The Era of Private Peacemakers:
A New Dialogic Approach to Mediation

A Case Study of Three Finnish Private Organizations

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Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

With wars having changed from inter-state to intra-state wars, with the cortege of destruction and death, as well as an increasing number of refugees brought about by the many ongoing wars, there is an urgent need to work towards a better understanding of conflicts, and in particular their possible transformation. During the past two decades, the majority of conflicts have ended in a negotiated agreement, in contrast to the Cold War years when most wars ended by military victory. However, an increasing number of violent conflicts escape efforts of the international community to find a peace agreement. Even where agreement has been negotiated, peace is often fragile, and the agreement does not necessarily guarantee sustainable peace, as the threat of re-escalation of violence is often omnipresent.

As traditional peace mediation has turned out to be ineffective and powerless to bring about sustainable peace, there is a need for new practices and innovative thinking. Executive Director of the European Institute of Peace (EIP) Martin Griffiths notes that "we need to make mediation, diplomacy and conflict prevention fit for the 21st century."[1] Executive director of the Secretariat and Convener of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers Antti Pentikäinen identifies a similar challenge:

> Peace mediation and national dialogue efforts have entered a new and complex era. The situation is particularly challenging in fragile states, where aid and development tools are not enabling rapid enough progress in legitimate governance for newly developed and weak institutions. The challenge from radical groups is particularly strong in fragile states, which reflects the broader challenges in peace mediation and national dialogue. In this era, the mediation and dialogue tools that were created for traditional inter- and intra-state conflicts have become ineffective.[2]

Thus according to both, mediation practices have remained too much in the past. The so-far failed efforts to achieve comprehensive peace agreements in Syria and Ukraine reflect the current challenges well. In the latter case, a ceasefire agreement (Minsk 2) has been agreed upon, but has not ended violence in Eastern Ukraine. In the Syria case, the Geneva-based official negotiations have not gone anywhere and have most of time been interrupted. In addition to the challenge of radicalization in fragile states pointed out by Pentikäinen, both of the above-mentioned cases include a return of an element of proxy war, which sets further challenges for peacemakers – official and private.

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[1] Martin Griffiths, Foreword to *Alert 2016! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding* (Barcelona: Icaria, 2016), 9, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/alerta16i.pdf
[2] Antti Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation through Inclusion of Traditional Peacemakers," Development Dialogue 63 (2015): 67.

Wars are more complex than ever before, and classical state-centric forms of peace mediation have proven inefficient in resolving current complex conflicts. The problem of prevailing practices of peace mediation and peacebuilding in general is, according to Emery Brusset, Cedric de Coning, and Bryn Hughes, that the myth of rational management of a peace process and the possibility of linear thinking of influences of action have dominated the international community's approach to conflicts. According to the authors, however, conflicts are not complicated systems such as automobiles to which "linear causal logic is well suited," but should be regarded as "highly dynamic and *complex* social systems" in which linear causality is inadequate.[3] Conflicts thus escape options for comprehensive resolution; instead, what is needed is an understanding that "the role of mediators in the peace process is to plant the seeds for sustainable peace" but not to define what peace should look like in each particular case.[4] Therefore, there is a need to rethink what the ownership of a peace process really means.

In the late 1990s, the world witnessed a peace mediation boom, as the number of mediation cases skyrocketed in comparison to the last decades of the Cold War. While in the late Cold War era most of violent conflicts still ended in military victory, the mid-90s saw conflicts increasingly end in a negotiated agreement.[5] Despite drastic quantitative change, there was then no equivalent qualitative change, despite attempts to adjust mediation practices and guidelines to resolve a new kind of asymmetric conflicts as pure inter-state conflicts became rare. Actual approaches to peace mediation remained rather state-centric and premised on rationalistic, interest-based and materially oriented approaches.

Beyond the rather traditional setting of peace mediation and peacebuilding dominated by states and the United Nations (UN), the signs of a revolutionary change in practices of peace are taking shape among private peacemaking actors. The past two decades have witnessed the emergence of a growing field of informal peace diplomacy executed by private actors. These private peacemakers, however, are often entangled with official actors, as their funding is mostly dependent on states and international organizations. They are often regarded as supporting or assisting actors involved in the official peace process and, at the same time, their involvement in peace processes is seen as crucial.[6] The role of private peacemakers, however, is changing, and it seems that they are the advocates and innovators behind the paradigm shift that has taken

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[3] Emery Brusset, Cedric de Coning, and Bryn Hughes, "Introduction," in *Complexity Thinking for Peacebuilding Practice and Evaluation*. ed. Emery Brusset, Cedric de Coning and Bryn Hughes (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 2

[4] Griffiths, "Foreword to *Alert 2016! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*," 10.

[5] Mikael Eriksson and Roland Kostić, "Rethinking Peacemaking: Peace at All Costs?" in *Mediation and Liberal Peacebuilding. Peace from the Ashes of War?*, ed. Mikael Eriksson and Roland Kostić (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 162.

[6] Timo Kivimäki and David Gorman, *Non-Governmental Actors in Peace Process: The Case of Aceh*, Case Study, Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (2008); Peter Wallensteen, "Academic Diplomacy: The Role of Non-Decision Makers in Peacemaking," in *Peacemaking: From Practice to Theory*, ed. Susan Allen Nan, Zachariah Cherian Mampilly, and Andrea Bartoli (Santa Barbara: ABCCLIO, 2012), 457.

place. We are arguably witnessing the largest change in peace mediation practice and approach since the establishment of modern peace mediation practice in the post-Second World War years.

As part of this change, the importance of *dialogic approaches* has increased among practitioners, and in particular among NGOs and other private actors. To some extent, the increase has happened at the expense of the more conventional approaches to conflict resolution, especially that of peace mediation. It seems that the formerly sharp border between peace mediation and dialogue processes, or between peace mediation and peacebuilding, is blurring. However, there are still noticeable differences: peace mediation usually entails the participation of third parties, whereas dialogic approaches place more emphasis on the responsibility of the parties of conflict themselves. Moreover, classical peace mediation has been premised on state-centric diplomacy and a search for solutions that would end violence through compromises on power, status, and territory, while dialogic approaches are less pre-structured as to the nature of participants, the issues at stake, or the kind of solutions sought out. What is seemingly happening in the field, initiated by private actors, is not just a replacement of classical mediation with a new dialogic approach but the development of new practices and approaches in the interface of mediation and peacebuilding, and also that of peacebuilding and development. This turn has mostly taken place as a bottom-up revolution of the peace mediation field. This *dialogic turn* contests the methods and in particular approaches of classical mediation, and sets new challenges and questions. What new, then, does this turn contribute to complex peace processes, and how do these new approaches manage to adjust to the complex architecture of numerous actors and processes in a particular peace process? Since a more traditional state-centric approach also still prevails in top-level of diplomacy and still has an important role with an increasing number of local conflicts entangled in great power rivalry, a question arises of how a new dialogic approach can adjust to this context. And above all, does this new approach better support peaceful change and transformation towards sustainable peace? What are the major obstacles and challenges the new approach has met? In this study, we approach these questions from the perspective of Finnish private actors by examining and comparing their strategies, experiences, and lessons learned from the various peacebuilding operations they have participated in.

This study is based on empirical material about the strategies, approaches, and operations of three Finnish NGO-based private organizations (also referred to as *private peacemakers*): Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Felm) and Finn Church Aid (FCA), which also serves as the Secretariat of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (Network). Although their work is largely invisible to the general public, all of these actors have been active in the international peacemaking field

and have been involved in various conflicts around the world in for example Ukraine, South Sudan, and Iraq (CMI), Syria and Myanmar (Felm), and Libya, Somalia, and the Central African Republic (CAR) (FCA and the Network). Their approaches are not uniform, but nevertheless include several similar kinds of new approaches to peace mediation practice, based on both the new practical requirements in the field but also the new kind of philosophy of conflict transformation. It is obvious that their peace mediation is less about negotiations and individual mediators facilitating roundtable talks with two parties, and more about creating opportunities for locals to take the lead in peace processes.

This study examines the change from the perspective of the three Finnish private peacemakers, but its focus extends beyond these particular organizations to the role of NGO-based peacemakers in general, and the overall changes in peace mediation approaches. We examine a surface of official and unofficial, formal and informal, in which peace diplomacy is executed, as well as the changing agency and tools in the field. Some highly interesting new studies about a new approach to mediation and peacebuilding have been published and have had a great influence among private peacemakers. What has, however, been lacking is empirical research on this revolution in the mediation business. We are interested in how private peacemakers comprehend their own role and added value, how they understand conflict and peace and, in particular, how this new approach is seen in the way they execute their projects in the field. This is done by analyzing data from interviews conducted with representatives of CMI, Felm, and FCA and the Network Secretariat, as well as project documents and other written material provided by the organizations.

In addition to conducting an empirical study on the three private organizations, we aim to connect this recent change in the field and strategic thinking to theoretical debate, considering in particular the conceptual basis of practitioners' thinking. Furthermore, we keep in mind the fundamental core question: does the new approach support the transformation from violent conflict to sustainable peace in a way that is significantly better than the methods offered by conventional peace mediation? The study begins with a discussion on the changes the field of mediation has gone through in the recent decades, making way for the increasingly important role of private actors. It then presents the Finnish context and the private organizations studied here. Chapter 3 outlines some of the most prominent recent theoretical debates that have been particularly influential among private practitioners, after which Chapter 4 analyzes the organizations' role in the mediation field, and their work and views on conflicts, transformation and mediation, and dialogue. Finally, Chapter 5 presents what we call the *dialogic approach* to mediation, and reflects on the implications of such an approach in the Finnish context.

2. Mediation and the Role of Private Actors

2.1. The Crisis of Classical Mediation

In the post-Cold War era, the dynamics of war and violence have changed significantly, and the international community has been confronted with new challenges in responding to armed conflicts and global security threats. Today's wars are typically protracted intrastate conflicts characterized by asymmetric power relations, weak state authority and legitimacy, a collapse of state monopoly on violence, various competing private actors, and targeting of civilians.[7] While the number of armed conflicts has been on the decline since the end of the Cold War according to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), 2014 saw the highest death toll of the post-Cold War period. Moreover, the internationalization of armed conflicts is on the rise, and also intrastate conflicts are more often entangled in great power rivalry and power-political interests, which further hinders the resolution of conflicts.[8]

Since the end of the Cold War, the large majority of conflicts have come to their end by peace negotiations usually mediated or facilitated by an international third party, while earlier most conflicts ended by the military victory of one party. Between 1990 and 2007, altogether 646 documents were signed that can be classified as peace agreements.[9] Unfortunately, negotiated peace agreements and classical peace mediation cases have become rare in recent years. Simultaneously, an increasing number of peace processes have failed to build peace. 35 armed conflicts were reported in 2015: 13 in Africa, 12 in Asia, 6 in the Middle East, 3 in Europe and 1 in the Americas. Only 4 peace negotiations were concluded by signing a peace agreement: those in CAR, Sudan (Darfur), Mali, and South Sudan, where violence broke out again in 2016.[10] Furthermore, negotiations in Colombia were already close, while Syria has escaped all possible efforts for resolution. The fate of the South Sudan agreement well reflects another serious problem. There is a great tendency for peace agreements negotiated by a third party not to last; for example, one third of the 69 peace agreements during the period of 1989 to 2000 were followed by a civil

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[7] Karin Aggestam and Annika Björkdahl, "Introduction: War and Peace in Transition," in *War and Peace in Transition: Changing Roles of External Actors,* ed. Karin Aggestam and Annika Björkdahl (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2009), 15-31; Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars,* 2nd ed (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

[8] Thérése Pettersson and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflicts, 1946-2014," *Journal of Peace Research* 52 (2015): 536-550.

[9] Mona Fixdal, *Just Peace: How Wars Should End* (New York: Palgrave Macmillam, 2012), 7.

[10] Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2016! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*

war within five years of their signing.[11] Furthermore, even where open violence did not break out, society often stagnated somewhere in between war and peace, becoming stuck in a reality that is not war nor peace.

Why peace efforts have failed - or more precisely, why third party-organized peace processes have been unsuccessful in establishing durable peace - is the question several scholars have examined. Jasmine-Kim Westendorf looks for the explanation from the essence of a peace process. According to her, a fundamental challenge for peace processes is that

> security building, governance building, and transitional justice initiatives [are] primarily technocratic exercises that [attempt] to 'fix' infrastructure and systems of states emerging from civil war. The tendency toward technocratic peace processes is underpinned by the assumption that intrastate violence is an irrational phenomenon that occurs in the context of the breakdown of state institutions and that reestablishing, or in some cases simply establishing, those institutions through a number of mechanisms across the security, governance, and transitional justice sphere will help build peace.[12]

But this kind of depoliticized peace process does not respond to how "individuals and communities [engage] with peace consolidation, or [work] against it."[13] Thus, peace often remains an elite-driven process that does not contribute to the security of the community. Westendorf calls for an anti-technocratic approach that is custom-designed for the needs of the local population and allows a genuine engagement of local society. In a similar way, Eriksson and Kostić note that a durable peace settlement is more likely in homegrown negotiations with high local ownership of the process.[14] However, for humanitarian reasons the international community cannot always just wait for the emergence of homegrown negotiations, but a third party intervention may be needed to end or reduce violence. The follow-up question, then, is how the practices of third party peacemakers should be revisited, and whether the new practices launched by private peacemakers contribute to this challenge.

Current, predominantly intrastate conflicts with significant regional and transnational features are highly complex and unpredictable in comparison to classical interstate wars. The majority of contemporary wars are asymmetric conflicts within which agency has become blurred and obscure, while human rights have simultaneously become entangled in warfare. Furthermore, it has become more and more difficult to define who the parties of conflict are, and with

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11 Eriksson and Kostić, "Peacemaking and Peacebuilding: Two Ends of a Tail," in *Mediation and Liberal Peacebuilding. Peace from the Ashes of War?*, ed. Mikael Eriksson and Roland Kostić (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 5; Vidar Helgesen, "How Peace Diplomacy Lost Post 9/11. What Implications Are There for Norway?" *Oslo Files on Defence and Security* 03 (2007): 15.
12 Jasmine-Kim Westendorf, *Why Peace Processes Fail: Negotiating Security after Civil War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner publishing, 2015), 4.
13 Ibid.
14 "Rethinking peacemaking: Peace at all costs?" in *Mediation and Liberal Peacebuilding. Peace from the Ashes of War?*, ed. Mikael Eriksson and Roland Kostić (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 162.

whom mediators should negotiate to achieve results.[15] In other words, the dichotomy between official (state) and unofficial agency, and forms of policy and warfare has blurred. Even if conflicts have changed from taking place between states into taking place between private actors[16], this does not mean that the state, or other official actors, are currently out of conflicts. Rather, it means that the *producers* of violence are more often private than state actors instead of official agents and operatives of the states, such as armies. For example, in the case of Ukraine, although the conflict parties include state actors, namely Russia and Ukraine, the majority of the fighting takes place between unofficial operatives, which are supported, equipped, and also controlled by state actors often unwilling to even admit their participation. Conflicts are also increasingly transnational and regional; even if the actual fighting takes place within certain state borders, agency and violence are not limited within those borders.

Similar kind of conflicts can sprawl within a larger region, as in the case of the Arab Spring, in which the conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Egypt must be considered in the same region encompassing the Mediterranean area and North Africa. Indeed, according to the practitioners interviewed, it is possible to recognize certain regional characteristics in conflict dynamics, and these bring certain predictable elements for planning. CMI for example divides its geographic focus to three regions: sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Eurasia (de facto the post-Soviet space).[17] In the case of Africa, most conflicts are such that the former militant independence movement has transformed into a political movement, and the political system now needs to adapt to the changed situation and be able to include the now political agents. Therefore, many sub-Saharan conflicts are conflicts within political parties. In the post-Soviet space conflicts are often entangled not only with the broader geopolitical context and with Russian politics in the area but also with challenges that the transition of political power from the older generation to the younger one generates. In the MENA area conflicts are similarly attached to generational changes in state leadership but beyond that also to the popular contest for a traditionally strong role of the state, associated with deep social crisis.[18]

These types of situations pose significant challenges to classical mediation, as many parties lack the level of autonomy needed to be considered an autonomous party to the mediation process. According to classical diplomacy, states can enter into relationships only with other states. Even if this dichotomy has been revisited, the blurred and continuously wavering agency has set huge challenges for official peace diplomacy, and created a need for private peace mediators who can more easily engage in dialogue with different kinds of actors

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[15] Jay Winter, "Postscript: War and Peace in a Transnational Age," in *Ways Out of War: Peacemakers in the Middle East and Balkans*, ed. Mona Fixdal (Palgrave Macmillan: 2012), 2.
[16] Interview with Ville Brummer, Oskari Eronen, and Mikko Patokallio, September 6, 2016.
[17] "Regions and Themes," CMI 2017, accessed March 23, 2017, http://cmi.fi/
[18] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.

in a particular conflict without giving too much attention to their official positions. They can adopt a flexible and tailored approach with each party and concentrate on finding various tools to engage all relevant parties without excluding any. In a traditional mediation setting, the mediator mediates between agents positioned at the top of a hierarchical pyramid of political power, and even when representatives of "rebel groups" are involved in negotiations, their multiplicity and diversity is neglected by the chief mediator, which treats them as a homogenous actor with one voice (for example the PLO, Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers and, more recently, the Syrian negotiations in Geneva).[19] In some rare cases this kind of tactic has been successful in reaching a resolution, as for example the Aceh peace agreement indicates, but more often artificial efforts to deny the plurality of actors and the lack of homogeneity among them has not brought expected results. On the other hand, it is extremely challenging for an official mediator mostly acting at the level of state diplomacy to directly engage in talks with individual warlords at lower levels of the hierarchy. The fundamental problem stems from the state-centric worldview of hierarchies of power and legitimacy and the tendency to approach conflicts through a clear top-down model in which decisions and agreements negotiated at the top level trickle down to the local level. Current conflict zones, however, demonstrate the extent to which power hierarchies are increasingly blurred even in the case of states.

Furthermore, classical peace negotiation does not fit asymmetric conflicts. In fact, asymmetric negotiation situations hold a paradox; as best negotiation situations are among equals, efficient negotiation is not possible in asymmetric situations. Thus, negotiations within asymmetric conflict hold several pitfalls. Because of different power positions "the bargaining situation is inevitably unfair."[20] Furthermore, mediation enhances international legitimacy or just gains time[21] and is also used by parties who are not committed to negotiations and compromises for their own purposes. The spoiling problem is also remarkable in asymmetric negotiations. Therefore, even if mediators and mediation scholars have developed various tools to cope with asymmetry and the imbalance of power in practice, classical peace mediation still works better in negotiations among equals - mainly among states - and asymmetry remains an unresolved challenge.

Current asymmetric wars increasingly revolve around competing ethnic and religious identities. While purely power-political interests have not vanished, they appear to be more closely intertwined with identity-related

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[19] Marko Lehti and Jenny Saarinen, "Mediating Asymmetric Conflicts," in *Nordic Approaches to Peace Mediation: Research, Practices and Policies*, ed. Marko Lehti (Tampere: Tampere University Press, TAPRI Studies in Peace and Conflict Research no. 101, 2014), 40-43, 57-62.
[20] Fixdal, *Just Peace*, 37.
[21] Isak Svensson, "Medling och förhandling," in *Om Krig och Fred: En Introduktion till Freds- och Konfliktstudier*, ed. Karin Aggestam and Kristine Höglund (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2012), 177-78.

issues. Conflicts arise, as evidenced by many current tensions, as part of a larger (re)production of identities and group boundaries through mutually exclusive myths, interpretations of history, and collective memorialization.[22] While narratives of the past provide anchorage for politico-cultural identities, they often represent the 'other' as a threat. Identity conflicts are thus fueled by discourses of historical enmity, hatred, and polarization, which intensify the basic existential fears for group survival. Issues pertaining to ontological insecurity may therefore constitute a more essential obstacle for achieving sustainable peace than threats to physical security. It has been noted in this context that engagement in wars and conflicts may, paradoxically, provide a sense of certainty, predictability, and ontological security by enabling consistent definitions of "self" and "other" to be maintained. While conflicts can function as sources of identities that provide feelings of safety, partaking in efforts of settlement can undermine identity-related safety; that is, bring about ontological insecurity. Resolution or transformation would therefore, with the conduct of violence furnishing the parties with firm identities, require an opening up of existing identities and identity transformation.[23]

Therefore, conventional methods of peacemaking can be unhelpful or even counterproductive. Whereas mediation in its more traditional configuration tends to rest on the assumption that settling wars and violent conflicts calls for fair solutions in terms of the interests or material gains at stake, current conflicts escape that kind of rationality and linearity of solution. As the transformation of conflicts has become more challenging, with mediators having to deal with a complex system of different power structures and power centers, peace can no longer be reached solely at high-level summits, even if these are still sometimes also needed. In these more complex settings, the official status of persons participating in peace negotiations does not guarantee that they have the power to execute any agreements. Thus instead of choosing persons according to their official position, it has become important to ask if they have the capability and power to sell the negotiated agreements to the larger population and to their supporters.[24] Yet, official negotiators may not be able to bypass those in certain official positions and simply choose to instead engage the people with real credibility in the societies involved. Private peace mediators, on the other hand, are free from the rules of state-centric diplomacy and therefore able to seek out and engage in dialogue with various relevant actors.

[22] Susanne Buckley-Zistel, "In Between War and Peace: Identities, Boundaries and Change after Violent Conflict," *Millennium. Journal of International Studies* 1 (2006): 6, DOI: 10.1177/03058298060350010101.
[23] Marko Lehti, "From Antagonism to Agonistic Peace: Rethinking Identities and Dialogic Transformation," paper presented at ISA's 57th Annual Convention, Atlanta, Georgia, March 17, 2016.
[24] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.

2.2. The Rise of Private Actors in Peace Processes

During the Cold War years, the peace mediation field was quite exclusively dominated by states, mostly great powers, and international organizations, mainly the UN. The UN could mandate individual mediators such as Ralph Bunche, Folke Bernadotte, Olof Palme, and Jan Eliasson, and in some cases UN Secretary-Generals acted as mediators themselves (e.g. Dag Hammarskjöld).[25] The Camp David negotiations (1978) between Israel and Egypt, mediated by then-President Jimmy Carter and his team, are an excellent example of power mediation executed by a great power during the Cold War period. Only leaders of states – those of Egypt and Israel – were allowed to participate and contribute to negotiations even though it was the fate of Palestinian people that was on the table. The mediator, President Carter, used persuading power to achieve a conclusion desirable from the US point of view.[26] Mediation efforts were straightforwardly part of great power diplomacy, and the US in particular used power mediation for a long time in efforts to bring an end to various violent conflicts.

Twenty years later, in the completely different context of the Bosnian War, the mediation style of US mediator Richard Holbrooke in negotiating the Dayton peace treaty that ended the war in 1995 was in many terms a continuation of old power mediation practice.[27] Within that framework, mediation belonged to the toolbox of classical state diplomacy, as it was predominantly great powers that were considered to be able to mediate due to their persuading power exceeding beyond the negotiation table. This still left no room for private peacemakers. On the other hand, in many ways the failure of the Dayton treaty to bring about truly sustainable peace, and the persistence of antagonistic relations for over 20 years after the signing of the agreement have shown that the transformation of violent intrastate war into sustainable peace would require a lot more than great power diplomacy can achieve. Furthermore, the Dayton agreement itself, and in particular the fixed ethnic categorizing it held, has been seen by many as the main obstacle to transformation towards sustainable peace.[28] These failures have also demonstrated the need for the rethinking of the whole model of peace diplomacy. This need has created a niche

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[25] Isak Svensson and Peter Wallensteen, *The Go-Between: Jan Eliasson and the Styles of Mediation* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2010); Peter Wallensteen and Isak Svensson, *Fredens Diplomater. Nordisk Medling från Bernadotte till Ahtisaari* (Santerus, 2017).
[26] William B. Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics* (Washington, DC: Bookings Institution Press, 2016).
[27] Peter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System* (London: Sage, 2007), 266.
[28] Roland Kostić, "American Nation-Building Abroad: Exceptional Powers, Broken Promises and the Making of Bosnia," in *Mediation and Liberal Peacebuilding. Peace from the Ashes of War?*, ed. Mikael Eriksson and Roland Kostić (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013).

for the rise of private peacemakers, albeit one that did not emerge without challenges and problems.

The emergence of private peacemakers is also related to the growing sector of international humanitarian non-state actors. In the development and human rights sectors the role of private actors has been remarkable and well-recognized since the late 1960s and the early 1970s, but the boom of humanitarian interventions, and the expansion of the peacebuilding sector since the mid-1990s has had drastic impacts on the number of NGOs and private actors in the field. Furthermore, the reorientation of some former humanitarian and development-centric private organizations towards peacebuilding, but also to peace mediation and dialogues, has broadened the field of actors. A great number of new organizations focusing on the promotion of peace have been founded, while several old organizations earlier focused only on the development sector have also moved into the peacebuilding sector.

In peacemaking processes, private, mostly NGO-based actors only appeared in the second half of 1990s. In these booming years of peacemaking, new private actors also emerged in the peace mediation field, previously a mostly state-dominated business. In the first phase, there emerged individual private mediation experts ready to offer their services. Indeed, Stephen Chan describes the early years of the unscrupulous world of private peace mediators in following way:

> There is a phenomenon that appears almost everywhere there is conflict. It began with sporadic and uncoordinated interventions by well-meaning people who found they could help influence, shape, and even suspend conflict, particularly in regions remote from the interests of the great powers. This movement of international mediators proved to be a curious hybrid of academic idealism and prescriptive procedures. The mediator was often male and Western, and he took centre stage, controlling communication among conflicting parties to nudge them into compromises, settlements, and even resolutions of their disputes—using techniques extrapolated from, among other sources, marriage guidance manuals.... a veritable cottage industry of mediators burgeoned to its present status as a high-earning, high-profile, jet-setting, and seemingly indispensable part of a curious globalisation of idealistic and yet professionalised concern for relieving the misery of others.[29]

The core argument of Chan and other critical scholars examining the early phase of private mediators is that the mostly amateurish but eager private mediators represented liberal interventionism in its rudest form, and that they ignored, among others, issues such as local ownership and inclusion, just as most large-

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[29] Stephen Chan, "Conclusion: Mediating the Mediation with Difference," in *Mediating across Difference: Oceanic and Asian Approaches to Conflict Resolution*, ed. Morgan Brigg, and Roland Bleiker (Honolulu, US: University of Hawaii Press 2010), 270. Compare with Lior Lehrs, "Private Peace Entrepreneurs in Conflict Resolution Processes," *International Negotiation* 21 (2016): 381-408. Lehrs presents the role of private peace entrepreneurs more as an important resource.

scale peacebuilding operations did at the same time. While we agree that Chan's description may capture some significant elements of the early phase of private mediators, it is no longer fitting in the era of professionalized private peacemakers - even if it cannot be denied that there are still so-called "peace-lords" that act almost the way Chan described.[30] Chan's criticism was targeted mainly towards private peace entrepreneurs, individuals, while the initial phase of private peace mediators was soon followed by the foundation of new private non-profit organizations focusing mainly on peace mediation. While examining the more recent developments, this study comes to a conclusion completely opposite to that of Chan; it argues that NGO-based private peacemakers have for the past decade been a source of revolution and renewal in mediation practice, contributing to issues such as local ownership and inclusion being taken seriously and adapted to strategic thinking in new, radical ways.

The private peacemakers that have developed a high profile in mediation are a diverse group of actors. They may characterize their work as mediation, peacebuilding, conflict resolution or transformation and have their own emphases in the mediation arena. Most of them are NGO-based, but since their activity has elements of the private sector, they can be referred to with the general term of private peacemakers. Some pioneering organizations, such as International Alert, the Carter Center, and Search for Common Ground (SFCG), were already established in the 80s, but grew and expanded their work to the sphere of mediation in the 90s. Private organizations such as ACCORD and Conciliation Resources, among various others, were founded in the early to mid-90s, and became active in mediation and peacemaking from the mid-90s onwards. For example, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), established in 1999, focuses on dialogue, mediation, and humanitarian issues, while the International Crisis Group (ICG), founded in 1995, produces research, analysis, and advocacy. The SFCG has particular expertise in the use of media in dialogue and conflict transformation, while International Alert has been especially active in preventive diplomacy and the development of early warning systems.[31] The latter has also been a central part of the work of ICG and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), a non-profit organization founded in 1991. The Berghof Foundation, which was originally established in 1971 and shifted its focus to ethno-political conflict in the mid-90s, has been a pioneer in the advancement of conflict transformation approaches.

Furthermore, a significant part of the current international high-profile private diplomacy organizations have been established in the 2000s - including

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[30] Interview with Mahdi Abdile, Antti Pentikäinen, Milla Perukangas, Edla Puoskari, and Paula Tarvainen, 6 September, 2016.
[31] Martina Fischer, "Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Strengths and Limitations," in *Advancing Conflict Transformation: The Berghof Handbook II,* ed. Beatrix Austin, Martina Fischer, and Hans J. Giessmann (Opladen/Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2011)

CMI, founded in 2000.[32] Oskari Eronen from CMI conceptualizes the development of private mediation in four phases initiated in the mid-90s: the identification of needs, ideation of the agenda, the development of practice, and the first-phase review of practices and agenda.[33] This periodization stems from the private actors' own understanding: they have already executed new types of practices for five to ten years, and according to them it is now time to look backwards, to critically evaluate and renew practices in the current turbulent era.

In addition to private diplomacy organizations, there is also a growing field of faith-based organizations (FBOs) assuming increasingly active roles in the peacemaking field - in the Finnish context, these include FCA and Felm. The work of many FBOs in the field is rooted in a faith-based tradition of humanitarian assistance, which can be traced back to the 19th century missionary work.[34] While the roots of such peace promoting work can be traced back to far earlier times, religiously oriented NGOs became more broadly involved in development and humanitarian aid in the mid-20th century. In the 90s, peace efforts become an integral and visible part of their identity and the growing number of FBO organizations assumed prominent positions also in the peacemaking and conflict resolution field.[35] The increased cooperation not only between FBOs from different faith traditions but also between FBOs and secular private organizations has, along with the changing field of international diplomacy, led to FBOs becoming involved in new types of activities. FBOs previously focused on development and emergency relief have increasingly taken on mediation and conflict transformation efforts, with many focusing on interreligious peacemaking.[36] One of the most visible faith-based actors in the field has been the Community of Sant'Egidio, which acted as a mediator in the Mozambican Civil War and significantly contributed to the signing of the Rome General Peace Accords.

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[32] Antje Herrberg and Heidi Kumpulainen, *The Private Diplomacy Survey 2008: Mapping of 14 Private Diplomacy Actors in Europe and America* (Brussels: Initiative for Peacebuilding, 2008), http://www.ifp-ew.eu/pdf/IfP_mediation_mapping_the_private_diplomacy_survey.pdf

[33] Interview with Eronen, Patokallio, and Rytkönen, January 27, 2017.

[34] Michael Barnett and Janice Gross Stein, "Introduction: The Secularization and Sanctification of Humanitarianism," in *Sacred Aid*, ed. Michael Barnett and Janice Gross Stein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3-36.

[35] Jacob Bercovitch and S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, "Religion and Mediation: The Role of Faith-Based Actors in International Conflict Resolution," *International Negotiation* 14, no. 1 (2009): 175-204, DOI: 10.1163/157180609X406562.

[36] David R. Smock, *Faith-Based Non-Governmental Organizations and International Peacebuilding*, Special Report. (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001); Tsjeard Bouta, S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, and Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Faith-Based Peace-Building: Mapping and Analysis of Christian, Muslim and Multi-Faith Actors* (The Hague: Clingendael- Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Washington DC: Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005), https://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20051100_cru_paper_faith-based%20peace-building.pdf; Cynthia Sampson, "Religion and Peacebuilding," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods & Techniques*, ed. I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 273-326.

The growing field of private actors is also seen in the number of cases in which they have been involved. When examining mediation as activity in which a third party "facilitates communication processes in the negotiation process and may offer proposals to the parties to help them move towards agreement," including conciliation, fact-finding, and good offices,[37] Bercovitch calculates 69 NGO mediation efforts in the 90s. This is nearly four times the number of efforts in the 80s, and over five times that in the 70s. While Bercovitch's definition of mediation is still narrower than the one adopted in this study, the data illustrates the spike in organizations involved in private mediation in the post-Cold War years. Since the 90s, the number of private organizations engaged in peacemaking, mediation, and conflict prevention has continued to rise quickly, with the European Centre for Conflict Prevention catalogue of conflict prevention and resolution calculating 587 NGOs as engaged in peacemaking.[38]

The emergence of the private peacemaker sector came with a set of new challenges. Suddenly, there were tens of new organizations and private actors wanting to be involved in peace mediation, and ready to offer their services wherever conflict broke out and the UN-led peace caravan arrived. There were suddenly too many players in the field, which led to the emergence of competition among private peacemakers. Furthermore, instead of a classical meditation situation with one chief mediator and two parties both representing the upper hierarchy of political power, new peace processes have become more complex not only because there are now numerous parties to be involved but also because there are other mediators, often private actors, involved in addition to the chief mediator. The result is so-called multi-party mediation, which allows for a more active role for private actors but also makes peace processes and their management more challenging and complicated.[39] This phase has been seen in rather critical terms and as harmful for the overall goal of sustainable peace and local ownership. At the same time, competition has also had certain positive effects regarding the professionalization of the field.

The growth in the number and importance of private peacemaking sector can be interpreted as part of the broader context of the changing world in the post-Cold War era, with diminished East-West rivalries and increasingly global and transnational security issues. Furthermore, it is also possible to recognize three major explanations for the growth of the private peacemaker sector. First, the blurring of the previously sharp line between peacemaking and development policies and the understanding of security and development as just different

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[37] Jacob Bercovitch, *International Conflict Management Database*, Data and Coding Manual (Christchurch, 2004), 188; as illustrated in J. Michael Greig and Paul F. Diehl, *International Mediation: War and Conflict in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 63.
[38] Nathan Shea, "Nongovernment Organisations as Mediators: Making Peace in Aceh, Indonesia," *Global Change, Peace and Security* 28 (2016).
[39] Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, "The Shifting Sands of Peacemaking: Challenges of Multiparty Mediation," *International Negotiation* 20 (2015): 363-388.

sides of the same coin have in significant terms contributed to the growth of the private sector of peace diplomacy. As a consequence of these developments, peacemaking is understood as going beyond ceasefire agreements and peace treaties, and emphasis is placed on long-term development. Second, the increase of private diplomacy organizations coincided with the growing realization that classical state diplomacy no longer fit the new kind of asymmetric conflicts. Already during the so-called Oslo process in the early 1990s, state-led peace diplomacy was re-focused, and non-state actors such as the PLO participated in the negotiations mediated by a state. However, even if non-state parties were also - within certain limits - invited to the roundtable negotiations, state-led diplomacy struggled to handle the increasing number of parties of conflict, as in official settings an invitation to peace negotiations is also a significant sign of recognition for participants.[40] Third, at the beginning of the War on Terror after 9/11, several rebel movements were officially labelled as terrorists with whom states cannot anymore negotiate, increasing the need for the ability of private actors to talk to parties states cannot talk to.

As the shortcomings of official diplomacy in responding to the complex crises of the past decades have become evident, the role of private diplomacy has become increasingly crucial. Although private diplomacy faces its own challenges related to economic and political leverage and resources, its advantages in operating in contemporary conflicts have been widely recognized in practice. Yet, the role and agenda of private peacemakers and new types of practices of peace have so far remained fairly unexplored in academic study on peace mediation and peacebuilding. Although the benefits of cooperation between official and private diplomacy, together with the private sector's ability to access situations and parties that official actors cannot reach, are recognized[41], the field of unofficial and at least partly informal peace diplomacy is according to our understanding too often presented only as reinforcing and complementing state-centric official peace diplomacy rather than examined according to its potential role of influencing peace processes on its own terms. Thus, official diplomacy is in practice still often considered the primary track, and official processes are seen as essential for bringing about peace. The private sector is then seen as subordinate to official mediation, with its main role to offer supportive services. However, Andrea Strimling argues that official and private sectors should be seen as complementary, since "resolving complex conflicts and building sustainable peace require, in addition to negotiated agreements, profound changes of attitude, relationship, and behavior among individuals and

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40 I. William Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts in a Globalized World," *International Negotiation* 11 (2006): 265.
41 See for example Hugh Miall, "Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task," in *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict*, ed. Alex Austin, Martina Fischer and Norbert Ropers (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2004); Andrea Strimling, "Stepping Out of the Tracks: Cooperation between Official Diplomats and Private Facilitators," *International Negotiation* 11 (2006): 91 – 127, DOI: 10.1163/157180606777835766

groups."[42] The private sector thus focuses on organizing and supporting dialogue process that may have direct and indirect effects on the official peace process. There are, however, fundamental challenges in cooperation between official and private actors, even if they recognize the complementarity of their work, as "efforts to cooperate are often frustrated by differences in interests, assumptions, professional culture and identity, lexicon, and perceptions of relative power."[43] Steadily increasing criticism towards state-centric peace diplomacy, and the recognition of its limits and pitfalls, have contributed to the beginning of the re-mapping of more independent roles and activities of private actors. However, private peacemaking organizations continue to have to legitimate their existence by pinpointing the added value of their activity to official peace processes and acting in the shadows of official peace diplomacy.

2.3. Mediation in Finland

When it comes to the Finnish context, mediation has arguably been a central element of the country's foreign relations for a long time. It is often argued that mediation was part of the Finnish identity building process as a neutral bridge-builder during the Cold War. Piiparinen and Aaltola suggest that its geopolitical position offered Finland three opportunities: to mediate between the East and West, to sustain the UN's security architecture that benefited small states, and to signal its neutrality to other states.[44] Finland has also been known to actively support UN peacekeeping as a means of increasing its international profile while maintaining a stance of neutrality between the East and the West.[45] Furthermore, Finland's role as a small state has been a central theme throughout its UN membership and gaining recognition for its neutrality was a priority for the country during the Cold War; it assumed the role of a physician rather than a judge, as former president Urho Kekkonen stated in his first statement to the General Assembly.[46] However, the official prioritization of promoting mediation in Finnish foreign policy is a more recent development. In 2010, former Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Stubb stated that Finland aims to become a great power in mediation, following the example of countries such as Norway and

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[42] Strimling, "Stepping Out of the Tracks," 96.
[43] Ibid., 92.
[44] Touko Piiparinen and Mika Aaltola, "Peace Mediation as a Reflection of Finnish Foreign Policy: What does Mediation Mediate about Finland?" in *Global Networks of Mediation: Prospects and Avenues for Finland as a Peacemaker*, ed. Touko Piiparinen and Ville Brummer (Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2012), 92-93.
[45] Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *Nordic Approaches to Peace Operations: A New Model in the Making* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012).
[46] Unto Vesa, *Finland in the United Nations: Consistent and Credible Constructivism*, Finnish Foreign Policy Paper 2 (Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs).

Switzerland.47 These developments and the emphasis on mediation in foreign policy in recent years can be seen as stemming from earlier mediation experiences in Caucasus and the Balkans, and the more recent success of Martti Ahtisaari.48 Official interest in mediation was further increased by the work of the Country Brand Delegation, led by Jorma Ollila, which envisioned a more active and visible mediation role for Finland, as well as Finland's campaign for non-permanent UN Security Council membership for the period 2013-2014.49

In Finland's normative promotion of mediation in international organizations, the UN has arguably taken center stage, with initiatives in the EU and the OSCE following suit. Finland's work through the UN Group of Friends of Mediation, formed together with Turkey in 2010, has led to the adoption of three General Assembly resolutions and the writing of the Secretary-General's report A/66/811. Finland still has a long way to go to reach similar position than that of Norway or Switzerland, and in terms of financial investment in particular, Finland could not have reached a similar level. Instead of concrete mediation experience as a state, Finland has so far mainly focused on active lobbying and networking at the UN and in the EU and on supporting Finnish-based NGO-based peacemakers.50

This support to private peacemakers, primarily FCA, Felm, and CMI, is then an integral aspect of Finland's mediation activities, and part of a long history of involving civil society actors in the government's efforts.51 In recent years, Finland has also promoted collaboration and information sharing with civil society through channels such as the Mediation Coordination Group.52 Currently, Finland's flagship projects in mediation are supporting dialogue in Syria and Myanmar (largely carried out by Felm with its partners) strengthening the mediation capacity of the African Union (AU), the Nordic Women Mediators' Network and the Gender and Inclusive Mediation training involving CMI, PRIO and the UNDPA, as well as supporting the Network, and FCA as its Secretariat.53

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47 MFA, *Peace Mediation – Finland's Guidelines* (Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2014), accessed March 1, 2017).http://formin.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=59769&GUID={8CA2CDB5-BA89-4928-A7C4-E8094C3B757B}.
48 Pertti Joenniemi, "Peace Mediation and Conflict Resolution: The Policies Pursued by Four Nordic Countries," in *Nordic Approaches to Peace Mediation: Research, Practices and Policies*, ed. Marko Lehti (Tampere: Tampere Peace Research Institute, 2014).
49 Pertti Joenniemi and Marko Lehti, "Rauhanvälitys pohjoismaisen yhteistyön haasteena," in *Rauhanvälitys – suomalaisia näkökulmia*, ed. Petteri Nissinen and Anisa Doty (Helsinki: Kansalaisjärjestöjen konfliktinehkäisyverkosto), 40-48.
50 Marko Lehti, "Rauhaa pohjoisesta," *Finnish Journal of Foreign Affairs* 51, accessed February 6, 2016. http://www.ulkopolitiikka.fi/numero/51/eurooppa/
51 Heli Kanerva, "The Development of the Governmental Structures of Finnish Peace Mediation," in *Global Networks of Mediation: Prospects and Avenues for Finland as a Peacemaker*, ed. Touko Piiparinen and Ville Brummer (Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs), 108-113
52 MFA, *Action Plan for Mediation,* 2011 (Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2011), accessed February 8, 2017,
.http://www.formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=236431&nodeid=49540&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI.
53 "Mediation," MFA, accessed February 6, 2017,
http://www.formin.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=323874&contentlan=2&culture=en-US

This demonstrates the MFA's focus on the work of the three Finnish NGO-based peacemakers.

Indeed, these three private organizations have taken on increasingly prominent roles in mediation, and have been affected not only by the Finnish context and history, but also by the international shifts in the field. The developments advancing the rise of private diplomacy organizations and the expansion of the range of non-state actors in the field during the past two or three decades can be detected in the work and evolvement of CMI, FCA, and Felm. CMI is one of the globally active and visible private diplomacy organizations established at the start of the new millennium along with the growing professionalization of non-official diplomacy. FCA and Felm, on the other hand, are examples of FBOs that have expanded from development cooperation and humanitarian assistance to the sphere of peacemaking and mediation. The growing need for private peacemakers, the professionalization of the field, and the increasing global attention on the intertwined nature of development and security are thus seen in the development and evolvement of the three Finnish private organizations.

All of the private organizations studied here are prominent Finland-based actors engaged in peacemaking globally. As partner organizations of the MFA, they are involved in close cooperation with the MFA, which is also a major funder for each organization. Due to the MFA's growing prioritization of mediation in the recent years, the close collaboration between the MFA and the three partner organizations is likely to also have affected the private organizations' increasing activity in mediation by offering initiatives to engage in mediation projects and, on the other hand, opportunities to showcase their work in the field.

FCA and the Network

FCA is the largest non-governmental development co-operation organization and the second largest provider of humanitarian assistance in Finland. It is an FBO whose work is guided by the rights-based approach and divided into three thematic areas: the right to livelihood, the right to education, and the right to peace. Founded in 1947 to administer emergency aid allocated to Finland, which was struggling after the Second World War, it has since evolved into a globally prominent development actor.[54]

During the past 10-15 years, the FCA has set up offices in other countries, not necessarily for mediation purposes, but to be closer to the local population and partner organizations.[55] As the organization's guiding principle has traditionally been to conduct humanitarian and development work in difficult

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[54] "History," FCA, accessed January 10, 2017, https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/en/us/history/
[55] Interview with Mahdi Abdile and Aaro Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.

and fragile areas and to help the most marginalized groups, development efforts have quite naturally become intertwined with security issues, and the complex situation and needs on the ground have brought peace work to the FBO's agenda. During the past decade in particular, there has been a shift in FCA's work, as the organization previously focused on development and humanitarian work has begun to engage more in peacebuilding and peacemaking. Peace work is currently carried out in the Right to Peace sector in countries and regions such as South Sudan, Kenya, Somaliland, Puntland, and CAR.

The shift in FCA's own approach, the changing arena of international mediation, and the evolution of contemporary conflicts – particularly in relation to the increasingly central role of religion and identity-based issues – made the moment ripe for the establishment of the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. It had become evident that FCA has links and connections through which it can contribute to peace mediation in a new way, while Finland's campaign for the UN Security Council in 2012 simultaneously offered an opportunity for FCA to showcase its Somalia work at the UN and to gain new, important connections.[56] In addition, the increased global interest in the role of religious actors in peacemaking made for effective momentum for the founding of the Network. This was supported by Finland's official promotion of mediation at the UN through the Group of Friends of Mediation, leading to the adoption of three General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions and the writing of the Secretary-General's report A/66/811, which calls for better inclusion of religious and traditional leaders in peacemaking.

The Network was formed in 2013 by FCA in cooperation with the UN Mediation Support Unit in the Department of Political Affairs (UN MSU – DPA), the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Religions for Peace (RfP). FCA serves as the Secretariat and the legal entity of the Network, which is comprised of close to 50 actors, including inter- and intra-governmental agencies, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and religious and traditional peacemakers. The MFA and FCA are also the two main sources of funding for the Network.[57] It supports the positive engagement of local religious actors in peace processes and connects them with states, intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, and regional and sub-regional bodies.[58] By doing this, it aims to promote sustainable and inclusive peace in its countries of operation.[59] The Network operates in the Middle East and North Africa (e.g. Libya), Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g.

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[56] Ibid.
[57] "Finance and Accountability," Network, accessed February 22, 2017,
https://www.peacemakersnetwork.org/about-us/finance-accountability/
[58] Network, *Memorandum of Understanding of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers*, unpublished manuscript, August 20, 2015.
[59] "Our Work," the Network, accessed February 22, 2017, https://www.peacemakersnetwork.org/our-work/

CAR, Somalia, and Kenya), and South and Southeast Asia (e.g. Myanmar and Southern Thailand).[60]

Felm

Felm is a mission organization belonging to the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church. It was founded in 1859, making it one of Finland's first civil society organizations.[61] It is also one of the largest Finnish civil society organizations working in global development; it is engaged in development co-operation, emergency relief, church work, and advocacy. Felm's work aims to promote human dignity and justice around the world, and its core values are partnership, love of neighbor, responsibility, and justice.[62] Its work is based on the rights-based approach and is stresses long-term involvement and strengthening inclusivity through bottom-up processes.[63] This approach is also the basis of its mediation work, which it sees as inherently linked to development and human rights.[64]

Felm's work is also guided by its identity as a Christian organization and its faith-based approach to values such as peace, reconciliation, justice, and forgiveness. Its vision also stresses helping those who are the most vulnerable and the most in need, and its approach to peace, reconciliation, and development is part of its view of the mission of the Evangelical-Lutheran church in curbing injustice and poverty, and protecting human rights.[65] Like FCA, Felm has expanded its work from development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and emergency relief to conflict resolution and peacebuilding through a comprehensive view of the interrelated nature of development, peace, and security. In this way, it has also been influenced by the changing field of mediation, and the evolution of modern violent conflicts. Felm's work in conflicts is also based on the acknowledged potential role of churches and religious actors in both conflicts and peace, which grants faith-based organizations a particular niche in advancing peace and dialogue through local church connections and networks. It sees its role as an enabler of local mediation rather than a private mediator itself, and stresses the importance of strengthening local capacity to promote peace and reconciliation.[66]

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[60] Network, *Progress Status of the Network projects* (Helsinki: The Secretariat of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, 2016)
[61] Karita Laisi and Kristiina Rintakoski, "Suomen Lähetysseura: paikalliset kumppanit rauhantyön keskiössä," in *Rauhanvälitys: suomalaisia näkökulmia,* ed. Petter Nissinen and Anisa Doty (Helsinki: Kansalaisjärjestöjen konfliktinehkäisyverkosto, 2014), 108
[62] Felm, *Annual Report 2015*, accessed 3 August 2016, http://www.suomenlahetysseura.fi/ls_en/www/lahetysseura/home/about_felm/.
[63] Laisi and Rintakoski, "Suomen Lähetysseura: paikalliset kumppanit rauhantyön keskiössä," 108
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Rintakoski, pers. comm., March 19, 2017.

Although its Christian identity is still a significant part of its work, Felm's as a mission organization has undergone notable changes during its 150 years of operation. While its work is based on Christian values and many of its partners churches and FBOs, it also works with secular organizations and emphasizes the holistic nature of its work, based on the needs of local communities.[67] In various other projects, however, faith-based networks play a larger role; these include projects involving interreligious dialogue, initiatives aimed at promoting social justice, trust between communities and the protection of religious minorities, and other issues related to religion in Pakistan, Nepal, and Ethiopia.[68] Its projects also include reconciliation, and trauma and memory healing in South Africa, as well as two of Finland's largest investments in peace work: Myanmar, where it supports the Euro-Burma Office, and the aforementioned Syria Initiative. The latter is carried out in cooperation with the Lebanese Common Space Initiative (CSI). The project began with seed funding from Felm, followed by funding from the Finnish MFA and the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. All in all, Felm currently operates in 30 countries in Africa, South America, Asia, and Europe. In South Africa it has engaged in supporting dialogue in local conflicts in cooperation with the South African Council of Churches, in Ethiopia it is active in dialogue among religious actors in the Dessie region, and in Pakistan Felm has supported local religious leaders in Peshawar.

CMI

CMI is a private diplomacy organization founded in 2000 by former President of Finland and Nobel laureate Martti Ahtisaari, whose long-term vision is that "all conflicts can be resolved."[69] Originally established to assist Ahtisaari in his various international assignments, to take part in policy discussions and to advocate for capacity building in civilian crisis management, CMI soon began undertaking its own projects.[70] While its support to Ahtisaari led to CMI beginning its work more as a think tank, it has since shifted its focus to operational work in conflict areas.[71] Similarly, thematically, CMI began in crisis management, later expanding to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. It has since evolved into one of the frontline private diplomacy organizations in the field internationally. Ahtisaari is still the Chairman of the Board.

In the first half of the 2000s, it also worked as the secretariat of the Helsinki Process on Globalisation and Democracy. One of its most high-profile initiatives is its involvement in the Aceh peace process, which began in 2004. CMI

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[67] Ibid.
[68] Interview with Kristiina Rintakoski and Minna Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
[69] "About Us," CMI 2017, accessed January 7, 2017, http://cmi.fi/
[70] Ibid.
[71] Interview with Eronen, Patokallio, and Rytkönen, January 27, 2017.

facilitated talks between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in a process that culminated in 2005 in the signing of an agreement granting the province of Aceh an autonomous status. These efforts have resulted in increased international visibility and recognition of CMI's work. Although the Aceh peace process, one of CMI's first and best-known activities, significantly relied on more traditional mediation approaches, with Ahtisaari facilitating negotiations between representatives of the government and GAM in Finland, from the perspective of CMI's mediation in its current form, it was an exception rather than a rule. The organization has since moved from more traditional approaches to new, diverse approaches that look for alternative mediation strategies – although its work is still actively informed by and benefits from Ahtisaari's legacy.[72]

Currently, CMI works to prevent and resolve conflicts through informal dialogue and mediation while also providing capacity building and mediation support at different stages of conflict management and peace processes. It cooperates with local, regional and international actors, providing direct support to international organizations such as the EU, the AU and the OSCE, and operational support to the UN. It focuses on working between the official and unofficial levels, often drawing from its access to higher levels of decision-makers and political elite. CMI's work rests on the principles of impartiality, local ownership, inclusiveness, and coordination and complementarity. It divides its work into three thematic approaches: mediation and dialogue processes, mediation support, and support to states and societies. CMI operates in the Middle East and North Africa (e.g. Libya and Iraq), Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. South Sudan), and Eurasia (e.g. Moldova and Ukraine).[73] Besides regional units, CMI's work has a cross-cutting focus on gender and inclusivity.[74] In comparison to the two FBOs, CMI operations are often more focused on representatives of political structures, and are more confidential and discrete by nature.

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[72] Mikko Patokallio, personal communication, March 13, 2017.
[73] Ibid.
[74] "Regions and Themes," CMI 2017, accessed March 23, 2017, http://cmi.fi/

3. Complexity, Inclusion, and Transformation: Sources for Renewal of Practices

The increasingly complex demands of current conflicts have been widely acknowledged in academic literature, which has discussed the changing nature of violence, and re-evaluated the relevance and efficiency of conflict resolution and peacebuilding approaches. Criticism towards the prevailing forms of liberal interventionism, liberal peacebuilding and liberal peace has become a norm in academic literature already some time ago. Still, the great majority of this theoretical and critical debate has no straightforward conclusions for peacebuilding or mediation practices. Or, in other words, theoretical debate has avoided more practically orientated questions, and simultaneously its critical eye has targeted for example forms of interventionism and changing power positions. However, even if this debate yields no clear conclusion for revisiting peacebuilding practices, it has an in-depth theoretical basis that scrutinizes the core challenges of prevailing forms of peacebuilding and conflict resolution and thus it has had clear spillover effects on debates close to practitioners' world.

Strangely, there have been two parallel forums for scrutinizing problems of current peacemaking: one of closed academic venues, and another with practitioners and academics close to them. Even if similar kinds of themes are examined and similar conclusions drawn, these two spheres have had surprisingly little interaction and dialogue between each other. While academics have criticized peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and official diplomacy from a theoretical point of view, drawing from the work of the prominent scholars in the field, private practitioners have focused on evaluating their work through a practical lens. Yet, improved coordination between the academic and the practitioner side of the field would have a lot to contribute to both literature and practical operations; it is therefore worthwhile to consider the interplay for example between the debates on the complexity of conflicts on the one hand, and on conflict transformation on the other.

As part of this critical re-evaluation, practitioners have themselves been involved in theoretical debates, but mainly they have been influenced by certain new approaches like the conflict transformation debate. At the same time, they as organizations have sought new approaches to influence conflicts, and new ways to evaluate efficiency. While critically evaluating their previous approaches and methods, they have simultaneously studied fundamental questions about the essence of conflicts and the possibility of their transformation in depth. The result has been a true revolutionary change in thinking on peace mediation and

peacebuilding, the role of the third party and its ability to support transformation towards peace, as well as questions of responsibility and ethics. From the perspective of the three Finnish private organizations, two theoretical approaches resonate the most with their understanding of peace processes and the practice of peace: the debate about the complexity of conflicts, and transformation theories.

In a sense, this interest and investment of private organizations in the re-evaluation of approaches to conflict could be viewed as product development. In order to ensure the quality and effectiveness of their services, or the "product" they offer, private peacemakers must continuously evaluate and assess their projects, strategy, impact, and also their working methods. This may require returning to the basics and the fundamental issues, and questioning the assumptions and premises on which their work is based, instead of measuring results according to old, established standards. At the same time, the "product" must be marketable and attractive to funders, which may or may not measure the value of the product from a similar point of view. Just as a private company cannot survive and expand without innovative product development, private peacemakers need continuous investment in critical and innovative thinking, and evaluation of existing practices beyond the more practically oriented, down-to-earth "lessons learned" evaluation. Only the ability to scrutinize fundamental phenomena enables constructive criticism of widely prevailing practices and a self-evident manner of thinking. Therefore, it seems obvious that instead of only focusing on field operations, it is important for private organizations to continuously participate in broader conceptual debates for preserving their ability to find new approaches and solutions as well as critically rethinking the basis of the whole peace process. Unfortunately, the Results-Based Management model often insisted by the donor does not offer much support to this kind of activity.

3.1. Transformative Peace Processes

During the past decade or two, the previously dominating rationalistic beliefs of conflict management have been challenged by various conflict transformation approaches that have also gained resonance among private peacemakers. The centrality of resolution as an omnipresent dogma has been contested not only by conflict transformation theorists, but also by several private peacemakers that lay emphasis on long-term transformation towards peace. One of the world's leading conflict resolution theorists, Oliver Ramsbotham, has written: "The normative aim of conflict resolution is not to overcome conflict. Conflict cannot be overcome – it is an unavoidable feature of social development. And conflict should not be overcome, in combating an unjust situation. The aim, rather, is to

transform actually or potentially violent conflict into non-violent forms of social struggle and social change."[75] This statement captures the core approach of what is called conflict transformation. During the past two decades, a distinct body of academic literature has emerged; these studies outline various approaches that can be labelled under "conflict transformation," although they are still far from a uniform theoretical framework. The term conflict transformation has already been used earlier by scholars such as Johan Galtung; he, however, referred to transformational processes rather than "a long-term transformation of a war system into a peace system," as conflict transformation is defined by John Paul Lederach.[76]

The theoretical foundation of conflict transformation has been influenced by John Burton's ideas on conflict resolution, Edward Azar's theorizing on protracted social conflicts and Morton Deutsch's work on transforming conflicts from destructive to constructive.[77] Later on, these ideas have been developed further by Diana Francis and Lederach, for example. Scholars such as Kumar Rupesinghe, Louis Kriesberg, and Raimo Väyrynen have also made significant contributions to the study of conflict transformation. Instead of intrusive third-party intervention and mediation, conflict transformation emphasizes empowerment for groups within society. Lederach's practically oriented conflict transformation approach, in particular, has had a great influence among NGO actors. As Miall points out: "Following Lederach, NGO practitioners advocate a sustained level of engagement over a longer time-period.... They seek to open a space for dialogue, sustain local or national conferences and workshops on paths towards peace, identify opportunities for development and engage in peacebuilding, relationship-building and institution-building over the longer term."[78]

The conflict transformation approach understands conflict as a socially constructed relationship between parties in which "each side declares which issues are in dispute and who the adversaries are. Members of opposing sides tend to quarrel about the correctness and reality of each other's social construction," as Kriesberg writes.[79] Kriesberg, as many other conflict transformation theorists, sees the main task of conflict transformation in changing the conflict from destructive to constructive. As transformation approaches regard conflict as a natural and important part of social and political life, the aim is not to eliminate it, but rather to turn destructive, violent forms of conflict into non-violent ones. In order to do this, conflict transformation aims at

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[75] Oliver Ramsbotham, *Transforming Violent Conflict: Radical Disagreement, Dialogue And Survival* (London: Routledge, 2010), 53.

[76] Hugh Miall, "Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task," in *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict,* ed. Alex Austin, Martina Fischer, and Norbert Ropers (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2004), 73.

[77] Ramsbotham, *Transforming Violent Conflict,* 53.

[78] Miall, "Conflict Transformation," 82.

[79] Louis Kriesberg, "A Constructive Conflict Approach to World Struggles," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21 (2015): 52.

transforming relationships, discourses, attitudes, and interests, often the very structure behind the conflict. It seeks to alter the underlying systems, cultures and institutions that lead to the expression of conflict in violent terms. Rather than try to adjust the positions of the parties and compromise between their differing interests, conflict transformation attempts to change the nature and functions of violence.[80]

In addition to the work of Lederach and Kriesberg, a few scholars have focused more on antagonistic relationships and identities. For Buckley-Zistel "conflict transformation refers to approaches that seek to encourage wider social change through transforming the antagonistic relationship between the parties to the conflict."[81] This approach understands antagonism, or antagonistic identities, as a major aspect of the conflict. Vivienne Jabri argues that moving from war to peace is a discursive process that requires transformation of identities. According to her, "the legitimation of war is situated in discursive practices based on exclusionist identities," and therefore she stresses the importance of discursive processes that incorporate difference rather than reify exclusion.[82]

Instead of regarding conflict as a static condition that must be removed, conflict transformation approaches view conflict as a fluid, dynamic process. It evolves and fluctuates constantly in unpredictable ways and patterns, and is often part of a complex web of multiple, intertwined conflicts. Conflict transformation efforts are therefore needed at all stages of a conflict cycle: before, during, and after the violence. Francis and Ropers, among other, stress the need to support transformation efforts at the early phases of conflict, as promoting peace and changing structures sustaining direct and indirect violence tends to be much easier prior to the escalation and intensification of violence.[83]

Differentiations between conflict transformation, conflict resolution, and the more traditional conflict management have fundamental implications for peace mediation practice. They offer remarkably different understandings of the possibilities of the third party to make peace; furthermore, they have different perceptions of peace itself. The classical *conflict settlement* or conflict management approach emphasizes realpolitical goal setting, and aims to look for a win – win situation among the conflict parties, one that would help to find a practical resolution for the conflict. Therefore, negotiations are presented as a

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[80] Raimo Väyrynen, "To Settle or to Transform? Perspectives on the Resolution of National and International Conflicts," in New Directions in Conflict Theory, ed. Raimo Väyrynen (London: SAGE Publications, 1991), 1-25.
[81] Susanne Buckley-Zistel, *Conflict Transformation and Social Change in Uganda: Remembering after Violence* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillam, 2008), 21.
[82] Vivienne Jabri, *Discourses on Violence: Conflict Analysis Reconsidered* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 157.
[83] Diana Francis, *People, Peace, and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 10-11; Francis Ropers "Peaceful Intervention: Structures, Processes, and Strategies for the Constructive Regulation of Ethnopolitical Conflicts," Berghof *Report No. 1*. (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 1995), 22.

core instrument of conflict settlement (or management). It is the interests of parties, not their positions, that are on the agenda of these negotiations. Conflict settlement is based on the classical definition of conflict as a source of incompatible interests, and presumes that these interests are negotiable. Furthermore, peace as a normative aim is understood in simplified terms, and is comprehended as the end of open violence.[84]

Classical peace mediation is based on the conflict settlement approach as it was defined during the Cold War years. At the time, mediation was an instrument to resolve conflict in a state-centric system, and it was power and interests that were mediated, as for example in Camp David in 1978 when Israel and Egypt negotiated over the Palestinian question.[85] The emphasis on the impartiality of the third party, and the exclusion of all emotions, including hatred, outside the negotiation table have been fundamental principles of classical peace mediation emphasizing rational negotiation setting. The classical negotiation setting based on the idea that conflicts are a function of a tragic misunderstanding that can be solved in rational terms is criticized for example by Deiniol Lloyd Jones, who points out that instead of misunderstandings, conflict is about "fundamental political disagreements which are coupled with radical imbalances of power."[86] Along similar lines, Ramsbotham emphasizes radical disagreement as the core of violent conflict. For Ramsbotham, radical disagreement is about a conflict of belief in its broadest sense, and thus, in his view, it is not a question of the "coexistence of rival discourses, but a fight to the death to impose the one discourse."[87] This does not allow for compromise, but instead the way out is to have agonistic dialogue at the beginning to enable future transformation.[88]

The *conflict resolution* approach does not share the power-political perspective dominant to conflict management, but rather aims to address the underlying structural causes of violent conflicts. The conflict resolution approach agrees that incompatible interests are negotiable, but also considers there to be non-negotiable human needs that must be satisfied. The focus is then on issues like safety and human security, and distributive justice, among others. Reaching an agreement is important in order to know what the 'real' problem and the root cause of conflict is, and to recognize each other's needs; then it is possible to explore creative solutions.[89] The conflict resolution approach also

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[84] Miall, "Conflict Transformation"; Buckley-Zistel, *Conflict Transformation and Social Change in Uganda*, 16.
[85] Oliver P. Richmond, "Mediation in Post-Liberal International Relations," Working Paper; Marko Lehti and Jenny Saarinen, "Mediating Asymmetric Conflicts: A Survey on Nordic Studies on Peacemaking," in *Nordic Approaches to Peace Mediation: Research, Practices and Policies*, ed. Marko Lehti, (Tampere: Tampere University Press, TAPRI Studies in Peace and Conflict Research, no. 101, 2014), 11-92.
[86] Deiniol Lloyd Jones, "Mediation, Conflict Resolution and Critical Theory," *Review of International Studies* 26 (2000): 655.
[87] Ramsbotham, *Transforming Violent Conflict*, 123.
[88] Ibid., 131-132.
[89] Buckley-Zistel, *Conflict Transformation and Social Change in Uganda*, 17.

emphasizes "intervention by skilled but powerless third-parties working unofficially with the parties to foster new thinking and new relationships."[90] The normative aim of resolution - peace - is seen in Galtungian terms as positive peace, as the need to resolve the structural conditions that created a violent conflict is emphasized. Conflict resolution is based on a rational approach in which peacemakers are seen as doctors whose role is to recognize diseases and then find suitable medicine.[91] While conflict resolution theories brought with them the idea of complicated root causes of conflict, they retained the trust in rational communication and linear planning as well as the importance of problem-solving workshops.

Conflict resolution theories developed along with the rise of liberal peacebuilding, and the merging of peace and development sectors. They have given rationale and justification for various large internationally led peacebuilding operations launched since the mid-90s. However, the conflict resolution approach has had less influence on peace mediation, which has remained more grounded in conflict management theories. This constellation has radically changed the way many private peacemakers plan, design, and evaluate their activity. For such actors, conflict transformation more and more often appears as a relevant and indeed primary approach that can be adapted not just to peacebuilding but also to peace mediation while contesting the established tools and approaches for mediation. Or, if negotiation and mediation tools are associated with conflict management and problem-solving workshops with conflict resolution, dialogue processes have become the major tool to support long-term transformation. This radical shift in thinking of peacemaking is our key focus in this study.

3.2. Complexity Thinking and Non-linearity of Conflicts

Conflict transformation theories introduce a new understanding of conflicts by emphasizing how conflicts as such are an essential and unavoidable part of human society. Therefore, instead of resolving them, the goal should be the transformation of violence into nonviolence, and the (re-)creation of a society in which potential conflicts can be settled in nonviolent, peaceful terms. The very recent debate about complexity thinking has offered another perspective to conflicts as well as peaceful society. This theoretically interesting debate has

been more close to practitioners' challenges, and has partly originated from the practitioner side. Indeed, it has so far remained separate from critical peacebuilding debate even if two are related and in many terms complementary. *Complexity Thinking for Peacebuilding: Practice and Evaluation*, edited by Brusset, de Coning, and Hughes, and published at the end of 2016, has so far been the major contribution of this debate, which has taken place in several workshops and seminars for some time. The starting point of the criticism presented by Brusset, de Coning, and Hughes targets the prevailing Results-Based Management model, but step by step, the authors move towards the fundamental questions of the essence of conflict and peace.

The Results-Based Management model is founded on linear and simplistic thinking about causality between the input of peacemakers and a recognizable output of their work. The financing structure of the peacebuilding industry, based on donor support for a particular project, has particularly strengthened this kind of thinking. Donors, often states, expect results for their financial investment, and thus the work of peacebuilders is continuously evaluated. The logic of this interaction between the official (donors) and the unofficial (private peacemakers) thus requires a presupposed possibility to pinpoint the results of particular action or intervention. Yet, Brusset, de Coning, and Hughes argue that this does not fit the very logic of conflict. Complex conflicts cannot be approached from a mechanistic perspective. They are not complicated systems like motors of automobiles in which it is possible to recognize causes for errors, and in which it is possible to identify the consequences of the repairing action, but *complex* systems. This means that there are "usually a very large number of programmatic interventions being undertaken simultaneously at different levels, by different professional communities, and with widely ranging timelines," and it is impossible to isolate the causal effects of one particular intervention.[92]

Therefore, conflicts are defined as dynamic and complex systems. Following de Coning, a complex system (like society) is created and "maintained, as a result of the dynamic and non-linear interactions of its elements, based on the information available to them locally, and as a result of their interaction with their environment, as well as from the modulated feedback they receive from the other elements in the system."[93] Complexity as a specific approach is interested in how the elements interact, and how this interaction translates into the system as a whole gaining new capacities that did not exist within the individual elements.

Complex systems are open, non-linear, and self-organizing. They are open systems, as interactions take place across their boundaries, and the boundary

[92] Brusset, de Coning, and Hughes, "Introduction," 4.
[93] Cedric de Coning, "Implications of Complexity for *Peacebuilding* Policies and Practices," in *Complexity Thinking for Peacebuilding Practice and Evaluation*, edited by Emery Brusset, Cedric de Coning, and Bryn Hughes (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 20.

between the inside and the outside is not definite. Non-linearity refers to the argument that the outputs generated by the inputs are asymmetrical and not proportional. Action always has indirect and unintended consequences; thus, complex systems are not predetermined and predictable. The self-organization aspect stems from the ability of complex systems - determined by the cumulative effects of the actions and interactions of the various agents comprising them - to organize, regulate, and maintain themselves without a controlling agent.[94]

These three presumptions have drastic consequences for peacebuilding practice and contest ideas previously seen as self-evident while also generating new possibilities. Ideas and techniques such as the traditional problem-solving approach, rationalistic conflict analysis, and Results-Based Management need to be rethought, as the outcomes of intervention in a complex system are not simple and predictable; rather, the system tends to respond to interventions in multiple, often unanticipated ways. Conflicts are not manageable in rationalistic terms, and it is not possible to indicate what the consequences of a particular action has. Furthermore, it is not even possible to know which actions have a significant influence in the long term. Some small-scale and almost invisible interventions may be crucial in the long term, while at the same time, large-scale, carefully planned international operations may have very little influence. This setting also offers justification for NGO-based, small private peacemakers: "non-linear causality generates asymmetrical relations, which implies that relatively powerless agents can sometimes have a disproportionate effect on the system."[95]

Coping and navigating within complex systems requires a new kind of flexible and dynamic approach. Conflict analysis therefore needs to be an ongoing process of exploration and self-critical analysis, not just a one-off process that takes place prior to the intervention. Second, because of the above-mentioned lack of clear boundaries between the local and the external (the inside and the outside), the intervening third party is automatically and inevitably part of the system. Furthermore, the third party should be aware that in a complex system it is not possible to interfere and have only one effect. Thus "peacebuilders, local and international, have to take responsibility – ethically – for their choices and actions."[96]

The complexity approach comprehends conflict and peace and in a new way and thus radically contests the established forms and practices to promote liberal peace. If complex systems, such as societies, are self-organizing, violent conflict has damaged their ability to self-organize. From this perspective, peacebuilders should aim to consolidate the resilience of the society, and to stimulate and support its capacity to self-organize. The goal is a *self-sustainable peace*. This kind of peace, however, is difficult to define and "codify" by factors

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[94] Ibid., 24-27.
[95] Ibid., 26.
[96] Ibid., 34.

other than the absence of violence, as factors such as good governance and justice are highly contextual.[97] As Brusset, de Coning and Hughes point out, "peace emerges from messy political processes embedded deep within the cultural belief systems of the societies in question."[98] This is in many ways reminiscent of David Roberts' description of "popular peace" as "particular to context and messy in make-up, rather than formulaic, reactive rather than rigid, and better suited to spontaneous contingency, circumstance and complexity than the rehearsed rhetoric and ready rubric of neoliberal universalism."[99] Therefore, approaches that worked in one context can rarely be guaranteed to yield results in another. This underscores the need to understand peacebuilding as a local process, which external third parties can support by helping to restore stability and facilitate social reconstruction.[100]

3.3. From Liberal Peacebuilding to Peace Formation

The complexity of conflicts debate is in many ways related to the perspective of many liberal peace critics. In particular, they share a similar kind of approach to local ownership. At the time of the emergence of the large-scale peacebuilding industry in the mid-1990s, local ownership was repeated in peacebuilders' documents, but in practice there was not much local ownership in the internationally led large-scale peacebuilding projects of the time. The international community set strict frames and goals of development, and peacebuilding support turned into a monitoring and patronizing exercise, in which locals were expected to reach certain conditions before they were allowed to make decisions on their own behalf. These preconditions were attached to the ideal of liberal peace based on the assumption that the promotion of democracy, good governance, the rule of law, and a functioning market economy constitutes the universal norm and guideline for sustainable peace. During the past few years, inclusivity and local ownership have gained new significance in peacebuilding and have become noticed also in the peace mediation context.

Before the end of the Cold War, UN peace operations had no direct mandates to reshape the political sphere of target countries, but over the last two decades, the UN's peace operations have increasingly extended their agenda to reshaping and rebuilding the political sphere under the rubric of "liberal peacebuilding." Despite these ambitious and well-meaning goals, however, many new forms of (liberal) peacebuilding practices have constituted highly invasive

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[97] Brusset, de Coning, and Hughes, "Introduction," 4.
[98] Ibid.
[99] David Roberts, 'Beyond the Metropolis? Popular Peace and Post-conflict Peacebuilding," *Review of International Studies* 5 (2011): 2556.
[100] de Coning, "Implications," 30.

forms of external regulation, as peace researchers and international relations scholars have shown in their critiques. Indeed "the critique of the liberal peace has been with us for almost two decades," having become the prevailing dogma a long time ago.[101] Several studies on (liberal) peacebuilding have concentrated on its illiberal effects, and have argued that missions cannot be neutral as they always reflect the ideological values of peacebuilders and serve certain interests.[102] Peacebuilding has even been interpreted as a new expression of the western civilization mission that aims to promote liberal practices in the developing world. According to Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, "contemporary peacebuilding operations have developed a range of uncomfortable similarities with earlier structures of Western imperialism . . . it is usually the interests, values and priorities of the interveners, not those of the victims, that shape contemporary peace operations."[103] Furthermore, according to Audra Mitchell, "[a]s peace interventions become more closely aligned with the creation and implementation of good governance, an administrative logic, and the meta-narratives of international actors tend to depoliticise the project of peace and reduce it to a problem of management."[104] This emphasis on management tends to transform the peacebuilding approach into one of managing modernization, and because in the prevailing emergency situation it is only the (international) third party that is deemed capable of undertaking such management, liberal peacebuilding tends to construct war as an unending process.

At the beginning, critical studies were primarily interested in theorizing about new forms of global governance legitimated by peacebuilding missions,[105] but the more recent so-called fourth generation of critical peacebuilding studies have brought together an emancipatory motivation and a critical perspective. They have focused on the interaction between local, state and global levels, and have argued that the everyday and local aspects of peace have so far been marginalized. In response to this situation, terms like "popular" or "hybrid peace" have been introduced in order to gain a broader view of peacebuilding and to explore alternatives to "liberal peace."[106]

Roberts notes that local ownership does not emerge without the recognition that there might be alternative forms for a liberal peace, but that at

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101 Oliver P. Richmond and Roger MacGinty, "Where Now for the Critique of the Liberal Peace," *Cooperation and Conflict* 50 (2015): 171.
102 Chandler, *International Statebuilding*; Oliver P. Richmond, "Failed Statebuilding versus Peace Formation," *Cooperation and Conflict* 3 (2013) 378–400.
103 Alex J. Bellamy and Paul Williams, "Introduction: Thinking Anew about Peace Operations," *International Peacekeeping,* 11 (2004): 10.
104 Audra Mitchell, "Quality/Control: International Peace Interventions and 'the Everyday,'" Review of International Studies 4 (2011): 1633.
105 David Chandler, *International Statebuilding: The Rise of Post-Liberal Governance* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 22-42.
106 Christine Cubitt, "Responsible Reconstruction after War: Meeting Local Needs for Building Peace," *Review of International Studies* 1 (2013): 91–112; Richmond, "Failed Statebuilding versus Peace Formation"; Roberts, "Beyond the Metropolis?"; Mitchell, "Quality/Control."

the same time, peace cannot be post-liberal "as long as neoliberal hegemony endures."[107] However, there is the possibility to enhance what Roberts calls "popular peace" that "binds the everyday to legitimacy, ownership and degrees of emancipation."[108] According to him, "[p]opular peace is the outcome of hearing, centring and responding to everyday needs enunciated locally as part of the peacebuilding process, which is then enabled by global actors with congruent interests in stable peace."[109] Popular peace is contingent, as everyday needs can change and are context-dependent, and cannot be defined by outsiders. It requires the engagement of local formal and informal actors.

The recent debate on hybrid peace has concentrated on the question of what Oliver Richmond calls local, subaltern agency, giving rise to calls for localized practices of "peace formation."[110] According to Richmond, "international- and national-level peace agreements, peace processes and progressive reforms have little meaning" if they are not adapted also to the local context, enabling a localized process of "peace formation."[111] Following Richmond, "peace formation" requires the contextualization of the peace process, and peacebuilding should be "reconstructed though local and international agency, and their mediation, to include institutions, rights, needs, culture and custom, from security, political, economic, social and justice perspectives."[112] It is local agency that is essential for any viable, sustainable form of peace. This local authority needs to have legitimacy within the sociopolitical and historical frame of its subjects in a specific networked context. Along similar lines. Eriksson and Kostić note that if we agree that "locally arranged peacemaking processes are always the better alternative," then the third party interventions need to be targeted to empowering local ownership and recognize "the presence of traditional institutions and actors" which could help "overcome societal divides."[113]

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[107] Roberts, "Beyond the Metropolis?" 2542.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 2543.
[110] Oliver P. Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013).
[111] Oliver P. Richmond, *Failed Statebuilding. Intervention, the State, and the Dynamics of Peace Formation* (Cornwall: Yale University Press, 2014),
[112] Oliver P. Richmond, "From Peacebuilding as Resistance to Peacebuilding as Liberation," in *Rethinking Peacebuilding. The Quest for Just Peace in the Middle East and the Western Balkans,* ed. Karin Aggestam and Annika Björkdahl (New York, NY: Routledge 2013), 70.
[113] Eriksson and Kostić, "Rethinking Peacemaking: Peace at All Costs?" 162.

3.4. The Role of the Third Party in Inclusive and Locally Driven Peace Processes

What critical scholarly literature rarely addresses are the practical implications of the criticism of liberal peacebuilding and the emphasis on the local for the outsider third party and indeed for the possibilities of the third party to support local peace formation without the intrusive interventionism characteristic of liberal forms of peacebuilding. Inclusivity is considered essential for transformation towards sustainable peace as a whole, as it is noted that "more inclusive societies are generally more stable, harmonious and developed."[114] Therefore, increasing inclusion in societal processes supports the creation and strengthening of self-sustaining peace or the goal of an "inclusive state," as Pentikäinen writes.[115] Following this logic, all efforts and inputs to increase social inclusion in sociopolitical processes support transformation towards self-sustaining peace. As part of shift towards local ownership and emphasis on everyday needs it is not only the peace process but peace mediation and negotiations too that have to become more inclusive.

Within the framework of classical Cold War era peace mediation "inclusivity" and "local ownership" were not discussed, or they were not seen as important questions at all. On the contrary, mediation was seen in many terms as exclusive action, as the mediation situation was often secret, engaging only a few representatives of political elite. Furthermore, the mediator was mandated by an international organization, or, in the case of superpower mediation, by the superpower itself. Even if in classical mediation the parties to conflict had to come to an agreement, discussion about local ownership was distant to the mediation debate, which was based on the assumption that there are incompatible interests among parties, and that after rational dialogue they would either manage to agree or they would not. If examining the booming mediation field in the 1990s, and still in the early 2000s, it remained rather separate from the peacebuilding debate and it still cherished a similar approach as earlier, despite the new challenges set by asymmetric conflicts.

Regarding peace negotiation or mediated peace processes, inclusivity has traditionally not necessarily been seen as a good thing. In fact, Paffenholz and Ross note that classical mediators have resisted these ideas because "mediators often prefer to focus on ending armed conflict through addressing the immediate grievances between the main belligerent parties. This is often manifested in exclusive negotiations, featuring only the leaderships of the belligerent parties."[116] Mediators have tried to resist inclusion, as a simple negotiation

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[114] Thania Paffenholz and Nicholas Ross, "Inclusive Peace Processes - An Introduction," Development Dialogue (2015): 28.
[115] Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation," 67.
[116] Paffenholz and Ross, "Inclusive Peace Processes," 29.

setting with a limited number of actors can better be managed, and as it is easier achieve quick results in such a situation. In its classical setting, peace negotiation initiated by a mediator was seen to require a limited number of parties to be successful. Within complex asymmetric conflicts, classical mediators have aimed to bring simplicity by limiting the number of negotiating partners to two by in a way consciously denying the challenges of agency in often asymmetric, scattered, and fragmented settings. Following that principle, Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations and Arab League Special Envoy to Syria until 14 May 2014, aimed to create a simplified negotiation setting between rebels and the government in Syria. The Geneva-based negotiations under the leadership of Staffan de Mistura have also predominantly continued the same strategy. The diversity and heterogeneity of the rebel side is thus tried to explain away, and several other actors like the Kurds have been excluded. The policy recently underwent a minor revision, as de Mistura created a Women's Advisory Board (WAB) to increase inclusivity.

The challenge of this kind of mediation strategy was also well seen in the Sri Lankan peace negotiations facilitated by Norway in 2002-2003. The negotiations only took place between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE). Even the mediator, following the conventional mediation guidebook, tried to act as impartially as possible, and to cope with the asymmetry of negotiating partners. Despite the signing of a ceasefire, the peace process failed completely, and violence re-escalated in 2004 after the withdrawal of the LTTE. Finally, the civil war came to its end in May 2009 by the military victory of the government, associated with the massacre of thousands of civilians. Although Norway cannot be blamed for the violent end of the war, its mediation efforts have been criticized for excluding large segments of the Sri Lankan society; several important parties such as the Muslim minority, the non-LTTE Tamili groups, and civil society actors were completely excluded from the peace process.[117] Examples of successful classical bilateral settings in recent years include that in Aceh, mediated by Martti Ahtisaari, and in Colombia, between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). However, even in the latter case, inclusivity and ownership of the peace process have become huge challenges in relation to the acceptance and legitimacy of the peace agreement. All in all, it is clear that questions of inclusivity and local ownership are crucial, also for peace mediation in asymmetric conflicts that cannot be resolved in summits of great powers or in secret high-level meetings.

Inclusion is seen to bring about complexity, uncertainty, and polarization, all of which work against agreements and compromises. Still, it should be kept in mind that "the inclusion of additional actors or groups next to the main conflict parties (such as civil society or political partners) in negotiation processes is

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[117] Kristine Höglund and Isak Svensson, "Mediating between Tigers and Lions: Norwegian Peace Diplomacy in Sri Lanka's Civil War," *Contemporary South Asia* 17 (2009): 175-191.

crucial in making war-to-peace and political transitions more sustainable."[118] Peace negotiations always have a long-term effect, and thus negotiations are a unique opportunity to influence structural transition. It seems obvious that a lack of inclusivity decreases the durability of the peace agreement already because of the simple reason that inclusion increases legitimacy and public support for a peace agreement. Through simplified and exclusive negotiations it is not possible to accommodate to the increased complexity of conflict situations; therefore, more inclusive negotiations are also more effective. However, numerical inclusion is different from sociopolitical inclusion; in inclusive peace processes, it is important to ask what is needed to achieve inclusive outcomes to make political settlements sustainable. Inclusion is also needed in all phases of a peace process.

Emphasizing inclusivity is thus an essential element of a peace process as well as mediation but raises complex challenges and questions that are well identified by Paffenholz and Ross: "Given the opportunities and challenges presented by inclusion in peace processes, it is best approached not as a yes or no binary, but as a question of how to accommodate the increased complexity through effective process design. This involves questions of who should be involved in a process, when is the right moment to include additional actors, and how they should be included (or what form their participation should take)."[119]

Inclusion may refer to broadening up from elite-based exclusive negotiations among war lords to civil society actors. It can also mean turning the focus from the national and elite level to local communities. Furthermore, it can refer to engaging large sociopolitical groups that are otherwise excluded or marginalized. This can refer to large and heterogeneous social groups like women and youth, to slightly more limited groups like traditional and religious actors, or also to radicalized elements of society. From the third party perspective the question is also about practices of peace and models that support the transformation process. Inclusivity can also be about increasing amount local mediators. "More and different types of actors are taking part at national and international levels to resolve conflicts and seek agreement," and the inclusion of civil society organizations as active actors has become a new norm.[120] This has been part of a broader reconceptualization of third parties in mediation and the questioning of such traditional ideals as neutrality and impartiality. Various scholars have casted doubt on the effectiveness of the traditional unbiased outside mediators.[121]

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[118] Paffenholz and Ross, "Inclusive Peace Processes," 28.
[119] Ibid., 30.
[120] Bertram I. Spector, "Citizens Negotiation: Toward a More Inclusive Process," *International Negotiation* 20 (2015): 89-108.
[121] See for example I. William Zartman and Saadia Touval, "International Mediation in the Post-Cold War Era," in *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict,* ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela R Aall (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996); Diana Francis, *People, Peace, and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action* (London: Pluto Press, 2002);

As the ability of outside-impartial mediators has been questioned, a fair number of studies have been written on the role of insider mediators. Many of these draw from Wehr and Lederach's *confianza* model, outlining the characteristics of an insider-partial mediator.[122] The model, which is based on the authors' work in Central America, regards the entry of an insider-partial mediator to a conflict as rooted in the trust and respect they enjoy in their community. Similarly, various other similar studies view the power and leverage of insider mediators as stemming from the credibility, legitimacy, trust, and respect they enjoy in their communities.[123] This is especially the case with authoritative figures, such as religious and traditional leaders, on which the bulk of the literature has focused. In addition, local peacemakers' particular mediation capacity is reinforced by their knowledge and understanding of the local context.[124] With this shift of attitudes in both academia and practice, local ownership, inclusivity, and context-specificity have become the cornerstones of the work of the majority of private organizations in the field – at least on the level of rhetoric – and few would now argue against this logic. How the issue is approached in practice varies; private peacemakers adopt different strategies in engaging local actors in peacemaking, and may focus on different parts of the society. This is also seen in the work of the three Finnish private organizations, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

With attention among both academics and practitioners having shifted to local ownership, context-sensitivity, and the need to transform conflict dynamics "from the inside," increasing emphasis has been placed on local agency: local peacebuilders, peacemakers, and mediators. The main arguments of debates on popular peace, locally driven peace, or peace formation have been that the basis for sustainable and durable peace is constructed at the local level by supporting local transformation and allowing local definitions of peace, and that responding to local everyday needs is possible only be engaging local actors. This kind of philosophy does not deny the significance of state institutions, but it argues that concentrating primarily on supporting the rebuilding of state institutions may be an inefficient and even counterproductive exercise for achieving sustainable peace.[125] While official peace mediation still prioritizes the focus on state

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Isak Svensson, *International Mediation Bias and Peacemaking: Taking Sides in a Civil War* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

[122] Paul Wehr and John Paul Lederach, "Mediating Conflict in Central America," in *Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation*, ed. Jacob Bercovitch (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 55-74.

[123] See for example R. Scott. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), Bercovitch and Kadayifci-Orellana, "Religion and Mediation"; Douglas Johnston and Brian Cox, "Faith-Based Diplomacy and Preventive Engagement," in *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, ed. Douglas Johnston (New York; NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11-30.

[124] S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, "Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Exploring the Role of Religion in Conflict Resolution," in *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, ed. Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremenyuk, and I. William Zartman (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), 264-284.

[125] Roberts, "Beyond the Metropolis?" 2544-5.

institutions, and private peacemakers are adopting a new kind of approach to locally driven peace, there is a danger that the linkage of the differing agenda and objectives of official and private peace diplomacy becomes more challenging.

Jerry McCann's article "Local Ownership – An Imperative for Inclusive Peacebuilding" captures well the niche of a new practitioners' approach for locally owned peace processes and the new ideal for how the international third party – a private peacemaker in particular – should accommodate its approach to enhance locally driven process. Previously, practitioners' literature concentrated on how to make peacebuilding more efficient, whereas McCann notes that "external actors must reconsider how their support can be more effectively integrated into locally owned efforts towards building peace."[126] His approach to existing peacebuilding is critical:

> From the ownership of the marginalised at the grassroots level, to the ownership of the state at the national level, organisations claiming to have designs for building peace consider it routine to identify those that they target as owners of the initiative. The unfortunate reality of 'peacebuilding' as a professional practice is that provided the intervention suggests local ownership, and provided the target groups are of interest to the donors, one can sustain oneself as a peacebuilder without significantly affecting peace.[127]

According to McCann, determining whom to support, and how, poses one of the trickiest challenges facing practitioners. Yet, the starting point of the process for peacebuilders should be to understand the needs of the local people as they themselves understand them. In order to recognize the true capacities and limitations of target groups, the intervening third party has to understand the population, their ideas and identities, and the unique context of the conflict – this, however, requires sufficient time and resources. Ensuring local ownership requires mutual trust between the local actors and the third party, as well as the trust of the local actors in the process itself. Yet, this type of relationship building takes time. Flexibility is essential for the third party, as "it is impossible to predict the precise route a society will take on its way to becoming more peaceful."[128] Flexibility, in turn, requires the ability to respond to unexpected signs and developments, rather than to make accurate predictions. The goal would then be *locally driven* and *locally owned* peacebuilding interventions.

McCann introduces four more practical conclusions for a third party to avoid the mistakes of liberal peacebuilders. First, the new sensitive peacebuilders should, instead of an international mandate, have a local invitation to engage. Second, they should, instead of internationally led projects, search for local partnerships. Third, to create a truly inclusive process, the agenda and goals

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[126] Jerry McCann, "Local Ownership - An Imperative for Inclusive Peacebuilding," *Development Dialogue* no. 63 (2015): 16.
[127] Ibid., 17.
[128] Ibid., 19.

should be locally developed and action-oriented. "Ultimately, interventions need to go beyond analysis and dialogue and lead to actions that spark a population's confidence that locally owned, inclusive processes can lead to changes between themselves and the state."[129] Finally, a peace process should be a trust-enabling process, but "before there can be trust there must be dialogue, and once trust has been activated, even if it is a guarded, limited trust, there must be evidence of the trust to suggest it has begun."[130] For a third party actor, it appears that *dialogue* constitutes the focal point of a new kind of peace process, and thus the boundary between mediation and peacebuilding appears in blurred form.

According to Amanda Feller and Kelly Ryan, a dialogic transformation has already become an important instrument of peacemaking, but to become a truly useful and successful tool it still requires theorists, practitioners, and local and international leaders to form a better and clearer understanding of what is understood as dialogic transformation.[131] Thus, there is a need for new studies – empirical and theoretical – that capture the turn in peacemaking practices but simultaneously also theorize dialogic transformation in relation to the older forms of peace support. This is a task to which this study aims to contribute.

Dialogue has been a notion used more often in recent years by both academics and private peacemakers, and indeed, shifting from mediation to dialogue is a niche in looking for local ownership and inclusivity in peace process. Although the notion of "dialogue" itself is obviously not a novelty, it seems that the term has recently been used with increasing frequency and gained particular new meanings. In general, dialogue just refers to any interaction or discussion between parties. While this is the most general use, it is also possible to recognize a long tradition, with dialogue referring to the Habermasian understanding of dialogue as a communicative act which looks for common understanding of questions. This places the main emphasis of dialogue on resolution; dialogue may then often refer to problem-solving workshops, a common aspect of peacebuilding practice.

However, the rationality of these workshops has recently been criticized, as their failures to transform antagonism have been pointed out. Furthermore, complexity thinking, which has had a great influence on practitioners' thinking in recent years, challenges the rational logic of problem-solving workshops. From a philosophical perspective, there are also alternatives to the Habermasian definition; for example, Bakhtinian dialogue more actively attempts to recognize difference, but does not aim at finding common understanding. According to Richard Sennett, Bakhtin's use of the word "dialogic" refers to "a discussion which does not resolve itself through finding a common ground. Though no

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[129] Ibid., 22.
[130] Ibid., 23.
[131] Amanda Feller and Kelly Ryan, "Definition, Necessity, and Nansen: Efficacy of Dialogue in Peacebuilding," *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 4 (2012): 351-380.

shared agreement may be reached, through the process of exchange people may become more aware of their own views and expand their understanding of one another."[132] Therefore, Bakhtinian dialogic contrasts with Habermasian dialogue and its dialectical approach. Sennett distinguishes Habermasian problem solving – resolution seeking – from the Bakhtinian problem-finding dialogue that emphasizes listening (indeed one of the principal skills of a mediator). While the first emphasizes closure, the latter avoids it and drives the conversation forward. In this study, we discuss how the three Finnish private peacemakers comprehend the terms "dialogue" and "dialogic" in their approaches to peace and conflict transformation, and how this shapes practices of peace in their agenda and in their projects.

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[132] Richard Sennet, *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 9.

4. Private Peacemakers: New Roles, Ideals, and Practices

During the past decade, several private actors, and in particular the three Finnish organizations, have adopted a new understanding of conflict and peace that is very much based on conflict transformation theories and complexity thinking. Although practitioners do not necessarily justify their strategies by referring to particular theories or scholars, it is obvious that terms like transformation and complexity appear in their rhetoric more often than resolution, and dialogue is often emphasized over negotiations. This has obviously had a great influence on their practices, the way they approach and analyze individual conflicts, their understanding of the results of their activity, and in particular their goals and available tools to support sustainable peace in the field. They have not just adopted a new basis for their practices, but also contested several practices of traditional peace mediation but simultaneously they have to cooperate and interact with official peace diplomacy. In this chapter we examine the change in peace diplomacy from the perspective of private peacemakers by asking how they identify themselves as actors and as third parties in peacemaking, how they cope with the official-private dichotomy, what is required from their perspective to support transformation towards sustainable peace, and how it is possible to engage local actors. On a more general level, the question is about contesting the prevailing dogma of liberal peace, but from private peacemakers' perspective, the question is how it is possible to escape the straitjacket of liberal peace and to regenerate their approach and the practices of peaceful intervention.

This chapter is divided into three subchapters. The first concentrates on the self-identification of private peacemakers and on how they manage to find their role and position on the surface of official and private peace diplomacy. The second subchapter focuses on how the understanding of conflict and peace has changed and what implications this has had on the practices of peace as conducted and operationalized by FCA, Felm, and CMI. The changes in the understanding of conflict transformation are discussed with particular emphasis on the ways these concepts are present in CMI's work. The last subchapter discusses principles of inclusivity and local ownership, and dialogue as an inclusive tool for supporting transformation by enhancing the locally driven peace process. Here, the approaches of Felm and FCA especially highlight the way local civil society actors are supported in mediation and dialogue.

4.1. At the Interface between Official and Private Peace Diplomacy

Private peacemakers have been a part of international peace architecture for over two decades, but they are still in many ways subdued in the state-centric world of peace diplomacy. Track 1 diplomacy still belongs almost solely to states and international organizations like the UN. This is often the visible scene of mediation in the media that reports about the Geneva- and Astana-based negotiations in the Syrian case or the Minsk negotiations in the Ukraine case, although in Finland the role of CMI has gained more media attention recently, in particular because of its active role in contributing to the organization of the nationwide Ahtisaari Days. The objective of Ahtisaari Days is to increase public knowledge about conflict resolution and mediation in everyday life as well as in international contexts.[133] The dominating image of a mediation situation is still one of high-level summits or official roundtable negotiations among a few men, even though the broader perspective of peace diplomacy is much more diverse, and roundtable negotiations have in fact become rare.

The dominance of official over private may already have been contested, but it is still a major challenge for private peacemakers. The rules and practices of peacebuilding and mediation have been set at this official level. As outsiders and sometimes marginalized actors in the field of official peace diplomacy, private actors need to search for justification for the significance of their contribution, and either live within the given rules and practices, or try to challenge and renew them. Acting completely beyond the UN-centric world is not a real option, as this would also prevent the ability to be involved in most peace processes.[134] Private peace actors are in many ways entangled with states and international organizations and, notably, a major part of their financing comes from states and international organizations. Therefore, they often find themselves operating in the middle of pressures from various directions; they have to demonstrate their contribution to UN-led processes, justify their efficiency and impact to donors, and find their place among other private actors and coordinate action with them without giving the impression of stepping on their toes. The relationship between official and private sectors is continuously dynamic, challenging, and in particular asymmetric. Thus, in order to be innovative, private actors need to cope within the limits of official peace diplomacy but simultaneously be able to maneuver on its edges, while softly aiming to influence official practices and perceptions. In other words, private organizations may be small in terms of their resources when compared to official

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[133] "Ahtisaari-päivät," accessed April 5, 2017, http://ahtisaaripaiva.fi/
[134] Interview with Eronen, Patokallio, and Rytkönen, January 27, 2017.

actors, but they can be smart players employing soft power to influence the complex international peace architecture.

Multifaceted Mediators

The activity of the private peacemakers is difficult to label exactly either as mediation or peacebuilding or development aid. This is also the case when examining the activity of the three Finnish NGO actors - CMI, Felm, and FCA. Their activity certainly has strong elements of mediation, but calling it that would depend on how we define what "mediation" is. In the most general terms, mediation only refers to the actions of a third party, a mediator, resolving disputes between two or more parties, without defining the actual tools of the third party. Along similar lines, according to the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation, "mediation is a process whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage, or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements."[135] This is still a rather broad and open definition that does not attach mediation only to negotiation situations. Still, it already limits mediation to activity that seeks to develop agreements. Furthermore, the UN guidance differentiates between facilitation, mediation, good governance, and dialogue as different tools available for a third party. If mediation is associated only with solution-seeking (peace) negotiations, with mandated peace processes, and with a certain role in negotiations, the activity of the Finnish organizations can only in a few cases be regarded as mediation. But if mediation is seen as peaceful third-party intervention to support peaceful transformation in a society in the middle of violent conflict by sustaining dialogic interaction among parties to conflict, then most of their activity can be considered mediation.

Private actors currently approach peace mediation from a new flexible angle. The boundaries between mediation, peacebuilding, and development are comprehended as vague and indefinite in their thinking, and therefore values and norms from the peacebuilding and development sectors are transferred to the field of mediation. The difference to peacebuilding then becomes vague, but while the emphasis is on supporting and enhancing dialogic transformation among parties to conflict, it is possible to call the activity mediation, while separating it from for example more development-oriented peacebuilding efforts. However, as mentioned, the distinction is vague, and not necessarily even needed.

If examining the self-image and brand of CMI, Felm, and FCA, there are clear differences. CMI has built up a brand of private peace brokers, and the role of a mediator is a core part of their self-identification as well as public brand.

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[135] United Nations, *United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation* (New York: United Nations, 2012), 4.

This is demonstrated in their famous marketing videos in which Martti Ahtisaari is seen negotiating among Angry Birds and Santa Clauses.[136] Nevertheless, even if for the Finnish public CMI appears almost solely as a peace mediator, in the field it does not necessarily always want to take the role of a mediator; the public role it assumes is very context-based. Still, out of the three organizations examined here, the work of CMI can most conveniently be described as mediation, based on its concrete projects as well as the discourse it has adopted. While CMI was founded as an organization offering mediation and mediation support, Felm and FCA are FBOs with their own background in peace and reconciliation, humanitarian and development work. Mediation and peacebuilding have entered their agenda gradually, as the peace and development sectors have grown more and more intertwined and inseparable. Simultaneously, certain former CMI workers (mainly Kristiina Rintakoski and Antti Pentikäinen, who were already involved with CMI at the time of its establishment) have found leading positions in Felm and FCA, bringing with them experience from their CMI career. Therefore, Felm and FCA's mediator role is more blurred and vague. Felm mainly uses the term peacebuilding instead of mediation in its official language, but on the other hand, it sees its role as part of a broader peacebuilding architecture, and it certainly looks for dialogic tools to support transformation towards peace. However, representatives of Felm are more keen to make a clear distinction between national dialogue and the kind of mediation that follows UN policy. Instead of mediation, Felm talks about supporting the local peace process and ownership of the peace process. In this way, it sees itself as an enabler of local mediation rather than a mediator itself, as mentioned above.[137] Rather than refer to its own work as mediation, it stresses its role in enabling and strengthening the work of local mediators, thus engaging in mediation in a more indirect manner.[138] FCA and the Network similarly have the emphasis on supporting local actors, but they are also comfortable using the term mediation to describe their work.[139] Their work also has to take into account the UN framework, due to the Network's origins being closely linked to the UN Mediation Support Unit and the development of UN mediation guidelines, which has been promoted by the Group of Friends of Mediation co-chaired by Finland and Turkey.

Private actors are continuously justifying their significance and indeed existence in relation to official peace diplomacy of states and international

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[136] CMI, "Peace on Piggy Island! Martti Ahtisaari Negotiates Truce Between Birds and Pigs," Youtube video, 3:01, posted by "Angry Birds," November 9, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9T4GrQV_Vs;
CMI, "Santa Summit," Youtube video, 2:19, posted by "CMIFinland," October 17, 2016,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrNEi7ASLGI
[137] Rintakoski, pers. comm., March 19, 2017.
[138] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016; CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative* (Helsinki: Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, 2015).
[139] Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016; Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects*.

organizations, and thus pinpointing the added value they bring to (and beyond) official diplomacy is a core of self-identification and defining of their agenda. Their work is then justified by their ability to act in places and in times in which the official operatives cannot function. These efforts require the "unofficial nature" of their peace work, as it is possible for private actors to work with groups marginalized or even excluded from the official process. In addition to mediating *among parties official actors cannot mediate among*, private peacemakers emphasize that they are able to *mediate when it is not possible to mediate.* Thus, they can act where official mediation is not possible and gain the parties' acceptance to introduce some mediating elements to the process. They can also act where stakeholders do not want mediation and dialogue processes, at least not those that are internationally supervised. These are cases where there is a clear need for support, but conflict parties or main stakeholders do not, often for political reasons, want to officially acknowledge the need for a dialogue process. The involvement of private actors is also invisible in comparison to a UN-mandated process, and the main stakeholder – usually the hosting state – may then cherish the idea of ownership of the process. Then, private actors can take the role of an adviser, even if the main goal from their perspective is to use the possible entry point to create opportunities to support conflict transformation.[140]

Private actors can take other roles when mediation as a term is too politically loaded for one of several parties, and in that way allow the hosting state to retain the illusion of control and ownership. This has very much been the case in Myanmar and Nepal, where the process is merely seen as national dialogue rather than mediation. In Iraq, the term national dialogue has also been problematic; in this type of sensitive process talk about a national dialogue, a concept that has a set meaning, may be politically too loaded and counterproductive as it can lead to the conflict parties shutting down and refusing to engage. For example, in Iraq CMI is currently supporting the Iraqi government in drafting a National Reconciliation Strategy, which is not operational yet. Even if some form of national dialogue is organized in the future, it would be difficult to pursue such a goal in the currently fragile and sensitive climate, and it is not up to a third party to set this kind of goal.[141]

The unofficial nature of private actors' work is particularly relevant in the early stages of a process and in breaking deadlocks. Private peacemakers can also bring elements of mediation to conflict prevention in situations which official mediation cannot enter. They can become involved in conflicts before the conflicts have been internationally recognized, and thus work more efficiently to prevent escalation. Private actors can also aim to transform relationships that do not yet look conflictual, but have an essential role in the conflict dynamics, and

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[140] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.
[141] Ibid.

in supporting transformation towards sustainable peace. Private actors do not legitimize and delegitimize power structures in the same way official processes do. They can thus act more quietly and invisibly, and cross boundaries that official actors cannot.[142]

Preventive mediation, and working in contexts where the label of mediation is not wanted, is possible for private peacemakers because the footprint of private actors in conflicts is much smoother and much less visible than that of official conflict resolution efforts organized and mandated by international organizations like the UN. When states or international organizations become involved the particular conflict has to already be recognized, and their involvement always has a significant influence on the conflict dynamics. Because of their bureaucratic and intrusive nature, officially mandated, UN-led processes are not very suitable for conflict prevention or mediation efforts before violent conflict breaks out. A UN intervention underlines that a serious conflict is in place; therefore, instead of prevention it may even contribute to escalation, as the parties see violence as the best option to receive recognition.[143] As Zartman points out, "[t]he mediator is seen as a meddler, especially in internal conflict. It works to weaken the government, by implying that it cannot handle its own problems, and to strengthen the rebellion, by giving it recognition and equal standing before the mediator."[144]

How terms are used on an operational level is thus a part of private peacemakers' professional skills, and they feel more comfortable with the fluid use of concepts like mediation or dialogue than official actors. Even more importantly, the same activity is often seen from various angles, and it is not possible to fix the perceptions of parties involved. Therefore, naming something mediation is a political act that has influence on the peace process, and private peacemakers are well aware of this.[145]

Concepts are always politically loaded and context-specific. Calling a certain activity mediation can even be dead serious as it is in the Syrian case, where the local partners of Felm cannot call themselves mediators. In the context of violent civil war, insider mediators may be easily interpreted as traitors; thus it is safer to talk about support for the local community.[146] Furthermore, states may want to emphasize their own ownership of a peace process, and third party mediation may be seen as a form of international intervention, preventing private organizations from entering the process as mediators. In many cases it is easier to find an entry point into a conflict situation by offering some other services rather than mediation, even if the actual service is one of mediation or

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[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] I. William Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts in a Globalized World,"
 International Negotiation 11 (2006): 265. DOI: 10.1163/157180606778968362
[145] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.
[146] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.

facilitation. Vice versa, by offering only mediation services, private organizations would exclude themselves from several potential cases.[147]

Mediation may be too politically loaded in the middle of violent conflict or too intrusive in a post-conflict situation, but it is certainly also problematic in the case of a preventive operation. Even if preventive mediation is a conceptually catchy notion, it is not as appealing from a practical point of view; calling offered services mediation may easily underline the existence of conflict and thus be harmful for soft preventive diplomacy. Thus in Moldova, CMI has offered support in clarifying – in purely legal terms – the position of Gagauzian autonomy, and thus the issues under discussion have been very technical by nature, which has prevented further dramatization of the situation.[148] Still from a broader perspective, it appears that facilitating discussions about Gagauzian autonomy has been managed in a way that prevents the escalation of the potential conflictual situation between the majority and the minority – a situation which would also have potential indirect implications within the broader geopolitical context. This kind of fluid approach is essential to the success of private peacemakers and it enables a new kind of broader approach to peace diplomacy that more easily crosses the formerly sharp boundaries between mediation, peacebuilding and development aid. In this way, such fluidity may open doors for a new approach to peace mediation.

When examined from this more flexible angle, by understanding private peacemakers as multifaceted mediators, the question about the definition of mediation loses its meaning, or indeed turns into a question of whether it is necessary, or to what point it is relevant, to make clear distinctions between mediation, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and dialogue. Conceptual fluidity and flexibility are seemingly characteristic to the new NGO approach. Therefore, the answer should not be looked at from the point of view of theory or distinct conceptual definitions; rather, we should turn the focus to practices of peace when considering the activity and executed peace operations of the Finnish private organizations. It seems that private peacemakers may have at least three different roles in peace processes: offering advisory services, mediation, and the facilitation of dialogue processes. For the Finnish private peacemakers, organizing different types of training and capacity-building activities is an essential part of their work and a recognizable part of almost every operation, but it may also serve as an entry point to a peace process, and to other roles in a peace process. Their role may vary from that of an advisor to a secretariat to a trainer. Even if they do not always act as a mediator or a facilitator, these still appear to be key parts of their identity. It is only rarely that they act as the main mediator for an internationally recognized conflict, as these duties are often reserved for state or international organizations. These roles overlap in actual

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[147] Interview with Brummer, Eronen and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.
[148] Ibid.

operations, as the same organization can enter the same peace process in several roles and offer different services. Furthermore, the same role may be interpreted by in different manners by different actors.

Private actors can more freely choose with whom they work with, and what kind of dialogue they facilitate, while the officially recognized process has its hands tied. These mediation efforts may support the larger, internationally coordinated process (CMI in South Sudan, Felm in Syria, Network in Libya etc.), or they may be separate private platforms for mediation (CMI in Moldova). Private organizations offer their advisory services to various kind of actors: international organizations, states, and local actors.

The Finnish private peacemakers have engaged with several international organizations. For example, CMI has provided consultation to the AU, as the AU has been developing its mediation capacities.149 Felm has cooperated a lot with the European Institute for Peace (EIP).150 FCA's activity and emphasis on religious and traditional peacemakers led to the founding of the Network, to which FCA still offers secretariat services. The Network has particularly contributed to UN-based definitions of mediation; it carries out research and organizes training for UN officials on cooperation between track 1 actors, and religious and traditional peacemakers.151

All three have offered advisory and mediation support to states struggling with violent conflict, recovering from conflict, having the potential for conflict, or where conflict is currently latent. The role of a private actor is then officially to offer technical support. As for FCA's work with states, it has been active in supporting the building of new state structures in Somalia by linking community actors, especially clan leaders, to the official statebuilding process.152 CMI has offered different kinds of advisory services to support the organization of locally driven dialogue processes for example for the Iraqi and Moldovan governments. In Myanmar Felm's activity is based on its acceptance by the host state.

All three organizations also provide support for local actors, and it has become a more and more important dimension of their activity. For Felm, organizing various kinds of workshops and dialogue forums for local civil society actors has been a core part of its Syria Initiative project.153 The same goes for FCA and the Network, which have organized training, dialogue, and strategic

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149 CMI, A*nnual Programme Report 2014* (Helsinki: Crisis Management Initiative, 2014); Ville Brummer and Oskari Eronen, "Hitting Moving Targets – Where Do the Results of Private Actors Contribute?" Paper presented at the International Conference on Mediation, Basel, June 21-23, 2016.
150 Felm, *The Syria Initiative: 2nd Quarterly Report 2016 (*Helsinki: Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, 2016); Felm, The Syria Initiative: *1st Quarterly Report 2016 (*Helsinki: Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, 2016).
151 Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects.*
152 Antti Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation," Rauli Lepistö, "Building a Piece of Peace: Finn Church Aid's Outreach and Reconciliation Project in Somalia," *CMC Finland Peacebuilding and Civilian Crisis Management Studies* 4 (2013).
153 Felm, *The Syria Initiative: 2nd Quarterly Report 2016;* Felm, The Syria Initiative: *1st Quarterly Report 2016.*

planning workshops for local religious and traditional actors and other civil society peacemakers, in projects in for example Somalia, Libya, Kenya, and various parts of Asia.[154] CMI does not place a similar level of emphasis on working with grassroots civil organizations, but like the other organizations, it also supports local actors, for example in order to gain knowledge about the situation on the ground, to explore how local peacemakers view their own participation, to plan strategic involvement in projects, and to map out possibilities for track 1 cooperation.[155]

The organization of dialogue processes, including both National Dialogues (NDs) and informal dialogues, has gained increasing significance in the private organizations' niche. Dialogues have replaced much of mediation in their activity, and while they overlap with various consulting activities, they can be regarded as a separate category. In dialogue processes the nodal point is to enhance communicative interaction and trust among various stakeholders to conflict. Parties of dialogues vary, as does their inclusivity. NDs are broad inclusive processes gathering together as many stakeholders within state borders as possible. Informal dialogues, on the contrary, are often based on selective inclusion and can engage only a few stakeholders. Dialogues hold elements of mediation, but the distinction between mediation and dialogue is more obscure in the case of informal dialogues.

Felm has concentrated on the development of ND processes in general, but it has been particularly active in Myanmar and Yemen. In Syria the ND is still a matter of distant future, and thus the dialogue processes launched by the private organizations so far are more informal and conducted among civil society representatives. The Network and FCA, for their part, facilitate intra- and interreligious dialogue in different contexts, including CAR, and South- and Southeast Asia. They also support intertribal and interclan dialogue in countries such as Somalia and Libya. These projects do not directly attempt to support a particular official-track process, but to de-escalate inter- or intracommunal violence. Instead of broad dialogue platforms with civil society actors CMI has concentrated on working primarily with carefully selected members of larger groups, and on engaging in informal, often discrete dialogue forums with these actors, for example in Ukraine.

[154] Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects.*
[155] CMI, *Annual Programme Report 2014*; CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative: Annual Report 2015* (Helsinki: Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, 2015); Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects.*

Complex Peace Architecture and Smart Private Actors: From Competition towards Complementarity

The current peace architecture is becoming extremely complex, but it simultaneously lacks efficient and well-designed channels to coordinate the different levels and tracks of peace processes. Indeed, there is in a way a double complexity that concerns not only the conflict setting itself but also the whole peace architecture with tens of international and local, official and private actors, and various donors with their interests. Coordination and management of that complexity has become difficult, but simultaneously, creating and enhancing vertical and horizontal communication channels among various actors is considered essential. In particular, it is seen that the state- and IO-centric official level has stagnated with its old practices; bottom-up communication is difficult, and too often there is a gap between the official-level process and other local peace processes. Furthermore, the complexity of the peacemaking setting is not always understood by donors, which are often states, and thus, private actors have to balance between traditional perceptions, and more daring and unconventional approaches to peace processes.

Mandates are the single most important practice through which official state-based diplomacy has controlled peace processes and preserved the hegemony of official diplomacy over private. Mandates have simultaneously been legal regulations of the agency and goals of a particular process, but can also be regarded as straitjackets that aim to control all initiatives and actors. As part of their effort to find new ways to secure their own survival and justify their significance, private actors have contested the omnipresence of mandates. This has had significant practical consequences for private actors' efforts to contribute to the renewal of practices of peacemaking, and these new practices in many ways challenge the guidelines of classical peace mediation.

The practical monopoly of the UN as a mandating power to peace processes has created competitive markets among private peace actors. When the number of peace mediation cases started to grow in the mid-1990s, mandates for whole operations have mainly been given by the UN, or in some cases by certain regional organizations like the AU. The chief mediator with the UN mandate, then, may have recruited and thus sub-mandated several private peace actors. Besides the UN-mandated cases, there have also been mediation cases mandated by warring parties themselves (for example in Sri Lanka), but in these cases, the operation has often been more limited, and the position of the mediator weaker. According to classical guidelines, the mandate sets the goals and agenda, and it is not possible to participate in a peace process without it.[156]

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[156] Svensson and Wallensteen, *The Go-Between*; Lehti and Saarinen, "Mediating Asymmetric Conflicts."

The dominance of mandates has acted like a monopoly in a market situation – it has remarkably limited the available cases and actors in peace processes. Thus, competition has naturally become tough among private peacemakers, as the survival and success of a particular organization depends on the peace process that the organization has accepted and received a mandate for.[157] It can be argued that in normal UN-led peace operations the mandate acts as an obstacle for efficient horizontal as well as vertical cooperation. Since the power to mandate lies with the official side in a mandate-centric peace architecture, private actors can only compete over mandates. This setting not only restricts the availability of peace processes, but also significantly limits the possible actors by predetermining the participants and goals of peace processes. Thus, mandates have acted as a stagnating and limiting force for innovation and rethinking.

The competition among private actors, and also among states, is a challenging aspect of complexity. Competition of access to peace processes has been serious for private actors, bu it has also set major challenges for multiparty mediation. Organizations often see other organizations more as competitors than potential partners. The difference is remarkable; potential partners share information and engage in open dialogue, while competitors hide information from each other, as this information may be crucial for strengthening one's own institution's position. This means that successes lead to organizations guarding their achieved positions rather than looking for partnerships.[158] "Competing multiple third parties can undercut each other" in a way that is harmful for the overall peace process, which certainly does not benefit from organizations hiding information and avoiding communication.[159]

The existence of competition is also experienced by the three Finnish organizations, and is regarded as a challenge for the overall peace architecture in multiparty mediation settings. In some areas competition has been characteristic to the whole process, whereas in some others it has been milder. In Myanmar, in particular, the situation has been highly chaotic. Finnish Special Envoy in Peace Mediation Kimmo Kiljunen recalls that as he entered the process, he found himself first having to mediate among these private peace actors.[160] There were far too many international actors and an absence of coordination. The hard competition among private peacemakers largely stemmed from the fact that the financing of a particular organization's project was based on how they could indicate the specific results of their action. Thus, the lack of coordination

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[157] Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016.
[158] Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016; interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
[159] Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, "The Shifting Sands of Peacemaking," 364.
[160] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016; Kimmo Kiljunen, presentation at the *Rethinking Dialogue in Conflict Resolution* seminar organized by the Centre for Resolution of International Conflicts and TAPRI, Copenhagen, January 20, 2015.

combined with pressure from donors created a situation in which hiding information and tripping others became normal.

Moreover, competition is not exclusive to private organizations, but is also found among states; especially small states aiming to develop their profile as peace mediators compete with each other in a way that also influences the private sector. This trend is also recognizable within the Nordic group, as Norway, in particular, has not always looked favorably upon Finnish efforts to gain more visibility in the international peace mediation field. In Myanmar, for example, Norway tried for some time to block Finnish membership in the coordination group. In the end, Finnish actors entering as coordinators and mediators among international third parties was a rather peculiar entry point to the Myanmar peace process, yet very much needed.[161]

Competition is not completely absent among the three Finnish organizations, but even if there has appeared a certain reluctance to share information, cooperation and interaction have significantly increased during the past few years. The three organizations do not have common and shared operations, and have not planned one, but they know each other on a personal level and are aware of where the other organizations are active. They have also had jointly planned brainstorming activity around workshops, seminars, and conferences. One of the most notable joint endeavors has been organizing three dialogue conferences with the MFA (including the upcoming conference in April, 2017).

In recent years, competition in multiparty settings has, at least in some cases, become less harsh; for example, in the case of Syria, private peacemakers have managed to cooperate more smoothly than previously, even if there are over a hundred actors involved in various processes. The continuing violent conflict and the enormous challenges have prevented the emergence of a similar kind of situation as that in Myanmar. Even powerful states and international organizations have reluctantly accepted that a single mediator bearing responsibility for the whole process has worked in the Syrian context that acceptance of "multiparty mediation and collective conflict management will be features of most future peace processes."[162] Even if multiparty mediation increases complexity in peacemaking, "it can help build the momentum required to help push peace negotiations to settlement and provide leverage and other key assets to a peace process."[163]

Accepting multiparty mediation sets new challenges for planning, operational engagement, and communication. One obvious challenge is that in the end, it is impossible to avoid competition altogether. In the Syria Initiative (SI), currently the largest peace project funded by the MFA, Felm has, in

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[161] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
[162] Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, "The Shifting Sands of Peacemaking," 382.
[163] Ibid., 383.

collaboration with its Lebanese partner CSI, managed to step by step become a significant actor among international private peacemakers. Despite their strengthening role, they have not struggled with competitive attitudes in the Syrian context, and have managed to successfully cooperate with various respected international private actors. The explanation for the easiness of cooperation among the different actors is seemingly that Felm has taken a rather invisible role in the Syria process, and adopted a low profile that does not challenge the positions of other actors.[164]

Competition appears also in Syria to be mainly about roles in the mediation process, and neither Felm nor its local partner CSI have aimed to take the role of the chief mediator, or in practice a mediator at all, even if their work has elements of mediation. Instead, they have acted behind the scenes. The SI has been very active in several sectors, and has actively sought partners and built networks. Its strategy has been based on working with and through partners, and this kind of network model requires complete openness and transparency. Instead of emphasizing ownership of ideas and knowledge, its work is based on open use of all ideas, as loaning ideas supports peace and is a tool to avoid competition and be successful in networking. Furthermore, according to Felm, a transparent architecture of a peace process prevents competition among private peacemakers.[165] Therefore, it has been very successful in the construction of cooperative networks with several major private organizations as well as with the EIP. Facilitators from the SI have recently also been involved in the Geneva process as facilitators for the WAB, which is attached to Syrian negotiations. Indeed, as in any markets, the ability to cooperate smoothly in multiparty mediation is based on the adopted roles. The conflictual situation among organizations takes place more easily if a particular organization aspires a more visible role in the process, and others feel that their position is challenged. Furthermore, at the operational level, when relationships and the division of labor between different organizations have been managed in coordination, cooperation has worked well and effectively. When it comes to cooperation during actual operations, respondents argue that in most cases there is no longer competition, as the roles of each participating organization are set, making it easier to concentrate on the actual work.

This type of idea of coordination among different actors is also the premise on which the Network was established. Its general objective is to support the positive role of religious and traditional actors in mediation and peacebuilding through collaborative action, which benefits from the expertise of different civil society organizations. International organizations specifying on certain projects and initiatives, and especially local organizations that have

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[164] Felm, *The Syria Initiative: 2nd Quarterly Report 2016*; The Syria Initiative: *1st Quarterly Report 2016*; interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
[165] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.

worked in their areas for a long time, often have in-depth knowledge and experience about the local context, and unique access and connections to the local population.[166] This can be an invaluable asset in ensuring the effectiveness of the peace efforts of other actors, especially if they are fairly new to the area.

The tough competition among NGO actors does not only stem from too many actors being involved in the field, but also from the limited availability of mandates. The competition over mandates among private peacemakers has also significantly pushed for the emergence of a new approach, and unofficial peace diplomacy has become more of a powerhouse of change rather than its obstacle, even though there remain considerable challenges concerning coordination and cooperation of different levels and tracks. In order to break out of this dilemma, private peacemakers have in many cases started to ignore mandates. In other words, for private peacemakers, the mandate is no longer as dominant and determining an element as it used to be, and attitudes towards it have become more practical and flexible.[167] In some cases a mandate is needed, and in other cases it is not. Instead of a mandate, private peacemakers now search for possible *entry points* to a particular peace process or conflict situation.[168] A mandate is one, but no longer the only way to gain this entry point. Thus, a mandate from an international organization or local government is not required to enter into a process anymore, as it has ceased to be seen as a document setting the whole agenda and goals of a project.

An entry point is not only to be found by a third party alone, but it always has to be based on *invitation* from a local actor. The inviting party can be a local NGO or other local actor instead of a state or other official authoritative agent.[169] A classical mandate given by an international organization or the conflict parties themselves is always a binding legal document that sets strict and non-negotiable frames for a mediator. Invitation, on the other hand, gives the third party more freedom and flexibility to define the goals and agenda of the process, and to update and refocus them throughout the process when changing conflict dynamics require it. As respondents argue, current conflicts are complex and unpredictable, and thus practices of peace have to be more flexible and adaptive than the previous mandate-centric system could be. For example, as CMI points out, even if the situation in Yemen has drastically changed since it first entered an ND process, CMI may continue to cooperate with some of their old local partners also within the new context of violent conflict, as the partnerships are not defined and limited by mandates.[170]

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[166] Interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016; interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.
[169] Interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.
[170] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.

Despite criticism towards official UN-led peace processes as inefficient and stagnated, all private actors need to position themselves into official processes in one way or another. It is often mentioned how the UN's involvement in peace processes makes them messier and rarely leads to true transformation or solutions. The UN is seen more as a bull in a china shop. This frustration towards UN-led peace operations is the overwhelming push towards seeking new approaches and practices, but private peacemakers are simultaneously aware that they cannot completely turn their back to the UN and state-based peace diplomacy, as they depend on and are attached to it in many ways. Private peacemakers then need to work within the framework of the UN-led peace process if they want to be involved and contribute to peace efforts in major conflicts. Operating completely outside of the official system is not an option. Rather than distance and exclude themselves from official actors, organizations must engage in dialogue with these actors, and try to influence their views and cooperate with them if possible.[171] This is particularly important if the actors are powerful states or organizations such as the UN, whose involvement in and influence on peace processes cannot be ignored. The ability to maneuver on the edge of official peace diplomacy while being part of it and simultaneously acting somewhere beyond it - perhaps in between the official and the informal - requires smart, multifaceted actors that are flexible with policies and approaches. These private actors may not have power based on their official position, but by acting in a smart way they may be able to reshape the perceptions and practices of official peace diplomacy. In this regard the three Finnish private actors have chosen different approaches and have positioned their agency in slightly different ways in relation to the complex international peace architecture.

As for international organizations - primarily the UN - each of the private organizations has to evaluate their relationship to them while remaining critical of their shortcomings. The Network's activities, in particular, are strongly linked to the need to reform the UN's approach to mediation due its close links to the UN, stemming from its origin and maintained by its New York office. It recognizes its own role in developing tools for mediation, with a strong focus on raising awareness about the role of religious and traditional actors in the UN framework.[172] From the perspective of liberal peace and western modernity, the inclusion of religious and traditional actors has been seen as irrelevant and even counterproductive to achieving development goals and liberal forms of peace. However, the core principle of FCA and the Network is that peace processes "need to build legitimacy before entering into dialogue about how to establish or reform institutions."[173] In many weak and collapsed states, only traditional tribal

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[171] Interview with Eronen, Patokallio, and Rytkönen, January 27, 2016
[172] Network, *Project Status of the Network Projects*.
[173] Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation," 2.

or religious structures may have legitimation from the local perspective, while state structures have ceased to exist. Thus engaging and working through these structures is essential for building inclusive peace processes, and indeed essential if the goal is to prevent radicalization by engaging radicalized elements back into society, as building up official institutions for this purpose takes too long.[174] In 2012, FCA's attempts to promote the inclusion of tribal elders in Somalia's peace process since 2007 finally led to the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) accepting the principle.[175] Even after that, however, the UN Security Council - mainly at the initiative of the US - aimed to "take a shortcut."[176] Eventually, because of local resistance, a major breakthrough was achieved by alliances of Somali elders. "The Somalia case inspired the UN Mediation Support Unit (MSU) to consider enlarging the UN's toolbox to include working with traditional and religious actors," as Pentkäinen evaluates the notable influence of FCA's Somalia work.[177]

Felm too finds it crucial to contribute to UN-led processes but its approach is more traditional, as it operates mainly in multiparty mediation settings. Felm regards itself as a support actor whose role - particularly in the SI- is to feed track 2 and 3 dialogue processes into track 1 level, or to link the bottom-up process to the UN-led Geneva talks, which have remained very much internationally led with little Syrian ownership. Thus, on the one hand, Felm identifies and acts within the strict frames of UN-led multiparty mediation complexity, but on the other hand, it is worried about its inefficiency and criticizes the poor coordination and the inability of track 1 level to listen local voices.[178]

According to Felm's representatives, coordination between different tracks and actors is rarely straightforward; there is no institutionalized channel for linking civil society dialogue processes to the official process, and it takes a great deal of time and effort to find individuals, connections, and channels through which processes at different tracks can be connected. Therefore, it is all the more challenging for private organizations to link their work to the official peace process if UN representatives do not take into account their contributions, and design processes to make better coordination possible - or if they do not even want private actors to become involved. For increasing efficiency in multiparty mediation setting, the existing complex architecture of peace processes should become more visible according to Felm's viewpoint. This visibility and awareness of links between actors would make communication easier and would in particular allow bottom-up communication. On the other

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[174] Ibid.; interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016;
[175] Rauli S. Lepistö, Rachel M. Gisselquist, and Jussi Ojala, "'Embedded' assistance: Finn Church Aid's Secondment in Somalia," WIDER Working Paper 2015/037; Lepistö, "Building a Piece of Peace."
[176] Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation," 3.
[177] Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation," 3.
[178] Cf. Crocker, Hampson, and Aaal, "The Shifting Sands of Peacemaking," 382-3. According to the authors, a major challenge of multiparty mediation is the lack of administrative support, resources, and political back-up.

hand, every connection cannot be visible, as the trust and credibility of a private actor on the local level may be based on it not being seen as a representative of the official UN-led process. From this perspective, the question of a visible architectural plan is not so much about joint goal and agenda setting, but about a communicative network that would make it possible to link the various scales of the peace process and indeed guarantee that NGO-based projects in more localized contexts are meaningful from the perspective of the whole process.[179] All in all, this approach is not radically new and resonates well with for example Strimling's vision of increased cooperation between official and private peace diplomacy.[180] Yet, these issues demonstrate the extent to which communication among official and private actors, also those on the local level, is still a notable challenge.

Comparing the three Finnish private peace actors, CMI's approach is again different and it acts more often as an independent actor beyond the large UN-led peace processes. However, it is also in many cases entangled with UN-led processes. After all, it is noted that the organizations do not choose where they act based on whether there is a UN process in place.[181] Nonetheless, the work and approaches of all three Finnish private actors largely depend on the potential existence of track 1 peace processes, even if they may have been positioned differently in relation to the official process. In some rare cases, they are active in areas with no official process and actors. CMI sees itself as working in and between tracks, acting in a complementary role, feeding substance to the peace process, sometimes from outside of the formal sphere. This position can also be used in cases of deadlock in the official process, when the unofficial sphere can offer new alternatives.[182] This kind of approach is clearly seen in the case of Iraq, which CMI has entered by invitation of the Iraqi government to give support in the drafting of the National Reconciliation Strategy. In Ukraine, CMI acts from the broadly acknowledged observation that the official process is less than perfect and thus it requires complementary supporting intervention. It is active in building channels of communication that can complement the work of the official Minsk process. Furthermore, CMI supports more effective Ukrainian engagement in the Minsk process through capacity building and by supporting the Ukrainian internal dialogue process.[183]

Yet, sometimes the private actors' cooperation with the official actors may appear problematic. A good example of possible tension and misunderstanding with the official process is CMI's South Sudan project, which approaches the conflict through the issue of intra-SPLM dialogue and aims in that way to also contribute to the whole process. The objective of the so-called Arusha

[179] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
[180] Strimling, "Stepping Out of the Tracks," 103.
[181] Patokallio, pers. comm., March 13, 2017.
[182] CMI, *Annual Programme Report 2014*, 10.
[183] Ville Brummer and Mikko Patokallio, pers. comm. March 23, 2017.

negotiations was to engage with the conflict parties within the leading SPLM party, as according to CMI's analysis, the conflict within the party was one of the key reasons for the crisis. Thus intra-party dialogue was considered an important way to resolve the overall crisis. The misunderstanding was caused by the intra-SPLM dialogue organized by CMI being interpreted by the chief mediator as setting up a peace process in competition to theirs, even though the goal of CMI was indeed to support that process. This case shows how important the perceptions of the other actors in the field can be, and how strategically important it is to communicate with the other actors involved in operations so that these kind of misinterpretations between private endeavors and officially mandated processes are avoided.[184] At the same time, the role of private peacemakers again becomes particularly relevant in these types of cases, as this type of intra-party mediation can be highly problematic for official actors, who can easily be seen as promoting the power of one political group.

In the case of FCA, its cooperation with the Eritrean government in its local project has raised questions among some Finnish officials - still, it stresses that in order to promote long-term change, it may be necessary to work with governments whose actions one does not agree with.[185] If the other options are either to do nothing or to work with anti-government forces, with good intentions possibly resulting in years or decades of chaos, violence, and a destabilizing power vacuum, attempting to promote development and human rights in collaboration with the government is seen as the best alternative. This is connected to the – often also donor-required – Human Rights-Based Approach followed by many private organizations including CMI, FCA, and Felm.[186] The rights-based approach distinguishes between rights holders and duty bearers; the former has to be empowered and the latter's capacity built. According to this approach, it is not enough to strengthen the rights holders alone, but also to help governments fulfill their obligations to rights holders, while paying attention to the unjust ways in which power is distributed.

In recent years, as noted by representatives of CMI and FCA, the space of maneuvering has become more limited, as the power-political rationale has become dominant. It seems that liberal internationalism has been contested from several angles, and states are less willing to invest in soft forms of peace diplomacy. Syria is a good example of intrastate conflict that has entangled in great power struggles among the USA, Turkey, Russia, Iran, and Saudi-Arabia in a complex way, with alliances and power interests in dynamic change. Powers like Russia and Iran also have interests in becoming involved in local-level

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[184] Eronen presentation at TAPRI, April 28, 2016; Patokallio, pers. comm., March 13, 2017.
[185] Interview with Eronen, Patokallio, and Rytkönen, January 27, 2017. + Pekka Haavisto
[186] CMI, *Annual Programme Report 2014*; FCA *Global Strategy 2017 onwards*, accessed February 2, 2017, https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/FCA_Strategy_English_2017_onwards.pdf?x80383; Felm *Strategy 2010-2015*, accessed February 2, 2017, http://www.suomenlahetysseura.fi/ls_en/?_EVIA_WYSIWYG_FILE=12341

negotiations, and thus partly rule out international private actors. In this kind of setting, it is more demanding for NGO actors to find entry points, their own space of action, and indeed funding. One option could be turning more towards private funding, but working with private multinational companies also raises new kinds of ethical questions.[187]

The Finnish Way: Cooperative Interaction between Official and Private Actors

The role and position of the private peacemakers in relation to official diplomacy are usually examined within the frame of peace operations. The focus has been on how the contribution of private actors complements official peace diplomacy, and to what extent their actions are integrated.[188] The interaction among official and private actors, however, is also significant when the official side does not take the role of the main mediator, but rather that of the donor. Private actors receive a major part of their funding from states, and the roles of the donor as a subscriber and the private actor as a service provider are in many ways crucial for the implementation of operations. This relationship may set considerable limits for planning and design. The organizations may according to their own new ideal decide what they want to do and where, and stress that designing projects and applying for funding is much easier once the organization has already formed a clear plan for a project.[189] Still, private organizations then usually have to convince funders of the need for a particular project before initiating a project, demonstrate their impacts in the middle of it, and indicate the achieved outcomes and results at the end of the project. This all sets clear frames for their freedom of action.

The context in which the work of the three private organizations analyzed here takes place is fairly unique in the sense that a great deal of their funding comes from the Finnish government. In 2015, CMI received 65 % of its funding from the state, with the rest coming from Finnish and international foundations (16 %), other governments (11 %), other partners, including corporate partners and private individuals (5 %), and the EU (3 %).[190] Felm received approximately 27 % of its funding from the MFA in 2015, with parishes being its largest funders (30 %), and the rest coming from other sources, such a Christian organizations and private individuals.[191] During the same year, FCA received the majority of its funding (approximately 33 %) from the Finnish government, with 27 % coming

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[187] Interview with Eronen, Patokallio, and Rytkönen, January 27, 2016.
[188] Strimling, "Stepping Out of the Tracks."
[189] Interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.
[190] "Funding", CMI 2017, accessed February 7, 2017, http://cmi.fi/
[191] Felm, *Annual Report 2015*, accessed August 3, 2016,
http://www.suomenlahetysseura.fi/ls_en/www/lahetysseura/home/about_felm/

from private donations, 22 % from international funding, 18 % from parishes and the Ecclesiastical Board.[192] The financial cuts made by the government in 2015 have affected all three organizations, even though some of their mediation work prioritized by the MFA was spared from great damage. Nevertheless, this illustrates the extent to which the private organizations are vulnerable to the policies of the government in this type of partnership.

The relationship between private organizations and states, and between donors and private peacemakers, may hold tensions and challenges, as argued above. However, the relationship can also be collaborative and dialogic, as the Finnish case proves, with both the MFA and private organizations as beneficiaries. In Finland, the relationship between the three organizations and the state extends beyond that of a funder and recipient. It is mutually beneficial and built on a relatively long tradition of state-civil society cooperation. In addition to the private organizations lobbying the MFA and the MFA financing their activities, the parties engage in a variety of collaborative activities, which may include exchange of information, ideas, and contacts, thematic or country-specific briefings and discussions, as well as a range of fairly informal interaction. The extent and depth of collaboration, however, often boils down to the views and actions of individual professionals, and the relations between them. Therefore, it is also affected by factors such as the fast rotation of professionals. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the cooperation between the MFA and the private peacemakers constitutes a sustained partnership, which is supported by the existing structures and practices of collaboration that have developed during the past couple of decades.

Since the MFA adopted (peace) mediation as one of its foreign policy priorities, it has seemingly recognized its own financial as well as professional limits as an acting peacemaker. The MFA policy has mainly concentrated on enhancing the so-called Friends of Mediation networks first within the UN, and more recently in the OSCE and the EU. It has had two special envoys for mediation (Kimmo Kiljunen and Pekka Haavisto) that have taken active roles in certain areas, such as the Horn of Africa. Still, a major part of the MFA's investment in mediation and peacemaking in the field has taken place through the three NGO actors. The idea has been that the work of the private organizations can increase the MFA's international mediation profile, while the MFA can support the organizations' visibility in intergovernmental and international platforms.[193] The private organizations can act out the MFA's mediation policies in practice, providing a highly efficient and cost-effective way of operation. Their expertise and access to the grassroots population and a variety of different actors is valuable to the MFA, while the MFA can in turn help

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[192] FCA, *Annual Report 2015*, accessed February 7, 2017, https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/KUA_ar_English_final.pdf?x80383
[193] Interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.

link them to official processes and provide up-to-date information on such processes.

The interests and priorities of the MFA and the three organizations then often go hand in hand with both influencing the other - or at least they are rarely in outright conflict. This does not mean that they always share the same ideals about mediation – indeed, the MFA's understanding is more traditional than that of private peacemakers. Still, it is clear that private actors have managed to bring parts of their way of understanding conflicts to the MFA, as the MFA has for example adopted support for religious and traditional peacemakers to its agenda, and as the largest peace operation funded by the MFA is Felm's SI project, whose main focus is to support local transformation and to strengthen bottom-up communication. All in all, the MFA has been willing to fund mediation projects with an emphasis on transformation and local inclusion instead of traditional mediation projects. Furthermore, the MFA has also supported the broader development of national and informal dialogue as a tool for peacemaking. A close relationship may appear problematic and raise questions about the independence of non-governmental actors in other contexts, but in the Finnish context this is seemingly not the case. All of the private actors emphasize that they do not represent the Finnish state, even if they are consciously Finnish actors. Indeed, the fact that they are Finnish may open doors due to the lack of colonial burdens, and due to other qualities perceived as positive in the international arena.

A close relationship with private actors is the cornerstone of Finnish mediation and has significant similarities to the Norwegian model. Despite these similarities, there are also major differences with the Norwegian and the Finnish models – also in financial terms, as Norway invests significantly greater amounts in mediation. Finland has not assumed the kind of state mediator role that Norway has played in several conflicts, and in which it has invested a great deal financially. It can be argued that Finland still lacks the capacity to take on such a role, making it more sensible to focus on creating alternative mediation strategies.[194] Collaboration with private actors has then had a central role in Finland's "key project [which] concerns the development of a normative and institutional basis for mediation in international organizations."[195]

In the Norwegian model that was taking its shape already after the Oslo process in the 1990s, the state, private, mainly NGO actors, and the research field were in a close relationship, which granted a small country like Norway capacity and expertise in various areas around the globe, but also flexibility in planning and action. This close contact between the actors and the wide range of specific expertise for planning and implementation that it offered enabled the Norwegian

[194] Piiparinen and Aaltola, "Peace Mediation as a Reflection of Finnish Foreign Policy."
[195] "Mediation," MFA, accessed February 20, 2017,
http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=49301&contentlan=2&culture=fi-FI

Foreign Ministry's smooth engagement in various operations.[196] While such civil society collaboration is considered a key pillar of both Finnish and Norwegian diplomacy, there are certain differences in how this has been executed in the two countries. Norway's primary NGO partners in its peace efforts have been the five major organizations Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and Save the Children Norway. These organizations have contributed to state-led mediation in countries such as Sri Lanka in a way quite similar to Finnish experiences, through the private organizations' local experience and expertise, and the personal relationships between NGO and government representatives.[197] In this way, they have provided access and entry points for Norway to engage in conflicts as a state mediator. The Norwegian private organizations largely focus on development and humanitarian assistance, and the interlinkage of development, peace, and security is closely present in their cooperation with the Norwegian state in mediation. In this way, they share similarities with FCA and Felm, while their differences to CMI are greater.

It appears, however, that the Norwegian private organizations have not adopted mediation as a central part of their own work in the way that is more characteristic to the Finnish private organizations. Their role seems to revolve more around supporting the mediation efforts of state rather than prioritizing it in their own work. It can be speculated whether this stems from the traditionally prominent state mediator role of the Norwegian state, the cooperation between the government and the private sector favoring different types of private initiatives, a different conceptualization of mediation among the Norwegian private organizations, or some other factors. In any case, the strategies and fields that private actors in Norway focus on are different from those of their Finnish counterparts. It was also noted by the interviewees that despite Norway's high mediation profile and the features of the Norwegian model, it does not have a similar set of private peacemakers.[198]

If compared to the many non-Nordic cases, it was argued by some practitioners that there is one notable difference in approach. Several states, including great powers, fund private actors and cooperate with them. For example, the Carter Center closely cooperates with the U.S. government but the limits of cooperation are very much set by U.S. political goals. Private actors are then used to support these political goals and their funding is thus entangled with the political objectives of the donating state. In Finland, according to the private actors, the MFA does not similarly impose political objectives, and it seems that the overall objective is to enhance peace mediation in general, with

196 Lehti and Saarinen, "Mediating Asymmetric Conflicts"
197 Ann Kelleher and James Larry Taulbee, "Bridging the Gap: Building Peace Norwegian Style," *Peace & Change* 31 (2006): 479-505. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-0130.2006.00388.x
198 Interview with Eronen, Patokallio, and Rytkönen, January 27, 2016.

particular goals linked in most cases to specific principles such as the promotion of women's participation in peace processes.[199]

The "Finnish model" is in certain ways a unique model and example of cooperative interaction between the official and the private. Although the MFA has not attempted brand this cooperation as a specific Finnish model, certain particular features can be detected in the way the partnership between the MFA and the private actors is constructed. Private actors certainly benefit from it, as it gives them considerable freedom to be innovative. At the same time, the MFA also benefits, as investing in new types of peace projects can be regarded as risk investment with a low risk, and with remarkably lower costs than acting through official diplomatic channels. Through funded projects, the MFA is well informed about for example Syrian and Ukrainian developments. Furthermore, with several strong state actors in the field it is easier to find a role through the private sector. In the best case, the innovative projects of private peacemakers can contribute to a major breakthrough and increase the Finnish reputation. In the worst case, the risk of failure is faced by the private actor rather than the MFA.

4.2. Revolution of the Practice of Peace

Reassessments of the role of private peacemakers have coincided with the re-evaluation of the whole peace process from a critical and innovative perspective. The revision of rules and practices has been connected to a more profound rethinking of the meanings of conflict, peace, and peace processes. The established understanding of these core concepts of conflict resolution has been opened to new interpretations, and liberal peace norms have been fundamentally contested. Furthermore, rethinking the fundamental basis of peace processes and recognizing the complexity and unpredictability of current conflicts has contributed to the emergence of new practices of peace that are more flexible and adaptive than the previous mandate-centric practices could be.

From Resolution to Transformation

Private peacemakers now call for new approaches better suited to the complexity of conflicts. In private peaceamaking organizations, peace processes are no longer comprehended as linear processes; rather, it is acknowledged that peace processes experience pauses, advances, and ruptures that reflect the

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[199] Brummer and Patokallio, pers. comm., March 23, 2017.

complexity and unpredictability of conflict itself. This challenges the idea of rational management of complex conflict situations. Because of this dynamic setting, there cannot be fixed positions or grand plans of management. The various overlapping conflicts and peace processes require private actors to fit their strategic planning to this highly and contingent setting.

As it is not possible to verify clear causal and linear relationships between particular actions of peacebuilders and their output to the conflict dynamic, the whole strategic thinking process from planning to goal setting, and from design to evaluation, has been revisited. The end goal of the process, peace, is seen as open-ended rather than given and fixed, as it appears in its liberal form. Furthermore, instead of overall, all-encompassing planning, what is now called for is humility, a multi-narrative understanding, and an obviously flexible and protean approach. The environment in which private peacemakers work is fluid and high-risk, one in which conflicts are wicked problems, unique in their characteristics, and impossible to describe definitely. According to Brummer and Eronen from CMI, the challenging mission of peacemakers, and in particular that of private actors, is to try to hit a moving target.[200]

Emphasizing the complexity and unpredictability of conflicts challenges the rationalist ideals of management and the possibility of one grand plan to which all participating actors contribute. The realization that there are no simple and easy solutions to complex conflicts has led to a revolutionary change in strategic thinking concerning the available tools; it has redefined goals and challenged previous evaluation methods. Still, conclusion is not the acceptance of complete randomness but private peacemakers re-evaluating how their work contributes to the wider peace process, how do they have an impact on it, and *where, when, and how* they should become involved. Furthermore, the new approach requires new principles for the effectiveness and efficiency of peace work, and these criteria also have to be understandable to donors. A new approach also raises further challenging questions: for example, how does the work of private peacemakers relate to traditional peace mediation when it is based on different assumptions and definitions? How can their focused processes influence and support the overall peace process, whose goals and approaches are often quite different from their own?

Transformation is a theme that cuts through all the activities of CMI, but in particular conflict settings the mediator must pay close attention to what kind of a societal transformation is taking place in each particular situation, and how it is possible to support it. In its strategy, CMI redefines how it aims to contribute to peace processes but also how the impact of its activity should be evaluated. The fundamental question is how it is possible to measure the efficiency of its activity in a peace process if it is not necessarily tied to a mandate or ideals of

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[200] Brummer and Eronen, "Hitting Moving Targets."

rational management. CMI declares that the basis for evaluation of the results of their activity are *trust, channels of communication, capacities, inclusion,* and *solutions.*[201] In the other words, all of these are needed for building up sustainable peace. Thus, promoting trust, channels of communication, capacities, and inclusion, and enabling solutions can be regarded as a comprehensive toolbox of private peacemakers in general. Seen in this way, it seems that the ideal behind goal setting is inspired by the idea of self-sustaining peace instead of the previously dominated liberal peace idea. Transformation takes place in several overlapping ways and layers. There is no more (if there ever was) illusion about a linear process of striving straightforwardly towards resolution. This is replaced by an ambivalent and contingent transformation process. It is understood that in the post-conflict society, transformation towards sustainable peace often takes years or even decades, and it is not possible to define exactly when that goal is achieved; in fact, this may not even be given much thought.

It is noteworthy that agreements – the focal point of classical mediation – have lost their omnipresence in agenda setting. Indeed, CMI respondents note that public peace agreements are nowadays easy for spoilers to challenge, and are only part of the wider requirements for sustainable peace. Pushing for agreements alone without considering other requirements for lasting peace is seen as counterproductive. In prevalently asymmetrical conditions calling something a result can be contested; participatory evaluation meets its limits as pointed out by CMI respondents.[202] In some occasions, agreements can be even counterproductive for sustainable peace if they are formulated in ambiguous or counterproductive ways. The Minsk agreement, for example, allows the retaining of local militias in Donetsk and Luhansk. Peace agreements are too often regarded as the endpoint of a process, even if they should be seen as one milestone towards the final goal. Furthermore, as they are public and fixed documents, they are easy targets for spoilers.[203]

On the other hand, it is also obvious agreements and accords are needed for carrying out peace processes, but they should be comprehended as milestones in the long-term transformation from a culture of violence towards a culture of peace rather than as end goals in themselves. The idea of CMI, and also FCA and Felm, is to proceed so that the organization itself does not propose a solution, but enables different modes of transformation and locally agreed solutions. In fact, CMI's vision could be redefined as "all conflicts can be transformed," rather than "all conflicts can be resolved." Still, resolution and transformation are not seen as mutually exclusive. In fact, the practitioners interviewed emphasize this compatibility of the two approaches – something

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[201] "Measuring Results," CMI 2017, accessed April 1, 2017, http://cmi.fi/; Brummer and Eronen, "Hitting Moving Targets."
[202] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.
[203] Ibid.

that is partly in contrast to academic debates, which have often perceived the choice of term as a more significant issue.

This transformative approach also contests the traditional Results-Based Management that the donors often require in order to verify that their contribution has had recognizable effects. It is clear that CMI does not want to measure the significance of its work exclusively through metrics, such as signed agreements, but to broaden its focus to the qualitative attributes of peace, where evaluation of the impact of their input can be less precisely measured and is more open to interpretation. Indeed, the way CMI sets its new evaluation criteria mildly challenges its donors' power to define the rules of the game, and it is obvious that any private actor cannot make this kind of move without a hint from its major donors that they agree with these new criteria.[204] Still, it seems clear that the old resolution-based thinking is not easy to replace and remains recognizable in evaluation methods even after they have been reassessed. Following the logic of complexity thinking and transformation theory, any rational evaluation of the output of a third party intervention would be very difficult to evaluate, and it would perhaps only be possible to recognize such an output after a significant period of time has elapsed. Thus CMI, like other private actors, in practice needs to achieve a balance between resolution and transformation, between expectations of rational evaluation and the asymmetric non-linearity of complexity thinking.

In contrast to CMI, respondents in Felm value agreement more highly; they underline how all dialogue has to have a clear goal, and that agreement appears to be a rather natural goal. However, they do not see themselves as experts of deal making where there are enough experts in the field, but their added value is in understanding the linkage to long-term development.[205] Felm as well as FCA approach transformation more from the point of view of development and peacebuilding. The representatives of Felm regard this background in development cooperation as an asset for an organization engaged in mediation and pursuing long-term conflict transformation. The representatives suggests that there are private diplomacy organizations that focus purely on political and security-track issues, while experience in development cooperation provides perspective on long-term socioeconomic development and its relation to transformation.[206] Overall, however, their approach is based on a similar view of transformation as the broader, long-term goal, with resolution related to more short-term, practical issues. Felm and FCA aim at long-term transformation by building bridges between civil society actors and enabling their more effective participation in peace efforts. The goal is then to gradually build peace structures from the inside. The work of local networks

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[204] "Measuring Results," CMI 2017, accessed April 1, 2017, http://cmi.fi/
[205] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016
[206] Ibid.

and individuals is supported by facilitating meetings, offering training modules, and conducting mapping and analyses of the conflict. These local efforts are then supported by advocacy and lobbying to engage and inform international stakeholders, and to link them with local contacts.[207] The ideal goal is that peacebuilding and mediation work will in this way be carried out by local actors even after the end of individual projects and third party-organized dialogues.

This type of perspective then goes hand in hand with links and connections to the grassroots community. This shared background in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance is also connected to the faith-based tradition guiding the work of FCA and Felm. Ideas stemming from the history of faith-based humanitarian assistance have shaped their work so that similar notions of helping those most in need are present in their work. In current approaches, this shows in the way transformation is associated with human rights and ideas of just peace.[208] The primary focus is therefore highly human-oriented.

The emphasis on long-term transformation and the perception of conflicts as complex and non-linear resists the more traditional, simple conceptualization of logical, linear processes that move neatly from conflict resolution and mediation to an official peace agreement to post-conflict statebuilding and reconciliation. Instead, transformation towards peace more often moves in the form of multiple overlapping and intertwined processes. This way, reconciliation and social healing take place simultaneously with mediation processes aiming at the transformation of perceptions and the reconstruction of relationships as part of the overarching transformation process. Due to the fundamental link between reconciliation and transformation, FCA and the Network note that violent conflicts often repeat themselves due to failed (or non-existent) reconciliation efforts.[209] From their point of view, local traditional and religious communities can make important contributions to this through the development of justice and reconciliation mechanisms founded on local cultural elements. The Network is not currently involved in such reconciliation processes, but regards them as a central area for future activities.[210] Felm also approaches the interlinkage of transformation and reconciliation from the point of view of the potential role of religion in promoting healing, forgiveness, and perceptions of justice in projects such as the one in South Africa, where this is done in cooperation with the local church partner through the Healing of Memories program.[211]

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[207] CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative;* Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects;* CMI, *Annual Programme Report 2014.*
[208] Ibid.
[209] Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016; Laisi and Rintakoski, "Suomen Lähetysseura: paikalliset kumppanit rauhantyön keskiössä," 113-115.

When it comes to FCA and the Network's concepts of conflict resolution and transformation, there is no clear, unified and unanimous view on the terminology, and the Network does not have a common glossary of terms.[212] Much like in academic literature on the topic, practitioners' ideas vary on which term to use and what the terms' relationship to each other is. Some of the representatives suggest that the appropriate term depends on the context and the phase of the conflict cycle, but it is nonetheless emphasized that in order to achieve lasting peace and socioeconomic change, a transformation must take place. Furthermore, it is noted that the transformation approach allows the Network to address conflicts in a more comprehensive, long-term way that better suits FCA's values, goals, and objectives.[213]

It should be kept in mind that these are views expressed by FCA as the Network's Secretariat. The Network as a whole consists of dozens of independent organizations, and it would therefore be difficult for it to agree on a unanimous approach to conflict. This kind of network structure favors fluidity, flexibility, and collaboration rather than fixed rules and terms. It is also worth keeping in mind that through the network structure, FCA as the Secretariat is likely to have drawn, and to draw, influences from other Network member and partner organizations. For example, it works in close cooperation with partners such as the Berghof Foundation, which has published a large amount of influential conflict transformation research, and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), which is closely connected to a great deal of the most prominent research in the field.[214]

When it comes to the impact of transformative approaches, private peacemakers are aware of the limits of their own ability to influence to the whole peace process. Still, when entering into a conflict, it is considered important for private peace actors to have an overall picture of long-term transformation in their mind. This kind of thinking can be seen as reflecting the relics of classical approaches, in which the management of the peace process was considered possible. On the other hand, this overall picture can merely be understood as a backbone of their planning; their actual projects are often short-term contributions to a long-term process, as they or any outsider power lack the final power to influence the process as a whole. With this in mind, the goal setting and chosen methods become more challenging. One obvious challenge in the transformative approach is that the people undergoing the process would not describe and see themselves as parts of any transformative process. Therefore, transformation cannot be used as an operational concept; instead, the concepts that are used are determined by the entry point through which the mediator enters the sphere of transformation.

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[212] Interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects.*

Following CMI, peacemakers cannot, and should not, define the end goal, but just aim to support transformation from violence to peace. At the same time, peacemakers should be aware that transformation may have unpredictable conclusions. The end results of political transformation should not be strictly predetermined, and one should not too tightly define what the end result looks like and what type of institutions and forms of governance are required.[215] Felm, which is more used to working in the frame of a large international multiparty mediation setting, is not willing to take as radical a step from the ideals of liberal peace.[216] Yet, Felm also sees it as the task of the conflict parties – not the third party – to negotiate and define the end goal of the process. What should be noted it that by acting beyond mandates and sub-mandates which have traditionally defined and set the goals of peace to match the ideal of liberal peace, private peacemakers can cope with the fundamental questions of peace and conflict more freely, which allows for the acceptance of locally defined conditions for peace. Indeed, the process itself is always seen by all three actors as originated by the local beneficiaries, which strengthens the commitment of the local participants to the decisions taken.

What a particular organization with its particular project can do is to contribute to the transformation process as a "precision strike."[217] The cases of Gagauzia in Moldova and Ukraine shed light on how the idea is to contribute to long-term transformation through carefully constructed and targeted actions. In both cases, even though the self-defined role of CMI is to help navigate the caveats of the peace process, the organization does maintain its focus also in relation to the more long-term transformative process. In Gagauzia, the main questions are what the definition of the Gagauzian autonomy is and how that autonomy is implemented. As there is no violent conflict yet, CMI's operation can be regarded as an example of preventive mediation supported by a private actor. In this sense, and on the surface level, the immediate challenge in the process seems to be legal; how to harmonize legislation in a situation where there is constitution, other laws, and the law for autonomy, without there being any kind of hierarchy between all of these. But even though on the surface the conflict seems to be about legal issues, the difficulty in the transformation process is that the situation is very politicized. CMI, which has an official mandate from both the Chisinau government and the autonomous government in Comrat, has sought to bring about political transformation through unofficial dialogues between participants by organizing study trips to familiarize the parties with various models of minority autonomy in Europe. It would be expected that this would

215 Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.
216 Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
217 Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.

enable mutual brainstorming sessions about available solutions, and in the end return to legal questions.[218]

In Ukraine, CMI's activity is not tied to an official mandate, but still aims to support the transformation of the political system so that it would enable a new national agenda setting for a peace process. In a similar manner as in Gagauzia, CMI acts mainly in informal settings; indeed, publicity would be harmful for the overall aim to build trust. The core tool in Ukraine is the informal dialogue platforms, or communication channels, that bring together different components of the conflict. Yet again, this is not so much about bringing about a clearly defined resolution. Overall, the key task in Ukraine is identifying the groups that are most willing to discuss. This flexible process means holding workshops and other forms of informal and resolution-shy mediation, which aim at creating channels and keeping them open. In all of the cases of CMI, one can see the perception of the organization that mediation and dialogue are about looking for a place, metaphoric or concrete, to discuss freely. Private actors can foster dialogue at different levels of society, not just on the high level. Private actors can also reach actors that the official channels cannot, broadening the process.[219] The idea of the transformative power of the process is based on the hope that these communication channels turn out to be self-sustaining, and expand and have spillover effects.

All in all, according to the examined private actors, *transformation* is an apt concept to describe not only the whole peace process, but also the goal of the mediation process. In CMI, FCA, and Felm, the transformation of the conflict, or the entity that is affected by the conflict, is understood broadly. Transformation does not only mean transferring to the state of negative peace, but a changed environment in which also the elements of structural violence, like corruption, are absent. The task of the mediator is therefore to set the ball rolling by supporting the process and by increasing the capabilities of the conflict parties to carry on the transformative process.[220] The understanding of what peace is has in many ways been transformed from the notion of "liberal peace" towards that of "self-sustaining peace", but certain institutional frameworks as well as the requirements of Results-Based Management resist more radical change and attempt to break with liberal peace ideals.

Towards Dialogic Transformation

The significant change in the conceptualization of conflict and transformation has also been deeply connected to how the organizations see their niche. A new

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[218] Ibid.
[219] CMI, A*nnual Programme Report 2014; 6.*
[220] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.

approach has required a new way of self-identification, and a redefinition of practices of intervention in particular conflicts. The third party is still an outsider that intervenes in a conflict and becomes involved in the process through this intervention. "Indeed, having a stake implies that the actor is part of the complex political, social and economic system around the conflict and its resolution."[221] On the other hand, according to CMI, a non-governmental operator can intervene in a (potential) conflict so that the intervention itself does not legitimize and delegitimize particular parties or power structures in a conflict, which is always the case when the international community, states, or groups of states intervene. In those cases, the intervention is almost certainly for someone and against someone else. The official operators also change the conflict landscape considerably as a private actor can operate for a long time without the political system around it collapsing. Thus a private agent should not have a large or visible role in the peace process, but must operate (mostly) in the shadows of the formal process. Their more context-sensitive, local-based agenda and unofficial nature of action does not similarly delegitimize existing power structures, but can instead benefit and build on local power structures, which is well seen in the Gagauzian case.

Peace mediators' work is about continuous balancing between different kinds of understanding and perception of various local and international parties, and within that frame, their own perceptions of success and measuring results need to be flexible and open-ended. "This ecosystem sees constant interaction between contested 'process narratives', which mediation must navigate. Perceptions entail also mediation itself. In light of complex social systems thinking, it is evident that mediators become part of the very same system the moment they enter the scene, making absolute neutrality impossible," as explained by CMI's Brummer and Eronen.[222] The core question is then how it is possible to recognize the unique context of particular conflicts and how it is possible to learn about the needs of local people.

Recognizing one's own influence on the process and thus the impossibility of complete neutrality also requires responsibility. Peacemakers should then carry ethical responsibility for their choices and actions. In Felm and FCA's work, these types of questions of ethical responsibility stem more from traditions of the development and peacebuilding sphere, such as the "Do No Harm" approach and related concepts. Ethical responsibility then entails reflecting on the organization's own impact on the conflict situation and the local beneficiaries. In CMI's thinking, this is an integral part of "artisanship for peace."[223] Instead of seeing peacemaking as engineering science, peacemaking should be compared to craftsmanship, or as Eronen prefers to express it,

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[221] Brummer and Eronen, "Hitting Moving Targets," 9.
[222] Brummer and Eronen, "Hitting Moving Targets," 9.
[223] Eronen, "Organising Artisans for Peace."

mediators can be seen as "artisans for peace." With this well-selected notion he refers to how, in addition to craftsmanship based on learned experience, this kind of mediation requires artistic features that are associated with a kind of artfulness of work, including the ability to be innovative, visionary, and reflective. Artisans for peace are nimble and often invisible actors who carry responsibility about their footprint on the local society. They are capable of maneuvering within the complexity of conflict, and within its continuously changing positions.[224]

As Eronen notes, "[a]rtisans for peace accept that the skills and the process cannot be fully codified or known explicitly."[225] Tolerance towards the limited possibility to design peace projects as well as the ability to cope with unpredictable change are seen as virtues of the new kind of peacemakers. Paying attention to the unplanned and the unexpected, or in other words expressing creativity, is now seen as a virtue of artisans for peace, as in complex settings it is not possible to execute rational linear planning and solution-centric methods. Thus, there are no predictable causalities between peacemakers' contribution and transformation of conflict. Even if it is well designed and planned in detail, a plan does not automatically led to peace, and will not automatically have more significant an output to conflict transformation than a contribution that is more difficult to measure and invisible in the beginning. Core skills are the ability to pick, recognize, and engage local partners that could carry the process.

CMI respondents would like to call this kind of approach to, or method of, mediation a dialogic one. *Dialogic* refers to the practitioners' conceptualization and way of acting, and the dialogic approach is a cross-cutting method that concerns all of CMI's activity, not just dialogue processes. Thus the terms *dialogic* and *dialogue* should not be confused with each other, even if they overlap in certain particular contexts. The dialogic approach may require organizing a dialogue, but not necessarily. The dialogic approach includes as a guiding principle the idea that it is the parties of conflict that create the process, and that the duty of a private peacemaker is to facilitate the local action. Therefore, the approach evades a classical negotiation situation. The dialogic nature of the process shelters the transformation and supports its flexibility, as a dialogue does not collapse as easily and as totally as a process more rigidly defined.[226] From the perspective of a third party actor, the dialogic approach brings flexibility within the complexity of conflict. If the conflict situation changes dramatically - as happened for example in Yemen - the dialogic approach allows the actor to stay involved, and to continue facilitation efforts in the changed context. This is a significant change from the negotiation constellation in more

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[224] Ibid., 145-146
[225] Ibid., 146.
[226] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.

traditional, mandated peace mediation, which is fixed and thus more vulnerable to unpredictable changes.

The dialogic process differs from that of negotiation in that it enables new solutions as well as transformation by facilitating the dialogic relationship of the conflict partners and seeking to change the perceptions of the parties instead of looking for compromise. The mediators' position in relation to that of the conflict parties is also regarded as dialogic. In a dialogic approach, the premises are not set, but may shift. The aim is to create opportunities and chances, whereas with negotiation, the field, its parameters, and therefore also its solution are already set. In a dialogic process, the emphasis is not so much on the resolution to start with, and even when dialogue is proceeding towards a resolution, this resolution is not something that can be derived from fixed parameters, but is something that can creatively surprise all the partners of the conflict, and the mediators. In previous resolution-centered peace processes, the resolution was the ultimate goal and was often already fixed, therefore producing a rigid and easily collapsable mediation architecture. In contrast to classical mediation, the flexibility of the dialogic approach is highly significant.

The challenge in the dialogic approach from the perspective of the mediator is to identify the agents, to open up their perceptions, and to ultimately bring forward new, changed conceptions. The risk is that even when participants agree on the steps leading towards positive transformation, they may not have the leverage to carry those changed perceptions back to their in-groups. The representatives of CMI refer to this as the difficulty of selling change and they therefore aim to find individual representatives of selected groups who have the ability to promote broader change. In Felm and FCA's view, increasing the legitimacy of the peace process can broaden acceptance of the change. These ideas are quite similar, but emphases on different types of groups shape the type and form of dialogue facilitated – these are examined further in the next chapter. There is general agreement that it is not sufficient to inflict change only among the closed group that is participating in the dialogue, but that mediators must always keep in mind that the change must be something that can be bought by the general public. This is why the mediation process cannot be hermetically sealed, but the mediator must also have access to up-to-date and state-of-the art information of the broader conflict context, including not only the direct conflict parties and their in-groups, but also other agents in the conflict architecture and possibly beyond that, including the international community.227

Focusing on perceptions is a central aspect of the dialogic approach. The conflict environment contains starkly polarized perceptions, rivalling interpretations of facts, and strong group affiliations. Proximity to conflict narrows one's perception on how peace can be reached, and therefore the main

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227 Ibid.

target of conflict transformation is in the change of perceptions. It then sees the goal as targeting perceptions of ways forward and looking for the productive win-win options.[228] The representatives of Felm also note how the huge challenge for transformation is that war is omnipresent and influences how people think and what they discuss. To achieve true change, peacemakers need to influence this by re-creating trust among people and supporting relationship building, the transformation of antagonistic perceptions, myths, and narratives, and eventually even bringing about forgiveness. This way, it also relates to reconciliation. Trust comes only through meeting others, and in the end, it enables change and resolution. From this perspective, conflict resolution and transformation are again not mutually exclusive but complementary. There are practical and technical issues and questions that require resolution, but these resolution processes then support the broader transformation of relations among people, the latter of which requires trust and forgiveness. Thus, the question is about a kind of hermeneutic circle in Felm's thinking.[229] In FCA and the Network's philosophy of conflict transformation, perceptions are not explicitly identified as having a central role in the formal strategy, but they are inevitably a necessary part of interreligious peace efforts. FCA's philosophy of transformation is then associated with reconciliation and forgiveness at the level of principles, but not so much in operational planning.

Negotiation situations are based on announced positions, and there are various solutions available to address incompatibilities. At a certain point, negotiations reach a point where no-one can move without someone else benefiting from that move. Negotiations are changing power positions. In contrast, *dialogue* is about transforming perceptions; while the expectation horizon is limited in negotiations, it is open in dialogues. In dialogues, what is discussed does not necessarily have to deal with possible solutions or problematic issues at all, but activities such as for example playing football may support attempts to see and explore new alternatives. Thus, opening of new alternatives is not sought by rational negotiations, but by changing the participants' perceptions of each other and the conflict in general. From this perspective, "winning war is change of value function," as Ville Brummer argues.[230] Felm also emphasizes in its Syrian Initiative project the importance of transforming narratives that provoke and maintain violence, but in this respect the media has a prominent role to play in changing perceptions and relationships between antagonistic groups, and in spreading knowledge about the conflict and peace efforts.[231] Thus, their approach is more grounded on the presumption that there are certain misunderstandings than can be corrected by getting the facts

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[228] Patokallio, pers. comm., March 13, 2017.
[229] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
[230] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.
[231] Felm, *The Syria Initiative: 2nd Quarterly Report 2016.*

right, while the CMI approach is closer to the assumption that instead of misunderstanding, antagonism among parties can be characterized as radical disagreement. Nevertheless, both organizations aim to stimulate the transformation of agonistic dialogue into dialogue that is more in a dialogic direction.

However, managing stakeholders' perceptions is not a straightforward or linear process. "Indeed having a stake implies that the actor is part of the complex political, social and economic system around the conflict and its resolution. In these prevalently asymmetrical conditions calling something a result can be contested; participatory evaluation meets its limits."[232] The dialogic method is thus not flexible only inside the dialogue, but the whole dialogue is in constant change as well. The parties that take part in the dialogue, and the dialogue itself, are not immune to the outside world and the changes that take place in it. It is important that the mediator is aware of this change, and can anticipate it and react accordingly.

4.3. Peace through Dialogue

The principles of local ownership and inclusivity of peace processes have been part of peacebuilding rhetoric from the very beginning. However, it has only been after the harsh criticism towards intrusive and elite-based forms of liberal peacebuilding that these principles have been revisited and taken as a true normative basis of peace processes - at least by an increasing proportion of peacebuilders - while the established peacebuilding industry still continues with more formal updates. These principles that were first adopted only within the peacebuilding and development context have recently been attached to mediation by private peacemakers. It is noteworthy that although inclusive and locally owned peace processes are intertwined in a complex way, they do not necessarily mean the same thing. Inclusivity primarily refers to participation, whereas ownership points more to agency in the peace process.

Inclusivity and locally driven processes are also widely shared norms among the Finland-based private organizations, but their approaches have clear differences in how inclusivity is acknowledged, how locals are engaged in the peace process, and who these locals are. They all trust that their activity increases the inclusivity of peace processes, and indeed, as they are not bound to official roles and positions, they can more freely search and engage new actors who would otherwise be excluded or marginalized from official processes.

A new niche of their work is not so much mediation but more often dialogue as this better allows for greater inclusivity in the peace process, but

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[232] Brummer and Eronen, "Hitting Moving Targets," 9.

there are different types of dialogue. When examining the recent usage of dialogues, we have on the one hand NDs, which are largely oriented towards problem-solving logic and adopt a broad understanding of inclusion. On the other hand, we have informal dialogues - or support of communication channels - which are based more on problem-finding logic and selected inclusivity. The first concentrates on national-level issues -- how the legal basis of the post-conflict state is organized -- whereas the latter may act at both the national and the local level, or between them. In the latter kind, communication itself is more important than the agenda or the results of discussion. Furthermore, there are efforts to focus primarily on the local level by recruiting and empowering locally based mediators. In all cases, third parties declare that locals set the agenda and hold the ownership of the process, but it seems obvious that a third party's footprint on the process is of a different kind in different processes. In NDs third parties often design frames, in informal dialogues they often - in one way or another - select actors, and in the case of local peace mediators, they offer training and technical assistance. In this chapter we concentrate on these three kinds of approaches: National Dialogues (including other national-level processes to support the re-creation of state institutions and their legitimacy), informal dialogue channels, mainly during the violent phase of the conflict, and local peace assets, i.e. support to local actors as well as the training of local mediators.

National Dialogues

The general term "dialogue" should be separated from the notion of ND, which has a rather specific meaning. Formally mandated NDs have emerged some years ago as a specific tool for supporting local ownership and inclusivity in peacebuilding and reconciliation. Siebert, Kumar, and Tasala define NDs as formal processes that are "mandated to develop constitutional frameworks as the basis for a new constitution to be adopted by their countries' parliaments."[233] Thus, the concept of NDs is rather legalistic and based on a belief that agreeing on the legal frameworks of the post-conflict state would have automatic spillover effects to the whole society. In contrast to mediation which "is a tool applicable in reaching agreements at critical stages in the process of change and advancing dialogue, National Dialogue has a specific role in rebuilding the social contract between society and government following times of extreme crisis."[234] According to Rintakoski from Felm, ND always focuses on transition and agreement, and

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[233] Hannes Siebert, Chetan Kumar, and Sanna Tasala, "Role of External Actors in Supporting National Dialogue Processes," in *National Dialogues and Internal Mediation Processes: Perspectives on Theory and Practice*, ed. Charlotta Collén (Helsinki: The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland), 35.
[234] Otto Turtonen, and Joel Linnainmäki, *Second Conference on Non-Formal Dialogue Processes: Experiences from Countries in Transition*, Conference Report, 2015.

can thus also be understood as an alternative to a mediated peace process. Even if the actual focus of NDs is to provide a new constitutional framework, they also, according to Siebert, address root causes, and thus "they have also served a much broader function than their intended purpose."235 In his opinion, ND has spillover effects to reconciliation, but he does not specify how this takes place.

Local ownership is seen as crucial for NDs, and processes should be "designed by national stakeholders themselves to collectively address their conflict and broken constitutional instruments."236 Process design is planned so that it supports local ownership and the role of international NGOs in acting in a more supportive and consultative way. An ND process can also be initiated only domestically, as was the case in South Africa. The South African case has often been used a model and exemplary case in practitioners' discussion.

In addition to the importance of representation and the participation of key elite representatives, acknowledging and engaging regional players is crucial for the establishment of favorable conditions for ND.237 This kind of approach requires a nuanced and deep understanding of context but there are certainly several pitfalls in design and implementation that may be fatal for the peace process as a whole. An ND guides a process but does not seemingly problematize the situation in which all stakeholders are not really able to engage in a process even if they are participating in it. This has been seen as the main cause for failure of the ND process in Yemen (2013-14) to which several Finnish private organizations also contributed, and which is in many ways a particularly contradictory example: on the one hand, as a process it was seen as a success, but soon after, the whole of Yemen sank into violent chaos because of a re-escalated civil war and the military intervention of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition. Following Pentikäinen "the process remained too elite-centric and did not facilitate enough grassroots reconciliation. More importantly, it failed to address some of the crucial underlying causes of conflict, which raises questions as to whether the standard approach to dialogue gives sufficient consideration to the need to build legitimacy before entering into dialogue about how to establish or reform institutions."238 Along similar lines, the representatives of CMI also emphasize that a larger dialogue process cannot work if all participants are not fully committed to the rules and goals of dialogue.239 It seems again from the Yemen experience that NDs cannot transform deep antagonistic relations within society, and that the spillover effects of NDs were exaggerated at least in this case.

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235 Hannes Siebert, "National Dialogues as Catalyst of Fundamental Change," in *National Dialogues and Internal Mediation Processes: Perspectives on Theory and Practice,* ed. Charlotta Collén (Helsinki: The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland), 42.
236 Ibid., 44.
237 Ibid.
238 Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation," 68.
239 Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.

Several practitioners have expressed doubt about whether more participation is the right answer when results have not been reached with smaller numbers of participants. Their conclusion is clear: criticism towards these kind of processes is needed, and the concept of an ND needs to be adapted to a particular framework. It seems, from their perspective, that more limited dialogues may better support transformation and reconciliation. Similarly, Paffenholz criticizes NDs by pointing out that "there is no correlation between more actors, more peace. What counts is the quality of engagement."[240]

There are significant differences in the Finnish organizations' approaches to NDs, but they all have engaged in planning and debate on NDs. During the past couple of years, NDs have been included in the Finnish brand of mediation, and the MFA has sponsored the organization of three conferences on National Dialogues: the first one was titled the Conference on National Dialogue and Mediation Processes (March/April 2014) while the second was titled Non-Formal Dialogue Processes and National Dialogues (November 2015). The upcoming conference in April 2017 is titled simply National Dialogues and focuses on regional dynamics and the local-national elements of NDs. While there are considerable differences of views on NDs among the three Finnish private actors, it is noteworthy that they have managed to cooperate smoothly in organizing these conferences, and the contradictory and contested nature of the concept has been avoided. At the same time, the change of emphasis of the conferences reflects the change from a strict and exclusive definition towards a more flexible and nuanced understanding of dialogue processes. How each organization understands the relevance of NDs and how they implement it in their strategies is however another issue.

Felm has been closely engaged in debates on NDs with its Lebanese partner the CSI. Thus, it is no surprise that NDs still hold an essential part in their strategic thinking. Felm has been engaged in the Myanmar peace process, which is often referred to as an ND process.[241] After partial success, this process that aims to create agreement between the government and minorities has recently met new challenges. In the case of Syria, the context of Felm and partners' SI project is different as the country is still deeply engaged in violent conflict, and thus an ND cannot be a short-term goal. Still, in Felm's thinking an ND is waiting somewhere in the distant future and is seen as an essential endpoint or a final transformative push from a culture of violence to a culture of peace.[242] In practice, the SI supports the organization of rather limited dialogue forums that are not "restricted to formal dialogue and negotiations tracks" among various civil society actors within their own design of the peace process.[243] The

[240] Paffenholz . Spoken remarks quoted in Turtonen and Linnainmäki, "Second Conference on Non-Formal Dialogue Processes: Experiences from Countries in Transition", 6.
[241] Siebert, Kumar, and Tasala, "Role of External Actors in Supporting National Dialogue Processes."
[242] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016
[243] CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative.*

particular dialogue forums are then seen as small steps towards the ultimate goal of an ND. These various dialogue platforms are seen to construct a nationwide network or a national dialogue platform that would create momentum for peace but also enable the organization of an ND in the future by supporting the acceptance of dialogue, building capacities for participation in dialogues, and connecting local and civil society actors to each other and to national-level actors.244 Along with the grand plan, local dialogues gradually engage the whole society into an understanding of the importance of dialogues. The idea is that Syrian stakeholders build their political leadership role through engagement in consensus building and dialogues.

This emphasis to build capacities to engage in political dialogues may have some contradictory elements, as ND as the ultimate goal of the process is so dominant in Felm's thinking. Organizing informal dialogue forums therefore often takes the shape of a miniature rehearsal ND. This is understandable, as it is often the wish of locals, too, but on the other hand, it may be asked how these forums support trust building and changes of perceptions, and open up new future horizons. By the end of 2016, the SI had supported 15 dialogue forums among Syrians either within or outside of Syria that offer direct opportunities to talk to other stakeholders. These include the "Is Dialogue between Syrians Still Possible?" forums organized in Beirut and Istanbul, and one titled "Approaches for a Political Solution in Syria," organized in Damascus. A transitional constitution workshop organized together with the Carter Center was similar in its agenda. More recently, Felm and the EIP have participated in organizing SFCG platforms that continue the same agenda.245

FCA and the Network are not involved or engaged in ND processes to the same degree that Felm is. Their dialogues are mainly non-formal in nature, and ND does not appear to be an end goal in itself. While non-formal dialogue is an important tool in preparing for and supporting more comprehensive, national mediation or reconciliation efforts, it does not have to lead to a formal dialogue process, but is valuable as its own process. However, they have been closely associated for example with processes that aim to build a new constitution or shared agreement on the fundamental rules of state in Somalia and Libya. In both cases, their work has, however, been linked to tribes, and thus instead of the open, inclusive structure of an ideal ND, these processes have been more traditional by structure. However, they sought support for more inclusive dialogue within this traditional framework which is seen to be legitimated and thus a valid form of gathering. In other words, rather than attempt to create national processes that include all actors, these processes aimed to engage the part of the society that was largely excluded before, and contribute to more

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244 Ibid.
245 Felm, *The Syria Initiative: 1st Quarterly Report 2016* (Helsinki: Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, 2016). + other Felm reports + interview

inclusive dialogue through these activities. These efforts were based on the idea that since traditional - tribal or other - structures constitute a central way of social organization in certain contexts, particularly in rural areas, they cannot be left out of inclusive national debate and decision-making. Furthermore, their participation in these cases has not been based on a mandate or invitation by states; rather, the inviting parties have been local actors.[246]

In Somalia, FCA cooperated with local clan leaders, Elders, to support their engagement in the political process. As one result of the process, the Elders participated in nominating Members of Parliament. Women peacemakers were also linked to the process, with (partially successful) attempts to secure their representation in the parliament. The case of Somalia is an example of a case in which FCA functioned as an integral link between grassroots communities and the official-track process by liaising between tribal leaders and UNPOS.[247] This experience, and the lessons learned from it, have since inspired work in other projects. One example is the Network's involvement in Libya, where it promotes intertribal dialogue and supports the mediation capacity of tribal leaders, while simultaneously facilitating cooperation between tribal leaders, and women and youth peacemakers. [248] Conventional approaches have been ineffective in the face of the complex landscape of the conflict in Libya, and the intertwined relations between political groups, armed groups - both political, and mainly criminal and opportunistic - and tribal groups. Through collaboration with its local partner, the Network approaches the conflict from the angle of tribal relations, by promoting peace through intertribal peace efforts aiming at the transformation of hostile attitudes and relations, and the deconstruction of enemy images stemming from grievances aggravated by political affiliations during the Gaddafi era.

In CMI's strategic thinking ND is only one form of, rather than a pre-given phase in transformation, and there is more open-endedness as to the end goal and method, even if similar kinds of transformative and inclusive elements are sought out to those pursued by Felm. CMI was engaged in ND in Yemen, but is not currently involved in any ND processes, even if national dialogue in one form or another may appear to be one relevant option in Ukraine and Iraq in the longer-term perspective. Nonetheless, it is up to these governments to decide if and when it is an appropriate solution. At the moment, CMI has just supported the drafting of the National Reconciliation Strategy in Iraq and the organization of dialogue processes within Ukraine. In both cases, ND is still a distant goal, or perhaps not a goal at all and, as mentioned earlier, such a fixed goal with a set meaning is currently still considered counterproductive.

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[246] Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects;* interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.
[247] Rauli Lepistö, "Building a Piece of Peace."
[248] Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects*; Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation."

Informal Dialogues

In addition to NDs in capital letters, there has simultaneously been debate about informal national dialogue "that has evolved from technical thematic dialogues, civil society dialogues, international dialogues and ongoing confidential negotiations,"[249] or more recently also about non-formal dialogue processes. The mediation literature has mainly concentrated on NDs, while that on (the in many senses more interesting and promising) non-formal dialogue has mainly only been examined in relation to more official processes. In that context, informal dialogue is too often treated as a prelude for ND, rather than as separate tool with its own characteristics, tools and goals. If private peacemakers' strategies and projects are examined it seems obvious that informal dialogues should be regarded more and more as separate from NDs - a tool of their own. While international practitioners have designed sophisticated and complex action plans for NDs, informal and non-formal dialogues tend to be on a more ad hoc basis and less legalistic as they lack the power to shape future legal structures. While they are often organized on an ad hoc basis, they may still be carefully planned from a third party perspective.

What is seemingly common for NDs and informal dialogues is emphasis on local ownership in designing dialogue. However, do they share the goal "to create space for diverse interests to influence the transitional negotiations" as was indicated in the Second National Dialogue conference concept paper,[250] or does informal dialogue in practice have different, more open-ended goals? This is what we shall now examine by looking at informal dialogues organized and facilitated by CMI, Felm, and FCA.

Informal dialogues are used in order to increase the inclusivity of the peace process as well as to enhance local agency. While these two objectives are certainly not contradictory, it is possible to distinguish the two types of emphasis in the informal dialogue process: reconciling dialogues and dialogic mediation. The primary aim of the former is to increase the inclusion of the population at large, gain bottom-up legitimacy for the peace process by strengthening the feeling of local ownership as well as promote reconciliation through dialogue. The latter is often more limited in terms of participants and agenda, and they can take place among selected members of elite as well as at the local level. The focus can be on the inclusion of selected individuals and they build trust and give opportunities to consider alternative future horizons. The latter is also closer to mediation and in certain contexts can be regarded as its alternative as it also aims to enable the peace process to move forward when traditional negotiations become stuck.

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[249] Siebert, "National Dialogues as Catalyst of Fundamental Change," 42.
[250] Turtonen and Linnainmäki, "Second Conference on Non-Formal Dialogue Processes," 2.

Reconciling Dialogues

For FCA and Felm, inclusivity is primarily linked to the engagement of civil society actors, but because of their background as FBOs they – and particularly the Network – also have a focus on the role of religious actors that have for various reasons been marginalized and excluded from the official peace processes. In their thinking, the role of local peacemakers is considered essential in enabling agreements and elite-level processes to gain the trust and acceptance of the grassroots community. Even if agreements are signed, they will not take root in practice and yield long-term results if the local population does not perceive them as legitimate and assume ownership of the process. It is also crucial that the individuals who sign the contract are able to implement it; this is often not the case, when the individuals signing the agreement do not actually have the power to see to its execution in practice.[251] These kind of local capacity-building efforts are also based on the notion that political processes, and projects driven by official actors and mostly involving elite-level actors, will not contribute to long-term change if they do not have the support of the larger population. From FCA's perspective, peace agreements can be important, but do not mean much in themselves if other necessary transformation does not take place; here emerges a need for what can be called *reconciling dialogue processes*. Agreements can be regarded as social contracts that lay out principles or goals that the society commits to and that form the basis for statebuilding efforts, but instead of looking to liberal ideals, which have dominated the thinking of international actors, the policy for these types of agreements should be based on the cultural and historical characteristics and logic of each particular context.[252]

FCA and the Network as well Felm see their niche as supporting dialogue processes whose topics and issues are determined by the local communities themselves. This support may include assisting with the strategic planning of processes, and providing other thematic and technical support. It may also include more practical support, such as offering concrete spaces and platforms for dialogue. A similar idea about local partners carrying on and spreading dialogue, and further extending communication, can be detected in Felm and FCA's work. The overall goal is to construct the self-sustaining dialogue that can be continued after the end of each specific operation, ideally even after the end of the NGO's involvement.[253] This is also the goal behind capacity building, as the aim is to provide the kind of dialogic tools that local peacemakers can continue using and pass on in the future.

FCA and the Network primarily approach dialogue from the point of view of religious and traditional actors. This makes inter- and intrareligious dialogue

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[251] Ibid.
[252] Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, 6 September, 2016.
[253] CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative*; Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects*.

- or dialogue between and inside traditional actors and communities - the natural focus of their work. The dialogue promoted by FCA and the Network focuses more on building mutual understanding, finding common denominators, and promoting peaceful coexistence. The emphasis, then, is on the long-term transformation of relations and perceptions between groups and individuals, rather than on resolving particular issues through structured processes.254 The complicated dynamics of protracted conflicts means that in contexts in which religious or traditional structures play a significant role in social organization and political life, religious and traditional actors can rarely be seen as their own entity, separate from the conflict. Rather, they tend to be intertwined with the conflict dynamics, and associated with various different parties in a way that may further complicate mediation and dialogue efforts. On the other hand, religious and traditional actors, particularly those involved in peacemaking, face pressure from various parties, including extremist groups, other armed or political groups involved in the conflict, government actors, or their own community - therefore, they have their own unique support needs in order to successfully promote peace in their communities.255 They also have certain unique capabilities to promote peaceful change due to their position in the society and their ability to draw from religious and traditional values in advancing peace, promoting dialogue, and deconstructing antagonistic images and narratives.256

In FCA and the Network's activities, dialogue is not so much a technical, distinct methodological tool, but rather a fairly broadly defined activity, and an aspect central to all mediation, peacebuilding, and transformation efforts. Dialogue is understood more broadly as communication between groups and may be interwoven into other activities. The Network often adopts a phased approach to dialogue, based on the perception that at times, ground must first be prepared for dialogue. This becomes particularly important in contexts in which there is a great deal of internal dissonance inside religious (or other) groups; therefore, promoting cohesion inside a group may be necessary in order to build a foundation for effective and productive intergroup dialogue. Providing opportunities, platforms and safe spaces for dialogue is considered an integral part of mediation efforts and a way of promoting harmony and understanding in the community. Local religious and traditional actors are seen to have a lot to contribute to these kind of processes in contexts in which their role is important,

254 Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016; interview with the Network Secretariat, November 14, 2016.
255 Mir Mubashir and Luxshi Vimalarajah, "Tradition- and Faith-Oriented Insider Mediators (TFIMs) as Crucial Actors in Conflict Transformation: Potential, Constraints, and Opportunities for Collaborative Support," *The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers Publication 2* (2016); Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation."
256 Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation," Mubashir and Vimalarajah, "Tradition- and Faith-Oriented Insider Mediators (TFIMs) as Crucial Actors in Conflict Transformation," interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016; interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016; interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.

as they have the potential to employ existing religious or traditional values and customs in a positive and constructive manner to support dialogue, particularly that between religious groups, or other groups based on traditional, indigenous structures, such as tribes or clans.

Examples of current activities include intertribal dialogue in Libya and intra-Muslim dialogue in CAR, where dialogue is promoted through a longer process first involving two phases of intra-Muslim dialogue, then proceeding to Muslim-Christian dialogue. The Network is also involved in a variety of projects that are not country-specific, but rather adopt a regional, thematic focus. These include, for example, promoting interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Buddhists in South and Southeast Asia. This work is comprised of various actions, the first of which is the establishment and development of the Asia Working Group, focused on monitoring and analyzing intercommunal tensions and trends in the region, finding innovative means to prevent and counter their rise, and on exploring ways to engage different parties, also more extreme ones. The second action is supporting the development of a Peace Education Manual based on Theravada Buddhist teachings; the manual, written by Buddhist clergy, aims to promote peace education in the face of rising extreme Buddhist nationalism and anti-Muslim sentiment through curriculum development for courses and certification programs, and university-level degrees in the longer term. The third action is the Interfaith Peacemakers' Fellowship Program, which engages Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Muslims peacemakers in interfaith dialogue and knowledge sharing by providing a safe space for interfaith networking, and which arranges workshops aimed at offering tools in areas such as religious literacy, conflict analysis, conflict transformation, early warning systems, and dialogue training. The fourth action is the creation of a peace support mechanism to provide technical support to religious and traditional peacemakers in the region; this would include a standby, rapid response team, as well as long-term assistance. These actions are implemented by the Network Secretariat in collaboration with actors such as the USIP, The Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zürich, the Peace and Conflict Institute at Chulalongkorn University, Mahidol University, and the Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (CPBR).[257]

While there are several similarities between the two FBOs' engagement of local peacemakers, there are also certain differences. In many of Felm's other projects, such as those in Nepal, Pakistan, and South Africa, religious actors play a significant role and the reconciling element is central. In the context of Syria, however, Felm stresses that religious actors are closely divided along pro- or anti-Assad lines, and strongly associated with these competing group affiliations; therefore it would have been risky to use them as access points.[258] The work in

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[257] Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects*.
[258] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.

Syria adopts a similar view to that of FCA in regard to the need of grassroots support for the political process. The project aims to link the bottom-up process to the top-down one, as both processes are considered to need one another.

CMI's work in Iraq can also be regarded as that of creating a reconciling dialogue, but it differs in many respects from the dialogue processes supported by Felm or FCA/the Network for example in terms of the actors involved and the issues discussed, and can be regarded as an effort to offer support to enable a long-term reconciliation process. Through informal dialogue and support, CMI has facilitated the drafting of the Strategy for Reconciliation in Iraq, which is a 50-page long paper for reform in areas covering legislature, governance, and other fields. The Iraq process has been initiated and CMI's role is mandated by the Iraqi government, but in contrast to an ND they have been clear that so far during this preparatory phase one of the core targets for the third party should be the engagement of potential participants. Thus, the process has been confidential and concentrated on trust-building in a situation where strict dichotomies and juxtapositions are evident. At this stage there has not yet been time for an inclusive joint gathering of all groups. Instead, dialogue is organized step by step through focused discrete dialogues that aim to enhance the legitimacy of the state and open perspectives for sustainable peace.[259]

Whether dialogue takes place between religious and traditional or any other type of actors, the inclusion of women, youth, and other marginalized groups is seen as crucial by all of the three organizations. Different contexts pose different challenges to inclusive dialogue. From FCA and the Network's point of view, the most significant obstacle is the fact that traditional or religious structures can be quite patriarchal in nature.[260] Therefore, particular attention is placed on generating collaboration between women and youth, and religious and traditional actors. In intertribal dialogue in Libya, for example, cooperation between tribal leaders, and women and youth, is promoted to enable and increase their participation in dialogue processes.[261] Examples of Felm's recent work include advancing women's engagement in the Syria peace process through the WAB, and youth's participation through the "youth and adolescents platform" made up of Syrian NGO representatives.[262] CMI has, among other initiatives, facilitated women's participation in dialogue through processes such as the Women's Forum for Dialogue in Yemen, and strengthened the political

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[259] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016; Sami Sillanpää, "Suomalainen Hussein al-Taee hieroo vallan kulisseissa rauhaa Irakiin – ja unelmoi maasta, johon voisi viedä perheensä turvallisesti," Helsingin Sanomat December 17, 2017, accessed April 6, 2017, http://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005010483.html
[260] Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016; Aaro Rytkönen, "Uskonnolliset ja perinteiset johtajat ovat rauhanvälityksen ankkureita," in Rauhanvälitys - suomalaisia näkökulmia, ed. Petter Nissinen and Anisa Doty (Helsinki: Kansalaisjärjestöjen konfliktinehkäisyverkosto, 2014), 105.
[261] Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects*.
[262] Felm, *The Syria Initiative: 2nd Quarterly Report 2016.*

engagement of youth networks through the Youth Dialogue Platform in South Sudan.[263]

Although the need to support women's inclusion is an issue acknowledged in the field of mediation for longer, efforts have not always been effectively executed in practice. One challenge stems from the question of who defines inclusivity, and this may become relevant when, for example, promoting the inclusion of women, youth, and other marginalized groups. If the initiative to engage women, youth, or other marginalized groups in dialogue and peace processes comes only from the outside, from private organizations involved in mediation, local ownership and inclusion may conflict. After all, local views on who should be included in dialogue may be different from those of third parties. This means that private organizations have to tread the fine line between setting certain requirements for local action and granting the lead to local actors.

From FCA and the Network's perspective, this becomes an issue when the traditional and religious structures in place pose obstacles to women's participation. These challenges, then, make it all the more important to streamline inclusivity into all projects; in the Network, Inclusivity is one of the four clusters along with peace support, tools and methodology, and thematic expertise on the prevention of violent extremism.[264] However, the Network interviewees argue that these challenges are no reason to shy away from interaction with local, traditional actors, but rather make it all the more important to cooperate with them in developing local processes to better account for inclusivity. It is underlined that inclusivity has to be woven into the religious and traditional fabric from the inside, rather than artificially attached to the process from the outside for the sake of appearances. While it is crucial to bring the inclusivity aspect into the process, local actors should also be allowed to take initiative in handling the issue themselves, and real efforts should be made to transfer ownership of inclusivity aspects to the local actors in a sustainable way.[265] Whether dialogue takes place among women peacemakers, religious actors, or other civil society representatives, it can take various forms and have different purposes.

Dialogic mediation

Dialogue platforms and workshops are not organized only to gain bottom-up legitimacy and support the reconciliation process. They have been used increasingly as a tactical tool for breaking deadlocks, engaging new actors in the peace process, and facilitating the envisioning of a more peaceful future, in

[263] CMI, *Annual Programme Report 2014*.
[264] Network, *Progress Status of the Network Projects*.
[265] Interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.

particular when the official negotiation forum is stalled. These types of informal dialogues organized with selected core individuals are in many ways reminiscent of mediation although they also differ from it in significant ways. While mediation is at least primarily resolution-seeking, what we call dialogic mediation mainly invests in transformation and the identification of key problems. The latter is therefore a looser, more open-ended process. This is why it can often be an option when reaching a solution is unthinkable or when there is the need to make space for a new kind of solution. In this way, dialogic mediation may engage local agency in broader terms than classical mediation. Or, in other words, informal dialogues are processes that may have been initiated by an international third party, but because of their informal nature and often separation from the UN-based official process, it is easier for locals to share responsibility for the agenda, objectives, and participation. The follow-up the question is: would private actors prefer to retreat when their role becomes insignificant and would they want to continue working in the shadows so that they can continue to influence the process when it starts once again to gather strength.

CMI sees itself as an actor that helps the peace process move forward when there is a glitch, a halt, or a setback. The ultimate goal is long-term transformation, but in day-to-day operations the time perspective has to be of a shorter term. What we call dialogic mediation is understood as the best tool to support the emergence of a self-sustaining process that is carried out by local actors who also bring the agenda, priorities, and possible solutions. CMI's input is to hand-pick participants for informal dialogue platforms, which requires in-depth preparation, local contacts, and craftsmanship in finding and engaging individuals. This is a key part of Eronen's concept of artisanship, which emphasizes the reflective stance in peacemakers' work and the notion that the "outcomes of artisanship will be unique because the context from which they start is always unique."[266] Recognizing the right local actors and engaging with them in agenda setting is a key moment of planning. However, as the form and agenda of partnership is not fixed, even in a radically changing situation like Yemen, local partnerships can be utilized for other purposes. Nonetheless, not all local partnerships last, and distrust among local actors and third parties can sometimes ends cooperation.

CMI's approach to dialogic mediation differs in many ways from the broader reconciling dialogues. Even if increasing the inclusivity of the peace process is the goal in both, the very understanding of what inclusivity requires is premised differently. An inclusive society and an inclusive political system are seen as preconditions for self-sustaining peace, but instead of straightforwardly engaging large social groups in broad dialogue CMI focuses more on particular

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[266] Oskari Eronen, "Organising Artisans for Peace," 146.

dialogue platforms with limited participation and agenda. The aim is to engage groups of the society that often cannot engage in official processes, but this is done through hand-picked representatives of these groups. These individuals have to be capable of representing the group and able to promote positive change within the group. A similar idea is present in Felm and FCA's work, which focuses on different types of actors often neglected or marginalized in the peace process. Furthermore, from the perspective of the whole process, the engagement needs to be targeted to marginalized groups whose inclusion would potentially push the whole process forward. Thus, it could be an opposition group within the ruling party (i.e. South Sudan) or powerful oligarchs and societal and economic actors (i.e. Ukraine, Moldova) – this all depends on the context. As conflicts are dynamic, there is always a danger that the position of a group and its role in transformation drastically changes – this may then change its role from an advocate to a spoiler. The process needs to be seen as agile and productive from the perspective of positive transformation, separate from the official political sphere while simultaneously connected to wider events.

In CMI's approach, informal dialogues mainly focus on relationships among people, and these relationships need to be grounded on trust and communication. Thus the facilitation of *channels of communication* is central in order to support long-term transformation through informal dialogue forums.[267] The assumption is that increasing communication channels creates preconditions for the change of perceptions, and thus for the increase of trust which enables new possibilities to advance peace.[268] What becomes important, too, is the type of channels offered. At times when formal channels cannot for whatever reason enable the needed dialogue, it can be supported through other informal components depending on the context.[269] These dialogues may often, but not necessarily always, be discrete to avoid overexposure or politicization - particularly in a tense and vulnerable situation this makes participation easier. The ideal is that an initial core dialogue forum would contribute to the emergence of other sub-forums perhaps sharing some of the same participants while also involving new ones. The intervention is successful if it creates a snowball effect and local participants continue and spread communication channels. The challenge is that the efficiency and the actual long-term effects of dialogic mediation are more difficult to verify than those of mediation efforts that are evaluated according to signed agreements. With dialogic mediation the request for verified influence becomes partly absurd as the opportunity to launch and engage in dialogic interaction is the actual goal, and the long-term effects are unpredictable and dependent on local actors.

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[267] Interview with Brummer, Eronen, and Patokallio, September 6, 2016.
[268] Brummer and Eronen, "Hitting Moving Targets."
[269] Patokallio, pers. comm., March 13, 2017.

In Felm's way of thinking, the grand notion of the whole peace process is more concretely present than it is in CMI's way of thinking; the several informal dialogue platforms are regarded as supporting dialogues that have the particular goal of enabling the construction of an ND in the distant future. In addition to that faraway goal, however, informal dialogues play an essential role of their own in building sustainable peace and long-term transformation, as they are seen "both to give a political horizon to resolve the crisis and more importantly to help to develop inclusive normative frameworks for overcoming the dramatic fragmentation of the country."[270]

Beside the previously mentioned miniature ND forums that constitute the core of national dialogue platforms, the SI has been arranging a variety of dialogue sessions and workshops for political and civil society activists, with some including security officers, judges, and lawyers, to discuss a variety of topics such as national reconciliation, the release of detainees and the fate of the kidnapped, state institution reform, transitional government, and local governance.[271] The SI has also involved the organization of a global week to promote peace through music and arts, the building of partnerships for advocacy with non-traditional political advocacy groups (for example faith-based groups, peace movements, and academic centers) and media actors, and activities to promote knowledge sharing among parties involved in the SI.[272] Felm has also brought together various Syrian women actors. The focus of all these dialogue forums has been more particular and specialized.

Some of these dialogue platforms and workshops are part of the SI's main aim to build up a network of local peace assets in Syria, which includes both networks of private organizations, and individuals trained to be local mediators or facilitators.[273] This policy is closely related to CMI's idea of communication channels of selected core persons but whilst CMI is more active with individuals that have broader influence, Felm's SI is engaging truly local actors with a local focus by "linking different constitutes to the dialogue process and to communal peace building activities aimed at creating a higher moral ground for peace and not directly in negotiating cease fires or access to services and humanitarian needs."[274] Felm aims to develop partnerships, disseminate knowledge, and enable better normative models. This is mainly done by offering different networks the possibility to engage with each other and to break the dividing walls. This activity takes place mainly through focused training and particular dialogue forums. In this way, these local actors are also attached to broader networks of peace processes. According to SI reports, what has been achieved during the project is that 150 initiatives have been carried out by peace assets,

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[270] CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative*, 5; interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
[271] CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative*.
[272] Ibid.
[273] CSI and Felm, *1st Quarterly Report 2016*; CSI and Felm, *2nd Quarterly Report 2016*.
[274] CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative: Annual Report 2015*, 28.

and peace assets have become more proactive, which is also verified by their active participation in SI platforms, their desire to work with other networks, and the new projects and ideas that they are constantly submitting to the SI.275 What cannot be verified in these reports, however, is the most important angle: how these initiatives and activities contribute to the long-term transformation of the complex conflicts. It seems that for the SI the primary role of peace assets has remained to build potential capacity for the future, in addition to this reported ad hoc activity.

A more challenging element of the SI's plan for local peace assets is the idea of individual insider mediators or national facilitators. The SI has had trouble finding volunteers willing to engage, but in the end, a couple of dozen individuals around Syria across the borders of the warring parties have adopted the role. Felm's representatives emphasize that these peace assets are not peace mediation experts per se; they may be local professional and/or activists, people with all types of professions and backgrounds. The common denominator is that they are experts of the local people and contexts; they know the history of the place, the economic structure of the area, or its different ethnic or religious groups. They may offer a multidisciplinary viewpoint to issues, offering economic, historical, political, or other expertise. In this way, they become the key link to the local community, and crucial for the implementation of the achieved developments on the ground.276 The background of these individuals varies, but a certain trusted position within the society and the ability to cross boundaries between some conflicting groups are required.

According to the plan, each peace asset directly contributes to improving the prospects for local peace deals and to reinforcing existing ones, but also to building the potential for a more peaceful future.277 It is reported that they have engaged in mediating and facilitating several locally based conflicts or disputes but have not been involved in local ceasefire negotiations that have taken place around Syria with the government and rebels. The goal is to empower peace assets in Syria, to establish the necessary local, national and international platforms to manage the transformation of the violent conflict raging in the country, and to shift it to a non-violent political arena. It is expected that Syrian peace assets will take charge of the bottom-up processes, build consensus towards a political process to end the conflict, and influence local and international public opinion and decision making processes. They represent new potential, locally evolved political leadership that can engage in local governance and ND when open violence finally comes to an end. Thus, in the end, everything returns to NDs and the strengthening of horizontal knowledge production in the peace process.

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275 Ibid., 10.
276 Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
277 CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative,* 12.

In comparison to CMI's emphasis on communication, knowledge-based dialogue is central to Felm's conceptualization of informal dialogues. Building trust and creating platforms for meetings are a part of organizing dialogues, but their goal-directed agenda is attached to knowledge.[278] According to Felm's experience, it is knowledge that facilitates dialogue which makes it different from the communication-centric views of dialogue cherished by CMI. In Felm's model, it is highly important to design how knowledge is input from the local to the national level and vice versa, but also within tracks among different dialogue forums. This provides the opportunity to manage the whole peace process and to make it possible to transform technical issues at the local level into a goal-oriented process.[279] There are political questions that can be endlessly debated but that does not support transformation, and therefore it is often necessary to steer the dialogue into a more goal-oriented direction, to find tools for resolution and to move the focus from intransigent positions to technical questions. The facilitator is needed here not in setting the agenda or suggesting solutions, but in designing the process as a whole and in transforming it into a goal-directed process.[280] In their approach, the SI has refused to propose solutions but has seen its role in helping stakeholders themselves to reflect on possible entry points and deduce their own lessons learnt. One such tool that has been developed is a draft framework for political negotiations. Thus, in the end their idea of dialogic mediation is closer to the traditional mediation situation, at least when focusing on the role of the third party, even if Felm does not describe its approach as mediation.

In the case of FCA and the Network, the organizations' work includes a specific focus on more radical parties, which official actors cannot talk to and may label as terrorists. FCA and the Network stress that excluding extreme groups from dialogue poses significant obstacles to peace, increases the risk of further radicalization, and drives them closer to terrorist organizations such as ISIS.[281] Addressing extremist groups is also considered crucial because of the particular vulnerability that religious and traditional leaders have in the face of the recruitment processes of such movements, especially when these leaders and their communities are neglected by the local government and the international community. The often desperate situations in local communities in the middle of conflict then make them fertile ground for the radicalization strategies of militias.[282] Indeed, the fabric of relations and allegiances between traditional (such as clan- or tribe-based) and religious communities, political groups, militias, and opportunistic criminal groups is yet another aspect of the highly

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[278] Interview with Rintakoski and Saarnivaara, September 21, 2016.
[279] Ibid.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation"; interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016.
[282] Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation."

complex nature of contemporary conflicts. While the importance of engaging in dialogue and establishing channels of communication with the more radical actors in a conflict is emphasized, it is simultaneously stressed that it is important to be aware of these groups' international agendas and motivations.[283] This is where the role of private peacemakers becomes particularly relevant, as they are able to explore the possibility of informal dialogue and engagement with extremist groups and individuals, and to maintain informal channels of communication to them in order to prevent extremist movements and complex inter-linkages between political, traditional, and criminal groups from spiraling out of control.[284] For example, the Network and FCA's work includes facilitating interfaith dialogue between certain more extreme groups in South- and Southeast Asia, as well as research on the drivers of radicalization and the possibilities for dialogue with radical actors in other regions.[285] These types of engagements are highly challenging and often require extensive research, trust- and relationship-building, and broad connections. This is where the Network's nature and structure as well as FCA's own connections become crucial; the expertise of different civil society partners offers significant support, and local partnerships help gain access to extreme elements on the ground. At the same time, Pentikäinen points out that extremist groups often do not view NGOs as impartial actors, which makes it crucial to empower and support local peacemakers.[286] Local religious and traditional actors can then engage in mediation, prevent radicalization in their communities, and counter the use of religious values in the incitement of violence.

From the point of view of the Network, insider mediators lie at the core of their mediation activities. Like Felm, the FCA and the Network also regard supporting local peace actors as an integral part of their agenda. The issues mediated at the local level are different from, even though often tied to, state-level processes, and thus also require the involvement of different actors. Mediators in the local context need to have knowledge of the everyday needs and practices of the local community, and certain credibility and legitimacy within the community. This makes it difficult for an international outsider to enter the situation. Therefore, the most relevant and important task for the third party in these types of situations is to support local capacities. The third party's role is to recruit potential local peace mediators, to empower them and to act as a linkage between the local and the national and international levels. Nonetheless, it is the local actors who recognize the issues to be mediated and define the agenda of action.

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[283] Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016.
[284] Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016; Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation."
[285] Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, *Progress Status of the Network Projects.*
[286] Pentikäinen, "Reforming UN Mediation," 71.

Local mediators are made up of a wide variety of different actors ranging from high-level religious and traditional leaders to individuals at the grassroots. The Network then supports the peace efforts of these actors by offering financial, technical, and other support. Although the Network was originally conceptualized as a network of religious and traditional leaders, the emphasis has since shifted to peacemakers at all levels. The Network has developed the idea of Tradition- and Faith-Oriented Insider Mediators (TFIMs), which can be regarded as a subgroup of the broader group of insider mediators. This category adds a new angle to their previous policy to engage traditional and religious leaders. TFIMs are not necessarily authoritative traditional or religious leaders, but actors who, one way or another, incorporate traditional and religious elements in their conflict transformation efforts. TFIMs can thus even challenge patriarchal leadership, and their approach to mediation does not necessarily rest fully on religion. TFIMs may also facilitate the involvement of neutral outsider mediators; in this way, TFIMs as insider-partial mediators may have a complementary role alongside outsider-impartial (international) mediators; they often have crucial, first-hand knowledge about the local context, and extensive connections and access to the ground. They may also play a central role by themselves – primarily on account of their inside knowledge of the conflict, their own desire for peace, and their close relationship with, and legitimacy among conflict stakeholders.[287] However, according to Mubashir and Vimalarajah's study (commissioned by the Network), the work of TFIMs faces numerous challenges, such as conflict-insensitive interventions by international actors who often have an Orientalist view of TFIMs, lack of financial and organizational means, and lack of collaborative structures. [288] These are obstacles the Network aims to address.

Insider mediators include a range of insider-partial and insider-neutral mediators. The "insiderness" of local peacemakers is not a straightforward and unambiguous issue; according to Mubashir and Vimalarajah, it requires a subjective interest and involvement in the conflict, yet not to such extent that the insider is incapable of any objective perceptions or of seeing the conflict system in a holistic way.[289] Indeed, the insider position of TFIMs tends to be a matter of perspective, and may change with shifting conflict dynamics. Furthermore, Mubashir and Vimalarajah categorize insider mediators into authoritative mediators and social network mediators. Social network mediators focus on people and relationships and tend to take a dialogic approach, and are often considered to be more flexible and active than authoritative mediators. TFIMs

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[287] Interview with Abdile, Pentikäinen, Perukangas, Puoskari, and Tarvainen, September 6, 2016.
[288] Mubashir and Vimalarajah, "Tradition- and Faith-Oriented Insider Mediators (TFIMs) as Crucial Actors in Conflict Transformation."
[289] Ibid., 16.

adopt proactive and reactive roles and their dialogical approach that create and nurture space and possibilities for conflict transformation.290

The inclusion of TFIMs and other local peacemakers makes it possible to create inclusive space for dialogue between all of the relevant actors and allow space for creative thinking. Also more traditional mediation can benefit from creative approaches (which are learning exercises in their own right). Furthermore, TFIMs and civil society actors can use their influence to address so-called violent extremism, but also to help others gain a sense of the root causes of extremism and to ensure that mechanisms are in place to address these root causes. In the end, it is highly important that states and international actors recognize unofficial peace mediation efforts, and avoid imposing top-down efforts and undermining TFIMs.

Both Felm and the Network offer training to local peacemakers, who have differing support needs. In their capacity-building efforts, both organizations emphasize peer-to-peer exchange and self-learning, rather than theoretical training.291 The focus is often on facilitating meetings, providing platforms for discussion, and offering logistical and technical support. For example, the SI arranges interactive training modules that can be accessed by the local peacemakers.292 Likewise, the Network's training workshops courses for diplomats and track 1 actors, for example UN officials, also take into account the experience that local peacemakers already have.293 From the point of view of locally driven processes, the training situation holds the potential risk of undermining the local and context-specific practices and understanding of peace if trainers are not familiar with these. However, it is obvious that local actors need different kinds of empowerment from the third party, depending on their role and influence in the society.

The Network emphasizes that the potential to mediate locally is very context-specific; in some contexts, religious and traditional structures offer the most relevant framework of social organization in the society, while in other contexts other types of insider mediators have more influence to advance peace. From the point of view of the Network, the engagement of religious actors, for example, is not based on the need to bring them into every possible peace process, but to identify situations in which they play a key role, so that peace initiatives would not fail because religious aspects were ignored in the process due to outside actors being uncomfortable and unfamiliar with them. This idea of context-specificity is shared by all of the other NGO representatives, and is a key aspect of the fluidity and flexibility of their approach. Each private

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290 Ibid.
291 CSI and Felm, *The Syria Initiative,* 18; interview with the Network Secretariat, November 14, 2016.
292 Ibid.
293 Interview with Abdile and Rytkönen, November 14, 2016.

organization has their particular niche that allows them to engage relevant actors according to their areas of specialization.

5. The Dialogic Approach

Private peacemakers are certainly not newcomers in the peacemaking field, even if they are still regarded by many as somehow subordinated to track I peace diplomacy. Thus, their role is seen as supportive to track 1 processes and in the best case, the relationship between official and private is understood to be well integrated and institutionalized. Is that the whole picture? It is true that track 1-level official peace diplomacy preserves its legitimate position but is also in a crisis as fewer and fewer violent conflicts manage to be resolved successfully in negotiations on the track 1 level. And even where agreement is achieved, it is an exaggeration to talk about sustainable peace. Thus it is obvious that the investment of private peacemakers is desperately needed for building up peace and breaking deadlocks. The relationship between official and private needs to be rethought in a more flexible and interactive manner. There is not only one ideal model available but several fitting for different contexts and for different kinds of private actors. It is indeed important to turn attention to private peacemakers and consider how they comprehend their added value to official peace diplomacy and, above all, their way of approaching conflict transformation. In this study we argue that during the past few years, private peacemakers have been a powerhouse of innovative thinking in peacemaking and have challenged several established and previously unquestioned practices relating to organizing peace processes. They have introduced a new, more nuanced a way to distribute complementary roles between official and private actors. We have examined this private peacemakers' challenge from the perspective of three Finnish private actors.

Private peacemakers in general, and the Finnish actors CMI, FCA, and Felm in particular, are not uniform in their approach to mediation and dialogue. However, there are also several similarities in their adopted practices and their comprehension of conflict transformation, and this is why it is possible to recognize a new common approach that we have termed a *dialogic approach* to mediation or peacemaking more broadly. This type of new approach draws from theories on the transformation and complexity of conflicts and is founded on a focus on dialogue, long-term change and sustainability, and local ownership. It emphasizes context-specificity, localized approaches, and the fluidity and flexibility of concepts and approaches, and derives entry points from local actors rather than official mandates.

The dialogic approach in our opinion is an appropriate term to describe the new fresh, revolutionary informal peace diplomacy executed by private peacemakers. The dialogic approach is not a uniform and coherent tool, but it is

possible to detect certain main characteristics, although their particular application varies among various private peace actors:

1. *Multifaceted mediators:* Fluidity and flexibility with conceptual definitions is characteristic to current private actors. They move fluently from one concept to another and recognize that usage of particular concepts is a political act; the same actions are seen differently by different parties, from different perspectives. Successful maneuvering within the complex architecture of peacebuilding requires sensitive balancing between perceptions and interpretations of locals, other third parties, and donors. The notions are powerful and the usage of concepts with a particular definition like "mediation" or "national dialogues" may close doors. In order to be smart actors it is important to be able to bring in elements of mediation into peace processes without calling the process mediation. In comparison to official actors, private actors' footprint in conflict dynamics is often more invisible, enabling fluidity and multifaceted agency.

2. *Self-sustaining actors:* Mandates have been a dominant frame for official processes and a prerequisite for private actors' participation. Mandates have for a long time been a source of unhealthy competition among private organizations and a source of major friction between the official and the private sector. In the new approach, the dominance of mandates has been challenged in principle and in practice, and instead of looking for mandates, private actors are looking for entry points. A mandate might be one, but is just one among many options. However, if an entry point is found beyond the official peace process, it has to be based on invitation primarily given by a local actor. This kind of approach enables entering into conflicts that are not yet declared and labelled publicly as conflicts, and investing more on preventive mediation.

3. *Transformative peace processes:* Emphasis is now more on transformation, rather than resolution. Resolutions are still needed in goal-oriented field work, but the peace process as a whole is understood as a long-term transformation process. Private peacemakers push for transformation towards self-sustainable peace by "precision strikes" on well-selected targets. Even if private actors may have an overall vision of the whole peace process, they understand they often aim to generate rather limited and selective change, which in the best-case scenario would have a snowball effect. Thus, the core skill of private actors is to recognize the right spots, design appropriate action to enhance transformation, and find an entry point which enables their contribution.

4. *Complexity thinking*: Emphasis of the complexity of conflict rejects the previously dominating linear approach, instead adopting the idea that it is not possible to design the whole peace process beforehand and that rational management is not possible as linear logic between input and outcome does not hold. Small invisible inputs may in the longer perspective have more influential consequences than a large-scale peace process. Thus small actors may have greater influence than large ones, if they are smart enough. Accepting the complexity of conflicts requires from a third party the ability to be continuously reactive, creative in its maneuvers, and able to be context-specific.

5. *Context-specificity*: All private actors (as well as many official actors too) emphasize how every conflict and its transformation or resolution has to be seen as unique. There are no universal lessons that can adapted to all new cases in a similar way. Peacebuilders consolidate the local society, and the goal of transformation is self-sustainable peace.

6. *Emphasis on dialogues:* Private organizations rarely arrange classical roundtable negotiations, but instead support different types of dialogues among parties, or within one party of the conflict. Dialogues are seen to be more inclusive tools than often elite-based negotiations. Dialogue platforms vary from large officially mandated NDs to informal dialogue platforms with selected participants, and the number of participants can vary from thousands to a couple of dozens. Furthermore, the understanding of what the niche of dialogue is may vary a lot. For CMI, increasing communication is the core tool from building trust, while for Felm, concentrating on knowledge transmission is also a dominant issue. While the majority of organized dialogues are more of the problem-finding kind, there are also those which look to problem-solving or aim to combine both goals.

7. *Informal dialogues:* Beside the very large and nation-wide NDs, informal dialogues have become a major tool for private peacemakers to enhance transformation. They can be regarded as a flexible, context-specific, and tailor-made tool that can have various particular objectives. Instead of looking for incompatible interests to be resolved, peacemakers emphasize the need to transform perceptions and antagonistic relationships through trust-building and other efforts. Phenomena like trust and communication channels have become the primary focus of their work. The overall objective is to enable new horizons of peace and

thus to break deadlocks and to create moments for peaceful change. A distinction can be made between *reconciling dialogues* and *dialogic mediation*: The first aims to strengthen the legitimacy of the peace process by enhancing the feeling of a locally owned process, and the latter focuses more on pushing the peace process forward and creating new momentum for the peace process. The first looks for inclusion of large groups so far marginalized from the official process (i.e. women, religious actors), while the latter focuses more on engaging particular individuals who may have the ability to change perceptions (i.e. members of the business elite or radicalized groups willing to be engaged in the peace process) and is thus closer to mediation.

8. *Localized mediation:* Designing activity with and through local partners, and recognizing and empowering local peace actors are key elements of the private organizations' work. However, practices of enhancing locally driven processes may vary from capacity building to support of local peace actors and everything in between. According to private actors, investing in capacity building and trust building would support an emergence of local agency, but frictions between the locally driven process and the third party intervention cannot be altogether avoided. In comparison to official actors, private actors better acknowledge that a third party is not only an outsider, but simultaneously becomes an integral part of the complexity of the conflict and a stakeholder in it. It seems that limited operations beyond UN-led processes or grassroots-oriented operations at their best enable local ownership and agency. The major challenge for the future is how to transmit this local agency to official large-scale peace operations and from track 2 to track 1 level.

9. *Self-sustaining peace:* In the ideal situation, private peacemakers depart from the *liberal* form of peace support, as the dialogic approach escapes a definitive definition of peace and understands the process as open-ended. However, the question over whether the transformation is completely open-ended or has loosely framed milestones differentiates among the examined private actors. In the most radical interpretation, the third party should not give attention to a long-term end goal as that is purely a matter for locals; yet, when working within the complex international peace architecture, it is not possible to avoid pre-given agenda frameworks and in practice the particular objectives may still reflect the ideals of liberal peace.

10. *Artisans for peace:* In comparison to earlier understandings of peacemakers as doctors who aim to recognize the cause of illness and find

appropriate medicine for it, or even sometimes as engineers that can manage complicated peacebuilding processes, private peacemakers can, to follow CMI's term, be seen as "artisans for peace." The emphasis of the new kind of self-identification is partly on craftsmanship, but also attached to certain artistic features. Peacemaking does not just require crafted skills learned by experience and rehearsing, but also sensitive intuition and creative ability to be spontaneous since it is not possible to copy exact models from previous cases, each of which is unique. Artisanship is about the ability to contact and communicate with the right people, to apply hunch and intuition in working in a complex context, and to recognize the right moments. It is about taking pride in one's skills, and assuming the ethical responsibility of one's own action.

The field of peacemaking is in turbulent change. There are more peacemaking actors than before but fewer success stories. Simultaneously the arising geopolitical trends and the strengthening power-political rationale narrow down momentum for peace diplomacy. The major challenge of peace diplomacy is how to organize the relationship between official track 1 diplomacy and tens of private peacemakers. It is obvious that jealous competition is something to be avoided, and vertical and horizontal cooperation, design, and coordination are desperately needed. Furthermore, it is important to comprehend the role and added value of private peacemakers in broad terms and to see the private sector not just as a supportive sector for the official one, but as an important and self-sustaining sector of its own. Still, the question of how to organize and cope with the asymmetric relationship between the official and the private cannot be avoided.

The "Finnish model" offers an interesting example that may have wider significance. In the Finnish context, the official and the private sector form a symbiotic relationship that benefits both. There is a lot of interaction and various mutual learning processes, but it is still obvious that the official and private sectors can never fully merge, as their practices, agendas, and identities are fundamentally different. In the Finnish model, it is a question of balancing with different cultures and approaches and, above all, the ability to tolerate these differences. From a broader perspective this may – much better than well institutionalized hierarchical systems – enable innovative thinking and new kind of approaches. The relationship is like those in the business sector, as donors look for targets for risk investments that in the best-case scenario bring large profits also to donors – yet, there is always a high risk of losing everything. In the field of peacemaking, the profit would be peace or at least change towards peace, and this would also enhance the reputation of the donor. However, in comparison to business investments, private peacemaking initiatives contain a low risk in regard to finances, as projects are still rather small and limited.

Nonetheless, the culture of Results-Based Management that is dominant in development as well as the peace sector may be a major obstacle for change. If accepting complexity thinking and transformative goals in a short or even long-term perspective, pinpointing the particular results of particular action is seen as absurd and impossible, and projects that are too result-oriented will not allow innovative activity. As conflicts are complex, it is not realistic that one intervention would be the crucial strike towards peace. Rather, it is a question of the complexity of peace interventions and very long-term progress with interruptions and setbacks. Conflicts and peace are not manageable, and the peace also architecture changes often. It is therefore often not possible to clearly identify the outputs of particular inputs. Tolerance towards uncertainties and unpredictabilities is what is expected from all actors – official and private – within a complex peace architecture. Moments for classical mediation have become rare and, as in many cases track 1 actors are incapable of acting in a smooth, invisible, and flexible enough way, a third party is needed to enable dialogic transformation in all phases of the conflict cycle, and their role could sometimes be crucial in enabling peace negotiations.

What, then, does this mean in the Finnish context? As it has been suggested in the study that the Finnish model has a set of unique qualities that enable cooperation between the state and private organizations as independent partners and mediators on their own, rather than as a support network of the state, it offers potential for questioning the traditional ideals and dogmas of liberal peacebuilding and classical mediation. As the relationship between the Finnish state and the private organizations extends beyond a simple donor-recipient relationship, and beyond other forms of more conventional or more development-oriented cooperation, it offers particular possibilities to approach mediation from new, innovative angles, and to explore fresh ways for the state to build on its existing relationship with private peacemakers in a way that benefits both parties and maximizes long-term effects and sustainable transformation of conflicts.

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