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Business and social peace processes: how can insights from post-conflict studies help CSR to address peace and reconciliation?

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Abstract

Private sector activities have often been linked to the fuelling of conflict and violence. At the same time, there has been growing interest in the contributions that the business sector can potentially make to peace, both from within academia (for example the ‘peace through commerce’ literature) and in the global institutional realm (for example the Business for Peace agenda). Proponents of such approaches claim that businesses have roles to play not only in contributing to growth and socio-economic development, but also in resolving or preventing conflict.

But what is meant by peace? The chapter engages the insights of post-conflict scholarship in order to employ a more holistic concept of peace, arguing that sustainable peace relies on the success both of a political and a social peace process. Social peace processes involves social transformation that goes beyond the ending of violence. The chapter asks how companies’ CSR activities can actively support such social peace processes and address the specific challenges of post-conflict societies, while critically engaging with some of the discourses that are central to the recent business for peace agenda. In reviewing current examples for CSR programming in post-conflict areas, it is demonstrated that social issues around reconciliation and reconstruction are frequently neglected.

Introduction

Private sector activities have been linked to the fuelling of conflict and violence, with blood diamonds, environmental degradation after oil spills, and the profiteering from repressive regimes but a few well-documented examples. At the same time, there has been growing interest in the contributions that the business sector can potentially make to peace. Academic debates have emerged, predominantly in the field of business ethics, on ‘peace through commerce’ (see Oetzel, Westermann-Behaylo, Koerber, Fort, & Rivera, 2009 for an overview). In the global institutional realm, the UN’s Global Compact (UNGC) has given rise to the Business for Peace (B4P) agenda, while transparency initiatives such as the Kimberley Process and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative are industry-specific attempts to deal with businesses’ complex relationships to conflict. Proponents of these varied approaches would agree that businesses across the spectrum have roles to play not only in contributing to growth and socio-economic development, but also in resolving or preventing conflict. In particular, the recently emerging B4P paradigm imagines multinational corporations as alternative to traditional aid institutions in conflict and post-conflict environments (Miklian & Schouten, 2014).

The private sector’s positive engagement in conflict and post-conflict contexts might be categorised in a number of ways: addressing conflict and peace through a company’s core business activities (such as through its supply chains; by offering products that meet the needs of post-conflict societies; or within the company’s employment structures and work places), policy dialogue with host government and civil societies (such as by funding think tanks, research, or media campaigns to promote peace), and through social investment (Nelson, 2000). The focus of this chapter is on CSR and on the contributions it can make in post-conflict and transitional societies. While the term is often used interchangeably with corporate social investment (see e.g. Muthuri, 2013 on CSR in Africa), the definition of CSR employed here understands it as including any activities or investments made by a company to make its business operations more socially or environmentally sustainable. In other words, any of the above-outlined ways of addressing peace, be it through core business activities, the work place or social investment, can be understood as part of a company’s CSR strategy.

Recent critical scholarship on CSR has looked at the relationships and interlinkages of development and CSR (Banks & Hulme, 2014; Blowfield & Dolan, 2014; Idemudia, 2014). While companies in developing countries often claim that their CSR programmes can

enhance socio-economic development, critics have been sceptical. Many developmental issues cannot be tackled through a business rationale or be converted into business issues (Blowfield & Frynas, 2005; Idemudia, 2014). Others maintain that the very idea of a business solution to development perpetuates a depoliticised version of development and appropriates other ways of thinking through development (Rajak, 2011). Key concepts in business engagement in development, such as the ‘social license to operate’, moreover assume relatively powerful and well-organised communities and civil society organisations (Mueller-Hirth, forthcoming).

These concerns pertain to companies’ activities in transitional societies too, but there are additional challenges that post-conflict societies must deal with. Drawing on insights from the interdisciplinary field of post-conflict studies, it can be argued that sustainable peace relies on the success both of a political and a social peace process. Social peace processes involve social transformation that goes beyond the scope of political settlements and the ending of violence. They include policies that will encourage civil society, benefit the victims of human rights violations and that re-integrate ex-combatants and child soldiers. But they also encompass efforts at truth recovery and memorialisation, citizenship education, economic restructuring and restorative justice (Brewer, 2010). A key aim of this chapter is then to chart how companies’ CSR activities can actively support such social peace processes and contribute to post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. In other words, how can CSR address the social issues that political transitions produce? And how, if at all, are companies’ CSR programmes currently addressing the challenges that post-conflict societies face? We know that CSR activities are conducted in conflict and post-conflict areas, but are they relevant to their specific context? In order to review existing CSR approaches, the chapter engages the insights of post-conflict scholarship and seeks to extend the debate on the role of business in post-conflict settings by employing a more holistic concept of peace. Rather than examining what makes business involvement in peace successful, this chapter moreover seeks to critically engage with the concepts and discourses employed in the recent business for peace agenda.

At the outset, the arguments put forward here need to be qualified with several caveats. Firstly, I specifically focus on post-conflict settings, i.e. those who are transitioning out of conflict, while the emerging literature has tended to look more often at business in conflict (Davis, 2013 is an exception). In practice the conflict and post-conflict stages frequently overlap, with many post-conflict societies suffering from ongoing conflict and

violence. Secondly, as much as post-conflict settings vary, so do the types of businesses that operate in them. There are many roles that small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) can play locally, with potentially vast contributions to peace and stability (Alexander, Gündüz, & Subedi, 2009; Yousuf & Bayley, 2015). The type and size of a company impacts on its relationship to conflict, with different companies having different risks and responsibilities in conflict environments (Nelson, 2000). Moreover, it is sometimes forgotten that MNCs only play a small part in most post-conflict settings, with informal economies making up most of the private sector (Miklian & Schouten, 2014). Having said this, the majority of research in the area of business and peace has been focused on MNCs. It is also these global actors most likely to engage with global frameworks for CSR and corporate governance: ‘local businesses in conflict settings are difficult partners for global initiatives, and excluded by the silent entry costs composed of access to technology, mobility and formal accounting systems’ (Miklian & Schouten, 2014: p.18)

This chapter proceeds as follows: the following section provides an overview of the changing context of business engagement in conflict and post-conflict zones. This leads to a critical review of recent academic and policy debates around the role of business after conflict, which also highlights some of their tropes such as the notion of partnerships. The concepts of social peace processes and positive peace are then set out. Using the argument about the necessity of programmes that address such social aspects, the next section explores how CSR might be able to specifically contribute to sustainable peace in post-conflict settings, and which conflict-sensitive CSR programmes companies are currently undertaking.

The changing context of business engagement in (post-)conflict zones

The context of business engagement with society has shifted significantly over the last three decades. Key changes include an increase in so-called ‘new wars’ (Kaldor, 2001), that is, intra-state conflicts that are increasingly financed and armed by global actors. Globalisation has also led to multinational companies investing in emerging markets, with a concomitant rise of these emerging economies as investors in their own right. While the last two decades have seen greater expectations of the behaviour and ethics of businesses, the pressures from domestic consumers on companies’ conduct vary hugely from country to country. Accompanying these changing expectations, the business sector has also gained greater importance in development, as the development sector has become partially privatised and

foreign direct investment (FDI) as increased while public development assistance has declined. Finally, globalisation has increased the possibilities of peacemaking (Brewer, 2010).

But why is it important for businesses to engage with conflict and peace? First of all, MNCs invest in many countries where corruption indices are high. The security risks of operating as a foreign business were rated medium to high in about one third of all countries in 2000 (Nelson, 2000). Perhaps most significantly, the majority of businesses provide not military but civilian products and do not benefit from conflict. Businesses consequently tend to assess conflict as a risk which can affect their business operations and profit in direct and indirect ways (*ibid.*). Costs are incurred through security spending, risk management costs (such as high insurance premiums), capital costs (for example finding it harder to raise costs through the international banking system), personnel costs (from risk of losing lives to increased stress) and litigation costs (*ibid.*). What is more, there are increasingly reputational risks for companies' engagement in, and potential exacerbation of, violent conflict. Nonetheless, the benefits often still outweigh the costs, particularly for 'big footprint' industries in the extractive sector.

Despite this clear rationale for engaging in peacebuilding, companies are not usually seen as peacebuilding institutions – rather, they are often viewed as escalating existing conflicts or helping to create new ones, particularly in developing countries that are resource rich or that provide labour to multinational companies. The focus of scholarship on business and conflict (similar to that on business and peace) has been mainly on MNCs, documenting how they have exacerbated violent conflict by financing war parties or insurgents, trading conflict goods or hiring aggressive private security firms (Rieper, 2013). Extractive sector companies have been accused of fuelling civil wars, contributing to environmental degradation, the displacement of populations and the degradation of livelihoods. Companies, through their support of particular groups or elites and patronage networks, are also documented to have negative impacts on community relations. Poor working conditions, security arrangements and human rights abuses in supply chains can further feed violence and conflict (it goes beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the issue of the private sector as exacerbating conflict in detail; see for example Collier & Hoeffler, 1998; Ferguson, 2005; Ross, 2012; Watts, 2005). In addition, there is a small proportion of companies that directly benefits from war, such as the armaments industry.

So how can businesses position themselves in conflict- and post-conflict societies? Rieper (2013) distinguishes four types of relationships: proactive engagement towards peace and security, business as usual, withdrawal, or taking advantage of public regulation gaps. Despite this range of options, organisations in large footprint sectors such as mining are not likely to withdraw in practice, since resources cannot be moved elsewhere and operations are very expensive to set up and run (Kolk & Lenfant, 2013). Nelson (2000) employs a pyramid to conceptualise different types of engagement. At the bottom is compliance with relevant legal frameworks, which is what businesses should do at the very minimum. Risk minimisation on the second tier involves an awareness of the impacts and actions to minimise damage. Value creation goes beyond compliance and risk minimisation, with ‘companies proactively creat[ing] positive societal value by optimising the external multipliers of their own business operations and engaging in innovative social investment, stakeholder consultation, policy dialogue, advocacy and civic institution building, including collective action with other companies’ (ibid.: 2000, p. 7).

Overall there has been a shift in CSR discourse and practice over the past decade or so, from more traditional social investment to strategic CSR (see e.g. Auld, Bernstein, & Cashore, 2008). This discursive shift is also evident in the area of business and peace, with companies ideally ‘align[ing] their strategy to peace and embed it in everything that they do’ (Haski-Leventhal, 2014: p.4). However, as a later section demonstrates, there is a gap between the discourses of companies who want to strategically embed ‘conflict-relevant’ contributions (cf. Rieper, 2013) and the realities of CSR projects in post-conflict countries.

‘Business for Peace and ‘peace through commerce’: the rise of an agenda and its limitations

This section reviews what recent scholarly and policy debates have considered companies’ positive contributions to peacebuilding and critically engages with some of its key assumptions, such as the benefits of partnerships and of economic growth. An emerging business and peace agenda is evident in policy initiatives such as the UNGC and the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights for extractive industries. The UNGC identifies four areas in which the business sector can make contributions to addressing conflicts: running business operations lawfully and inclusively (e.g. through hiring and procurement); constructive alliances with host governments; local stakeholder engagement;

and strategic social investment (UN Global Compact, 2010). The UNGC launched the Business for Peace (B4P) initiative in 2013 in order to help companies implementing responsible business practices in conflict-affected and high-risk areas. B4P signatories are asked to take action to advance peace by aligning their activities with the UNGC's ten principles (related to human rights, labour standards, the environment, and anti-corruption) and further international standards, in partnerships with others. The B4P thus goes beyond the old doctrine that businesses should simply 'do no harm' and urges the sector to engage more directly with issues around conflict and peace. This has led some to describe the B4P agenda as a 'new normative ideal' within global policy discourse (Miklian & Schouten, 2014), with the approach having been adopted by a number of public development actors such as Norwegian ministry of foreign affairs. Moreover, initiatives such as the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, the ISO26000 and the Conflict Free Gold standard explicitly address peace in the mining context. All of these initiatives are voluntary. Miklian and Schouten (2014) chart the emergence of this business for peace agenda in global and regional initiatives as a result of debates about the relationships between business and conflict. These were in part prompted by key moments that were damaging to the reputation of the industry, such as Shell's alleged collaboration in the execution of the Ogoni Nine in Nigeria or De Beers' alleged involvement with conflict diamonds.

Paralleling this shift in institutional attention, an emerging strand of academic literature now investigates the potential role of business, specifically TNCs, in resolving violent conflict. This work on the peace-building role of businesses is sometimes grouped under the banner of 'peace through commerce' and explores how companies can develop 'conflict sensitivity' (Alexander et al., 2009; Banfield, Haufler, & Lilly, 2005; Nelson, 2000; Oetzel et al., 2009). Conflict sensitivity requires companies (and others) to 'understand the context in which they operate, especially latent and open conflict dynamics; understand the actual and potential mutual impacts between this context and their own actions; and act on this understanding in order to identify future risks, avoid negative impacts, and maximise positive impacts' (Alexander et al. 2009, p. 10). Conflict-sensitive approaches might be contrasted with conflict-relevant approaches, which seek to address the root causes of conflict and violence directly (Rieper, 2013). This distinction is important for the arguments put forward in this chapter about social peace processes, since it is arguably only through tackling the structural causes of violence that sustainable peace can be achieved.

How does this literature envisage that business can contribute to peace? At the most fundamental level, businesses are generally seen to make a contribution to peace in post-conflict societies by doing what they are doing anyway: contributing to economic development and extending the reach of markets. This might involve economic growth but also the creation of jobs, investment or the transfer of skills (Oetzel et al., 2009). It is perhaps surprising that much of the literature on businesses' roles in peacebuilding sees economic growth as a relatively straightforward contribution, given that this assumes that growth trickles down. In practice, an increase in GDP might not give greater opportunities to the most disenfranchised, especially in deeply unequal society that have experienced protracted conflict. High levels of inequality can hinder economic growth and the distribution of economic opportunities throughout society. More generally, it must be acknowledged that the private sector's primary aim is not to reduce inequalities and ensure equitable growth.

In terms of positive contributions, companies might also be considered part of a neutral market space, for example in the context of ethno-religious conflicts (Oetzel et al., 2009). As such, they can provide (work) spaces in which people can interact with historically defined 'others' in still-divided societies. Businesses can thus contribute to overcoming divisions and promoting a sense of community (ibid.). Such neutrality is not likely to be achieved however if there is a history of corporate malpractice in that particular area, or if the business sector has explicitly aligned itself with a warring party in the past. Companies can have a positive role in diplomacy, the promotion of dialogue or in mediation (Davis 2012). This was the case in the later years of Apartheid in South Africa, where representatives from the African National Congress (ANC) and the white business community had begun secret meetings and negotiations in exile from the mid-1980s onwards (Gumede, 2005). Through organisational practices, transparency initiatives and corporate governance, companies might also be able to indirectly contribute to institutional reform (Banfield et al., 2005).

Haufler (2004, cited in Idemudia, 2010) stated, about a decade ago, that we lack empirical evidence on whether corporate engagement in peace actually contributes to a reduction of conflict. The jury is still out on this issue today. Rieffer (2013), for example, in her more recent study of MNCs' contributions to peace and security in zones of conflict, explores companies' commitments and their behaviour, rather than the impact of corporate engagement which she argues is extremely difficult to assess. Davis (2012) further notes that the various tool kits and guidance documents by global institutions and NGOs have so far not

led to widely-used conflict-sensitive practices – and this also means that it is hard to evaluate their impact. It must be noted that there is a dearth of empirical research, with much of the literature on business engagement in peace conceptual and general. In particular, what is missing is ethnographic work that could explore how corporate discourses and programmes are experienced, negotiated and contested on the ground. One of the reasons for this lack of in-depth research might well be that conflict and post-conflict settings can be perceived as challenging and risky environments for researchers.

However, there is a more fundamental issue that is sometimes neglected in the peace through commerce literature: should MNCs be peacebuilders in the first place (Miklian & Schouten, 2014)? There is arguably little or no accountability for business engagement under the UNGC and other transparency initiatives, with compliance so far based on self-reporting. Given this voluntary character, sceptics regard business engagement in peacebuilding in a similarly negative light as business contributions to development: as greenwash that deflects criticisms of unsustainable or corrupt practices (e.g. Banerjee, 2008; Frynas, 2008). What is more, both scholarly and institutional foci have predominantly been on MNCs with Western headquarters. This somewhat ignores the realities of an increasingly decentred global economy, witnessed for example in the rise of the BRICS countries and the growing influence of China in Africa. Companies headquartered in these countries may not share the same reputational risks and pressures from stakeholders at home, or they may not be signatories to global transparency initiatives. One illustration of this point can be found in the case of oil and gas company Talisman that withdrew from Sudan after stakeholder pressure, which allowed Asian companies access that were less clearly committed to the peacebuilding activities envisaged by global institutions (Miklian & Schouten, 2014).

A further major limitation of the new academic and policy literature on business for peace is the fairly uncritical notion of partnerships it regularly employs. The ubiquity of the partnership discourse in the business for peace agenda mirrors global development priorities over the last decade or two. USAID for instance enthusiastically claimed in 2007 that there has been a ‘renaissance of partnerships for international development’ (PEPFAR 2007: 9). To ‘develop a global partnership for development’ was one of the Millennium Development Goals and forms a key element in the post-2015 development agenda. The Post-Washington Consensus has provided the theoretical underpinnings for this ‘renaissance’ and exemplifies the re-accommodation of the state and society as complementary mechanisms for development after a cruder liberalism of earlier decades (Fine, 2001).

One of the key early publications in the business for peace field highlighted the importance and value of developing ‘new types of cross-sector partnership between business, government and civil society [which] will be absolutely critical in building peace and preventing or resolving conflict (Nelson, 2000: p.12), but it does not explain what these partnerships involve. Yousuf and Bayley’s (2015) report on marble mining in Pakistan begins with the assumption that multisectoral partnerships create the conditions for long-term investment, which ultimately leads to peaceful societies. To cite just one other example from many policy and corporate documents, the UNGC’s Strategy 2014 – 2016 uses the term partnership 55 times, without defining what constitutes a ‘transformational’ (p.27) partnership, how partnerships might differ from community engagement or stakeholder consultations, or indeed how partnership requirements differ from NGO-business collaborations to business-government partnerships. What unites the usage of the notion of partnerships in these and many other policy and corporate documents is the assumption that partnerships are equal, necessarily beneficial and that they are not characterised by power relations.

MNCs often see partnerships with NGOs as ways of managing reputational issues, but this type of partnership does not necessarily embed conflict relevance in their operations. Kolk and Lefant (2013) for example note that while empirical evidence about NGO-business collaborations is relatively limited, ‘studies that looked at partnerships in African conflict settings concluded that collaborative activities follow a rather philanthropic model’ (p. 47). Few of such collaborations dealt with aspects that are *directly* related to peace and reconciliation; rather they were generic and paid insufficient attention to conflict dynamics and contexts (ibid.). What is more, in the idealistic vision of partnerships as equal that is put forward in policy documents such as those mentioned above, it is overlooked that corporations often profit from the new role as peacebuilders they are being given. Conversely, for NGOs there can be negative effects: first, for advocacy NGOs there are reputational risks in partnering with corporations; second, where NGOs tend to represent the interests of communities in the context of CSR programmes, community voices might well become more marginalised (Mueller-Hirth, forthcoming).

There is then a disparity between global discourses of companies’ peacebuilding and partnerships, and their local operating practices which might continue to include traditional philanthropic projects characterised by particular power relations. As I argue below, much of

the CSR activities that are carried out in post-conflict zones are focused on security and economic growth, as opposed to engaging with peace as a multidimensional concept.

What is peace? Introducing the concept of social peace processes

This section outlines the notion of social peace processes that is employed throughout this chapter. How peace is defined, and who gets to define it, is central to examining the potential role of businesses in post-conflict societies. And yet, the concept of peace is rarely delineated in companies' CSR programmes. This has particularly outcomes as Miklian and Schouten note: 'not defining peace allows it to form a "boundary object", its vagueness allowing actors of different plumage to rally around its positive connotations without being held responsible for the cost' (2014: p. 15). The first distinction that needs to be made is that between negative and positive peace (Galtung, 1969). Galtung's influential framework highlights that the absence of direct, or personal, violence is not enough to achieve peace, for 'peace [...] has two sides: absence of personal violence, and absence of structural violence' (Galtung, 1969: 183). Positive peace then refers to the absence of direct and structural violence and is therefore associated with achieving social justice, defined as the egalitarian distribution of power and resources (ibid.).

This leads on to the next distinction, and one that is critical for the present chapter, between political peace processes and social peace processes (Brewer, 2010). Political peace processes involve political management, such as the establishment of new and representative institutions, fairer systems of voting, the introduction of human rights law and associated accountability mechanisms, and the introduction of a free press (ibid.). But these kinds of political reforms do not address, or alternatively take for granted, the arguably more difficult questions of how people can live together after violence and how societal healing and reconciliation can occur. Social peace processes are then about

'the repair and rebuilding of social relationships, interpersonal and inter-group reconciliation, the restoration of community and the social bond, and social and personal healing. [They are] largely realized through attention to [issues] such as civil society engagement with peace, the development of non-violent masculinities for ex-combatants, managing negative emotions and promoting positive ones, re-remembering and historical re-imagining strategies, 'truth' recovery, socially functional public victimhood and the rest' (Brewer, 2010, pp. 200-201).

So there is a recursive relationship between political and social peace processes (ibid.), with one facilitating the other. Clearly, civil society has an important role to play in this understanding of peace as an embedded and social process.

Companies' definitions of peace – and therefore also how to attain it – might well differ from those of other stakeholders, for example those in civil society. The strategies and programmes of different types of businesses in post-conflict areas certainly vary as is shown below, but there is little conflict reporting in CSR annual reports (Miklian & Schouten, 2014). Many businesses focus on social and economic development activities in disadvantaged communities, such as building health and education infrastructure. Issues around memory, civil society and ex-combatants that are central to questions of social justice (cf. Galtung, 1969) and to social peace processes (cf. Brewer, 2010) are rarely, if ever, touched upon. Indeed, the kinds of CSR programmes that companies are currently undertaking in post-conflict settings are remarkably similar to those they carry out in non-conflict areas.

Taking seriously the above arguments about social peace processes, the following section looks at CSR initiatives and programmes that companies have undertaken in post-conflict settings in order to examine how CSR can contribute to peace and social reconstruction after conflict.

How can companies' CSR strategies contribute towards peace and social reconstruction in post-conflict settings?

This section in part draws on a report by the UNGC and PRI (United Nations Global Compact, 2013), which summarises successful examples of companies that have engaged with the UNGC's earlier 'Guidance on Responsible Business in Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas' (UN Global Compact, 2010). I have chosen these examples because it can be assumed that they were selected by the UNGC due to their potential to serve as case studies of best practice and to provide lessons for other companies. Put differently, these examples should highlight the best companies can achieve and are clearly perceived to be addressing business engagement in conflict zones directly and effectively. I summarise them below under the headings of leadership on human rights, collective promotion of peace through involvement in initiatives, partnerships, community engagement and economic development.

Strategic commitment and leadership, at board level, are required on corporate responsibility issues, in order to institute policies and operating standards that make explicit mention of human rights and security and that make a clear stand against bribery and corruption. To this end, companies should raise awareness of human rights and corruption through training and skills development of their staff and their business partners (Nelson 2000). For example, Shell Nigeria runs a human rights and conflict resolution training programmes for its staff in the Niger Delta (Rieper, 2013). ENI's Human Rights project in Congo similarly involved staff training around security and human rights, with the aim of preventing risks connected to security and human rights abuses (United Nations Global Compact, 2013). This encompassed information on international human rights principles, local obligations, the role of civil society in monitoring human rights abuses and role-play exercises around security threats. In still-divided societies, companies can also undertake efforts to promote diversity in the workforce and make workplaces more tolerant and integrated through conscious hiring policies. In this way, organisations can become examples of cross-sectional collaboration. Oetzel et al. (2010) make the example of Northern Ireland, where some companies 'intentionally hired half Catholics and half Protestants to provide them with the experience of working together with that otherwise hated "other"' (p. 352).

Relatedly, involvement in peace-promoting initiatives and frameworks is often suggested as a key conflict-mitigating approach since it can lead to the promotion of the rule of law, human rights, and transparency within a country, using the collective influence that large companies have (Haufler, 2009; Nelson, 2000; Rieper, 2013). An example is diamond mining company De Beers, which is regarded by some as having been implicated in the Angolan and Sierra Leonean civil wars through funding war criminals (Saunders, 2000). The company has subsequently been centrally involved in setting up the Kimberley Process, which has however been criticised by human rights organisations for its lack of transparently coordinating and monitoring the diamond trade while giving legitimacy to mining companies (Bieri, 2013). Indeed, with De Beers having been granted diamond exploration permits again in Angola, it will be interesting to see whether their CSR programming in this particular post-conflict setting will differ from their social investment elsewhere, e.g. in South Africa or Namibia. Associated with the Kimberley Process, but with a focus on artisanal miners rather than on certification systems, is the Diamond Development Initiative, a development-focused, conflict prevention initiative that brings together NGOs, governments and the private sector.

As already mentioned, partnerships, dialogue and consultation with a range of local stakeholders are seen as central to conflict-sensitive and conflict-relevant approaches (Nelson, 2000). Kolk and Lefant (2013) describes how the NGO PACT helped mining corporation Anvil's to engage with human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of Congo at two levels: 'at the community project level (e.g. how to involve communities in project design and management) and at the business level (integration of a human rights lens in operations, consideration of how to use security forces, and how to engage with government forces and rebels)' (p.50). Through partnerships, NGOs 'can play an important role in assisting [multinational companies] to integrate conflict-related issues, such as livelihoods, artisanal mining, and transparency in their CSR activities and partnership endeavours' (ibid.: p. 52). They recommend that companies partner with NGOs in order to learn how to shape and articulate their community relations. However, one of the obstacles to these kinds of collaborations is that engaged advocacy NGOs do not necessarily want to be seen to be involved with corporations in the extractives sector. There have also been calls for Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) as a vehicle both for addressing the socio-economic needs of communities and for creating profits for companies. However, as a study on economic recovery in Nepal shows, resentment after the conflict in that country is so great that these kinds of partnerships are unlikely to succeed (Alexander et al., 2009).

Most often, the partnership approach is coupled with the notion of community engagement. For example, research on oil exploration in Uganda's Albertine Graben (International Alert, 2013) recommends that CSR becomes more strategic and streamlined: 'oil companies should incorporate corporate social responsibility projects in the district development plans, and work hand in hand with local government and communities to implement planned development projects.' (ibid.: 9). A report on resource management in Liberia (Yousuf, 2014) recommends that communities become more creatively involved in their dialogue with companies, for example by creating a committee responsible for overseeing all land disputes. But communities must be empowered to be able to communicate effectively with multinational corporations. Civil society organisations are then ascribed another role: in addition to partnering with companies, they should educate communities to develop effective tools for negotiations, for example in order to deal with concession agreements (International Alert, 2013). Both partnerships and community engagement might be enhanced if there exists a vibrant civil society, which CSR can try to support. In this

respect, CSR activities can be directed at supporting an independent media, reconciliation activities or peace education.

As already discussed in an earlier section, economic development and the creation of jobs and wealth – what businesses do anyway - are often portrayed by companies as one of the most efficient, albeit indirect, ways in which peace can be strengthened. For example, Nestlé's human rights impact assessment in Sri Lanka resulted in predominantly economic outcomes, helping the resettlement and livelihoods of internally displaced people (IDPs) by assisting in locating displaced cattle (United Nations Global Compact, 2013).

The above focus areas and examples highlight, in places, the potential of companies to positively engage with peace processes in post-conflict societies. At the same time, they show that to date there remains a lack of understanding of, or focus on, the *social* components of peace. There are many indirect contributions CSR can make, but still only a small proportion directly addresses peace. Very few of the programmes, which are after all considered best practice examples for engagement in conflict zones, could be said to specifically contribute to a social peace process. They are: the conscious promotion of diversity in the work place; the promotion of civil society organisations that are active in the areas of reconciliation and peace education; and the implementation of specific human rights and anti-corruption policies. CSR programmes are then, despite the rhetoric of conflict relevance, rarely tailored towards the requirements of post-conflict societies; most of the initiatives highlighted by the UNGC as successful could be considered meaningful CSR programmes, but they are not conflict-relevant.

To illustrate this point, two examples can be contrasted. Jamali and Mirshak's (2010) study of CSR in post-conflict Lebanon shows that some companies conducted philanthropic programmes such as monetary assistance to businesses affected by the war, but little was done to directly address the challenges of Lebanon's post-conflict society and economy: 'we detected [...] little appreciation of the broader meaning of CSR and little consideration of the greater responsibility expected from MNCs in terms of mediation, reconciliation, and peace building in conflict zones.' (Jamali and Mirshak, 2010: 460). Conversely, IT company Virtusa has developed a more direct approach to addressing social peace issues in Sri Lanka. In addition to providing humanitarian assistance, the company created a software application, the Rehabilitation Management System (RMS), 'to assist the [Bureau of the Commissioner-General of Rehabilitation] in effectively managing the rehabilitation [of ex-combatants]

process with accountability’ (United Nations Global Compact, 2013: p.66). In the second example, the company has applied its own skills and expertise to address a conflict-related social issue – the rehabilitation of former combatants – in partnership with the government.

In addition to the overwhelming focus of programmes on (crucial but generic) issues such as economic development, there are several key issues that are neglected in companies’ CSR in post-conflict settings to date, and that arguably need to be addressed in order to make CSR genuinely conflict relevant. Current corporate thinking around CSR in post-conflict zones continues to be dominated by a risk discourse. The extractives sector in particular understands social investment in these areas as a question of security and risk management, rather than as opportunities for an improvement in human rights practices or reconciliation. For example, Maersk’s developed a CSR tool ‘to support local CSR planning, thus helping managers of the rigs to (a) identify and manage risks and opportunities related to CSR at local operations and (b) draw up an action plan to deal with and to mitigate those risks’ (United Nations Global Compact, 2013: p.43). Even where companies’ stated aims are to provide human rights training, such as in the example of ENI outlined earlier, we might critically ask which limited conception of human rights underlies materials for a half-day workshop with a stated focus on security. Such a focus on risk minimisation in companies’ post-conflict engagement can be understood, drawing on Galtung’s (1969) work that was outlined above, as entailing a negative conception of peace – that is to say, understanding peace as merely the absence of direct violence.

The approaches and CSR programmes reviewed in this chapter grant a significant role to ‘civil society’ and its organisations. The dual function of CSOs to educate companies on human rights, but also to educate communities to better negotiate, was discussed above. This double role is certainly a tall order for organisations that are often under-funded and under-resourced. But it also betrays a rather naïve understanding of what civil societies are and how they themselves can be the site of contestations, conflict and violence – particularly in still divided societies. What is more, community engagement itself remains fragmented in many places. For example, International Alert’s (2013) study of the Albertine Graben highlights that some efforts were made by the oil companies Tullow and Total, such as socio-economic development projects and the appointment of community liaison officers. Nonetheless, the report identified significant gaps in these companies’ CSR strategies, arguing that there was ‘no systematic approach to the delivery of corporate social responsibility projects streamlined in the district development plans’ (ibid.: p.7) and ‘limited

engagement between oil companies and the community, even though oil companies have community liaison officers' (ibid.: p. 9). Here, as elsewhere in corporate documents and global institutional discourse, the concept of community is not clearly defined.

Moreover, other reports and corporate documents appear to put the onus for responsible engagement by businesses on the community. For example, the Liberian study that was mentioned earlier (Yousuf, 2014) recommended that civil society organisations educate communities to better manage their relations with companies. While it is hard to disagree with the wish to give communities better tools to confront multinational corporations and increased knowledge of legislation and concessions, there is something problematic about the idea that it is the community that is responsible for developing the relevant skills to negotiate concessions, in lieu of companies fulfilling their responsibilities to society and to communities. In this kind of responsabilisation of a community, rather than of a business, it is the community that bears the responsibility for negative environmental or social impacts if it fails to upskill properly. Responsibility for corporations' responsible behaviour is being shifted from companies to communities.

Conclusions

This chapter has sought to make a contribution to the literature that examines the role of the private sector in maintaining or enhancing peace, with a focus on CSR activities. It has highlighted the emergence of a business for peace agenda and has critically discussed some of its key assumptions around the beneficial nature of partnerships and its dominant notions of community and civil society.

By introducing the notion of social peace processes to this policy agenda and scholarly literature, I have demonstrated that CSR activities in post-conflict areas are often generic and neglect the social issues that characterise conflict and its wider contexts. While companies focus on social and economic development activities in disadvantaged communities, issues around memory, victimhood, civil society and ex-combatants are usually ignored. Despite the assertions that companies want to contribute to reconciliation, few such examples can be found. Indeed, the CSR programmes companies are currently undertaking in post-conflict settings are remarkably similar to those they carry out in non-conflict areas. Economic growth and development contributions are of course extremely important and

necessary, especially in fragile post-conflict environments where there is typically a lack of FDI and few employment opportunities. Likewise, CSR can only ever be one of a number of strategies that businesses use to enhance peace. But I argue here that it is important to question the assumptions of academic and policy literatures on businesses' positive contributions to peace and in how far they are genuinely addressing the challenges societies face after protracted conflict.

The distinction between conflict sensitive and conflict relevant approaches that is sometimes made in the literature is useful in this context, and in some ways parallels that between negative and positive peace. Conflict-sensitive approaches might be contrasted with conflict-relevant approaches, which seek to address the root causes of conflict and violence directly. This distinction is important for the arguments put forward in this chapter about social peace processes, since it is arguably only through tackling the structural causes of violence that sustainable peace can be achieved. Conversely, risk-based discourses on peace and conflict, such as they were shown to dominate some companies' CSR programmes, rely on conceptions of negative peace as the absence of violence.

Companies should therefore be supported in developing more nuanced understandings of peace processes in post-conflict settings where they operate. This also involves an awareness of the gap between transition and transformation. They should be assisted – by international institutions, states and the non-profit sector – in developing CSR programmes that can contribute to post-conflict transformation, be it through leadership on human rights, collective initiatives, economic development, or partnerships with progressive NGOs. In their relationships with NGOs and communities, they must be mindful of making others responsible for pushing forward transformative practices. Nonetheless, the fact that most CSR remains entirely voluntary is ultimately deeply problematic, however peace is defined.

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