Partnerships for peace and development in fragile states: identifying missing links

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PARTNERSHIPS FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN FRAGILE STATES: IDENTIFYING MISSING LINKS

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ABSTRACT

Literature on partnerships has grown rapidly in the past decade across different disciplines. However, despite conceptual attention to the value of strategic multi-stakeholder collaboration to promote peace and reconciliation, challenges posed by (post-)conflict, fragile contexts have barely been considered in empirical studies. In this article we contribute by bringing together debates from different partnership literatures and providing an overview of existing, relatively limited research insights on partnerships for peace in fragile states. We present a typology of different levels (local, national, international) at which collaboration takes place and different types of partnerships (philanthropic, transactional, engagement, transformative). This is exemplified with specific attention to Africa, where most fragile states are found, and to partnerships with transformative potential. The analysis suggests that the lowest-level (local) partnerships tend to exclude the national government, while the most recent international, multilateral-driven collaboration has not included business; national cases are most transformative but incidental and not yet leveraged internationally. Despite the interconnected nature of conflict and fragility issues, linkages between partnerships and partners at different levels are largely missing, offering potential for further development by a broad spectrum of scholars and thought leaders. Insights from 'extreme' unconventional contexts thus have relevance for management research more generally.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN FRAGILE STATES: IDENTIFYING MISSING LINKS

INTRODUCTION

How to bring peace and reconciliation closer has been a major issue in the context of so-called ‘fragile’ states. The notion of fragile states is closely linked to conflict (potential) in combination with poverty, lawlessness and lack of government authority and legitimacy, affecting citizens and firms alike (Brück, Naudé, & Verwimp, 2011, Naudé, Santos-Paulino, & McGillivray, 2011). Fragile states are often characterized by ‘in-between’ situations in which formal cease-fires or even peace agreements are interspersed with bouts of violence, hostility and lack of trust. Fragility is typically accompanied by weak and/or missing institutions, particularly the formal (legally enforceable) institutions which exist alongside the informal (implicit, self-imposed, tradition-based) ones (North, 1994). So-called ‘institutional voids’ have received attention in the business literature, mostly in conceptual work (e.g. Khanna & Palepu, 1997; Tracey & Phillips, 2011), and in a few exploratory qualitative studies (Kolk, 2014a; Mair & Martí, 2009; Mair, Martí, & Ventresca, 2012). This aspect deserves further attention for fragile states, which seem to exemplify an ‘extreme’, unconventional and under-researched context (Bamberger, 2008; Bamberger & Pratt, 2010). Empirical research in such settings has been difficult and sometimes dangerous, however, which may explain the paucity of available studies.

Partnerships between business and (non-)governmental actors have increasingly been presented as important for helping to fill institutional gaps, as traditional single-actor approaches have fallen short of providing the whole range of missing institutions. A generic interest in partnerships in different bodies of literature (e.g. Schäferhoff, Campe, & Kaan, 2009; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Van Huijstee, Francken, & Leroy, 2007), has, in recent years, led to some academic studies of collaboration in poor settings and weak institutional contexts, again usually in conceptual articles (Rivera-Santos, Rufín, & Kolk, 2012; Rufín & Rivera-Santos, 2014; Webb et al., 2010), and only a small number of empirical, qualitative explorations (Mair et al., 2012; Reffico & Márquez, 2012). However, here too the (post-)conflict context in fragile states has been mostly missing, although several publications have emphasized the value of strategic collaboration to further peace and reconciliation (e.g. Abramov, 2009; Kolk & Lenfant, 2012; Oetzel et al., 2009). We seek to contribute to this literature by providing an overview of the existing, relatively limited research insights on partnerships for peace and reconciliation in fragile states from different disciplinary fields of study. We then present a typology that focuses on the different geographical levels (local, national, international) at which collaboration takes place and considers various types of partnerships (philanthropic, transactional, engagement, transformative). This is subsequently exemplified with specific attention to Africa, where most fragile states are found, and to partnerships with transformative potential.

Emergent collaborative efforts in recent years include a series of initiatives at the intergovernmental level through the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. This involves aid donor countries from the OECD, 18 conflict-affected and fragile states (the so-called g7+), and international organizations, with a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from both North and South. The 2011 'New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States' envisages partnerships at the national level in these countries. In addition, as collaboration in this international framework does not yet tend to incorporate business, we give examples of 'lower-level' partnerships, which include corporate activities undertaken to further peace and collaboration in conflict-affected, fragile states. This has often involved collaboration with NGOs, and sometimes with aid donors, but only occasionally with national or local governments. We have collected empirical material, particularly concerning Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, that serves to exemplify different types of local and national partnerships and their peculiarities. Our analysis points to conceptual adjustments that may need to be made for partnerships in the context of fragile states, and has implications relevant to a broad spectrum of scholars and thought leaders.

RESEARCH ON THE ROLE OF PARTNERSHIPS

Multi-stakeholder partnerships have received growing academic interest as innovative ways to further both corporate social responsibility and societal objectives. Partnerships differ in size, foci, types of participants and issues tackled, but principally stem from a 'win-win' philosophy (Waddell, 2000) to merge divergent interests and create value for society, organizations and individuals. The idea is that partners from different sectors (business, government and civil society) bring complementary resources, skills and competences, and share risks and responsibilities to help address complex societal problems (e.g. poverty alleviation, climate change, social equity, economic development) that a single actor cannot solve. Partnerships have been studied from different disciplinary perspectives, which can be distinguished in two broad streams of literature: one from business areas (management and, to a lesser extent, marketing), the other focused on (sustainable) development (including public policy, political science and international relations). The past decade in particular has seen a range of review and overview articles in journals from various fields of study (see especially Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b; Bowen, Newenham, & Kahindi, 2010; Kourula & Laasonen, 2010; Reed & Reed, 2009; Schäferhoff et al., 2009; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Van Huijstee et al., 2007) and in books or reports (Gray & Stites, 2013; Kolk, 2014b; Pattberg et al., 2012; Seitanidi & Crane, 2014).

Across the specific disciplines, the partnership literature has addressed a variety of topics. Some studies have dealt with the generic drivers for partnerships and the context in which they emerged, i.e. they pay attention to the agreed need for new governance approaches arising out of the various 'failures' of single-sector initiatives by governmental, business or nonprofit actors (Kolk, 2014b; Schäferhoff et al., 2009; Van Huijstee et al., 2007). Other publications have focused more on the actors, their specific motivations (e.g. Elkington & Fennell, 1998; Rondinelli & London, 2003), and the peculiarities of the interactions, (dis)advantages and strategic and operational matters (e.g. Berger, Cunningham, & Drumwright, 2004; Selsky & Parker, 2005), or the outcomes for business and/or society (e.g. Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b; Bäckstrand, 2006; Kolk, Van Tulder, & Kostwinder, 2008). Most partnerships originate from and involve developed-country actors, but many target their activities on developing countries. Not surprisingly, the business literature, encompassing both management and marketing, has predominantly focused on the collaborative activities of firms originating from developed countries. Those interested in the (sustainable) development implications have usually taken a broader view. We will discuss both streams below with an eye to their relevance for peace and development in fragile states.

Approaches to partnerships in the business literature

In the fields of management and marketing, several approaches have been taken. Traditionally, most attention has been paid to the actor types involved – firms (private/for-profit), governments (public) and NGOs (nonprofit) – and to the various combinations in which they collaborate. Scholars interested in firms and their managers/marketers have largely concentrated on private-nonprofit, public-private and tri-partite partnerships and not on the public-nonprofit partnership, designated as the fourth 'arena' of cross-sector collaboration (Selsky & Parker, 2005). Of these four types, private-nonprofit partnerships, between firms and NGOs, have predominated in both management and marketing studies, as illustrated in a range of publications over the years (e.g. Berger, Cunningham, & Drumwright, 2004; Dahan et al., 2010; Den Hond, De Bakker, & Doh, 2012; Elkington & Fennell 1998; Kolk & Lenfant 2012; Kourula & Laasonen, 2010; Le Ber & Branzei, 2010; Rondinelli & London, 2003; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Webb et al., 2010; Yaziji & Doh, 2009) and in recent overview articles (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b). Several aspects, however, have remained somewhat underexposed in this body of work. These include the 'blurring boundaries' (Crane, 2010) between different sectors, the hybrid nature of actors (exemplified by NGOs undertaking for-profit activities), and the fact that in international development partnerships, developing-country actors may have different roles, views and interests to those of their counterparts from developed countries (Kolk, 2014b; Rivera-Santos et al., 2012).

Austin (2000) was the first to identify different stages of business-NGO collaboration seen from the perspective of the organization: philanthropic, transactional and integrative. Particularly in the latter most intensive stage, the so-called locus of value creation has received attention. A distinction has been made between micro, meso and macro levels, considering the individual, organizational and societal dimensions of partnerships respectively (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b; Kolk, Van Dolen, & Vock, 2010) (see Table 1, vertical axis). Levels can potentially affect one another, and even strengthen the overall impact of partnerships through so-called 'trickle' effects. As noted above, the business literature has thus far concentrated on the meso level, on firm-NGO partnerships and the implications for firms in particular. In recent years, a few studies have built on organizational psychology and consumer behavior research and shed light on the role of individuals, especially employees and consumers, in partnerships (or social alliances, the term used in marketing research) (Berger, Cunningham, & Drumwright, 2006; Kolk, Vock, & Van Dolen, 2014; Vock, Van Dolen, & Kolk, 2013). Austin and Seitanidi (2012b) noted that this micro level deserves more attention in research on partnerships, comparable to broader calls concerning the microfoundations of management (see Felin & Foss, 2005; and the AMP special issue of May 2013). The societal implications of partnerships have been said to be the “least thoroughly dealt with” (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b, p. 952). However, this observation reflects limited consideration of other fields (political science, international relations, development studies) where scholars have ventured to address at least some macro-level aspects.

In addition to these three levels, the literature has also considered internal and external dimensions of partnerships (cf. Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b). This distinction helps to address the fact that the social good (‘macro’) can also be furthered by realizing benefits for individuals and/or groups outside the partner organizations. A case in point would be a partnership that supports an individual farmer and his/her family and community. Internal value creation then covers benefits for partnering organizations and related individual constituents (micro and meso), which has typically been the focus of management research. Table 1 gives an overview of the partnership aspects that can potentially be studied. In contrast to earlier overview articles (e.g. Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b), we split the internal dimension into two: the partnering organization (usually a firm, as the normal focus of business research) and the partnership, which considers the other organization(s) involved in the collaboration. Management publications have concentrated on box 2, to a much lesser extent box 1, with only limited attention to boxes 3 and 4 and hardly any to the other aspects included in the table. A few recent marketing studies have considered 5 and the interactions with 1, as well as the implications for the focal firm (box 2). Some of the external components, which relate to society, to institutions, systems, organizations, groups and individuals outside the partnering organizations, have been addressed by other, non-business disciplines. Linkages between the external- and internal-oriented literatures have been relatively limited. The external, societal (i.e. macro) aspects are most relevant for the subject of this article, and will be addressed next, in relation to partnerships for development and/or peace.

Insert Table 1 around here

Partnerships for development and/or peace

The literature on partnerships for development partly consists of analyses of specific collaborative activities undertaken by firms in developing countries, including their fit with core business (e.g. Kolk et al., 2008; Reed & Reed, 2009). In some cases this concerns business-community interaction that is not exclusively tied to partnership arrangements but is part of a wider corporate involvement or engagement strategy. This may occur in developing countries (e.g. Muthuri, 2008; Muthuri, Chapple, & Moon, 2009) but is more often the case in developed-country settings (Bowen et al., 2010). More extensive partnership-focused attention has been paid to the (policy) governance implications regarding global (agrifood) chains (e.g. Bitzer, 2012) and sustainable development generally (e.g. Pattberg et al., 2012; Van Huijstee et al., 2007). Publications have most often covered aspects related to box 7 of Table 1, and sometimes to boxes 5 or 6.

Studies from the political science, public policy and international relations disciplines have considered power relations, inclusiveness, accountability, transparency and legitimacy issues of partnerships, often derived from an analysis of formal structures, and they have noted serious concerns (Bäckstrand, 2006; Beisheim, 2012; Liese and Beisheim, 2011; Pattberg et al., 2012; Schäferhoff et al., 2009). This research, focused on box 7 of Table 1, has concentrated more on processes of collaboration and their societal consequences than on concrete outputs. In terms of the types of partners, partnerships for sustainable development turn out to be most often implemented by international organizations (often in the United Nations context), OECD governments or Northern-based (often donor-funded) NGOs in areas where there are already many activities, and not in those where the problems and needs are greatest (Kolk, 2014b). Thus they do not emerge in the least-developed countries, local communities tend to be excluded, and affected stakeholders are often underrepresented (Idemudia, 2009). Existing partnership publications also reflect this focus.

In addition to this peculiar geographical/actor coverage, the partnership literature has paid only limited empirical attention to the peace/conflict dimension, whether as the goal of the collaboration (i.e. promoting peace and reconciliation) or as the context in which it takes place (i.e. a (post-)conflict, fragile setting). At the same time, the importance of collaboration in such contexts has been conceptually acknowledged from various sides. From a business-community perspective, collaboration may help companies to operate in areas of low governance by improving relations and communication with communities, and furthering local capacity-building (cf. Idemudia, 2007; Muthuri et al., 2009). The business and peace literature has stressed the value that companies can derive from involving other actors in effectively tackling conflict-related issues (Bais & Huijser, 2005; Haufler, 2002; Haufler & Ballentine, 2005; Oetzel et al., 2009) and the role that partnerships can play in fostering good governance, trust and peace (Abramov, 2009). Scholars focused on post-conflict reconstruction and prevention of violence have emphasized the importance of supporting initiatives such as partnerships. They assume that cross-sector collaboration is most likely to be successful when it links security, justice, governance and economic development (World Bank, 2011), and when it can help increase the capacity of state authorities to care for their citizens, thus furthering reconciliation and institution building (Dobers & Halme, 2009; Ite, 2007). This points to the importance of integrating locally-implemented efforts with activities at the national and international levels.

However, whether partnerships for development in fragile regions address these issues remains largely unknown. The lack of insight seems due, at least in part, to the difficulties and sensitivities of doing empirical research and collecting reliable data in (post-)conflict settings. In addition, many of the activities undertaken and studied are – even in fragile countries – most often geared towards philanthropy, with a donor-recipient mode, and thus have limited interaction with local communities beyond specific product or service transactions (Idemudia, 2007; Idemudia & Ite, 2006; Ite, 2005; Kolk & Lenfant, 2012, 2013; Muthuri, 2008; Muthuri et al., 2009; Wheeler, Fabig, & Boele, 2002). They thus lack a consideration of the broader societal context and its key problems. Issues directly related to the conflict and/or with a wider community focus with a potential to further peace and reconciliation efforts are tackled only occasionally. Further to the geographical dimensions discussed above, this transformative potential, considered crucial in fragile, (post-)conflict areas, is a second dimension that needs to be taken into account.

A typology for considering partnerships in fragile states

Table 2 provides a preliminary typology that consists of the two dimensions mentioned above. One axis consists of three geographical levels: *local*, *national* and *international*. Given that conflicts are usually embedded in broader national/regional settings with multiple dimensions related to security, justice, governance and economic development, partnerships can only contribute to peace in a sustainably way if they are not just local in nature but also link to these higher-level phenomena. Such linkages often result from the involvement of national and/or international actors, or they may be brought about by relating local collaborative efforts to those taking place at national or international levels. Below we will present some illustrative examples from the relatively limited number of earlier studies and ongoing research of collaboration at the different geographical levels with specific attention to Africa, where most fragile states can be found, in both the least-developed and middle-income economy categories (OECD, 2012).[1]

Insert Table 2 around here

The other axis relates to the partnership categories, distinguishing four types based on their key focus: *philanthropy*, *transaction*, *engagement* and *transformation*. In an earlier section we have already mentioned Austin's (2000) initial continuum that suggests an evolution of three stages from philanthropic to transactional and, subsequently, integrative partnerships that are more strategic in nature. As this categorization stemmed from advanced developed-country settings, we have also taken other classifications into account that seem more relevant for developing countries in general and (post-)conflict countries in particular. Key publications include Bowen et al. (2008) and Muthuri et al. (2009), in their focus on community involvement more generally, and Kolk & Lenfant (2012), who studied partnerships in a conflict setting. Together, these authors have identified the importance of considering communities and/or organizations beyond a transaction mode with a mere commercial focus. Both philanthropic and transaction-oriented partnerships are found to be ill-suited to contributing to a more peaceful environment, as indicated above. The potential for conflict reduction and peace promotion is rather different for partnerships that are more strategic in nature or focus on engagement in the local context. They include multi-stakeholder dialogues/platforms and joint activities to help build trust, display strong community involvement, and venture to address issues directly related to the conflict.

In the discussion of the three geographical levels in the next section, we therefore concentrate on these latter two types of partnerships, i.e. those focused on engagement and, most notably, transformation (see Table 2). Engagement goes beyond resource transfer; it shows a certain degree of community involvement (directly by firms with communities or via NGOs) and implies an exchange of knowledge and information (Kolk & Lenfant, 2012; cf. Kourula & Laasonen, 2010). Transformative partnerships contain integrative elements (as they relate to organizations' core activities, cf. Austin, 2000; Muthuri et al., 2009) but also involve concrete learning and capacity-building activities and interactions to reduce community tensions (Kolk & Lenfant, 2012). In terms of linkages between different levels, the benefits of, for example, an (inter)national learning platform with the aim of disseminating knowledge from a particular issue found in conflict areas (such as artisanal mining, or conflict commodities) are more likely to trickle down to the local level if they can be concretely delivered through partnership with organizations that have been involved in the process.

PARTNERSHIPS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Local level

To tease out relevant issues from the local level, we focused on Central African countries characterized by (post-)conflict situations, with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as an extreme case in point. The DRC ranks very highly on the 'failed state index', being second after Somalia, and is amongst the lowest on underlying indicators including governance, transparency, peace, human development and gross domestic product per capita.[2] Recent research has covered international firms operating in the DRC and shown that most partnerships are found in the extractive industries (Kolk & Lenfant, 2012). This is not surprising given that the country is the most mineral-dependent fragile state globally, with this activity accounting for almost 80% of exports (OECD, 2012, p. 19). As in Angola, an almost fully fuel-dependent fragile state, there are only a few partnerships with transformative potential in terms of peace and reconciliation, and they have often emerged out of earlier NGO campaigns against foreign firms for their (assumed) (in)direct involvement in conflict and exploitation.

The inventory of collaboration by multinationals in the DRC yielded 39 partnerships, of which four were transformative and 13 engagement-oriented, with some extractive firms having more than one type of partnership (more generally, only two engagement partnerships were undertaken by non-extractive firms). Collaborative activities usually imply higher levels of corporate transparency regarding their role in society, engagement with stakeholders (including local communities, a national and/or international NGO, and occasionally local government officials) and sometimes support for finding (alternative) employment opportunities (e.g. for artisanal miners) and for capacity building (Kolk & Lenfant, 2013). Key aspects have been knowledge exchange, improvement of institutions and adherence to international standards for good business conduct, thereby furthering trust with and among communities. Overall, engagement and dialogue have prevailed in these partnerships, and appear to be precursors for more extensive implementation on the ground. The few transformative partnerships found in the DRC mining sector are marked by strengthening of capacity at the community level and address issues directly linked to conflict (e.g. violence against women, artisanal mining alternatives). Interestingly, none of these partnerships included government authorities, a notable missing link which may be due to their lack of capacity.

If one moves away from the (foreign) firm perspective to focus more on local economic opportunities, agricultural activities come to the fore, as they are often seen as crucial for promoting economic development in fragile states. In the same DRC setting, coffee has emerged in recent years, specifically in the Eastern provinces of North and South Kivu bordering Rwanda, an area characterized by a vicious cycle of conflict and violence, poverty and poor governance. Coffee projects for small farmers have been shown in other countries to help fill institutional gaps by creating 'compensatory structures', including new/different networks, intermediary entities and partnerships, while also generating positive outcomes for farmers and their communities (Kolk, 2014a). Our research in Eastern DRC and Rwanda showed that transformative partnerships are more common in the local coffee sector than amongst the (predominantly mining) multinationals active in the DRC. We found 28 partnerships at the local level, half of which were either philanthropic or transactional (7 each), while 3 focused on engagement and 11 on transformation. Of the four coffee partnerships in the DRC 3 were transformative; in Rwanda this applied to 8 out of their 24 (in Rwanda there is also a national-level transformative partnership, see the next subsection).

Through the partnerships, small farmers gained access to resources, not only in the form of technical assistance for improving crops and harvests, but also in the realm of social services, such as health care and credit, and they learned about organisational structures and procedures that ensure accountability and transparency. The transformative coffee partnerships created a window of opportunity to establish and improve relationships between different actors. They were found to have a wider impact in communities in terms of enhanced social cohesion (ethnic groups that were previously hostile started to work together for a common purpose; some rebels dropped arms and switched to coffee production/processing) and the creation of new governance modalities in a fragile setting. The partnerships contributed to building (informal) institutions, capacities and a climate of trust conducive to more peaceful behavior. Local business and non-profit organizations started to collaborate with international firms and NGOs, and sometimes also with Northern donor government agencies, which provided incentives (e.g., covering risks, matching funds, offering networks) as part of broader framework agreements designed to stimulate private-sector investment in fragile states.

The specific composition of the coffee partnerships focuses attention on the absence of local/national state authorities. In the literature, several authors have expressed concern as to the implications of such a configuration for ‘crowding’ out the state, and thus (further) undermining credibility and citizen trust in its abilities, as well as increasing dependence on external donors (Eweje, 2006; Idemudia & Ite, 2006; Kolk & Lenfant, 2013). Remarkably, however, all interviewees from the DRC expressed the wish not to have government authorities involved for fear of being harassed with heavy taxation or even bribes and noted that it may take a generation or more before government can take up its proper role again. The DRC appears to be a case in which business and NGOs take a leading role in the absence of government and actually help to create the ‘rules of the game’; this is different from Rwanda as will be shown below. While the argument that business-NGO partnerships can undermine the state seems valid in many countries, the DRC may be an exception at present in view of lasting hostilities, proven corruption and incapability on the part of government. At the same time, this perhaps extreme case clearly illustrates ‘blurring boundaries’ as well as the possible role of partnerships in fragile states, with other actors jointly assuming responsibilities that the local/national government has apparently been unable to take.

National level

However, there are also cases in which national governments in fragile states have (gradually) become involved as part of broader multi-stakeholder partnerships. Such partnerships are either focused on engagement or on transformation, with the specific type depending on the degree to which concrete activities are being implemented on the ground. These partnerships commonly include government authorities, and emphasize institution/capacity building and the creation of a favorable policy environment at the national level, meant to eventually trickle down more locally. Below, we will give two key examples of transformative partnerships at the national level, one originating from coffee in Rwanda, and the other from the extractive sector in Angola.

Rwanda, like the DRC, is also a least-developed fragile state. However it clearly differs in that the national government has full authority over its territory (even being accused of interfering across the border with Eastern DRC militarily) and has spearheaded economic reforms aimed at stimulating specific sectors, including coffee, where the PEARL/SPREAD multi-stakeholder partnership has been notable. PEARL (Partnership for Enhancing Agriculture in Rwanda through Linkages) began in 2000 as a six-year project designed to rejuvenate the potential of Rwandan coffee after it had been decimated during the genocide. PEARL placed emphasis on institution building (through agricultural outreach centers for example) and the training of local farming cooperatives to improve the production and marketing of their coffee. In 2006, it merged with another project (Agribusiness Development Assistance Project in Rwanda, ADAR) to form SPREAD (Sustaining Partnership to Enhance Rural Enterprises and Agribusiness Development). SPREAD focused on strengthening the whole value chain through the creation of links between producers and buyers and thus extended the partnership to coffee companies, with a current involvement of more than 30 companies, 12 NGOs, six cooperatives and a university (see Table 3). There are some international partners, but their contribution merely consists of technical and/or financial support and access to (coffee) markets.

Insert Table 3 around here

An impact assessment study showed the collaboration to be instrumental in boosting the Rwandan coffee sector; it also found a range of other positive effects at the organisational and farmer level as well as at the institutional level in terms of markets and structures in which the national coffee authority was involved (SPREAD, 2011; cf. Murekezi & Loveridge, 2009). Considering the implications for peace, PEARL/SPREAD concentrated its efforts on capacity building by strengthening the agricultural and educational sectors and implementing an active policy to promote reconciliation. Hutus and Tutsi collaborated in cooperatives, jointly earning money, and were encouraged to think of themselves as Rwandans rather than members of a particular ethnic group. The cooperatives helped drive reconciliation between the Hutu and Tutsi as farmers who were once enemies started to work side by side at local washing stations, for example (Boudreaux, 2007, 2010). This is a clear example of a partnership for peace and development that links the national (policy-setting) level, communities and farmers locally, very different from the DRC coffee cases discussed in the previous section.

The second example began from an initiative taken in the extractive industry of Angola, categorized as an upper-middle income fragile state by the OECD (2012): the Angola Partnership Initiative (API), launched in 2002, by Chevron, in collaboration with USAID, UNDP and the national government. Chevron initially invested $25 million, with the donor agencies later adding another $31 million; after a positive evaluation the firm committed further resources (Chevron, 2010; Garrigo, 2011; Kolk & Lenfant, 2013). While the original goal was to build up capacity to realize greater economic stability and improve standards of living, it evolved into a broad-based national partnership for peace and development with clear national-local links. Activities ranged from providing basic human needs to support for sustainable income sources from agriculture, fisheries and small business development more generally. Search for Common Ground (SCG), an international NGO that joined API in 2006, contributed to integrating a peace and reconciliation lens in the projects. The partnership has been repeatedly praised, particularly for Chevron's initiating role (e.g. Cooley, 2006; Nelson, 2004; Wise & Shtylla, 2007). Together with SCG, Chevron also provides local knowledge and networks given its long-standing presence in the country.

Two factors are seen to account for API's success: the explicit consideration of local, post-conflict peculiarities and the awareness of the challenges and dilemmas of going through such a major transition from 'war to peace'. The peace reached in 2002 needed to be consolidated, the economy was fragmented, the infrastructure devastated; there was a lack of confidence from the international community, a huge population at risk and weak civil society representation. Failure to comprehensively address those challenges would have undermined the peace consolidation process. API assisted Angola in making the transition and through a comprehensive collaborative approach with explicit local involvement represented a change in the way development work was conducted in the country. Projects were only funded after proper engagement with local communities, which identified priorities based on an assessment of needs. Besides funding 'traditional' (health and education) projects, the partnership strengthened local capacity in conflict resolution in communities with a history of conflict. It resulted in behavioral change, a culture of dialogue, stronger civil society and local leadership with good links and access to the higher level.

Despite the relative success of both cases, with different degrees of foreign involvement, they seem relatively isolated examples amongst the almost 50 fragile states identified globally. Furthermore, while conflicts can be confined within a national territory, they very often have a cross-border dimension through population displacement, humanitarian camps in border towns, cross-border illegal trade (especially weapons and/or trafficking) or the (temporary) involvement of other countries. In the specific case of the DRC conflict, for example, Angola, Uganda, Rwanda and Zimbabwe have at some point been involved. Moreover, common issues such as lack of transparency, violation of human rights or corruption, sometimes associated with specific industries, can be found in multiple countries. This means that mere national or local projects are not sufficient to address the problems faced by fragile states, but that higher-level, more comprehensive, partnerships that target relevant cross-border activities within conflict arenas are needed.

International level

Partnerships targeting specific products or fragility dimensions

Since 2000, two international initiatives have emerged that target the extractive industry, more specifically the diamond industry, in relation to conflict issues: the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) and, as a complement, the Diamond Development Initiative (DDI). Arising from campaigns against 'blood diamonds', the KPCS is a multi-stakeholder process to eradicate conflict diamonds through a certification mechanism covering the whole (global) chain and with a sanction regime to diminish opportunities for funding war from this mineral's proceeds. It has been characterized as an innovative global governance scheme and conflict prevention initiative that has encouraged more ethical and transparent business behavior in conflict zones (Haufler, 2010; cf. Hale, 2011). As shown in Table 3, the KPCS comprises 54 countries (as participants) and 11 NGOs (observers) from both developed and developing countries, the World Diamond Council that represents the industry, and the DDI (see below). Despite shortcomings such as the absence of independent monitoring and enforcement capacity, governments' unwillingness to uphold their commitments to control export and import flows, and lack of integration of social and environmental concerns, the KPCS is still considered a valuable multi-stakeholder initiative for conflict prevention (Ballantine & Nitzschke, 2005; Haufler, 2010; Smillie, 2005; Wright, 2004).

One of the criticisms of the KPCS has been addressed through the DDI (Hale, 2011). As the KPCS focuses on the more macro-level regulatory and legal aspects, it pays less attention to the issue of small-scale artisanal mining, and the fate of those involved in it, outside the formal economy. Numbers are substantial, particularly in Africa: the DDI mentions 800,000 diggers in the DRC, 120,000 in Sierra Leone and "many tens of thousands" in several other countries including Angola and Liberia.[3] With De Beers as one of the founding members, in collaboration with several NGOs, governments and the industry manufacturing association (see Table 3), the DDI was created to help formalize economies surrounding artisanal diamond mines and turn blood diamonds into "development diamonds" for the communities involved. In addition to creating projects to improve the socio-economic conditions of artisanal miners and their families, the DDI has stimulated a dialogue amongst relevant stakeholders. It is technically active in all countries where artisanal miners are found, but in recent years has initiated a particular number of projects in the DRC, Sierra Leone, Angola and the Central African Republic. For example, the DDI has collaborated with NGOs, mining firms and the Congolese government to implement a registration system by which artisanal diamond miners track their production through to the point of export as required by the KPCS; their inclusion aims to ensure that diggers work in conflict-free zones and have a more steady income.

There are other international multi-stakeholder initiatives that have relevance for the extractive industry in a broader sense. A case in point is the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, designed to improve business transparency and accountability to help bring an end to the corruption often found in conflict areas. More focused on conflict prevention, but generic in nature, are the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, which provide guidelines for business on how to respect human rights while operating in locations characterized by conflict and violence. They include the need to conduct risk assessments and provisions as to security arrangements, adequate responses to human rights abuses and proper stakeholder dialogues. Initiatives such as these are not concrete partnerships in terms of implementation but rather guidelines for firms on operating principles that have emerged from discussions between different types of business and (non-)governmental actors . They thus provide a useful context to raise firms' awareness and generate more consensus on relevant issues, particularly in difficult business settings, but they do not encompass specific collaboration for peace and development activities with links to the national and/or local levels in fragile states.

International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS)

Although relatively abstract thus far in terms of implementation, the IDPS' 2011 'New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States' has specifically focused on collaboration to address multiple dimensions of fragility – improving security, justice, employment, living conditions, legitimacy of politics and the functioning of public services. The New Deal "provides a new framework within which to better align resources and support to the peacebuilding and statebuilding priorities of countries in fragile situations and for *more effective partnerships* and support to enable *country-led transitions* out of fragility" (OECD, 2012, 15; emphasis added). The IDPS started as a typical multilateral, intergovernmental initiative addressing concerns about aid effectiveness in fragile states. Specifically it was initiated to discuss constraints to delivering effective international assistance, identify a realistic set of objectives for peacebuilding and statebuilding that could guide national and international partners, and build trust between participating countries and organizations.

The quote above refers to two interesting peculiarities of the New Deal. First, the emphasis on country-led transitions reflects a change in approach, presumably resulting from the long-standing debate about aid effectiveness in general and fragile states in particular. As the IDPS co-chair put it: "I have been engaged in international development discussions for 25 years. If you had asked me 10 years ago what to do in fragile states I would have said: Work outside the government because it is too weak and vulnerable, use civil society and the UN instead. I would have said: Keep security efforts and development efforts totally apart, because mixing them is dangerous. Today my reply would be almost exactly the opposite. Work with and through local structures and institutions and engage in statebuilding BECAUSE the states are weak. And combine statebuilding and peacebuilding, BECAUSE without peace we will never see progress, without progress peace cannot be sustained."[4]

Second, much attention is given to (more effective) partnerships. The IDPS documents and declarations mention "capacity building", "institution building" and the need for "raising the level of confidence between state and citizens" in relation to the formation of partnerships predicated on these principles, to address structural issues found in fragile states. While the initiative envisions partnerships with a transformative agenda at the national level, it has thus far entailed international engagement only. As the group of 18 fragile states (united under the g7+ label) within the IDPS notes, "the g7+ was formed to work in concert with international actors, the private sector, civil society, the media and the people across countries, borders and regions to reform and reinvent a new paradigm for international engagement".[5] Numerous meetings, platforms and working groups were set up to move the peace and state building agenda forward and enrich it with local and national perspectives, but very few concrete activities with a transformative lens have been implemented. One could argue that the IDPS consists of international engagement with a transformative potential that has not yet been fully exploited.

The IDPS' strength and added value stems from being the only partnership at the international level which establishes clear links between different conflict dimensions through the Peace and State building Goals (PSGs), namely legitimate politics, security, justice, economic foundations, revenues and services. The IDPS stresses the need to tackle all these issues in order to bring about peace. A further notable aspect is related to the connection made between the rather generic PSGs and their specification for the national context through fragility assessments. These are conducted at the country level to help stimulate a dialogue between various stakeholders and discuss implementation issues and priorities. For example, the assessments for the DRC, Sierra Leone and South Sudan contain many references to the need for a national regulatory framework for proper, effective and accountable natural resource management; public-private partnerships are also mentioned by the DRC and Sierra Leone in the context of economic improvement.[6] However, as noted above, these statements have yet to result in concrete implementation on the ground.

What has been clearly missing thus far within the IDPS is the private sector. Most documents and fragility assessments that we reviewed emphasize the role of the private sector, and the need for collaboration with different parties, because “achieving peace is a multidimensional endeavour” requiring “shared efforts, with states, civil society, the private sector and multilateral institutions”. However, firms and business organizations have not yet been structurally engaged, either at the international or the national level. International organizations, national governments and to some extent NGOs – thus far more international than local ones – have predominantly participated in IDPS-related activities. The absence of the private sector is all the more remarkable given the existence of multiple multi-stakeholder partnerships with business participation in fragile contexts, as the examples in this article have shown.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The situation in fragile and conflict-affected states is receiving increasing attention in international policymaking, and the importance of strategic collaboration to promote peace and reconciliation has been emphasized conceptually, but not really studied empirically. Fragile, (post-)conflict states represent an ‘extreme’ unconventional research context in need of more study from the perspective of management and organization (Bamberger, 2008; Bamberger & Pratt, 2010). In this article we have aimed to improve the understanding of how partnerships with business could help promote peace and development in fragile, low-governance areas, and thus move the research agenda beyond the generic statements made thus far about the potential added-value of collaboration without having considered this issue or the difficult institutional setting in more detail. To this end, we first discussed the partnership literature across different disciplines, which has generally paid most attention to internal dimensions within firms and to the external, societal dimension (see Table 1, boxes 1, 2 and 7). We then introduced a preliminary typology that included different levels at which collaboration can take place, and considered various partnership types (see Table 2).

Subsequently, we gave examples of partnerships with transformative potential from the African context, where most fragile states can be found, in both the least-developed and middle-income economy categories. These examples provide more in-depth insight into the issues at stake. The lowest-level (local) partnerships found in the DRC – as perhaps the most extreme case – tend to exclude the national government and are often philanthropic, especially in the extractive industries. Some focus on engagement with potential for more extensive implementation on the ground, but these were found much less often. The few transformative local partnerships are generally business-nonprofit in composition, sometimes supported by foreign donor agencies. Interestingly, the latest international, multilateral-driven collaboration in the context of the New Deal has not yet included business, despite its stated aim to be truly multi-stakeholder in nature. The IDPS partnership is the only partnership included in Table 3 that has been lacking in implementation, and therefore involves engagement rather than transformation; it has transformative potential, though, given its ambitions. The national-level cases in the table are most comprehensive in types of actors covered, but are also rather incidental thus far, and at this stage they have not been leveraged beyond national boundaries. Furthermore, and despite the interconnected nature of conflict and fragility issues, there are few linkages between partnerships at different levels, a phenomenon which offers potential for further development by a broad range of scholars and thought leaders.

For thought leaders concerned with issues of peace and statebuilding, for example in the context of the post-2015 global development priorities, two further aspects might be worthwhile exploring: (i) how might effective local and national multi-stakeholder collaboration, including a positive contribution by firms, be elevated to the international level and (ii) how might experiences from successful local partnerships – that created new governance modalities without the (national) state – be transferred to (help build) government agencies and gradually involve them locally. Building links between levels is likely to facilitate the transformative potential of partnerships. Interestingly, recent years have also witnessed a re-evaluation of government, which used to be seen as a rather problematic actor in fragile states. This was illustrated by the statement of the IPDS co-chair (see the quote in the previous section), and the New Deal's emphasis on statebuilding and inclusive institutions. Firms are often ‘linking pins’ in view of their international operations and networks. Scholars may therefore not just want to follow such policy developments to obtain insight into the dynamics of (filling) institutional voids, but also to study the role of business in this process and across the different levels in more detail. What is more, insights obtained from such relatively extreme settings may lead to a better understanding of international firms and relevant management phenomena in other contexts as well.

Regarding the partnership literature, management and marketing scholars have focused on the meso level within organizations (box 2 in Table 1), with some recent interest in the behavioral, microfoundations of partnerships for employees and customers (especially boxes 1 and 5, and to a much lesser extent, 3). Other disciplines have paid attention to the macro, societal dimensions, especially through work on partnerships for sustainable development that considered international organizations, mostly Northern-based NGOs and donor countries in particular (box 7). By explicitly exposing the business actors involved, alongside others, we have aimed to help bridge the gap between these different bodies of knowledge, and contribute to a greater understanding of the external dimensions of partnerships. The implications for organizations other than firms, and for individuals, both within and outside the partnerships (boxes 4 and 6, respectively) also need further study (especially in box 5, in relation to boxes 1 and 3). Detailed follow-up studies into both the meso and micro aspects of partnerships in fragile states would be helpful to identify the dynamic interactions between and within organizations and individuals, and the linkages between the external and internal dimensions.

As indicated in some of the concrete partnership examples in this article, building relationships over a longer period of time to create trust between previously antagonistic parties requires patience and careful interactions, and specific capabilities on the part of the organizations and individuals involved. Intensive and difficult forms of collaboration with an eye to diminishing conflict, furthering peace and reconciliation, and creating opportunities for more social and economic stability expose crucial elements relevant to management and organization in the broadest sense. These range from individual-level factors, in terms of leadership and (human resource) management, to wider aspects including social capital, trust, stakeholder relations and corporate innovation that might be inspired by new forms of interactions. It would also be useful to study the potential trickle-down effects of partnerships (cf. Kolk et al., 2010), to explore to what extent such new types of conciliatory relationships encourage different ways of thinking and behavioral patterns on the part of both internal and external actors, including, for example, employees, customers and shareholders.

While the evidence presented in this article has been limited, partly due to the difficulty of doing research in these challenging contexts, it has illustrated partnerships from a societal perspective. In contrast to categorizations that focus on internal value creation (e.g. Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a) from the firm's point of view and on strategic integration with organizations' core activities or on transactional or philanthropic resource transfer modes, our classification (see Table 2) concentrates on the interaction with communities and a wide range of other organizations – business, NGO and government. It adds engagement and transformation as distinct foci of partnerships that are highly relevant, but not limited, to fragile states. Engagement in 'peaceful' settings may, however, be less protracted and take the form of a policy dialogue; it might also be specifically suitable for contested issues. Furthermore, the business-community literature has, interestingly, emphasized that transformation-oriented partnerships generally entail only a few participants as intense interaction is needed (e.g. Bowen et al., 2010). By contrast, in the (post-)conflict contexts covered in this article, many parties were, and needed to be, involved given the difficult nature of the problems and the need to build trust and reduce hostility across the board. From this perspective, not only firms and/or communities may benefit from the collaboration but also a much wider set of constituents in society. Follow-up research into more partnerships in different countries, with greater and lesser degrees of fragility, would be helpful to obtain more understanding of the conditions under which such a development can take place.

NOTES

[1] The second author has carried out field research in Central African countries, thus gathering evidence on the coffee partnerships highlighted in the local section. Furthermore, he has been involved in international-level IDPS developments from the civil society perspective, and been a participant observer at the 2012 IDPS steering committee in Nairobi and the g7+ meeting that took place alongside the United Nations General Assembly in New York that same year.

[2] See e.g. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/06/24/2013_failed_states_interactive_map; http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD; http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/worldwide-governance-indicators; http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/human_development_low.htm <all last accessed September 16, 2013>.

[3] http//www.ddiglobal.org <last accessed September 22, 2013>.

[4] Speech by Christian Friis Bach, Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, at the High level side event: "New Deal: g7+ Perspectives and Experience", 26th September 2012, United Nations, New York. Capital letter emphasis included in original text; available at http://um.dk/da/~/media/UM/Danish-site/Documents/Danida/Det-goer-vi/Tale%20af%20Christian%20Friis%20Bach.pdf <last accessed September 23, 2013>.

[5] http//www.g7plus.org <last accessed September 23, 2013>.

[6] See http://www.newdeal4peace.org/new-deal-pilots/, which also contains a powerpoint summary for Timor Leste, in addition to Liberia, Sierra Leone and South Sudan <last accessed September 26, 2013>. We considered the full documents for the DRC, Libera, Sierra Leone and South Sudan.

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Table 1. Overview of partnerships dimensions

	Internal		External to partnering organizations
	Within one organization	Within the partnership	
Locus of value creation			
Micro (individual)	Employees/managers and internal interactions [1]	Employees/managers of partner organization(s) [3]	External stakeholders e.g. consumer, farmer, citizen [5]
Meso (organization)	Focus on the organization (firm) [2]	Partner organization(s): NGO, government, firm [4]	Organizations outside partnership e.g. government, NGO, cooperative [6]
Macro (society)	n.a.	n.a.	Impact or processes within economy and/or society [7]

Table 2. A typology for considering partnerships in fragile states

Type / *Level*	**Philanthropy**	**Transaction**	**Engagement**	**Transformation**
Local				
National				
International				

Table 3. Key characteristics of national and international partnerships included in the article

	Geographical focus	NGOs	Government (agencies)	Companies / industry	Starting year
PEARL/ SPREAD	Rwanda	The Borlaug Institute, Technoserve, Alliance of Coffee Excellence, ADF, Project Rwanda, Transfair	Rwanda (OCIR), local Rwandan government authorities, US (USAID)	31 companies, e.g. Starbucks, Trobocca Trading, Songer and Associates, Rwanda Smallholder Specialty Coffee Company, Karengera Coffee, SOCOR, PROMAGRI	2000
API	Angola	Search for Common Ground, Save the Children, local NGOs / Community-based Organizations	Angola government, USAID, UNDP, German technical cooperation	Chevron	2002
KPCS*	Countries in Africa:** Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Zimbabwe	Partnership Africa Canada, Centre du Commerce International pour le Développement (Guinea), Green Advocates (Liberia), Network Movement for Justice and Development (Sierra Leone) Réseau de Lutte contre la Faim (Cameroon) ; Centre National d'Appui au Développement et à la Participation Populaire (DRC), Groupe d'Appui aux Exploitants des Ressources Naturelles (DRC), Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association (Zimbabwe), Center for Natural Resource Governance (Zimbabwe), Bonn International Centre for Conversion (Germany)	EU, USA, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, UEA, Venezuela, Vietnam	World Diamond Council	Process: 2000 Scheme: 2003
DDI***	DRC, Angola, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic	Partnership Africa Canada, Foundation for Environmental Security and Sustainability, Global Witness	World Bank, Belgium, Canada, Germany, UK, Sweden, Angola	De Beers, International Diamond Manufacturers' Association (IDMA), the Rapaport Group	2005
IDPS****	G7 + countries in Africa: Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan, DRC, Burundi, Chad, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Central African Republic, Somalia	A coalition that includes, inter alia, Saferworld, GPPAC, Cordaid, InterPeace, ACP (Kenya); Alliance for Peacebuilding (US); CDA (US) Conciliation Resources (UK), FECCIWA (Togo), NSI (Canada), Pregesco (DRC /Central Africa), REPAOC (Senegal/West Africa), Tiri (UK), WANEP (West Africa), World Vision (US/Global)	World Bank, UN, OECD, IMF, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Denmark, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, EU, US, African Development Bank, African Union, Asian Development Bank	n/a	2008

* Comprises in total 54 countries, 11 NGOs, industry and the DDI – African countries mentioned in the Table only
** CAR has been temporarily suspended, and Cote d'Ivoire is under sanction and not allowed to trade rough diamonds
*** Only founding members are included in this Table
****Comprises in total 18 fragile countries (so-called g7+), 22 donor countries (mostly OECD members), 3 middle income countries (Brazil, Chile, China), 8 multilateral institutions and a coalition of NGOs.