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Business Responsibilities in Times of War and Peace

The Case of Heineken in Central Africa

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In recent years, corporate social responsibility (CSR) of multinational corporations (MNCs) in developing countries has received a great deal of academic attention. However, the literature has focussed on large and mostly stable emerging countries such as Mexico, Brazil, China or India. The few studies concerning Africa typically cover South Africa or Nigeria and concentrate on the extractive industries, such as oil and mining. Central African countries and non-mining companies have not been the object of much academic scrutiny. This paper looks specifically at one major MNC operating in the beverage industry in three (post) conflict countries in Central Africa, namely Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and analyses the company's reactions to the conflicts as well as the extent to which the conflict context influenced the company's management and operations. Drawing from extensive interviews with Heineken high executives, and secondary documentation provided by Heineken, this paper offers detailed insights into the perceived and practised social responsibilities a major private economic actor encounters while operating in a conflict region. Based on the peace through commerce existing frameworks, we provide empirical evidence which reveals that economic and social opportunities are widely exploited. By continuing business in war times, creating linkages in the value chain, and offering healthcare to employees, family members and communities, as well as facilitating dialogue between warring parties, Heineken creates conditions for peace to thrive and contributes to consolidating the countries' stability. Our study also extends the scope of MNCs' responsibilities by showing the challenges MNCs operating in conflict areas face in maintaining an official policy of strict neutrality while being de facto involved in public matters.

- Multinational corporation
- Business for peace
- Conflict
- Peace
- CSR
- Africa
- Heineken

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THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF MULTINATIONAL corporations (MNCs) has received a lot of academic attention in the past decade (Fortanier and Kolk, 2007a; Kolk *et al.*, 2006). Whether in alleviating poverty or tackling climate change, MNCs are increasingly viewed as important actors with considerable power to, directly or indirectly, unilaterally or collaboratively, tackle global issues. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder theory have provided the theoretical underpinning for MNCs' engagement with issues previously considered outside their scope. Regarding peace and conflict matters, there is growing academic and practitioners' interest in the role of the private sector in general, and MNCs in particular, in contributing to stability and peace (e.g. Bais and Huijser, 2005; Banfield, 2003; Banfield *et al.*, 2005; Bennett, 2002; Gerson, 2001; Haufler, 2004; Jamali and Mirshak, 2010; Nelson, 2000; Oetzel *et al.*, 2007). However, empirical evidence is still limited, especially with regards to non-extractive industries in Africa. Besides the documentation of a few cases (mostly in the Niger Delta) which encourage MNCs' adherence to a few principles, mostly related to transparency, accountability and effective and sustained community involvement (Ite, 2007; Idemudia and Ite, 2006; Muthuri *et al.*, 2009; Hennchen, 2015), studies on how large MNCs operate in conflict countries in Africa, especially in Central Africa, and in sectors other than oil or mining, exploring the dilemmas and challenges they face, the opportunities they see and the role they play or could play are scant. In the context of Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in Burundi, three neighbouring countries in the heart of Africa, MNCs' presence is limited but the impact of their core operations as well as their CSR on the local situation is potentially significant. In that light, a thorough analysis of one MNC with a long-standing presence in the three countries offers interesting insights into the perceived and practised social responsibilities of an MNC in a conflict country.

The increasing relevance of CSR in developing economies is even more important given the shifting global investment patterns of the past decade. For the first time, developing and transition countries attracted more than half of global FDI (foreign direct investments) flows in 2011 (UNCTAD, 2011), which attests to the growing importance of developing countries in the world economy as well as their resilience to the economic and financial crisis (UNCTAD, 2011). This trend continued until the period 2013–2015 in which developing economies saw inward FDI reach \$765 billion, 9% above the level in 2014. Furthermore, the African continent's share of FDI has been growing since 2006, although the growth was more modest the past year (2015): In 2014, Africa accounted for 4.6% of global FDI flows, vs. 4.4% in 2011, and 2.7% in 2006 (UNCTAD, 2007, 2011, 2016). In 2015, FDI inflows to Africa amounted to \$54 billion vs. \$55 billion in 2011, and \$36 billion in 2006 (UNCTAD, 2007, 2011, 2016). Obviously, increased FDI patterns raise the issue of the increased economic and societal relevance of MNCs in host countries, in the light of their corporate social responsibility (Fortanier and Kolk, 2007b; Meyer, 2004). Their operations do have a major impact on host economies, ranging from traditional economic impacts (jobs, taxes) to spillovers (to local firms and through transfer of skills and technologies), as well as social effects for staff (working conditions and rights), local communities and the wider setting, including the consideration of human rights, corruption and governance, poverty alleviation, and the transfer of exemplary practices by being 'good corporate citizens' (Andriof and McIntosh, 2001; Kolk *et al.*, 2006; Kolk and Lenfant, 2010; Sullivan, 2003). However, research on the societal role played by MNCs in countries marked by poverty, conflict and limited statehood are very limited. Although MNCs' CSR strategies increasingly consider cultural, environmental, economic and cultural concerns (Eweje, 2011), CSR implementation on the ground differs quite substantially and issues tackled by MNC CSR strategies are not always in line with countries' priorities (Naeem and Welford, 2009). For instance, CSR strategies in Nigeria are often criticized for failing to address fundamental problems, such as the oil spills caused by MNCs' operations (Edoho, 2008; Idemudia and Ite, 2006; Ite, 2004) and CSR activities in Central Africa are rather generic (Kolk and Lenfant, 2010) and do not specifically cover issues typically related to conflicts such as ethnicity, identity, corruption, human rights abuses, unequal access to and redistribution of resources or violence against women.

Against this background, this paper aims to shed more light on one major MNC's presence in and reaction to a (post) conflict context in three different Central African countries, namely the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. More information about the evolution of the role and responsibilities of a major MNC over time, across three conflict countries, and its involvement in the wider social setting is an important step in gaining specific and detailed insight into an MNC's CSR strategic dilemmas, challenges and opportunities in (post) conflict countries in Central Africa. This study cuts to the heart of *what* business decisions are made in an era when the economic rationale of the firm alone does not serve to determine the optimum choices to take in a business situation.

CSR in Africa, MNCs and conflict

This research paper is located at the intersection of the CSR in Africa and the peace through commerce literature. The CSR in Africa literature (Egels, 2005; Ite 2004, 2005, 2007; Idemudia and Ite 2006; Okafor 2003) tackles a variety of issues, among which is the definition of CSR in the African context. While it is generally admitted that CSR should be locally embedded (Hamann *et al.*, 2005) and take historical and cultural factors into consideration (Idemudia and Ite, 2006), defining CSR in a continent marked by environmental degradation, protracted violent conflicts, as well as abject poverty, not only measured through income levels but also through health, education or nutrition indicators, is not an easy endeavour. In addition, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a UN-sponsored, multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at freeing people from extreme poverty, have not been achieved in many African countries. In this context, how to prioritize one issue above the other, considering the respective cultural and socioeconomic contexts (Dobers and Halme, 2009), presents MNCs investing in Africa with tremendous challenges. Revisiting Carroll's pyramid (Visser, 2006), economic responsibilities of MNCs prevail above philanthropy, legal or ethical responsibilities, given Africa's major employment needs. However, while MNCs' operations directly and/or indirectly result in job creation, CSR guidelines and frameworks only recently included issues such as employment type, job quality, or ethnic and regional diversification, which are highly salient issues in fragile and conflict-prone economies. The role and responsibility of MNCs in promoting fair, inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development, through their operations or through social investments, is even more important in Central African (post) conflict countries where formal employment opportunities are scarce and often provided along regional or ethnic lines, which undermines social cohesion and fuels ethnic resentment.

Global institutional pressures (Muthuri and Gilbert, 2011) as well as interaction with stakeholders (Egels, 2005) also exert influence on CSR orientation, scope and focus. CSR in Africa paid close attention to MNCs' community involvement (Muthuri *et al.*, 2009). Although marked by a patron–client type of relationship (Idahosa, 2002), meaningful MNC community involvement predicated on participatory decision-making processes will assist MNCs in bridging the gap between their perspective and local community expectations (Eweje, 2006; Kemp, 2010), while building healthy relationships with local communities will avoid costly conflicts (Muthuri *et al.*, 2009). Failure to involve beneficiaries, difficulties to integrate community perceptions, bringing technical solutions to political problems as well as isolation from broader development plans are often-heard critiques of CSR in Africa (Frynas, 2006; Idemudia and Ite, 2006; Ite 2004). To be effective, CSR activities in Africa must address the root causes of underdevelopment and/or conflict (Idahosa, 2002; Hamann and Kapelus, 2004; Idemudia, 2009). Given the complexities of violent conflicts, especially in Central Africa, where identity issues are often compounded by exclusion and limited access to resources which fuels political grievances, and where institutions are lacking to solve conflicts in a non-violent manner, MNCs' activities, if not carefully planned and implemented, can reignite or contribute to conflicts instead of helping solve them. In addition, CSR in weak institutional areas cannot be isolated from broader governance problems such as tax evasion and corruption, as these reinforce poor governance and further undermine state capacities (Dobers and Halme, 2009). In that light, not abusing a governance void and related opportunities to earn legal yet immoral profits ought to be part of CSR (Dobers and Halme, 2009). In the CSR in Africa literature, however, MNCs do not seem to show much concern for governance-related issues while "governance issues could conceivably be an important part of a CSR agenda, but the boundaries of current CSR appear to have been set without regard to the most pressing developmental challenges" (Frynas, 2005, p. 597). This discussion about companies' role in zones marked by governance gaps resonates with the literature on political CSR (e.g. Scherer and Palazzo, 2007, 2011; Scherer *et al.*, 2016). A few scholars argue that "regulatory voids have led to a political role for business" (Reinecke and Ansari, 2016, p. 300). Given the evolution of CSR from a notion focusing on safety and health to a concept including sustainable development and, to a lesser extent, human rights (Cragg *et al.*, 2012;

Wettstein, 2012), it seems only natural to incorporate conflict-related issues within CSR, which de facto, confers a political role to companies. This is also in line with Ford (2015, p. 457) who argued that companies are "highly political actors and have long been so". Linking CSR and conflict issues, we now turn to the "business for peace" literature, also known as "peace through commerce".

The business for peace literature (Fort and Schipani, 2004; International Alert, 2005; Wengler and Mockly, 2003) covers the contributions of business to promote peace and has been explored from different disciplines, such as political science and international relations (Bennett, 2002; Haufler, 2004; Wolf *et al.*, 2007), and management, including business and society perspectives (e.g. Fort and Schipani, 2004; Nelson, 2000; Warhurst, 2005). This new body of knowledge has also been studied through different lenses, from companies' reactions to conflict while operating in conflict zones, placing emphasis on "do no harm policies" or implementing codes of conduct, to companies' generic contribution to a peaceful environment regardless of the (conflict) context such as promoting economic development or the rule of law. In a few cases, the role of specific industries such as tourism, sports or mining has also been the object of interest (D'amore, 2010; Levy and Hawkins, 2010; Smith *et al.*, 2010). While studies point to certain determinants of companies' reaction to conflicts such as conflict intensity, geographical location, investment structure, firm size, firm experience, industry, firm type/ownership and stakeholder pressure (Berman, 2000; Oetzel *et al.*, 2007), there is scant empirical evidence of the exact drivers of companies' reaction to a conflict in a given conflict context. A recent study looking at factors influencing companies' likelihood to respond to a conflict found out that local stakeholder pressure is associated with firm direct responses, while external pressure is correlated to firms' indirect response to conflicts (Oetzel and Getz, 2012).

With regard to strategies that MNCs can deploy to promote peace, five main categories have emerged (Fort and Schipani, 2004; Oetzel *et al.*, 2007): promoting economic development, enhancing the rule of law, contributing to a sense of community, engaging in track two diplomacy, or engaging in conflict-sensitive practices. The more practitioner-oriented literature (International Alert, 2005; Nelson, 2000) also categorized different channels through which MNCs can implement activities to reduce the probability of conflicts: **core business**, i.e. maintain operations to generate wealth and provide jobs (Bais and Huijser, 2005; Fort and Schipani, 2004); **social investment**, i.e. support humanitarian efforts or finance community projects (Gerson and Colletta, 2002); or **policy dialogue**, i.e. engage in track two diplomacy or actively lobby warring parties to stop hostilities (Zandvliet, 2005). MNCs' interventions take place at micro, meso or macro levels, before, during or after a conflict (International Alert, 2005; Zandvliet, 2005). In the same line of thought, different intensity levels and basic reaction types have been identified: namely, compliance, do no harm and peace building (Nelson, 2000), take advantage, withdrawal, business as usual, and proactive engagement (Wolf *et al.*, 2007), while other categorization models made a distinction between business strategies that, unilaterally or in a collaborative manner, directly or indirectly influence the conflict (Oetzel *et al.*, 2007).

The case

Drawing from these models, our study will examine Heineken's operations and present a unique case of a major company's interaction with conflict and peace processes in three different countries. At the same time, our paper also answers a few questions related to the "poverty reduction–conflict–state fragility" linkages (Penh, 2010) with as focus the creation of fair, inclusive and sustainable economic and social opportunities in contexts of fragility, where tensions are palpable, conflict risk is high and governments not (always) properly functioning. Furthermore, countries that have experienced violent conflict in the recent past are more exposed to the possibility that violence can break out again within a five-year time span (Collier *et al.*, 2003). In that light, the experience of one company with a long-standing presence in this conflict-prone region and an established track record in various CSR domains, such as health and employment, will further the business for peace agenda and contribute to both the CSR and the peace through commerce literature.

At the time of our research, Heineken, founded in 1867 as a family business, was the world's most international brewer brewing and selling over 200 international, regional and local beers and ciders. Its core values were threefold: consistent top quality, enjoyment, and respect for people and planet. Heineken's growth through acquisition of local breweries resulted in investments in countries with difficult socioeconomic conditions, such as some African, Latin American and Asian countries, which by the end of 2010 represented 68% of the company's beer sales and 57% per cent of its EBIT (earnings before interest and taxes). In 2010 it had total revenues of €16,133 million (Heineken, 2011). Besides the significant growth in revenues (□20,511 million in 2015), its 2010/11 strategy in Central African countries did not change much (Heineken, 2015). Heineken was among the few multinational companies that experienced success in Africa for over 50 years. The company had substantial market positions in 15 African countries, out of which 11 were situated in sub-Saharan Africa (Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Namibia, Nigeria, Réunion, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and South Africa). While it exported the Heineken and Amstel brands across the region, the bulk of the sales came from brewing a variety of local brands, both beers and soft drinks. Revenues from the African markets were significant in terms of revenues, representing close to 13% of total revenues (□1.9 billion) in 2010 (Heineken, 2011).

As traditional markets (such as Western Europe) were becoming commercially less attractive, Heineken focused on how to increase sales within emerging markets in Africa. Given the fragile socioeconomic conditions in several of the sub-Saharan countries, Heineken had to direct resources into being an agent of social and economic change. It invested heavily in local healthcare for its employees and family members, with a focus on HIV/AIDS. It publicly debated its role in healthcare provision through for example its seminar named "Sharing Responsibilities in the 'World of Work' in Africa", where leading figures from international organizations and Dutch Government, NGOs, the public health community and industry were invited to reflect on corporate health policies in the poorest countries in the world (Heineken, 2011).

In DRC, Heineken business unit Bralima partnered with others to enhance local development and through its Bralima Foundation aiming to support underprivileged people through schooling and healthcare (Africa Report, 2011). In Rwanda, operating company Bralirwa contributed to the national development agenda through environmental, social and agricultural projects (Bralirwa, 2015). In Burundi, Heineken's local brewery Brarudi partnered with the Heineken Africa Foundation in areas of severe poverty such as Gitega, helping build local public healthcare infrastructure (Heineken Africa Foundation, 2011).

Methodology

We conducted semi-structured interviews with three Heineken high executives, two heads of human resources, and one president of Heineken operations in Africa and the Middle East, who agreed to three in-depth interviews. Interviews were held during the period January–June 2011, and in September 2015 at headquarters in Amsterdam. Qualitative interviews are very suitable to obtain in-depth insights into sensitive issues, such as how companies are affected by conflicts. A research plan including a detailed questionnaire was sent a few weeks prior to the interviews to allow for preparation. A report of the interviews was sent to the president of operations in Africa and the Middle East for validation. In addition, general documentation about Heineken such as CSR reports from past years, sustainability reports, annual reports and Heineken Africa Foundation reports were also reviewed, looking specifically at its operations in Central Africa, both in terms of core business and in terms of CSR. Other specific information about the operations in the three countries, such as DVD materials, brochures and leaflets, was made available. External documentation (Dutch press, NGO reports, general web search using topics such as Heineken in Central Africa, Heineken and conflict, Heineken and CSR) was also reviewed as a form of triangulation. Finally, extensive use was made of a book written in 2006 by Jean Louis Home, former Africa manager active throughout the 1990s, *Le businessman et le conflit des grands lacs*, for a detailed account of Heineken's direct reaction to the various conflicts in the 1990s. With regard to Heineken's socioeconomic impact assessment, we made use of recent project documentation concerning local content which Heineken increasingly implements to stimulate local entrepreneurship, together with an NGO Eucord. The CEO of this NGO (Henk Knipscheer) was interviewed extensively on the matter. Additional information was received through research journalist Olivier van Beemen's book titled *Heineken in Afrika* (2015), which triggered the researchers to review new journalism research findings and extend the research team. The former Heineken Africa Foundation Secretary General and Global Employees and Human Rights Manager enabled the research team's deep engagement with the topic as she had unique access to various internal and external stakeholders at both headquarter and subsidiary level.

Heineken's position vis-à-vis the various conflicts

To capture Heineken's reaction to and position vis-à-vis the respective conflicts from 1992 in Burundi, to 1994 in Rwanda and since 1996 in DRC, we made use of existing frameworks. We started with Wolf *et al.* (2007) by looking at the primary reaction of Heineken in the three conflict countries: take advantage, withdrawal, business as usual, or proactive engagement. A quick review of Heineken operations revealed that Heineken never left the three countries, which indicated that the attention should focus on whether Heineken, while maintaining its operations, conducted its business as usual (i.e. the conflict had little or no impact on its business) or engaged proactively in (co)finding solutions to the conflict. To obtain a better understanding of what Heineken did, and how it did it, we used Oetzel and Getz's model (2007), which makes a distinction between unilateral and collaborative activities on the one hand, and direct or indirect activities on the other hand. A direct contribution is a contribution that "has the intention of stopping violence, or preventing a situation with a clear capacity for violence from becoming violent" (Oetzel and Getz, 2012, p. 3). Direct activities range from influencing governments involved in conflicts or condemning publicly a course of action, while indirect activities may be related to addressing root causes of conflict or alleviating potential tensions such as adopting a diverse human resources policy. Given the fact that activities can be implemented at different levels (core business, social investment, policy dialogue), at micro (firm), meso (community) or macro level (country), before, during or after the conflict, such elements drawn from the practitioners' literature were added to the analytical framework (International Alert, 2005; Zandvliet, 2005). In addition, since our study goes beyond Heineken's mere *reaction* to various conflicts, but also tackles generic issues related to the company's operations in weak governance (post) conflict zones, we also included more generic elements drawn from Fort and Schipani (2004) that are not necessarily captured by the above-mentioned frameworks, such as promoting economic development, enhancing the rule of law, contributing to a sense of community, engaging in track two diplomacy and engaging in conflict-sensitive practices (see Table 2).

Table 1 General information on Heineken's presence in the three countries
Source: Heineken in Africa & Middle East, Heineken International, 2008

Country	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC
Name	Brasseries et Limonaderies du Burundi SA (Brarudi)	Brasseries et Limonaderies du Rwanda SA (Bralirwa)	Brasseries Limonaderies et Malteries SARL (Bralima)
Since	1956	1959	1923
Personnel	620	565	1712
Heineken stake (%)	59.30	100	95.00
Beer market share (%)	98	95	54

Continued

Country	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC
Breweries #	2: Bujumbura, Gitega	2: Gisenyi, Kigali	4: Kinshasa, Boma, Bukavu, Kisangani, Mbandaka
Beer volume (hl)	1.280.000	710	1.630.000

Heineken's operations in the frameworks

Before the conflict: compliance, business as usual, obeying the law and international regulations

The first obligation for MNCs investing in conflict-prone countries is to abide by existing national and international law and regulations. Since the rule of law is often absent in conflict countries and, when laws are available, they are often not enforced due to limited state capacity, following international regulations is highly relevant. For reviewing whether Heineken is following international guidelines in conflict countries, relevant areas include human rights (Ruggie Framework, Global Compact), the management of security forces (the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights), and combating corruption (e.g. the International Chamber of Commerce's Rules of Conduct and Recommendations on Combating Extortion and Bribery and Transparency International's Business Principles for Countering Bribery). Heineken, in 2011, was not aware of most of the above-mentioned guidelines, with the exception of the Global Compact. At first sight, it looks as if Heineken conducted its operations in a generic (business as usual type) manner regardless of the context, using its CSR policies and personal judgements to make business decisions.

With regards to **corruption**, Heineken acknowledges having to operate in grey areas. While corruption is officially opposed, ensuring continuity of its operations drove Heineken's local management at the frontier of corruption practices. Therefore, Heineken deemed it important not to place itself in a vulnerable position, which implies making sure there is enough stock of all crucial ingredients to operate, otherwise word would spread and prices offered by economic operators would most likely increase; in addition, it would put government officials (such as customs) in a powerful position to "demand" a higher price for the provision of services. An effective strategy to avoid corruption is to be involved in projects (agriculture, health, sponsoring education) as part of being a good citizen.

With regard to **human rights** and **management of security forces**: at the time of the interviews in 2011, Heineken was unaware of the Ruggie Framework which stipulates basic rules of engagement (protect, respect, remedy) and offers guidelines for corporate actors with regard to their responsibility to respect human rights. Furthermore, human rights as a topic of conversation was to be avoided with government officials in such delicate and politically sensitive environments. Heineken's primary responsibility was to stick to its core business (brew beer responsibly). With respect to maintaining security of staff and operations, Heineken was not familiar with the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Right. In the three countries, Heineken hired local private security companies, which consisted of a few guards with a uniform yet without weapons, since local authorities did not provide human or material resources to protect Heineken's assets. Despite its involvement in the boards of the company, and the economic importance of Heineken in terms of tax and royalty payments (see Table 2), the respective governments in the three countries did not protect Heineken's assets. In short, Heineken's operations in (post) conflict countries were based on common sense and were entrusted to a well-educated and sensitive staff with local knowledge. Heineken management mentioned that operating in conflict countries required knowledge and experience on how to manage crises. Nevertheless, in the three countries, Heineken was taken by surprise by the intensity of the violence (especially in Rwanda). Despite the explosive context and the various crises that marked the region in the 20th century, Heineken's social responsibility did not incorporate a political lens (i.e. it failed to include conflict-related issues).

Before multiple crises broke out in the 1990s in the three countries, Heineken's operations could be characterized as compliant and straightforward. Activities carried out were directly linked to their core business, in a unilateral manner. Few contacts were laid with non- state actors, few partnerships were entered and no specific conflict lens was applied to their operations. Interestingly, Heineken has not engaged in partnership with NGOs that can assist them in making sense of all the guidelines nor has it entrusted NGOs with their community engagement, as other (mostly mining) companies in the region do (Kolk and Lenfant, 2012).

During the conflict: direct reaction in crisis times

The analysis looked at Heineken's reaction to *violent attacks*, with consequences for *staff and assets*, and at Heineken's *vulnerability* in the light of *accusations* made.

Stay or leave

Heineken's operations in the three countries throughout the 1990s were the victims of numerous acts of pillage. Despite the fact that Heineken's assets were less grounded than major mining operations which cannot be moved (i.e. tied to the location of the mining sites), allowing for Heineken to rapidly withdraw from a country in crisis, it is noteworthy that Heineken maintained a continuous presence in Central Africa throughout the three conflicts. Only in a few cases were operations put on hold. The decision to stay in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC was based on four arguments: 1) sense of responsibility towards the country; 2) long-term vision; 3) protecting its assets; and 4) responsibilities towards its employees. Heineken's decision to stay was (also) based on the belief that the conflict would subside, and business would resume and be profitable, since Africa is a growth market. It was thus part of a business logic whereby companies that stay have a comparative advantage.

Table 2 Intervention typology in conflict areas identified at Heineken's operating companies

	Before conflict		During conflict		After conflict	
	Unilateral	**Collaborative**	**Unilateral**	**Collaborative**	**Unilateral**	**Collaborative**
Micro/company (core business)						
Direct			Protect assets, employees; Intervene during riot			
Indirect	Employee policy, diversification		Pay employees Maintain operations	Obtain and share information Network to find out about employee whereabouts	Health benefits to employees	Economic development: buy substitute ingredients for beer brewing
Meso/community (social investment)						
Direct						
Indirect	Create a sense of community Lead by example; be a good citizen		Continue business as usual as much as possible to avoid further disruption and institutional distrust	Exchange information, with other companies, and governments; Humanitarian assistance (UNDP)		**Health** projects at community level; **Education** projects; **Economic development** programmes in (support local actors in value chain) sport and reforestation
Macro/national (policy dialogue)						
Direct				Mediation, dialogue facilitation among antagonistic parties	Create trust	
Indirect						PIA dialogue with other companies: to improve governance
	Business as usual		Proactive engagement—Peace building			
	Compliance/Enhance rule of law/Create a sense of community					
	Promote economic development					
	Adopt conflict-sensitive practices					

Dealing with violence in acute crisis: protecting one's assets, facing accusations

While staying through numerous conflicts, Heineken was faced with the destruction of its assets. Telephones lines were cut, warehouses were plundered by both army forces and rebel forces and operations were put on hold in the three countries. In Rwanda, the brewery stopped its operations for a few months, buildings were rampaged, bookkeeping ransacked. Core staff salaries were paid during the suspension. In DRC, during the rebels' march from the eastern regions to Kinshasa in the mid-1990s, breweries and warehouses (Bukavu, Goma, Butembo, Beni, Bunia and Kisangani) fell one by one into rebel hands which led to personnel fleeing. In all countries, Heineken experienced the violence first hand. In Burundi, for instance, after the assassination of President Ndadaye on 21 October 1993, groups of violent young men armed with machetes tried to penetrate the premises of the brewery in Gitega, in search of Tutsi staff. In that particular case, the conflict was mediated through the intervention of a Heineken staff member who succeeded in calming the assailants (Home, 2006). In many cases, breweries acted as a shelter for people in danger of being assassinated. In situation of conflict assets are not only pillaged, they are also often requested. In Burundi for instance, Heineken's cold room was "requested" to keep the recently assassinated president's body cold (Home, 2006, p. 80). In 1996, after another coup, President Ntibantuganya took refuge at the US embassy, which then lobbied Heineken to open one of its houses for the ex-president. This example illustrates the "political" involvement, although reactive and indirect, of Heineken in Burundi.

The different conflicts were not only felt at "hardware" level (i.e. physical assets); tensions were first and foremost felt at staff level. Staff were murdered or arrested. In Rwanda, from 800 staff present before the genocide, only 300 survived or stayed. In addition, inter-community tensions heightened before and during conflicts. Rwandese staff that were seen as being too close to the (Hutu) regime of Habyarimana, fled across the border and remained in refugee camps for many years. Conversely, staff from eastern Congo from an ethnic group that is considered of Rwandan descent (Banyamulenge) emigrated to Rwanda to work for the brewery in Gisenyi, located at the border with DRC, while staff from western DRC (Kinshasa) were sent to Brazzaville, all for safety reasons. Confronted with extreme situations, Heineken's top priority was to protect staff.

During crises, Heineken management used its leverage and its networks to obtain as much information as possible on staff whereabouts to ascertain their safety. In Rwanda, Heineken management decided to support all Rwandese employees that had fled to refugee camps across the border in DRC through the provision of funds. Such actions led to the question of whether Heineken, while supporting its employees and their families, was not crossing the border of business and becoming a humanitarian agent. This dilemma is inherent in managing economic activities in emerging economies. By necessity, or vocation, the company gets involved in activities that are not part of its original mandate, beyond its core competences (Home, 2006). When the situation becomes tense or extreme, it is difficult to draw the line beyond which a responsible employer should cease to be concerned about their staff. When violence reaches a certain threshold, to be decided upon by local management in close collaboration with HQ, staff must be evacuated. The independence of decision making in crisis times must be left to "local management who are the only ones who can properly assess the situation" (Home, 2006, p. 50). This delegation of authority must be done in symbiosis with HQ. In crisis times, it is imperative to fight isolation and build relationships with other companies present, to exchange ideas and information, as well as assets, which requires building contacts in peaceful times. In such environments it is crucial to constantly re-sharpen one's knowledge because "there is nothing more dangerous than to assume one knows" (Home, 2006, p. 62).

Being in the front line of a conflict exposed and still exposes Heineken to numerous accusations from the press, pressure groups, opposition parties and NGOs. For instance, after a coup was staged in Burundi, the Dutch press as well as opposition groups from Burundi accused Heineken of contributing to maintaining an illegitimate president in power. Ironically, Heineken's management also received *pressure* from the new illegitimate authorities to maintain their operations. Similarly, Heineken was accused of collaborating with powers in Kinshasa *and* with rebel groups in the eastern part of DRC. Rebels in the east demanded the reopening of the brewery in Bukavu to profit from revenues while the "regular" authorities in Kinshasa pressured Heineken not to reopen its brewery in Bukavu under the argument that it would fuel the rebellion. Reopening the brewery in Bukavu was considered a local management responsibility since local management is best able to assess the risks and weigh first and foremost staff safety. Heineken engaged in a media campaign to inform public opinion that pursuing fair and sustainable economic activities are an avenue out of poverty and conflict, and that leaving the countries would have disastrous consequences for the staff, the communities and the country. Nevertheless, Heineken's strong stance on remaining neutral at all costs exposed them to the criticism of providing indirect support to the new illegitimate rebel authorities. The accusations continued to pressure Heineken HQ to take a stance over the conflict up to 2017 as new reports by academics (Schouten, 2013) and research journalists (Van Beemen, 2015) were published.

Social investment

In crisis times, when violence is raging, few social investment activities are carried out. This type of community investment project is best carried out when the incidence of violence is low. Nevertheless, Heineken was involved in the provision of humanitarian aid, together with UN agencies. For instance, Heineken not only ensured staff in refugee camps received some funds, but the company made a warehouse and generators available to UNDP for the delivery of food items to all camp refugees. The Rwandan factory in Gisenyi also manufactured bottles of water that were delivered through UN channels.

Track two diplomacy/engaging in policy dialogue

This dimension draws from the firm political strategies literature (Boddewyn and Brewer, 1994; Hillman and Hitt, 1999) and covers direct activities that MNCs can undertake to directly influence parties involved in a conflict, such as lobby activities or engaging in track two diplomacy (Zandvliet, 2005; Fort and Schipani, 2004). There is evidence that local as well as international firms use their leverage to induce warring parties to come to the table (International Alerts, 2005). These types of negotiation or mediation activities, although not common in the literature, have been documented, and may be carried out away from public view in order not to undermine the generally accepted view (Heineken is a case in point) that a firm's neutrality is its most important asset. Firms may thus not be inclined to report or publicly admit supporting such activities. For instance, Heineken played a role of convener, bringing parties together to search for common ground between antagonistic parties, and build a climate of trust to defuse aggressive behaviour. It must be stated that Heineken did not actually mediate between the parties involved, but provided contacts, logistical and financial support for such a dialogue to happen. In all instances, Heineken was asked yet refused to participate in the dialogue. Facilitating the dialogue, ensuring lines of communication between opposing parties remained open, was the limit of Heineken's responsibilities. A former high level manager indicated in an interview with one of the authors that:

> Heineken originally did not want to play this facilitating role but gradually got involved in it. In any event, it is always good to talk to people, government, or even opposition or what they called rebel groups. Although it was not our choice, once we were involved, we had to find a pacific solution to the conflict.

Interestingly, although this information was disclosed by a former regional manager in a book, and confirmed in an interview, Heineken at HQ refused to discuss the topic. This illustrates the complexity of obtaining accurate data on companies' involvement in peace matters because of the sensitivities linked to the issue.

During acute crises, Heineken's reaction can be characterized as proactive engagement at all levels, core business, social investment and policy dialogue. Heineken undertook a wide range of activities, both direct and indirect, at core business but also within the realm of social investment and policy dialogue, mostly unilaterally. Those policy dialogue activities, highlighting the political role that Heineken can play, are not advertised by Heineken.

After the conflict: immediate post-conflict

In the immediate post-conflict phase, beyond regular operational and logistical problems (such as water and electricity shortages, finding staff, training them, reconstituting teams, reorganizing bookkeeping, etc.), maintaining adequate relationships with government officials was extremely challenging. In Rwanda for instance, Heineken was the first company to be operational after the genocide. The new authorities decided to claim taxes for the activities during the months of the genocide (April–June 1994). Heineken challenged the government, went to court and won after a lengthy legal battle. This episode illustrates the difficulties of maintaining good working relationships with government authorities in a crisis-conflict context. In the three countries, the government interests were at some point conflicting with Heineken's interests. In a few cases, poor decision-making by government put Heineken at the brink of bankruptcy. For instance, board members representing the government were nominated based on political allegiance and not on merit, which hampered operations.

After the conflict: Heineken and its CSR (i.e. *not in crisis* context)

Generic CSR of Heineken

Heineken CSR is largely encapsulated in "Brewing a better future" (Heineken, 2012) and "Brewing a better World" (Heineken, 2015), a policy framework encompassing guidelines and goals that lays out Heineken's values and core principles. Heineken CSR makes reference to and is inspired by other reference points such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, Global Compact, the OECD guidelines, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Millennium/Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Business Coalition objectives among others. Generally, it can be noted that CSR started with aspects such as safety, health and environment, was later extended to child labour, and whistle blower and human rights elements (Business Code of Conduct (Heineken, 2013) and underlying policies), yet never included "conflict"-specific aspects. "Brewing a better future" articulated its policy around six major pillars, each with its own set of key performance indicators (KPIs): **green brewer** (with a focus on environmental issues such as energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, water efficiency of breweries); **green commerce** (looking at packaging, transport, recycling); **engaging employees** (concentrating on occupational health and safety); **Heineken cares** (community development, agriculture projects, health projects); **responsible consumption** (moderate consumption of beer); and **partnership for progress** (reduce alcohol-related harm). These six major pillars were meant to lead to the realization of three strategic objectives—improve, empower and impact—and five enablers have been identified to make it happen (incentives, governance, reporting and transparency, supplier code, communication and engagement). In addition, a total of 23 programmes informed by the six pillars were implemented. To translate the philosophy into actions and practice, implementation on the ground needed to be adapted to local circumstances according to countries' priorities.

In the *operationalization* in Central Africa, there was a strong focus on *health* and *economic development*, both in terms of *core business* (healthcare to personnel, sourcing raw materials locally, promoting jobs, spillovers and improving the revenue base of the country) and in terms of *social investments* (building health infrastructure in the communities, financing health projects and empowering farmers' organizations). In 2010, its health programmes were recognized as a shift from risk management to value creation by the Institute of Social Innovation of business school ESADE as a form of CSR in conflict and post-conflict scenarios and presented as a best practice for companies (Prandi and Lozano, 2010). In Africa in general and in Central Africa in particular, the Heineken Africa Foundation (HAF)—a €20 million endowment through which healthcare projects across the continent are funded—was the philanthropic leg of the company. Based on a long-standing presence in these countries and the realization that Heineken's healthy future largely depends on a healthy workforce and a healthy society, numerous health projects have been financed in Burundi, Rwanda and DRC (Heineken Africa Foundation, 2010 and 2012). Projects funded ranged from constructing health facilities, to running clinics, to treatment of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. It can be inferred from the above that Heineken accepts the notion that business has a role in promoting the right to health especially in countries with limited statehood, which raises the scope of duties and responsibilities of MNCs operating in conflict countries. The dire situation of public healthcare was a main driver for Heineken's interventions in the health sectors in many African countries, including Rwanda, DRC and Burundi. This moral duty argument "coincides with the view held by some proponents of the stakeholder theory of the firm" (van Cranenburgh, 2005, p. 245), yet poses a clear dilemma in terms of the scope of Heineken's responsibilities and exposes Heineken to the critique that it takes over and therefore undermines government responsibilities and capacities, although high level Heineken managers claimed that Heineken "will never take over such responsibilities and replace government authorities", as Heineken's focus is to create jobs and become a good citizen.

More specifically in Burundi, HAF allocated funds to the construction of a community health centre in Bugendana, a village where some 600 people were killed in the massacre on 20 July 1996, and Brarudi provided funds for the construction of six primary schools in the same community. Acknowledging the unifying character of sport, Brarudi sponsored the Primus league, golf and tennis tournaments, and rehabilitated two stadiums and two basketball fields. In DRC, Heineken was working with GTZ to help 19 of its supply chain providers (mostly small enterprises) to reach out to an additional 2,500 employees to expand its HIV/AIDS workplace programme. In Kinshasa, HAF supported a project aimed at early diagnosis of children at risk of sickle cell anaemia, a generic blood disorder and provided funds and in-kind support to another nine projects throughout the country. Other projects where Heineken was involved in DRC were the creation of a new blood transfusion centre in Kisangani, and a programme aimed at improving paediatric care and treatment in Bukavu. In Rwanda, HAF supported a €600,000 mosquito nets project, aiming to create production capacities to produce nets in Rwanda, a project that failed along the way. Heineken also collaborated with the government on a housing project and supported the annual maintenance of the Rwandan Genocide Memorial Garden, through tree planting and reforestation, and finances various initiatives, in line with the government's priority of national basic education, such as a primary school close to the brewery in Gisenyi.

Economic development strategy, both core business and social investment

As of the mid-2000s, Heineken shifted its sourcing policy and emphasized increasing local content, i.e. creating economic linkages and a sustainable raw material supply chain. This linkage strategy has empowerment and sustainability components and aimed at creating the conditions in which raw materials for beer production such as barley, hops and apples are supplied from sustainable and reliable sources. Local sourcing is good for the communities (income improvement), good for Heineken (cost reduction) and good for the environment (reduce carbon emission). Importing crops from Europe was expensive, generated additional carbon emissions, provided no extra income for local communities and exposed Heineken to exchange rate fluctuations and logistical problems. The programme was mainly focused on strengthening farmers' capacities with respect to growing, harvesting, packaging and transporting sorghum or any other raw material in a profitable way as well as providing them with seeds, fertilizer and micro-credits. The innovation also lay in the guaranteed amounts bought at a fixed price.

These projects fitted within Heineken's strategy of helping reconstruct the country's economic structures and fabric while contributing to its core business of brewing beer responsibly. To further that logic and for transparency purposes, Heineken decided to carry out economic impact assessments (EIAs) in a few African countries (including Rwanda and Burundi) to better understand its contribution to the economic development of the countries in which it operates. Heineken's EIAs look at parameters such as cash flows and direct and indirect employment, to assess the impact Heineken has on the host countries' economies. The methodology follows an economic model based on input–output analysis and makes a distinction between direct, indirect (value chain) and induced impact (linked to the added value and increased income generated from money transfers). EIAs captured all economic transactions related to Heineken's operations whereby consumption triggers production which generates money transfers between various sectors, which leads to income generation for households (salaries, selling of products), governments (taxes) and companies (profits, dividends and savings).

The EIAs conducted in Burundi and Rwanda illustrate Heineken's importance in both countries' economies (all figures are drawn from Triple Value, 2007, 2008). For instance, in 2006 Bralirwa generated revenues of €64 million, while Brarudi generated revenues of €87 million. The total value added of Bralirwa was €36 million, which accounted for 2% of Rwandan GDP while Brarudi's total value added was €51 million, or 8% of Burundi GDP. Bralirwa paid taxes equivalent to €26 million which represents 9% of total tax revenues, Brarudi paid €37 million, or 30% of Burundi's total tax revenues. When looking at the total value added (direct and indirect) Bralirwa's value was measured at €76.8 million, composed of €27 million household income, €32.9 million taxes, and €16.9 million profit and savings. Of this €76.8 million, €45.6 million was from direct effects and €31.2 million was from indirect and induced effects. The total value added attributed to Brarudi was €91 million, of which €26 million was household income, €43 million taxes and €22 million profits and savings. From the €91 million generated by Brarudi's presence, €60 million (65%) comes from direct effects and €31 million (35%) from indirect and induced effects.

In the entire Bralirwa value chain, approximately 20,000 jobs are created. When including induced effects, total employment amounts to 38,000, equivalent to a multiplier of 67. Non-poor households benefit the most from Bralirwa's operations (80% of €27 million income generated for households); this figure is less than the national average of 84% (non-poor households account for 84% of all income), which indicates that Bralirwa does not perpetuate inequality. Brarudi employs 620 people on a full-time basis. In the entire value chain, another 14,056 jobs are provided. The value chain employment multiplier is 23. With induced employment linked to additional spending of households, the total number of jobs generated by Brarudi's presence is over 35,000, or a multiplier of 57. The bulk of the jobs are associated with distribution in the retail and transport and recreation sectors. In absolute terms, non-poor households benefit the most from Brarudi's presence, receiving 79% of the €26 million household income generated, although they also account for the bulk of the Brarudi product consumption. Brarudi's impact on low income essentially deals with employment created in sugar cane production and with households benefiting from consumption by families whose revenues are generated by Brarudi's supply or distribution chain.

Job creation is a key priority for Heineken, which is extremely relevant in post-conflict contexts. However, many post-conflict economic interventions are focused on short-term job creation and tackle issues related to the supply side, but do not necessarily take into account the longer-term increase in demand for skilled employees. Interventions using a value chain approach, similar to that supported by Heineken, seek to build a market-driven value chain, and therefore increase the demand for skilled employees. In addition, new jobs created can become a source of tension, especially if the jobs or services are dominated by certain groups. For that matter, economic processes supported by Heineken in the value chain do not exacerbate inequality between specific groups. Basically, promoting economic development (i.e. sticking to Heineken's core business) was considered by Heineken the best strategy to operate in (post) conflict, low governance areas. The most direct and meaningful way for Heineken to offer opportunities for recovery and post-conflict reconstruction is through job creation (providing employment) and stimulating economic linkages (ensuring local companies obtain suppliers' contracts). Through sourcing locally, a local supply chain is created which generates jobs and improves living conditions. Heineken's local sourcing and sustainable supply chain initiatives in Africa were instrumental in empowering communities and improving farmers' income. According to Heineken's management, investing in local economies and creating economic linkages was all the more important in economies highly dependent on natural resources. Heineken intended breaking those countries' natural resource dependence through strengthening economic diversification. In that respect, Heineken was highly critical of companies that just come to Africa to dig raw materials from the ground and export them. As stated in its report, Heineken's position vis-à-vis CSR is best described as follows:

> Rather than providing temporary relief, we aim to enable permanent, positive change. As an integral part of the community, we care for our employees and their families and we empower local stakeholders who often depend on our presence for their livelihood (Heineken, 2012, p. 30).

Policy dialogue

In the post-conflict contexts, whereby incidence of violence was not as high as in the previous decades, Heineken was involved in a policy dialogue called Private Investors in Africa (PIA) with international institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF as well as other private companies in order to foster an institutional climate conducive to business in Africa. The coalition allows members to discuss economic governance issues, and is a strong advocate of economic liberalization and removal of trade barriers that hamper business creation and economic growth. It is interesting that this policy dialogue entails international institutions and other private companies, but does not include governments directly. Generally speaking, Heineken's position in 2011 was that business must stay as far as possible from politics, which does not mean a total disinterest in public affairs. Heineken strongly believed that the private sector must play its role, in terms of contributing to economic development, but maintaining its place and without infringing on political choices that are foreign to its core business. Engagement, where suited, but not beyond. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that practising it properly is extremely difficult, as is managing a precarious "balance between involvement in the public life of the country and the distance one needs to maintain vis-à-vis local institutions" (Home, 2006, p. 15). While operating in such difficult and challenging environments where governments are not properly functioning and where tensions are palpable, Heineken does not wish to be seen or perceived as taking sides and therefore strongly believes in maintaining neutrality and impartiality at all times. The best way to achieve this is through sticking to one's core business. Concentrating on the bottom line, ensuring one is never involved in difficult transactions, maintaining cordial yet functional relationships with local authorities was part of the assignment managers receive when taking on a job with Heineken in the region. The basis of CSR in conflict countries is ensuring that legal mechanisms function. Heineken's standpoint, although understandable, does not show openness about the political role Heineken de facto has by staying in operations in complex settings. Although it is clear that wounds from the past have not yet healed, it can be argued that Heineken, by deliberately choosing to stay in operations in such challenging contexts, made a political statement.

In a post-conflict, non-crisis context, Heineken used both core business and social investments as channels to shape its social responsibilities, mostly in collaboration with others. A more stable context seems suitable for cross-sector collaboration to thrive.

Limitations

This study focuses on one MNC in Central Africa as seen from the company's perspective. We realize the analysis could have been studied from many other perspectives—from the viewpoint of local communities, governments, a combination of them, the field as a whole, a comparison of the strategies of several companies in (post) conflict zones and so on. Each of these perspectives has its own methodological opportunities and limitations. An example is the 2015 publication named *Heineken in Afrika*, by research journalist Van Beemen, that provided an overview of historic and current practices of Heineken in Africa by critically highlighting inconsistencies between Heineken's CSR policies and practices (Van Beemen, 2015). That research took the perspective of former Heineken employees and local external company stakeholders. Also in our research the first author was not granted access to the local operating companies for sensitivity purposes, nor was it possible to conduct research into local business practices of Heineken. As a partial solution, a second researcher, also a former Heineken employee, with knowledge on operating in (post) conflict areas, joined and filled some of the gaps. Still, for academic purposes, increased access to data for publication would have strengthened the business and conflict and business and peace literature. The security risks for the company and its employees should however not be overlooked when doing research in this sensitive area. Nevertheless, the article is a first attempt to present results from a multi-level, multi-country study of the effects of conflict from the viewpoint of the management teams that were in charge at the company during and after the conflict took place.

We do not make claims about the completeness of Heineken's impact on conflict and peace in the three countries as it was not our intention to conduct an economic and social impact analysis. While we know aspects such as tax and alcohol can have significant impact on conflict societies, we have limited our study to the perceived and practised social topics identified by the company's high executives. While the findings are presently unique and limited, what is suggested by the findings in this study is not trivial. Given the poverty of theory and empirical evidence of business for peace, our study purpose was to conduct an in-depth examination of one MNC and stimulate others to do so as well so that, in time, the academic community provides a basis for grounded theory of business for peace and CSR.

Conclusions

This research paper sheds new light on how a major MNC operating in three Central African (post) conflict settings reacted to different conflicts that raged throughout the 1990s. Our research shows that Heineken's CSR in post-conflict areas in Central Africa had a strong focus on health (and to a lesser extent education), economic development (continuation of business, local content, stimulating local entrepreneurship), and track two diplomacy (facilitating dialogue for conflicting parties). It contradicts Van Beemen's positioning of Heineken as "doing everything to influence the government and its populations to ensure the optimal circumstances for creating profit" (Van Beemen, 2015, p. 340, translated from Dutch). We conclude that although Heineken recognized the limitation of its scope of social responsibilities as a private actor, Heineken's influence clearly reached out beyond the operations of its breweries.

In line with Visser (2006), Heineken felt a strong responsibility to support economic development, followed by philanthropy. Track two diplomacy and policy dialogues were seen as sensitive activities that may endanger the company's neutrality, which managers felt should be maintained at all times. While acknowledging neutrality is a sine qua non for business to thrive, our paper illustrates the dilemmas that one MNC in conflict and weak governance zones faces and shows the difficulty of navigating subtly between not taking sides in the conflict and acting responsibly as a concerned citizen with a certain degree of public responsibility. In crisis times, Heineken did undertake some steps to pursue resolution of disputes through dialogue and other peaceful means, as was the case in Burundi. Heineken did support mediation activities and therefore intervened in the public sphere, using its leverage and a certain degree of legitimacy to facilitate a dialogue between opposing parties. Heineken's rules of engagement were to facilitate the dialogue without taking part in it which is based on the distinction between being involved in public matters as opposed to being involved in politics, and stretches the scope of an MNC's involvement in a conflict area. These actions are in line with Fort and Schipani's (2004) track two diplomacy, promoting dialogue and the rule of law.

Our paper also shows that Heineken placed value on the intangibles such as staff quality, sensitivities and building relationships. It is clear that no blueprints or guidelines exist that can help companies deal with rebels invading a company's premises or requesting assets, which may explain why Heineken did not apply specific conflict analyses or tools. This does not necessarily mean that its policy and practices are not sensitive to the conflict; it implies that Heineken did not feel the need to develop its own guidelines on how to conduct business in a conflict country. Heineken's operations are embedded in generic CSR policies and codes of conduct and its position regarding investing in conflict countries is based on being a good citizen and abiding by the general rules of conducting business in a responsible way. For that purpose, Heineken relied on staff who are expected to understand the context in which the company operates. Trusting staff, their judgement, promoting knowledge acquisition, integrating local staff in decision-making, promoting team work, looking for ethnic mix and staff diversity, and building adequate relationships between HQ and local breweries is seen as crucial in conflict-affected areas. Traditional management forms are not suited to operate in complex and crisis-conflict contexts. In a sense, Heineken management style evolved to reflect its commitment to CSR, and emphasized strengthening of team capacities through crises on how to cope with them, discussing management of grey areas, such as corruption, which required a change of behaviour, and a total and fundamental involvement of African management. The main challenge of operating in conflict countries is to reconcile antagonisms and deal with contradictions. Promoting a business culture conducive to peaceful behaviour is an important part of Heineken's strategy in Africa in general, and in Central Africa in particular. Furthermore, Heineken encouraged capacity building through close cooperation with the local community, and supported the emergence of efficient, inclusive and sustainable market economies.

Our paper also demonstrated that Heineken's reaction to conflict situations correlated to the conflict intensity. In times of crisis, most activities undertaken were linked to Heineken's core business and carried out unilaterally. Only in post-conflict contexts did Heineken undertake activities collaboratively, which indicates that a certain degree of stability needs to be achieved for partnerships to emerge, which is in line with other studies (Kolk and Lenfant, 2012). However, Heineken mentioned the importance of networking and knowledge sharing with other companies before, during and after conflicts in order to be well connected when and if conflicts arise. Most interventions supported by Heineken in conflict contexts, at all stages of the conflict, are rather generic—that is, they do not incorporate conflict-related issues (such as governance or human rights)—and indirect; that is they create conditions for peace to thrive but are not directly related to conflict mitigation or conflict prevention. Finally, this study also exemplifies the difficulties for an international company to embrace a political version of CSR. While it can be argued that Heineken, by deliberately choosing to stay in operations, made de facto a political decision, and that some activities were of a political nature (facilitating a political dialogue), Heineken refuses to acknowledge or even discuss this "political" role.

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