



THE ROLE OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES IN THE CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT AREAS: THE CASE OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the involvement of the private sector in collective actions and the roles that it plays in humanitarian disasters and crises in conflict and post-conflict areas. The multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) are the main emphasis of this paper. The paper analyzes the involvement of the private sector in various forms of partnerships and addresses the challenges that these initiatives face. Rational choice institutionalism theory is used in discussing and identifying MSIs' roles. The analysis is built on the Syrian refugee crisis and shows that the private sector can potentially contribute more to humanitarian action through collaboration with various actors. This work also contributes by proposing recommendations to overcome barriers and increase the effectiveness of MSIs.

Keywords: Multi-stakeholder Initiatives, Multisectoral Partnerships, The Private Sector, Conflict and Post-Conflict Areas, The Syrian Refugee Crisis.

ÇATIŞMA VE ÇATIŞMA SONRASI ALANLARDA ÇOK PAYDAŞLI GİRİŞİMLERİN ROLÜ: SURİYE MÜLTECİ KRİZİ ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZ

Bu makalenin amacı, özel sektörün kolektif eylemlere katılımını ve çatışma ve çatışma sonrası bölgelerdeki insani felaketler ve krizlerde oynadığı rolleri Suriyeli mülteciler / sığınmacılar ekseninde araştırmaktır. Özel sektör içerisinde ise özellikle çok paydaşlı girişimlerin Suriyeli mülteci / sığınmacılara yönelik davranışlarını anlamak ve anlamlandırmak bu çalışmanın ana sorunsalını oluşturmaktadır. Alana ilişkin uluslararası ve ulusal yazının kapsamlı bir şekilde incelenmesi yönteminin kullanılmış olduğu bu çalışma, özel sektörün çeşitli ortaklık biçimlerine katılımını literatür taraması yöntemiyle analiz etmekte ve bu girişimlerin karşılaştığı zorlukları ele almaktadır. Akademik yazında çok paydaşlı girişimlerin rollerinin tartışılması ve tanımlanmasında kullanılan rasyonel seçim kurumsallığı teorisi çalışmanın kuramsal çerçevesinin oluşturulmasında kullanılmıştır. Ampirik veriler zemininde elde edilen bulgular sonucunda gerçekleştirilen analiz Suriye mülteci krizi üzerine inşa edilmiştir ve özel sektörün çeşitli aktörlerle işbirliği yaparak insani yardım faaliyetlerine potansiyel olarak daha fazla katkıda bulunabileceğini göstermektedir. Bu çalışma ayrıca, Suriyeli mülteci / sığınmacıların yaşadığı engellerin üstesinden gelmek ve çok paydaşlı girişimlerin bu alandaki etkinliğini artırmak için mevcut yazına katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çok Paydaşlı Girişimler, Çok Sektörlü Ortaklıklar, Özel Sektör, Çatışma ve Çatışma Sonrası Bölgeler, Suriyeli Mülteci Krizi.

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Introduction

With increased globalization in matters like environment, migration, human rights, and security, non-state actors have emerged to play more significant roles alongside the state activities. These roles have been opposed or complementary to state activities in these critical issues (Weiss et al. 1996; Baker et al. 2007, p. 3). Therefore, the rules and norms are formulated, controlled, and imposed not only by the states alone but also by other actors, such as private companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational enterprises (MNEs), and other non-state organizations (Keohane et al. 2000, pp. 202-213).

In the recent past, parallel to the changing roles of the agents, the nature and the magnitude of the conflicts have also transformed into new forms. In particular, after the end of the Cold War, and with the emergence of the failed states in their system and economy (which became the center of major conflicts), the relationships between state failure, poverty, and terrorism became more obvious. Such conflicts, although they may seem localized to unstable states, have tremendous impacts on the global economy. As shown in the Global Peace Index (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015), the majority of the conflicts of political and ethnic origins were also about controlling natural resources - such as oil, wood, and minerals- where corporate interests are important (Macdonald, 2013). In addition to these economic reasons, identity and religion are other important root causes of the conflicts.

In refugee crises, which are the unfortunate consequence of most major conflicts, the new agents start to play increasingly important roles, which can vary from being more actively involved in tackling poverty, environmental issues, terrorism, and human rights. However, they also get more involved in raising competition and conflict over access to resources, often fueled by corporate interests. Regardless, the potentially positive role of the business community in peace building and conflict resolution is being discussed more often due to their active involvement in crisis areas.

The presentation that led to this paper (Büyüktanır, 2016) discussed the cooperation between the private sector and other actors under multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) and different forms of partnerships¹ in post-conflict areas. The presentation highlighted the economic impacts of civil wars or conflicts in some countries and the efforts made by the private sector through its partnerships in tackling the problems related to underdevelopment, conflict, and conflict-related actions.

The study presented in this paper is built on the rational choice institutionalism theory in discussing and identifying the private sector's roles, and the added value provided by getting more involved with the other actors in different forms of partnerships in conflict and post-conflict areas. The data gathered as primary and secondary sources from online and printed documents were analyzed using the method of qualitative data analysis for interpretation and presentation. The concept was presented using the Syrian refugee crisis as a case study.

The economic, social, and political impacts of the Syrian refugee influx in the neighboring and European countries have been widely noted. Regardless, relatively little is known about the ways in which the private sector has contributed to the humanitarian response and post-war recovery by involving partnerships and active collaborations. The purpose of this study is to investigate the increasing role of the private sector in

¹ In this paper (Streck, 2004), the partnership will be used as "voluntary cooperative arrangements between actors from the public, business and civil society that display a minimal degree of institutionalization, have common non- hierarchical decision-making structures and address public policy issues".

humanitarian action and the ways in which it engages in collective actions. The multisectoral initiatives are the main emphasis for this objective intended to address the challenges that the various forms of partnerships face within multi-sectoral initiatives and partnership efforts, especially in humanitarian disasters and crises. Building upon the Syrian refugee crisis, the analysis presented in this paper shows that the private sector can potentially contribute to humanitarian action through collaboration with various actors. The roles that the private sector played, as well as the challenges that were specific to the MSIs for this crisis, are identified. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by placing emphasis on the need for more collaborative partnership models that the private sector can engage in with various actors. This study also sheds light on the need for collaborative partnerships and the importance of cross-sector partnerships as an alternative to the traditional methods that rely on governments as the only source capable of solving such monumental problems.

1. Literature Review

Turmoil between nations has resulted in various consequences for the world, and the number of civil wars and internal conflicts has increased since the end of the Cold War (Nye et al. 2011, p. 206). These conflicts in countries from various parts of the world, such as Afghanistan, Angola, Iraq, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Former Yugoslavia, and Syria, reaped destructive consequences in many parts of the world, increasing the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest nations (Collier et al. 2003). As Castles (2010), underlines, there is also a close relationship between mobility and globalization, and there has been a great transformation, particularly since the Cold War, both in developed and less-developed countries.

The underlying reasons for civil wars and conflicts have been addressed in various studies. Collier & Hoeffler (2000), stated that conflicts were mainly caused more by a lack of economic opportunities than by grievance. He added new reasons for the civil war in his further research with Collier & Hoeffler (2004), and argued that the risk of a civil war outbreak likely increases with the presence of a large diaspora, poverty, a low per-capita income, slow economic growth, and a higher population. On the other hand, other studies provided several critical points indicating that countries with greater natural resources and higher amounts of production of natural resources, such as oil or diamonds, and weaker state institutions are more prone to conflicts and civil wars (Lujala et al. 2005; Fearon, 2005; Blattman et al. 2010). According to Keen (2008, p. 21), one of the main reasons for civil wars is ethnic tensions. The reality is that whatever the reason for conflicts and civil wars, they trigger situations that result in vast numbers of people being forced to flee their homelands due to humanitarian and security concerns.

Recently, studies that have linked refugee flows and immigration to the transnational spread of civil and interstate war have increased in number (Koslowski, 2000; Adelman, 2002; Fearon et al. 2003; Collier et al. 2004; Lischer, 2005; Freilich et al. 2006; Salehyan et al. 2006; Salehyan, 2008; Buhaug et al. 2008). Some of these writers focus on the consequences of migrants and refugees with respect to security issues in neighboring conflict zones. For instance, the prolonged conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was initiated by the large wave of migrants fleeing from violence and instability in Rwanda. Another example is how the refugees from Darfur have destabilized neighboring (Choi et al. 2013, p. 53). Lischer (2005), asserts the possibility that refugees and the lack of humanitarian resources may affect the internal security of host countries and attract terrorist attacks. In fact, by using time-series analysis of 154 countries over the years 1970-2007, Choi & Salehyan (2013) support this idea. Other studies document that there is a relationship between forced migrants arriving in Europe and the risk of

terrorism in the EU (Guild, 2003). For instance, according to the Terrorism Act of 2000, Muslim refugees in Britain are increasingly being targeted as potential terrorist threats.

European countries are the most preferred destinations for immigrants and refugees who desire a safer and better life. Some countries, such as Turkey and Northern African countries, are seen as transit routes (Toprak, 2020, pp. 552-554). However, when refugees arrive in these countries, either as a transit route or as final destination, they influence social, cultural, and economic situations. Moreover, as a result of the unexpected influx of migrants, various changes to border security policies are often enacted. European states' legislative and policy responses to the refugee crises are primarily undertaken to prevent the possibility of terrorist networks taking advantage of immigration systems (Brouwer, 2002; Givens et al. 2008). While some researchers have started to work particularly on the securitization of migration in Europe (Jessen-Petersen, 1994; Brouwer, 2002; Givens et al. 2008), others take identity perspective into consideration, and argue that mass migration results in increasing the identity concerns in Europe (Castles, 2010). For instance, factors such as language, culture, and religion have created some concerns and raised tensions between host communities and Syrian refugees (Zyck et al. 2014, p. 7).

Despite the many studies related to security concerns, refugees, and mass migration, and especially related to short and long-term conflicts, fewer studies investigate the economic burden and social instability they create in conflict-affected countries. Abadie & Gardeazabal (2003, p. 113), found that after the start of terrorism in the Basque Country in the late 1960s, per capita GDP declined about 10 percent relative to a synthetic control region without terrorism. Another example is how violence affected inflation and the prices in Ireland during the years of conflict (Besley et al. 2012). During the Syrian conflict and the associated refugee crises, the refugee influx has major economic and social influences on the countries hosting the greatest number of refugees, such as Jordan and Turkey. Economically, this influx caused issues, such as increased housing costs, decreased wages due to the hiring of the people in need below the market rate, and increased unemployment among the citizens of the host countries since businesses illegally hired Syrian refugees (Zyck et al. 2014, p. 7).

Building partnerships for disaster recovery and post-conflict situations is one of the most effective ways to alleviate some of the issues mentioned in the previous paragraphs. Although the forms of partnerships can be different, *multi-organizational partnerships* (MOPs) and *multi-stakeholder initiatives* (MSIs) are the two most common. Lowndes and Skelcher (1998), define multi-organizational partnerships as including government, business, and community, as well as not-for-profit agencies. Some researchers use the term *multi-agency* for the same concept and focus on multi-agency disaster response and recovery for humanitarian crises. The role of multi-agencies in response and recovery, and what kind of problems they face in their efforts to help victims and communities, are examined in the literature (Prizzia, 2008; Janssen et al. 2010; Izumi et al. 2015; Chandra et al. 2016).

The main focus of this study is the multi-stakeholder initiative type partnerships. Through the help of multi-stakeholder initiatives, "NGOs, multilateral and other organizations encourage companies to participate in schemes that set social and environmental standards, monitor compliance, promote social and environmental reporting and auditing, certify good practice, and encourage stakeholder dialogue and *social learning* (Utting, 2002, p. 61). It is also expected that NGOs, multilateral and other organizations will advance the corporate social responsibility (CSR) concept. These partnerships can be perceived as an "interactive relation between different actors for sharing knowledge and expertise to address pressing issues of conflicts and refugee crises and migration (Zadek et al. 2006). In such partnerships, each stakeholder defends its

specific interests and uses its strategic and bargaining capacity. Therefore, the participation of all stakeholders can be thought of as “a new form of legitimate action that forms part of a broader liberal model of building a coalition of interest groups” (Cheyins, 2011, p. 2).

All this literature shows us that there is an increasing interest in postwar recovery efforts to see whether these can contribute to decreasing the general instability or de-escalate more severe crises. While others have looked at the link between civil wars and refugee flow and insurgency, this study will focus mainly on recent partnerships and will suggest possible solutions for collaborative partnerships that the private sector especially can engage in.

2. Methodology

In order to achieve the goals of this paper, the required data were gathered as primary and secondary sources from online and printed documents. Qualitative data analysis was used to process the data for interpretation and presentation. Web sites were used as primary sources to gather some of the macro data that has been aggregated specific at a country or regional level and has been published as reports or papers. This type of data is typically produced by intergovernmental organizations, such as the UN or local and international NGOs, and is valuable as it is hard to find from other agencies

To complement the primary sources, books, journal articles, digital or printed documents from research centers, think tanks, academia, and private firms were used as secondary sources. While relatively little information focused specifically on the small-sized private sector, examples of large-scale and impactful private sector engagement as MSIs were identified and selected.

In this paper, primary and secondary data were used in identifying how the private sector contributed to tackling problems related to the conflict and post-conflict areas, and for emphasizing its role in collaboration with the other stakeholders. In this context, the Syrian refugee crisis was evaluated as a case study. The data were also used to shed light on the specific challenges that MSIs face within a multi-sectoral initiative within the scope of this case study.

This study develops into several sections. The first section gives an in-depth literature review related to civil wars, economic and social aspects of conflicts, securitization of migration, and the private sector’s role in conflict and post-conflict areas. The second section defines rational choice institutionalism, which requires more precise identification of the private sector’s current and potential roles and the added value provided by increased involvement with other actors in different forms of partnerships in conflict and post-conflict areas as a theoretical approach. The third section covers the definition and examples of multi-stakeholder initiatives and some criticisms directed at these partnerships. The Syrian refugee crisis is provided as a case study in the fourth section. This section provides several illustrative examples of private sector engagement related to the Syrian refugees. The last section sums up the main findings and presents recommendations.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis of this paper originates from the theory of rational choice institutionalism. This theory has long been the leading paradigm in economics. In recent decades it has become more widely also used in other disciplines, such as sociology, political science, psychology, and international relations (Hogarth et al. 1987; Swedberg, 1990; Green et al. 1996). This study uses the rational choice institutionalism by leveraging its potential applicability for partnerships, particularly the ones in the form of MSIs, that

provide an agenda or a plan in which various partners collaborate on a voluntary basis to solve cross-border issues such as global warming, sustainable use of natural resources, poverty, migration, and human trafficking. Since the 1980s, these issues have become major concerns for the states that required collaboration and cooperation in the form of transnational partnerships in order to be able to address them adequately. The size, scope, time frame, and purpose of transnational partnerships may vary from only two partners to multiple partners (Andonova et al. 2003, p. 23; Selsky et al. 2005, p. 853). Instead of a single actor's independent operations, these transnational partnerships have emerged to find alternative solutions to emerging problems (Keohane, 1984; Schäferhoff et al. 2009). Among these partnerships, MSIs can be regarded as new institutions in which the public sector, the private sector, and civil society take part in global politics, where specific norms and rules are important.

Although originally the theory of rational choice institutionalism focused on international cooperation between states (Keohane, 1984), it has later expanded its focus to partnerships with the assumption that the partnerships can increase their effectiveness if the level of institutionalization is improved by establishing a formal structure and information flow. Such institutions can reduce uncertainty and lower the transaction costs of performing the same activity without institutionalization, which also amplifies the effectiveness (Williamson, 1975; Hall et al. 1996, p. 943).

As one of the types of new institutionalism (Keohane, 1984), rational choice institutionalism has some features (Hall et al. 1996). It assumes that each actor has its own strategic intention and expectation related to its own preferences. By involving in these institutions and acting collaboratively, each can reach the best possible result and receive the maximum benefit. Each institution also has its own symbols, rules, and moral templates (Hall et al. 1996, p. 947), and they offer their own rules, responsibilities, and skills necessary to confront specific social, economic, and environmental problems (Adelman et al. 1997). For instance, governments by regulating, businesses by creating wealth, and civil societies by bringing in the values can become more effective than each contributing alone. Additionally, the actors' behaviors are reformed and their impacts are strengthened when they integrate into an institution (Scott, 1995, p. 43).

Rational choice theory is perceived as particularly important to comprehend the effectiveness of partnerships. Some scholars have emphasized the effectiveness of these partnerships as a major source of their legitimacy (Bäckstrand, 2006, p. 291; Schäferhoff et al. 2009, p. 452; Szulecki et al. 2011, p. 714), while others have suggested the level of institutionalization to explain why partnerships vary in their effectiveness (Ruggie, 2003, p. 301; Biermann et al. 2007; Schäferhoff et al. 2009). As will be analyzed in the following sections, the multi-stakeholder, as opposed to bilateral partnerships, partnerships can be more effective if they are constructed under the common shared rules and norms. Furthermore, partnerships or collaborations with codes of conduct and a high level of institutionalization are also more effective.

As the parts of these partnerships, the companies aim to engage in MISs can also be explained by the rational choice approach. The private sector treats choices as instrumental in achieving their private goals. The companies (for-profit organizations) partnering with the other actors in the MSIs can lower their costs and enjoy legitimacy in society and international markets since the main goal of these companies is not just to survive, but to succeed economically while gaining legitimacy at the same time.

This study uses the rational choice institutionalism for analyzing partnerships and the role of the private sector, particularly the ones in the form of MSIs, which provide help in the Syrian refugee crisis.

4. The Private Sector as an Actor in Multisector Model of Governance

Although companies face fewer formal government restrictions since the 1980s, they do, at the same time, face an increasingly aware and empowered global civil society that endeavors hold them responsible and transparent. As a result, private-sector actors have been compelled to be *socially responsible* to improve their social and long-term economic performance by dealing more cooperatively and creatively with their external stakeholders. Companies not moving in this direction are increasingly subject to criticism from advocacy campaigns, shareholder activism, consumer boycotts, and ombudsman initiatives locally and internationally (Utting, 2002, pp. 82-91; Macdonald, 2013, pp. 128-129). Therefore, TNCs and MSEs are now perceived as contributors within a multisector model of governance together with governments, intergovernmental organizations, international organizations, and NGOs.

Previously, engaging the private sector was taken into consideration in a limited framework, such as in multi-track diplomacy (Diamond et al. 1996); however, recently it has begun to play a more significant role as an innovative partner. Especially since the beginning of the twenty-first century, and with the rise of the global media and corporate social responsibility, the role of the private sector has been attracting more attention. Therefore, it has become more difficult for companies to stay neutral. In addition, recent calls for alternative approaches to business come not only from a global civil society sector but also from a small part of the business sector itself. Furthermore, assisted by the rise in alternative dispute resolution processes, companies are increasingly trying to manage conflicts using processes such as mediation, regulatory negotiation, dialogue, and arbitration, and by creating commissions and committees focused on these particular issues.

The private sector can influence conflicts and problems, both positively and negatively. In societies with deep religious or ethnic conflicts, companies may worsen inequalities, intensify divisions, and cause conflicts as a result of their actions (Macdonald, 2013, p. 128). At the same time, companies can profit from conflicts and wars by selling their products, as exemplified by the defense and arms industries. For instance, in Jordan, the Syrian refugee crisis has become an advantage for some businesses, which provided services in the Za'atari Camp including leasing water rights, renting offices and accommodation, and selling food, pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, temporary shelters (tents and caravans) and construction materials to aid agencies (Zyck et al. 2014, p. 7). However, a high percentage of companies prefer to avoid conflict, as it destroys economies, intensifies poverty and inequality, and hampers growth in the long run (Kanbur, 2007, pp. 2-7). In addition, conflicts affect companies and their employees' working conditions negatively, as they are exposed to the risk of violence and destruction of property. Moreover, a great number of companies, as well as the economy, are negatively influenced, as other companies are reluctant to invest in conflictual areas (Mueller, 2013).

Business communities prefer to focus more on reducing, resolving, or preventing conflicts and problems rather than on waging conflict. The private sector supports peace and development by engaging in various partnerships with other actors through multi-stakeholder or multi-sectoral partnerships, which are described in the next sections.

5. Multi-Stakeholder and Multi-Sectoral Partnerships as New Ways of Cooperation

Multi-stakeholder initiatives and multi-sectoral partnerships are new ways of working together with various actors to address problems related to issues such as poverty, human rights, and the environment. In particular, the private sector has preferred

to cooperate with civil society organizations to create partnerships and set standards regarding these issues. These partnerships have been discussed in the framework of various concepts, as outlined in detail in Bäckstrand (2006), Cheyns (2011), and Zadek & Radovich, (2006).

Multi-stakeholdership as an initiative and partnership was first discussed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At the summit, non-state actors were asked to be more inclusive and responsive, especially minorities such as women and indigenous people, and as a solution to the participation gap in global environmental governance (Bäckstrand, 2006, p. 294). However, after ten years--by the time the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held in 2002 in Johannesburg, more networks and cooperation were established by actors from civil society, government, and the private sector. These partnerships resulted in the recognition of multi-stakeholdership as a new form of global governance and helped disseminate local and international norms. Through the help of MSIs, “NGOs, multilateral, and other organizations encourage companies to participate in schemes that set social and environmental standards, monitor compliance, promote social and environmental reporting and auditing, certify good practice, and encourage stakeholder dialogue and *social learning* (Utting, 2002, p. 61). These partnerships create a synergy between different organizational actors for sharing knowledge and expertise among stakeholder (Zadek et al. 2006, pp. 345-367). The participation of all stakeholders is seen as “a new form of legitimate action that forms part of a broader liberal model of building a coalition of interest groups” (Cheyns, 2011, p. 2).

The private sector, especially those interested in human rights, environmental sustainability, and corporate social responsibility, work particularly with NGOs, which have gained more recognition in developing tools for conflict management and risk assessment, in multi-stakeholder partnerships. NGOs support the internalization of global norms within societies as a part of their identity and to affect the determination of interests. They can also influence governments to make amendments or re-establish their policies. As Campbell (2002, p. 20) argues, NGOs can help to establish criteria for corporate involvement and help in the benchmarking of standards that could apply to sector-specific companies. NGOs play these roles through research on corporate activities in conflict zones and by investigating corporate efforts to prevent conflict. NGOs also act as a bridge between government and the private sector to ensure that both are upholding their public responsibilities. Therefore, NGOs are preferable partners for the private sector in MSIs.

The rationale behind why companies may be willing to engage in MSIs can be unique to each company and may depend on the willingness and necessity. The theory of rational choice institutionalism can explain the actors’ purpose of obeying rules constructed within the MSIs or the actors’ reason to participate in MSIs. The actors obey the norms because they fear punishment and sanctions from social media or local and national platforms. There is no doubt that partnerships within and across sectors have been accelerated to a great extent by developments in technologies and the pluralization of governance at the global level (Keck et al. 1998). These mechanisms allow stakeholders to be heard and to function within a plurality of norms and rules. In practice, companies may consider one of the below:

- *Obtaining positive legitimacy*: Companies have recently acknowledged that their capacity to live in a more stable and peaceful environment is linked to their relations and partnerships with other actors in society. This kind of partnership marks a critical step in legitimizing a company in the community. To reduce or eliminate the pressure that may result from the media, governments, inter-governmental

organizations, and other civil society actors, companies want to expand their social roles in global governance. In particular, working with NGOs, which some are mainly service providers and of which some are advocacy-based (Lambell et al. 2008), is more advantageous for the companies. The reason is that, although companies have sources to support some campaigns or to provide financial help by means of their own tools, working with the other actors helps legitimize their work in society and makes them more visible on social media.

- *Using the resources efficiently and eliminating the existence of asymmetric information:* Although companies generally have enough financial capacities, they may not provide the information and know-how that NGOs tend to have at hand. Because these organizations are active mainly at the local and national levels and have more interaction with the other actors that the companies cannot easily reach. NGOs, on the other hand, are willing to develop and realize social, economic, and cultural projects locally and internationally, but they do not, however, generally have the measures and resources to carry out these projects efficiently in a sustainable way. In this respect, the cooperation of NGOs with the business world is crucial for reaching the main aims. Therefore, it is better for both parties to mutually exchange the resources they have. As Utting (2002, p. 86) suggests, it is a win-win process for both parties, as “corporate social and environmental responsibility . . . [make] good business sense by boosting a firm’s competitive advantage, creating new markets, and, in some instances, even reducing costs” by eliminating the existence of asymmetric information and transaction fees.

- *Supporting and disseminating norms:* In recent years, norms have been interpreted from a theoretical and empirical point of view, as have social facts, such as identity, interests, language, social interaction, and intersubjective meaning (Jepperson, et al. 1996; Finnemore et al. 1998). Norms, which constitute a basis for the inter-subjective approach (Guzzini, 2000), are of great importance to anyone who wishes to understand politics that incorporate meaningful action and normative questions (Zehfuss, 2002). Even though international and regional norms are important steps toward standardizing the attitudes of states and non-state actors, since the 1980s, local norms have begun to interlace with international norms. Moreover, international norms often influence and/or develop internal structures and social norms at the domestic level (Finnemore et al. 1998). Included in this transformation, the private sector has assimilated these norms to change other actors and parts of society at the national and international levels. Creating partnerships has become important in terms of helping local and international companies/corporations and NGOs act together to support national and international norms with respect to transparency, participation, and accountability, which are among the main principles of governance. Corporate action--rather than acting individually--is now a more effective way of disseminating norms both at the local and international levels.

In summary, the expansion of the strategic cooperation between actors and businesses can facilitate better exchange of information, knowledge, and experience and enhance the allocation of resources. This kind of a strategic alliance will be advantageous for parties in their attempts to realize their own action plans, and will also create a new way of thinking and acting by integrating the social, political, and economic life of the globalized world. Although there are not enough case studies for this kind of collaboration, there are positive examples available that have been implemented in conflict areas in different parts of the world.

6. Examples of MSIs in the Global Arena and Some Criticisms Directed at These Partnerships

There are partnerships that the private sector has engaged in to provide support in different situations. Therefore, before presenting examples of partnerships providing support for the Syrian refugees, these will be discussed briefly.

The private sector and non-profit organizations both have increasing roles in disaster-relief activities, and there are various ways of relationships and interactions that the private sector embodies with the agencies and actors. The private sector engages in disaster-recovery situations in various ways, such as direct donation, building public-private partnerships, or collaborating with other actors. These efforts can create innovative solutions and promote the use of technology, help communities manage incoming funds, and support federal aid. In such situations, insurance companies and NGOs play a direct role by providing housing support, health services, and financial counseling (Chandra et al. 2016, pp. 2-3). The private sector's involvement in disasters demonstrates the importance of collaboration with the other actors.

In other cases, the private sector, including mining and extractive industries and NGOs, have started to work on new projects for specific conflict-affected and fragile states, such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mali, Pakistan, and Palestine (Brown et al. 2016). In the industry sector, the Fair Labor Association, the Global Network Initiative², and Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition (2012) (EICC); in human rights, the End Human Trafficking Now! Campaign ("End Human Trafficking Now!" Web Page), and Institute for Human Rights in Business (Institute for Human Rights in Business Web Page) are all examples of sector-specific MSIs and partnerships. Likewise, the Clean Development Mechanism³ and WSDD partnerships are examples of initiatives and partnerships focused on environmental and sustainable development. On the other hand, Kimberly Process Diamonds (Kimberly Process (Diamonds) Web Page), the Ethical Trading Initiative (Ethical Trading Initiative Web Page), the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil Web Page), Madison Dialogue (Gold, Diamonds) (Madison Dialogue (Gold, Diamonds) Web Page), and Better Cotton Initiative (Better Cotton Initiative Web Page) are examples in the trade sector. The International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies (International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies Web Page) (CIETT), the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI)⁴, the Fair Labor Association⁵, and the International Cocoa Initiative⁶ work as initiatives to deal with labor problems.

Although MSIs promise mainly decentralized flexible structures and varied expertise, these partnerships are also the result of a response to growing criticism⁷. They have been criticized for lack of accountability (Keohane et al. 2003), monitoring mechanisms, and transparency. The main reason for these critics is based on unclear guidelines and a lack of mandatory reporting requirements (Bäckstrand, 2006). Another

² For the analysis of two industry-specific MSIs see; Baumann-Pauly, et al. 2017.

³ For more information about Clean Development Mechanism see; Streck, 2004.

⁴ BSCI embraces over 600 companies that utilize BSCI's common Code of Conduct, which prohibits child and forced labor (The Business Social Compliance Initiative Web Page).

⁵ The Fair Labor Association (FLA) is an effort by companies, colleges, universities, and civil society organizations to improve working conditions in supply chain factories (Fair Labor Association Web Page).

⁶ The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) is a partnership of companies, labor unions, and NGOs that work to prevent child and forced labor in the West African cocoa supply chain through programmatic activities such as sensitization, training, and other community-level micro-projects, with a particular focus on education (International Cocoa Initiative Web Page).

⁷ A special issue of the journal "Agriculture and Human Values" edited by Emmanuelle Cheyns and Lone Riisgaard (2014) discusses the main paradoxes of MSIs.

criticism is made regarding the asymmetric balance of power as a result of unequal resources among stakeholders (Fransen et al. 2007). As a result of these power differences, local and relatively smaller communities and partners, in particular, can be excluded both from the decision-making process and from negotiations as well.

MSIs are not independent of national and local contexts. As such, they may adversely affect local power inequalities by interacting within local political and economic structures. They are often controlled by powerful actors embedded in the hierarchy of the local power structures. The result is often reinforcement of existing power inequalities at the local level.

Although partnerships are essential, and sometimes they are at the center of critiques, one should acknowledge that they are not easy to form either. The main challenge for partnerships is “managing the interaction of different modes of governments, which at some points will generate competition and other points collaboration” (Lowndes et al. 1998). According to Zyck and Armstrong (2014), there are other examples of institutional and procedural barriers. For instance, humanitarian agencies do not appear to be ready to engage with the business community: businesses attempting to collaborate with aid agencies note that decisions are postponed and that decision-making authority is unclear. In many cases, businesses have found it difficult to know whom to approach and how to identify appropriate focal points in aid agencies (2014, p. 1).

While the businesses make efforts to raise their economic, social, and environmental impacts, these attempts are generally connected with short-term economic development or social integration projects. Moreover, most of these activities are organized in highly visible ways so that the firms can gather positive media attention in society. Therefore, more comprehensive forms of partnerships and collaborations aiming at creating long-term projects should emerge. In addition, if these companies have some experience in working with the other stakeholders in various disasters and conflict-related areas their impact can be more influential.

7. The Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Need to Provide Multidimensional and Multisectoral Help

The extensive refugee crises that took place after the Second World War, and spread across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, had significant negative economic, cultural, and social impacts. Millions of people lived as refugees and migrants or had to displace internally. According to the UN data sources, in excess of 89.3 million people had to leave their homes due to wars, conflict, or persecution. However, this number reached record highs in 2021, and is still increasing (UNHCR, 2022, p. 2). The Middle East and North African (MENA) region, in particular, has been crippled by one of the worst humanitarian crises that began in Syria.

In March 2011, pro-democracy protests erupted against the Syrian government. Protesters demanded an end to the authoritarian practices of the Bashar al Assad regime. The use of force by the Syrian government to suppress demonstrations turned the uprising into a full-fledged civil war. As a result, the largest humanitarian crisis of the twenty-first century erupted. The civil war in Syria resulted in millions displaced to neighboring countries seeking security. More than 6.8 million Syrians have fled to a total of 129 countries, primarily Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. There are more than two million Syrians in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan (673,000), and Lebanon (840,900); 3.7 million registered in Turkey; and more than 29,000 Syrian refugees registered in North Africa by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (UNHCR, 2016; UNHCR, 2022, p. 17).

Refugees perceived Greece, Italy, and the Balkan countries as a transit route to Northern and Western Europe. Greece has been the most seriously affected country in the transit route so far. After a record of 1,032,408 in 2015, the number of refugees using the Mediterranean Sea decreased to 123,318 in 2021. In 2015, when the highest number of refugees was detected, nearly half of these people were Syrian refugees (Clayton et al. 2015).

The capacity of the islands to host this number of refugees was inadequate, and the islands' resources were severely strained. As a result, the situation that the newcomers faced was disastrous in that most of them were exposed not only to harsh conditions, but also to threats from smugglers, human traffickers, and criminal networks. Women and children were the most vulnerable, and were, often subjected to sexual violence, child labor, and physical and mental trauma (International Rescue Committee Web Page). Therefore, there was an urgent need to provide help for refugees in improving health, education, and working conditions through multidimensional and multisectoral partnerships.

8. The Private Sector Engagement in the Syrian Refugee Crisis

During the initial period of the Syrian refugee crisis, international organizations and non-governmental organizations such as the UNHCR, International Rescue Community, Doctors Without Borders, and International Alert--provided relief to Syrian refugees and migrants by means of campaigns and different projects. However, the private sector was not very influential in getting involved in large-scale initiatives. For instance, the short-lived Special Mediterranean Initiative, from June to December 2015, was built as an initiative consisting of a number of coordinated actions in southern Europe and the western Balkans, North Africa, the Middle East, the East, and the Horn of Africa, and West Africa. The overall objective of the initiative was to augment UNHCR's operations by capacity building and advocacy in response and protection in countries of asylum. Key partners in Europe included the European Commission, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Frontex, IOM, NGOs with an EU-wide remit in advocacy and public information, as well as national and international organizations (e.g., national Red Crosses/Red Crescent Societies, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Save the Children) (The Special Mediterranean Initiative Web Page).

In 2014 local companies and MNCs began working with governments, IGOs, and NGOs to ease the effects of massive refugee inflows. There were different kinds of partnerships created to help the Syrian refugees needing humanitarian help. Although direct financial help is easier⁸, private sector companies can construct bilateral partnerships with NGOs or IGOs, or take part in MSIs with NGOs and IGOs to tackle specific problems that may require more than just financial help.

The number of bilateral partnerships in which the private sector engages has been increasing. For instance, the Oxfam-UNICEF partnership and the NGO-IGO partnership reached out to more than 46,000 people (70 percent Syrian refugees and 30 percent Jordanians) in Jordan. They provided more than 85,000 people in Lebanon with clean drinking water, cash, relief supplies, and sanitation. They also helped families with information about their legal rights, and connected them to services such as legal aid (OXFAM; UNICEF). An IGO-private sector partnership, the IKEA Foundation, in partnership with the UNHCR, has provided thousands of refugees with shelter, care, education, energy, and host communities in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (UNHCR).

⁸ To reach a list of direct and indirect support from big business that has begun handing over millions of dollars to help refugees see CNN Money, 2015.

In 2016, Microsoft, in a business-NGO partnership, donated more than \$20 million in grants and computer programs to twelve nonprofit associations. Through its philanthropic associations, Microsoft has been supporting the training of refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Greece, and Jordan. Through its collaboration with NetHope, Microsoft has conveyed network administrations to Syrian refugees in Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon. These centers offer refugees technology skills for them to succeed in new countries and areas (Mspoweruser; Microsoft). As the leading mobile operator in the Middle East and Africa, Zain⁹ and its key partners, Ericsson and REFUNITE¹⁰, worked together to demonstrate the positive impact of technology to help relieve humanitarian challenges resulting from the refugee crisis. They promoted the use of mobile technologies as a force for “positive change, particularly in the developing world, where such technologies are regarded as a means to develop everyday life, provide life-saving services, and serve as an enabler of empowerment for individuals who are economically or socially marginalized” (Zain Group Report, 2015).

There are some country cases on specific forms of humanitarian-private sector engagement. For instance, Zyck and Armstrong examined (2014, p. 1) the humanitarian-private sector engagement in Jordan during the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis. In the Jordan case, a collaboration between the humanitarian and private sectors presented a wide variety of relationships. The private sector firms have helped the refugees by taking part as donors of humanitarian operations. They have also provided services and goods to aid agencies as logistics, as well as partnerships with banks to transfer cash and food vouchers to refugee households.

In another notable example, Airbnb started a movement called Open Home in 2017 to solve the housing problem of natural disaster victims, and the movement was transformed into a non-profit organization Airbnb.org in 2018. Airbnb.org, which cooperates with organizations like the International Rescue Committee (IRC), SINGA, and Solidarity Now started to solve the housing problems of not only natural disaster victims but also refugees and carried out projects to solve the housing problems of Syrian refugees in Romania with the International Organization for Migration in 2019. The private sector also provided services to aid agencies such as WFP, UNHCR, Save the Children, Islamic Relief, and Human Relief Foundation. In some situations, businesses provided technical assistance to aid agencies to advance the quality of their services. Finally, with the help of cash transfer programs, they helped quicker the development of refugee-owned businesses mostly inside the camps.

The number of attempts to create MSIs working specifically with Syrian refugees is not very high. Business Action Pledge in Response to the Refugee Crisis is a special case. The UN Global Compact Business for Peace platform has embarked on a project to promote and inspire private sector engagement in humanitarian action. In September 2015, the UN Global Compact, in partnership with The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), launched a Business Action Pledge in Response to Refugee Crises to encourage the private sector to support existing efforts and provide solutions to the widespread societal disruption. The Pledge calls on companies with operations or supply chains in countries that are producing, transiting, and receiving refugees to determine how to support, based on their own assets and capabilities. Companies can demonstrate leadership by taking action as an individual company or in partnership with others (United Nations Global Compact Web Page).

⁹ Zain is a leading telecommunications operator across the Middle East and Africa providing mobile voice and data services to over 44.3 million active customers as of December 31, 2014 (Zain).

¹⁰ REFUNITE is a non-profit organization with the mission of reconnecting families separated by war, conflict, natural disasters, or other circumstances (REFUNITE).

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This paper showed in order to decrease the short- and long-term negative social, economic, and security impacts of refugees, the efforts should focus on sending not only direct humanitarian help but also on creating partnerships, mainly multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs), to provide safe and secure environments for both local people and refugees. In this sense, when actors from the private sector and other sectors come together, they should consider the real need to organize humanitarian actions.

This paper showed that one of the reasons why companies engage in MSIs is to obtain positive legitimacy, besides raising their economic, social, and environmental impacts. Therefore, their attempts are generally connected with short-term economic development or social integration projects, while these activities are organized in highly visible ways so that the firms can gather positive media attention in society.

The analysis presented in this paper suggested that the private sector prefers to work particularly with NGOs in MSI partnerships in developing tools for conflict management and risk assessment. NGOs can act as a bridge between the government and the private sector, to ensure that both are upholding their public responsibilities. Therefore, NGOs are preferable partners for the private sector in MSIs.

Although MSIs formed by the private sector and with other actors have been proven to be instrumental in addressing humanitarian crises, they have been criticized for lack of accountability, monitoring mechanisms, and transparency. The main reason for these critics is based on unclear guidelines and a lack of mandatory reporting requirements. MSIs have also been criticized for the possibility of reinforcing existing power inequalities at the local level in some cases.

In order to increase the efficiency and the impact of MSIs in humanitarian crises, the private sector and its partners should concentrate not only on short-term measures but on the long-term ones as well. Focusing on long-term development-related policies and reforms may create more impacts at national and local levels. These efforts aiming to help refugees should be planned very prudently by taking all aspects into consideration.

Finally, based on the analyses and the experience gained in different disasters and humanitarian crises, some recommendations can be offered to alleviate the critiques, overcome barriers and increase the effectiveness of MSIs. For instance, each partnership should involve local partners to have credible impacts, as the humanitarian organizations and the private sector need the know-how coming from the local communities. Furthermore, each partner should define planned outcomes and benefits, establish measurable outcomes, and have well-defined objectives. In order to share such goals, there should be an active platform where stakeholders from various sectors can discover options for information sharing and express their will to cooperate in what particular area of their expertise. Finally, there should be a robust monitoring mechanism for the action of the MSIs that will satisfy all actors and the community in general.

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