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Motivating and Impeding Factors for Corporate Engagement in Peacebuilding

Ulrike Joras

with contributions from Rina Alluri and Karsten Palme

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Abstract/Zusammenfassung/Résumé

Since the end of the Cold War, the debate on the role of the private sector in peacebuilding has attracted increasingly more interest from research as well as policy-making. One of the oft-made claims is that the economic self-interest of corporate actors in a peaceful business environment should spur them into supporting peacebuilding processes. However, this seemingly compelling argument is confronted with a relatively small number of practical examples where business actors in fact assumed an active role in peace.

The goal of the working paper is to contribute to a better understanding of the motivating and deterring factors for corporate engagement in peace. Focusing the empirical research on the conflict-vulnerable tourism sector in Croatia, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka, the working paper argues that economic incentives are an important though not a sufficient motivation for most forms of corporate engagement in peace. Other factors such as the terms (or costs) of peace and the relationships to or dependence from the government can also strongly influence corporate willingness to actively contribute to peacebuilding.

Depuis la fin de la Guerre froide, le débat sur le rôle du secteur privé dans la promotion de la paix a fait l'objet d'une attention croissante de la part de chercheurs autant que de politiques. Selon une opinion très répandue, l'intérêt que les entreprises ont à travailler dans un environnement pacifique devrait à lui seul les inciter à soutenir activement les processus de promotion de la paix. Il suffit pourtant de voir le nombre très restreint de cas où des entreprises ont pris une part active dans la recherche de la paix pour comprendre que cet argument ne tient pas.

L'objectif de cette étude est de contribuer à mieux cerner les facteurs qui peuvent inciter les entreprises à s'engager en faveur de la paix, ou au contraire les en dissuader. Se basant sur des études de cas menées à propos du secteur du tourisme - un secteur très directement concerné par la question des conflits - en Croatie, au Rwanda et au Sri Lanka, l'étude montre que les intérêts économiques en jeu sont un motif important mais pas suffisant dans la plupart des cas. D'autres facteurs tels que les conditions (ou les coûts) de la paix ainsi que les relations qu'une entreprise a avec le gouvernement concerné peuvent également avoir une influence sur sa disposition à s'engager pour la promotion de la paix.

Seit dem Ende des Kalten Krieges ist das Interesse an der Rolle privater Wirtschaftsakteure in Friedensbemühungen sowohl in der Forschung als auch bei politischen Entscheidungsträgern gewachsen. Eines der Argumente, das im Zuge der Debatte häufiger verwendet wird, ist der Hinweis auf das wirtschaftliche Eigeninteresse des Wirtschaftssektors an Frieden, das privatwirtschaftliche Akteure zu einem aktiven Beitrag zu Friedensförderung motivieren sollte. Diesem Argument steht jedoch eine vergleichsweise geringe Anzahl von praktischen Beispielen privatwirtschaftlichen Engagements in Friedensförderung gegenüber.

Ziel des vorliegenden Working-Papers war es, einen Beitrag zu leisten zu einem besseren Verständnis der motivierenden als auch hemmenden Faktoren für einen aktiven privatwirtschaftlichen Beitrag in der Friedensförderung. Aufbauend auf einer empirischen Untersuchung des Tourismussektors in den drei Ländern Kroatien, Ruanda und Sri Lanka wird argumentiert, dass wirtschaftliche Faktoren ein wichtiger aber kein hinreichender Anreiz für die meisten Formen eines privatwirtschaftlichen Engagements in der Friedensförderung sind. Andere Faktoren, wie beispielsweise die „privatwirtschaftlichen Kosten des Friedens“ und das Verhältnis zu bzw. die Abhängigkeit von staatlichen Akteuren können die Bereitschaft zu privatwirtschaftlichen Engagement in der Friedensförderung beeinflussen.

1 Introduction

The debate on the role of the private business sector in conflict contexts is dominated by two seemingly contradictory lines of thought: One predominant line, focusing on the conflict-aggravating influences of business actors (for instance Reno 2000); and a second line of thought, addressing the contributions of the private sector for peacebuilding and the transformation of armed conflicts (for instance Nelson et al. 2000). This working paper focuses on the debate evolving around the business sector's contributions to peacebuilding. Specifically, it will broach the issue of why some private business actors that operate in conflict zones opt for an active engagement in peacebuilding and while others do not. The research focuses particularly on the role of the tourism sector in three countries, Croatia, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka.

As many authors have argued before (e.g. Barsella 2004; Keen 2009), violent conflicts hamper the operations of the majority of business actors. During wartime, markets are disturbed, demand reduced and production derogated. A peaceful environment, in contrast, allows for more efficient business. In light of this, the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, for instance, argued that "the business community has a natural interest in a peaceful world" since "expanding peace means expanding markets, and expanding markets translates into greater profits for business" (cited in Barbara 2006).

The seemingly compelling argument about the economic self-interest of corporate actors in peace is contrasted with surprisingly few examples of active business involvement in the promotion of peace. The goal of this working paper is to look at some of the factors that deter private companies from engaging in peacebuilding and at those issues that may propel them to assume a more pro-active role. A better understanding of corporate realities in zones of violent conflicts and peace should help to better assess if and how private business actors can be expected to become a partner in conflict transformation. A recent report by the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, for example, pointed out:

"[...] if policy frameworks and strategies continue to assume that the private sector is a governance partner in conflict zones it may lead to a rude awakening when the private partner turns out to be incapable or unwilling to fulfill this role. Instead of merely relying on corporate governance contributions to peace and security, policy makers are recommended to review where and under which conditions such interventions have successfully taken place. The question of what is keeping corporations from becoming more involved also needs to be asked, ideally through honest dialogue with corporations. This will help clarify expectations and assumptions about corporate contributions to peace and security" (Feil et al. 2008: II).

This working paper focuses on the tourism sector. The tourism industry is widely presumed to be highly vulnerable to the eruption of violent conflicts. Revenues gained in tourism typically decrease in the event of an armed conflict, for the simple reason that tourists are not inclined to spend their leisure time in a dangerous and potentially life-threatening environment. The argument of the economic self-interest of business actors in peace, hence, seems particularly evident for this sector.

The research presented is based on a larger research project ("Tourism, Peace and Conflict. How far does Self-Interest Carry?") that was conducted by swisspeace in cooperation with the Cologne Business School between March 2008 and March 2009 and funded by the Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung. The working paper focuses on one of the research questions addressed in the wider project and draws on the empirical results of three qualitative case studies in Croatia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka. Only the case study on Sri Lanka was conducted by the author of the working paper herself. The case studies on Rwanda and Croatia were realized by Rina Alluri and Karsten Palme, respectively.

The three countries selected for the research represent three very different cases, both in terms of the characteristics of the respective conflicts as well as the characteristics of the tourism industries. While at the time of the field research, Croatia and Rwanda were in a post-conflict stage, the conflict

in Sri Lanka was still ongoing. Furthermore, the conflicts are very different concerning their root-causes and dynamics. With regard to the tourism sector, the economic relevance of the industry in terms of contribution to the national GDP is with around two percent relatively small in Rwanda and Sri Lanka, but with over 20 percent very significant in Croatia. Hence, it was not intended to provide a comparative analysis of the three cases, but to present a spectrum of different corporate strategies in the light of different forms of violent conflicts.

The working paper will first provide an introduction into “corporate engagement in peace” and seeks to systematize existing forms of business contributions to peace. In chapters 3 and 4, the theoretical underpinnings are briefly discussed and the empirical results from the cases studies are presented and analyzed. Chapter 5 provides conclusions and recommendations.

2 Understanding terms: An attempt to systematize corporate engagement in peace

The terminology used in the contemporary literature in order to describe private business activities in zones of violent conflict is notoriously vague. Most commonly, corporate behavior is differentiated in being either “positive” or “negative”. “Negative activities” describe actions that trigger or fuel armed hostilities, such as through the trading of natural resources stemming from conflict zones, as it occurred in numerous resource-rich countries including Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo or Sierra Leone (see for instance Global Witness 1999; Reno 2000). “Positive” contributions, in contrast, cluster corporate activities that presumably support the prevention, settlement or transformation of violent conflicts. Yet, it has to be acknowledged that so far the actual impacts of business contributions to peacebuilding have barely been assessed so that a conclusive valuation of the benefits of “positive” corporate engagement in peace cannot be rendered.¹

Very different types of activities are commonly grouped together under the terms “positive contributions”, “corporate engagement in peace” or “business sector support to peace”. For some authors, corporate engagement in peace addresses primarily measures that make business operations more conflict-sensitive (Rienstra 2001). This “Do-No-Harm-approach” to business engagement in peace is probably still the most prominent form, deriving from the lively debate on business entanglement in the emergence and perpetuation of conflicts. Other authors focus on more “proactive” contributions. Some, for instance, consider a decent organizational business structure as a sound way to support a peaceful society, since “a respectful way of working together will often spill over into behaviour outside of the organization, which will facilitate positive change towards a peaceful world” (Jackson/Coolican 2003: 787). Again others focus on political activities undertaken by business associations to forge peace (Tripathi/Gündüz 2008), and for most authors, corporate engagement in peace is a mixture of all of the above - and more (Nelson et al. 2000; Bennett 2002; Wenger/Möckli 2002). Particularly the role of companies in post-conflict peacebuilding has attracted significant attention over the last years, since economic reconstruction is assumed to require contributions from business actors in order to be successful (Brück et al. 2000; Bray 2005).

In Table 1 different understandings of corporate activities in conflict settings are clustered in order to show some of the different concepts and underlying assumptions.

Table 1: Categories of business actor actions in conflict context and peacebuilding

Strategies	Description
Coping strategies <i>and</i> Proactive corporate engagement in peacebuilding	“Coping strategies” primarily seek to mitigate the negative impacts /costs of violent conflicts on private companies. In contrast to proactive corporate engagement in peacebuilding, coping strategies do not intend to influence the conflict itself, its causes or dynamics but they seek to address the individual impacts or symptoms of a conflict.

¹ In El Salvador, for example, private companies were directly and indirectly involved in peace talks. Although this case is often used to illustrate “positive” corporate engagement in peace (Tripathi/Gündüz 2008), it remains uncertain if the business sector’s rejection of provisions in the peace accord on economic reforms was beneficial or detrimental for a sustainable peace process (Rettberg 2007).

<p>Avoidance of conflict-aggravating corporate behavior (conflict-sensitivity / do-no-harm) and Deliberate corporate support to peacebuilding</p>	<p>Conflict-sensitive business practices intend to alleviate the negative, conflict-aggravating effects of business operations ("Do-No-Harm").</p> <p>Although the most common definitions of "conflict-sensitivity" state that conflict-sensitive approaches should include the minimization of negative impacts on a conflict context while maximizing the positive ones, the major focus de facto on the reduction of the negative impacts while the deliberate support to peacebuilding in terms of the maximization of the positive impacts attracted significantly less attention (Centre for Conflict Resolution et al. 2004).</p>
<p>Unintentional corporate support to peacebuilding and Deliberate corporate support to peacebuilding</p>	<p>Companies are assumed to be able to engage in peacebuilding by intentionally and actively influencing political, social and / or economic factors that shape the causes and dynamics of a violent conflict. Some authors (for instance, Wenger/Möckli 2002) also argue that "simply by doing business", corporate actors can contribute to peacebuilding. Business operations typically generate income and employment, which can contribute to conflict transformation, particularly in the case in which poverty and / or inequality are at the roots of a conflict. In this case, peacebuilding is a type of unintentional "side-effect" of everyday business operations and not a deliberate strategy.</p>
<p>Political corporate engagement in peacebuilding and Economic corporate engagement in peacebuilding</p>	<p>Corporate engagement in peace can address different dimensions of a conflict scenario. A possible differentiation is according to the political respectively economic nature of business activities. Political activities can, for example, include political lobby activities for peace, supporting mediation processes or actively participating in dialogue forums and peace talks. Corporate economic activities in peacebuilding include in contrast those activities for which the business actor harnesses directly its economic potentials, such as through social investments, investments in an early post-conflict context etc. These economic activities deliberately seek to make a contribution to peacebuilding while being at the same time economically beneficial for the business actors ("win-win-situation") (for example Barbara 2006).</p>
<p>According to conflict-phase (Pre-conflict-; conflict- and post-conflict-phase)</p>	<p>One of the most common patterns to distinguish between different forms of corporate engagement in peace is according to the phase of a conflict (pre-conflict-, conflict, and post-conflict-phase). Nelson, for example, used this categorization, laying out different options for business support to peace in the different phases of a conflict (Nelson et al. 2000).</p>

The different categories listed in the table do partly overlap and can, in many cases, not be clearly separated from each other. Yet, the table provides an overview of the different understandings of corporate engagement in peace, as they are used in the current debate.

For the following analysis, corporate engagement in peace is understood as all activities by business actors that actively contribute to conflict prevention, conflict settlement or conflict transformation / peacebuilding.

This implies that “coping strategies” are not included in the term, since they do not seek to tackle the conflict, its dynamics or causes but only intend to increase the individual security and mitigate the individual costs that may result from violent conflict for a business actor. There may be specific cases where coping strategies intersect with corporate engagement in peace, but for analytical purposes these two types should be separated. Yet, here the suggested broad understanding of corporate engagement in peace does include deliberate as well as inadvertent forms of corporate support to peacebuilding. Some authors, such as Feil et. al. chose a different approach. Focusing on what they call “security governance” as a form of corporate engagement in peace they argue: “[Security] Governance contributions are defined by their intention to solve or alleviate societal problems. Therefore, we are not interested in corporate contributions that are merely by-products of companies’ business operations. Companies do not make a contribution to governance by ‘just doing business’ in a zone of violent conflict”.

A broader understanding is chosen for this research since in light of existing research gaps and lacking knowledge on corporate activities in peace promotion, a broad understanding has the advantage that no specific action is excluded that may empirically prove to be relevant for this field.

3 Theoretical background: Motivating and deterring factors for corporate engagement in peacebuilding

The academic discourse on the contributions of business actors to peacebuilding is in its incipient stage. While non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as governmental actors have for some years actively approached the private sector in order to engage them in peace-related work, only few academics have broached the issue in an attempt to analyze the private sector role and impacts on established peace and security practices.

In the following, some theoretical reflections based on the existing academic as well as non-academic literature are provided for examining the motivating and impeding factors for “positive” corporate contributions to peace. Eight different factors are listed, examining various issues that may inhibit as well as encourage business engagement in peace. These factors give the theoretical underpinning for the empirical analysis in the subsequent chapter. Wolf et al. suggest a similar approach for the analysis of what they describe as “corporate security responsibility” (Wolf et al. 2007). Yet, in contrast to Wolf et al., the following conjectures evolve mostly around the impacts of a conflict / peace process on the private business sector as well as the private sector’s position and relationship in and with its political and social environment.²

I. High (individual) economic costs resulting from a violent conflict

In policy-debates as well as in scholarly work, it is frequently suggested that the costs that a violent conflict causes for a company, is the central reason why private firms should be (self-) interested in taking on peace promoting activities (see for instance Haufler 2001: 661; UN Security Council Press Release 2004; Feil et al. 2008). By realizing actions that contribute to the prevention or transformation of violent conflicts, companies are assumed to be able to reduce their individual conflict-related costs - provided the corporate activities for peace are indeed successful.

Although often difficult to quantify, direct and indirect corporate costs of a conflict commonly accrue as a result of the destruction of service and production facilities; sanctions against a country; the destabilization of markets or as a result of a damaged company-reputation such as in the case of NGO-campaigns against firms that operate in conflict zones (Cranna 1994; DiAddario 1997). The impacts of violent conflicts may resonate in the business environment of a country for extended periods of time after the conflict has been formally ended. A long-term shortage of skilled labor may, for instance, occur due to qualified people fleeing the conflict-ridden country and / or due to a disruption of the education system. Trust is another early victim of war. Trust between business partners and customers are essential for effective business relations, but arduous to rebuild once lost during a conflict.

The tourism sector is commonly regarded as one of the sectors that is particularly vulnerable to violent conflicts. The Global Peace Index considers tourism as a “peace industry” since tourism is one of the sectors, which “thrives in peace rather than violence”.

“Tourism is one of the industries for which the economic benefits of peace are most evident. Tourists obviously do not wish to travel to destinations suffering from high levels of violence or war. [...] On average, for every 10 place improvement in the Global Peace Index:

² Wolf’s conjectures mainly (though not exclusively) address the characteristics of companies (e.g. size of a company) and product and production characteristics (Wolf et al. 2007).

- Tourism spending increases by approximately US\$77 per head of population.
- Consumer spending on hotel and catering increases by approximately US\$214 per head of population.
- Consumer spending on leisure and recreation increases by approximately US\$16 per head of population" (Global Peace Index 2008).

A quantitative analysis by Neumayer comes to similar conclusions. Neumayer finds for the event of armed conflicts that tourist arrivals drop by over 26 percent on the long term (Neumayer 2004).

Significant variations in the economic impacts of violent conflicts on tourism may occur between different destinations. In particular when the touristic attractions in a conflict ridden country are rather ubiquitous and can be found in other destinations as well (e.g. sand and sea), travelers may more quickly decide to spend their holiday in other, more stable locations with similar attractions. In addition, the risk perception of tourists may vary significantly, depending on their cultural background; the type and intensity of the conflict; the way how the media reports about conflict events; and also how and if travel warnings are issued (Fletcher/Morakabati 2008). In some occasions, tourists respond to incidence of violent conflict only with a certain time-lag of several months, while in other occasions, the drop in arrival figures is more or less immediate (Neumayer 2004: 261-262). The destruction of touristic infrastructure, such as cultural sights may not only impact tourism receipts in the short term, but may also have significant long term effects on the touristic potential of a country or region, as natural and cultural attractions are a fundamental precondition for tourism that can often not be recovered.

Despite these possible variations in conflict-impacts on tourism, studies in tourism as well as conflict research commonly emphasize the negative economic impacts on the sector and conclude that tourism cannot prosper in the absence of security (Hall 1994; Hall/O'Sullivan 1996; Pizam/Mansfeld 1996; Sönmez 1998; Pizam 1999; Fallon 2001; Drakos/Kutan 2003; Neumayer 2004).³ The conflicts in Northern Ireland and Nepal, for example, led to a drastic downturn in income from tourism (Wall 1996; Malla 2004; Bhattarai et al. 2005). Similar trends were observed for the Central-American countries Guatemala and El Salvador during the times of the civil wars, with the negative consequences of conflict also spreading onto other sectors as well as neighboring countries (Seddighi et al. 2002; Neumayer 2004).

These negative economic consequences of violent conflicts on the tourism industry should make the sector interested in a peaceful and stable business environment. Yet, this interest did so far seemingly not translate for concrete examples of tourism actors getting involved in peacebuilding activities.

II. Low (individual) economic costs resulting from a violent conflict

In reverse to the argument that high economic costs may mobilize corporate activities in support for peace, low economic costs may negatively influence private companies' propensity to engage in peacebuilding. As mentioned above, the costs of conflicts may vary depending on numerous factors, such as the geographic spread, intensity and type of a conflict. According to Berman, the geographic location of a company in relation to the main conflict zones is the factor that most significantly influences the affects of a conflict on an individual firm (Berman 2000).

³ However, most of these studies address terrorism (rather than violent conflicts) and its affects on tourism while others do not separate at all between different forms of violence.

A company may also develop coping strategies to influence the individual conflict costs. A firm may, for example, hire private protection to shield its assets from attacks and decrease its *individual* conflict-risks - while the conflict itself remains unchanged. Although applying coping strategies causes expenses for a firm, they may overall decrease its conflict costs and allow a company to operate in a conflict setting without being (or feeling) severely affected by the violence.

In the tourism sector, coping strategies seem to be of particular significance. In the relevant tourism literature, there is little reference made to active tourism sector engagement in peacebuilding activities, while authors such as Sönmez emphasize the need to better “manage” violent conflicts (Sönmez 1998; Sönmez et al. 1999; Freyer/Gross 2004). Managing a crisis caused by a violent conflict in this understanding primarily implies security strategies (e.g. collaborating with police forces) as well as marketing efforts and media campaigns to restore the image of the destination as a safe and pleasant place to travel to (“recovery marketing”). These coping strategies may reduce the conflict costs and hence, the willingness of tourism actors to assume an active role in peacebuilding.

III. Benefits of a conflict and high (individual) costs resulting from a peace process

There is an extensive body of literature on the economic incentives and benefits of waging wars. Authors such as David Keen argued that economic interests can be an important factor in the emergence or the continuation of conflicts, with political leaders as well as ordinary people turning to violence “to defend vested interests” or as a “solution to their economic and social problems” (Keen 1998: 12). These players may resent a peace process since peace is economically less beneficial than armed hostility. Also private companies may consider peace as a less promising environment than sustained conflict. Although those profiting from war can be expected to be a minority, high prices for consumer goods may benefit traders; security companies may profit from an increased demand; and for some extractive industries a lack of governmental interference in times of conflict may allow them to skim off extra profits (for instance Frynas 1998).

One specific form of economic incentives for war, are those cases in which actors reject peace on the grounds that the expected type of peace is perceived as economically detrimental. Those actors may not benefit from the violence itself but they may experience negative consequences through a peace process. In El Salvador and Guatemala, the private sector objected a negotiated settlement of the civil wars for a long time, fearing economic repercussions from the peace accords because they e.g. expected changes in the labor and tax regulations (Joras 2007b; Joras 2007a; Rettberg 2007).

Although peace is mostly assumed to be more economically beneficial for the majority of private companies than war, in those cases outlined above, peace brings about costs for business actors, undermining their support for a peace process. Literature on such spoilers has addressed this issue for various types of actors in a conflict setting, but has mostly ignored the role of private business actors as spoilers (Stedman 1997; Stedman 2001). Overall, it is not well understood how specific terms of peace may influence whether or not business actors are supportive of a peace process - even if they do not directly benefit from conflict.

IV. Political, ethnic and social influences on business actors

One of the main underlying assumptions of the conjectures that high (individual) economic costs from a violent conflict may encourage private companies to engage in peace promotion, respectively that high costs from a peace process may discourage private sector actors to do so, is that private companies behave as rational actors with the economic self-interest as the main decision criterion. For the conflict in Sri Lanka, Sunil Bastian, for example wrote:

“A frequent question among academics and researchers witnessing this deteriorating condition [that dragged the country into a civil war] was: ‘Where are the rational capitalists?’ Behind this debate was the puzzle: why were the capitalist classes, whose long-term

interests were undermined by this war, not bringing pressure on the ruling regimes to force a settlement to the conflict? Why were they were letting various governments drag the country into an unwinnable war that was detrimental to the long-term interests of capitalists?" (Bastian 2005: 25)

A focus on the "rational capitalists" disregards from the political, ethnic, religious or social identity of business entrepreneurs, which may influence a business-person's perception of a violent conflict and peace process. In some cases, the political, ethnic or religious rationale may outweigh a purely economic acumen or make the business-actor relatively insensitive towards the economic costs and risks associated with war. Craig Charney criticized for this reason the rational choice perspective in his analysis of the business sector support in the peace process in South Africa:

"While rational choice perspectives recognize that elites have options, the reigning assumption that firms act as rational maximizers of economic returns leaves little room for the effects of values and is altogether silent on the on the redefinition of self-interest or expansion of the boundaries of identity through discursive processes during a transition" (Charney 1999: 206).

The influence of identities other than that of a rational businessman may be of particular relevance in countries where the political and economic elites strongly overlap and where, hence, political and economic identities cannot be easily be divided.

V. Reluctance to engage in political processes and corporate dependence on the state

Corporate activities in support for peace may either address the local working environment of a company or the broader regional or national context. There are examples for both. Applying conflict sensitive business practices, for instance, happens primarily on the level of individual firms and affects above all the local work environment. Getting involved in peace mediation such as realized by private sector actors in South Africa or Northern Ireland, in contrast, seeks to impact the political dynamics on the national level (Banfield et al. 2006).

Both types of activity - though more those addressing the regional and national level - force the private sector actors to enter political territory, which they may be reluctant to do for two main reasons:

- Particular transnational / foreign companies may feel that they should not get involved in national politics, but stay neutral. Companies have frequently been accused of "neo-colonialism" following examples of corporations abusing their economic power to manipulate political-decision making processes for their particular interests (Fuchs 2007: 103-137). Companies may fear that getting actively involved in politics in order to promote peace may propel allegations of undue interference.
- Companies may feel that they are dependent on the government and do not want to alienate them by advancing views that are contrary to governmental positions. The tourism sector, for example, is generally closely linked to the government since its operations and economic performance are to a considerable extent contingent on the provision of touristic infrastructure by the state (e.g. airports, national parks, cultural sights, spatial planning). In other cases, a historically grown, closely knit relationship between governmental and economic elites may discourage private sector actors to articulate opinions other than that of the government.

In addition, corporate engagement in peace is a relatively new theme. Emerging in the wake of increasing knowledge on economic dimensions of civil wars and the growing corporate social responsibility movement, ideas about companies' support for peace have only been developed over

the last decade (see e.g. Nelson et al. 2000: 39; Haufler 2001; Banfield et al. 2006). Before then, peace and security were the sole preserves of the state with some support from NGOs. Up to now, the question was not systematically addressed if it is at all desirable to integrate the private sector into peace promotion. There is little broad based acceptance and trust in the idea that private companies can effectively and positively contribute to peace. This lack of acceptance may undermine the private sector's propensity to engage in peacebuilding.

VI. Lacking awareness and capacity on how to engage in peace promotion

The newness of the concept of corporate engagement in peace mentioned above may also be the root of a lack of awareness among companies on options of how to contribute to peace promotion. Companies may in fact consider security and peace as the responsibility of the state, with themselves having little to offer to the complex process of conflict transformation. Accepted guidelines or systematic suggestions on what the private sector's role in peace promotion might entail, are overall missing. Only for parts of the extractive industries and specific fields of the finance sector, have principles and schemes been developed that directly or indirectly seek to limit adverse company behavior in zones of violent conflicts (e.g. the Equator Principles, the Kimberley Process, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative or conflict-sensitive business guidelines for extractive industries by International Alert).⁴ These initiatives mostly do not encourage pro-active peace-supporting behavior, but instead provide a tangible frame of reference for selected sectors in terms of conflict-sensitivity so that "negative" corporate effects are curbed. For other sectors, these types of guidelines rarely exist.

Lacking knowledge, best practices or frameworks for business support to peace may hamper corporate engagement in this field. The Collaborative Learning Project, for example, suggests that "companies are more comfortable adhering to pre-defined codes of conduct than proactively engaging in peace building" (Collaborative Learning Projects 2003).

In addition to lacking knowledge on how to engage in peace, companies may feel that they do not have the capacity or ability to do so (Collaborative Learning Projects 2003). Companies may, for instance, feel that they do not have leverage over political decision-making processes; and that they cannot spare staff or money for peace support. The relevance and leverage of the tourism sector in political processes, for example, has often been described as small and disproportionate to its economic importance (Hall 1994).

VII. Inability to organize effectively

Even if the assumption is true that the majority of private business actors can prosper more in peace than in a conflictive environment, the very nature of peace as a public good may fundamentally contradict corporate engagement in peace promotion. The free-rider problem as well as the non-rivalry of its consumption may form a significant barrier for an individual business actor to shoulder the costs and risks that come with contributing to peace promotion.

Joint corporate actions for peace may, to some extent, mitigate the free-rider problem and reduce potential competitive disadvantages. Beyond this, it is often claimed that the ability of a corporate sector to act in unity, is a central factor in its ability to influence political decision-making processes (Mizruchi 1992; Rettberg 2007). Whether private business actors are able to overcome collective

⁴ The Equator Principles only marginally address zones of violent conflicts. They primarily tackle more unspecific social and environmental concerns that are relevant for project funding (Joras 2008: 7). Similarly, the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative does not only refer to conflict countries, but overall to extractive industries in resource-rich countries.

action problems may be a crucial factor that shapes business actors' willingness to get engaged in peace promotion. Well-functioning business institutions, such as chambers of commerce or business associations may provide good preconditions for business support to peace. In reverse, overall weak organizational structures may impede it. In the context of a violent conflict, a lack of organizational capacity, however, may be a result of the conflict itself, since private companies and business institutions may be so severely affected by the conflict that corporate institutions are not functional anymore.

The tourism sector is known for being challenged to organize itself effectively (Hall 1994). Characteristics such as a large number of small and medium enterprises and broad sectorial differences within the tourism industry (transport, handicrafts, hotels, food production, etc.) make it difficult to establish powerful corporate interest groups and may hamper the tourism sector's ability to engage in peace promotion.

VIII. Lacking political and critical space for corporate engagement in peace

Last but not least and linked to the factors mentioned above, an important reason that may discourage business actor's contributions is the lack of political space. Corporate engagement in peace promotion may become easier for companies, if there is an explicit political space carved out for private sector participation, such as specific forums for non-state actors to utter their opinion. International Alert, for example, found that "private sector mobilisation and integration in peace processes is both a decision reached internally by companies and also a response to specific opportunities and circumstances" (Banfield et al. 2006: 39). An environment that is highly unstable and politically charged may not provide the right setting to allow for external engagement from private business actors nor other external players.

These eight deterring and motivating factors certainly do not cover the full range of issues that influence business actors' behavior with regard to corporate engagement in peace. The relevance of these factors may also differ depending on the conflict setting, economic structure, and actors involved and would have to be analyzed within each specific context.

4 The tourism sector's engagement in peacebuilding in Croatia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka

Focusing on the presumably highly conflict-vulnerable tourism sector in Croatia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka, it was explored through qualitative interviews if and how tourism sector representatives got engaged in peacebuilding and what their motivations and impediments were.

An active, concerted and intentional engagement of tourism companies in peace promotion could only be observed in Sri Lanka, where members of the tourism sector were the initial driving force behind the establishment of the initiative "Sri Lanka First" (SLF). SLF was set up after the bomb attack against Colombo international airport in 2001 with the original intention to raise public awareness on the economic consequences of the violent conflict and to engage in public campaigning for a settlement of the civil war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan government (peace constituency). Although SLF was originally inspired by tourism actors, with tourism entrepreneurs having an active role in the establishment and early leadership, SLF developed immediately into a cross-sectoral business initiative. Numerous different sectors were represented in the organization, though with a geographic focus on companies based in the area around Colombo.

SLF was only publically active during a limited period of time. The initiative struggled to define an adequate mandate and appropriate activities, going beyond the initial campaigns, which for instance included a public demonstration against the armed conflict. Yet, other business-led initiatives were founded in the following years, including the "Business for Peace Initiative", the "Business Alliance for Peace" or the Sub-Committee on Peace and Reconciliation in the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. It seems that SLF inspired the establishment of these initiatives, although their particular activities were in part different from SLF's approach.⁵

In Croatia and Rwanda, the tourism sector saw for itself primarily a role in post-conflict reconstruction - however, without that there was any concerted activity by tourism companies with a deliberate intention to promote a more stable and less conflict-prone environment. In both countries, tourism representatives stated that they "automatically" supported peacebuilding, simply by doing business. The creation of jobs as well as economic opportunities would contribute to the process of post-conflict reconstruction and reduce the risks of a re-kindling of a conflict. In contrast to the deliberate form of corporate engagement in peacebuilding that was observed in Sri Lanka, dominated in Croatia and Rwanda unintentional corporate support to peace (see chapter 2).

In Rwanda, for example, tourism proceeds were directly invested in community development projects so that a share of the tourism income benefited the local population. In Croatia, the tourism sector "involuntarily" contributed to cross-border collaboration between Croatia and neighboring states. Tourism companies had to work together with former enemies in Serbia, Bosnia and Montenegro, since tourists demanded travel packages and tours, which not only focused on Croatia but also included destinations in neighboring countries. Tour operators in Dubrovnik, for instance, collaborated closely with partners in Montenegro for the purpose of joint tours; a "Pannonia Peace Route" was initiated as a bike-path connecting Croatia, Serbia, and Hungary; and cross-border partnerships are planned between the Croatian province of East Slovenia and the Serbian province of

⁵ The other initiatives, for instance, engaged in economic assistance in the East of Sri Lanka, discussion-groups, bottom-up initiatives with a specific focus on the small and medium companies, etc.

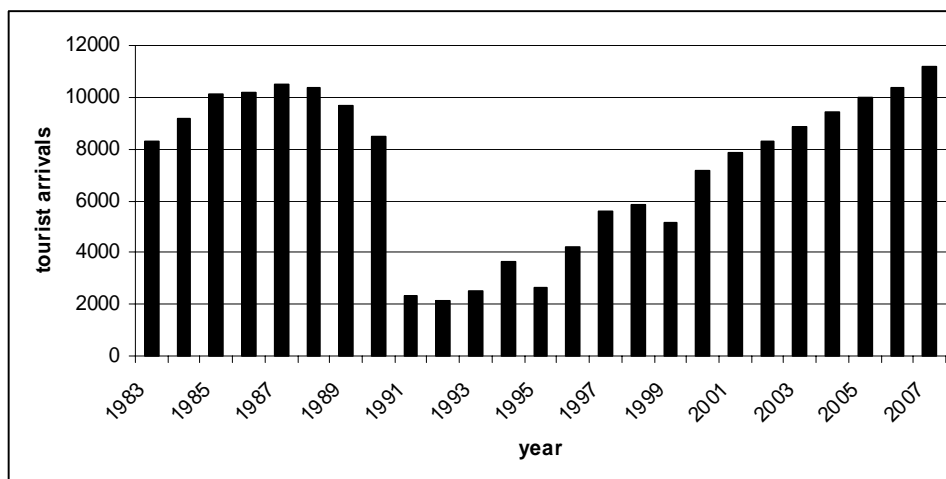
Vojvodina. These private initiatives were pioneering cross-border collaborations at a time when official cooperation between state bodies was limited due to political reasons and animosities.⁶

In the following, as a conceptual framework for the analysis of the empirical results it is reverted to the eight motivating and impeding factors for corporate engagement in peacebuilding, which were introduced in the theoretical chapter 3. The goal is to assess the relevance of these factors in order to better understand why in Croatia and Rwanda, the tourism sector did not engage in any type of concerted and deliberate peace promoting activities and why the Sri Lankan sector launched (an) initiative(s), but only in 2001, after the conflict had already taken its toll from the sector for 18 years.

I. + II. High (individual) economic costs / Low (individual) economic costs resulting from the violent conflicts

In all three country cases, the armed conflicts resulted in a decline in tourist arrival numbers. From country to country, the decline in tourism arrivals varied between roughly 50 percent and over 90 percent, as the maximum decline between the peak year before the conflict and the nadir during the conflict (see graphs 1, 2, and 3 below). In Croatia, the tourism sector was repeatedly a direct target in the conflict since beginning in 1990. In August 1990, for instance - the high season for the tourism sector - ethnic Serbs blocked the most important rail- and road connections between Zagreb and Istria in the course of the so-called "log-revolution". This deliberately cut off the access path for the local population as well as the tourists, who in many cases interrupted their holiday early. Occasional targeted attacks against the sector continued in the following years and as a result kept tourist numbers low.

Graph 1: Tourist arrivals in Croatia, 1983-2007

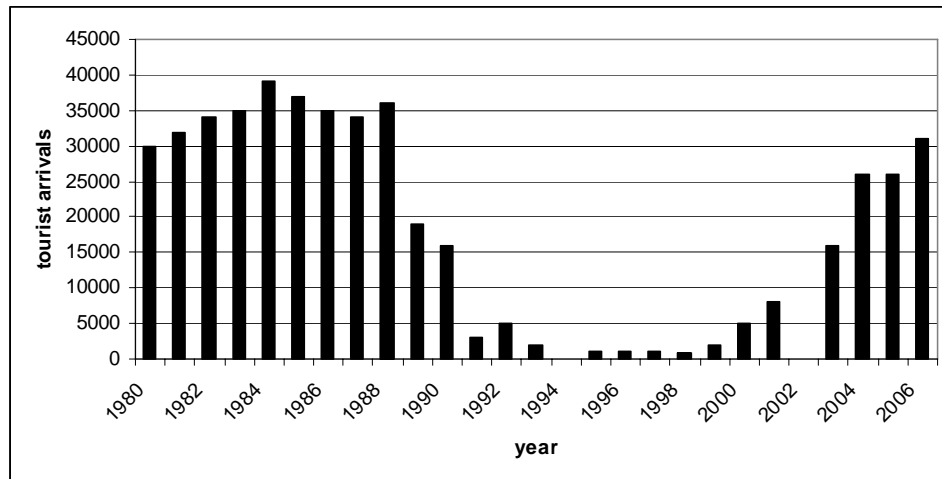


Source: own graph based on data by CROSTAT, 2008.

⁶ While these examples are remarkable and most likely were an important contribution to peacebuilding in these countries, in some observed cases it seemed that the label "peace" was primarily used for marketing purposes, without that peacebuilding activities could be observed.

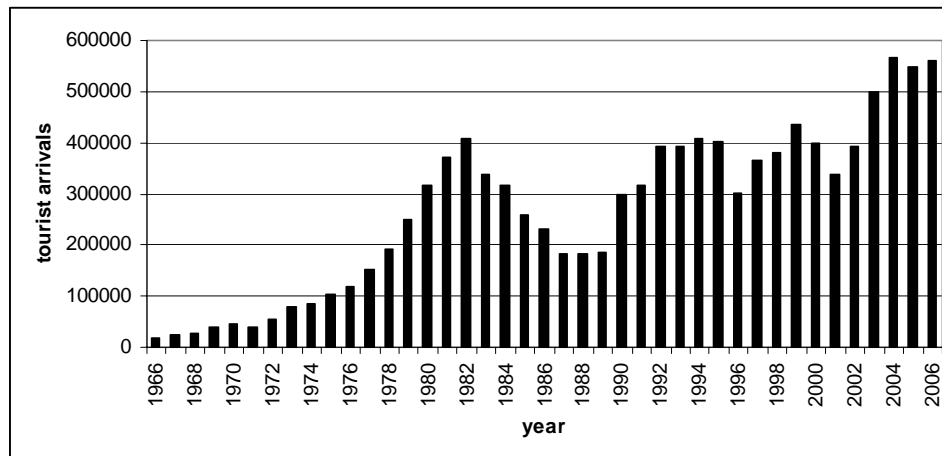
In Rwanda, tourist arrivals dwindled since the beginning of the violent conflict in 1990 and dropped to almost zero in 1994 as a consequence of the genocide. Only with the end of the genocide and the de-escalation of the conflict between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, did the sector began to recover. In Sri Lanka, tourism arrival numbers experienced a decline with the beginning of the civil war in 1983. Although the sector recovered to some extent despite the ongoing conflict, the development remained erratic and vulnerable to violent political incidences.

Graph 2: Tourist arrivals in Rwanda, 1980-2006



Source: own graph based on data by the ORTPN (no data available for the year 2002)

Graph 3: Tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka, 1966-2006



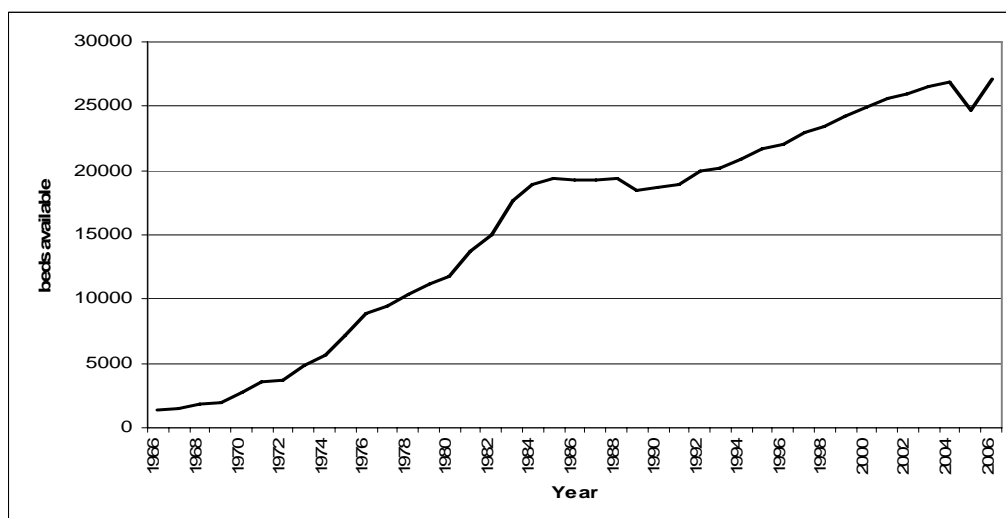
Source: Annual Statistical report of Sri Lanka Tourism - 2006

A comparison of the different developments of tourist arrival numbers in the three countries seems to contradict conjecture 1 made in chapter 3: In the two countries, Croatia and Rwanda, where no intentional corporate engagement was observed, the relative decline in tourist arrival numbers was with at least 80 percent significantly higher than in Sri Lanka (ca. 50 percent), where intentional corporate engagement took place. Hence, there seems to be little correlation between the severity of the conflict-impact on the tourism sector and its propensity to engage in peace promotion.

Two additional factors, however, should be taken into consideration: The impact of coping strategies and the event of the airport attack that propelled the establishment of Sri Lanka First.

Firstly, particularly in Croatia and Sri Lanka before 2001, tourism actors developed various coping strategies, in order to mitigate the immediate economic impacts of the conflict. The strategies included the concentration of touristic investments in comparatively safe geographic areas (the West, South and the inland in Sri Lanka and Istria in Croatia); the development of international marketing campaigns (in Sri Lanka also in new markets such as China and Russia); alternative investment strategies (e.g. in Sri Lanka an expansion of investments in more peaceful markets such as the Maldives); or the supplementation of income by starting new economic activities (one big tour-operator in Croatia became a commercial agency for car sales). The coping strategies could evidently not prevent all economic conflict-costs.⁷ However, they made it possible for (some) tourism actors to generate a living from the still-incoming tourists or through other income-generating activities. In fact, in both Croatia and Sri Lanka, tourism carried on throughout the conflict period at sometimes surprisingly high levels. In Sri Lanka, continued investments in accommodation also suggest optimistic expectations for the future of the sector (see graph 4). The application of these coping strategies and the continuation of tourism were of course only possible since the intensity of the wars were temporarily relatively low and because the geographic focus of the fighting zones in one area of the country allowed for the continuation of tourism in other regions.

Graph 4: Development of accommodation capacity in Sri Lanka, 1966-2006



Source: Annual Statistical report of Sri Lanka Tourism - 2006

Secondly, Sri Lanka First was founded in immediate response to the attack against the only international airport in Sri Lanka in 2001. The attack led to a sudden drop of tourist arrival numbers and made the influential business community around Colombo feel the armed conflict at their doorsteps. Throughout most of the civil war, the fighting between the LTTE and the governmental

⁷ Despite this assessment, the tourism sector in Sri Lanka stayed far behind its potential. For climatic reasons (monsoon), Sri Lanka could, for instance, have grown into a year-around destination, if the East of the country could have been developed touristically. Also in a global comparison, tourism development in Sri Lanka lags behind the international average.

security forces was geographically contained in the North and East of the country, sealing off Sri Lanka's economic powerhouse in Colombo from most of the immediate effects of the conflict. The attack against the airport made the civil war and its economic impacts more palpable for them. High economic costs were in this case the direct impetus for the establishment of the business-led initiative. The comparison seems to suggest that the *absolute* economic costs of a conflict are not significant for *deliberate* corporate engagement in peace. Much rather, it is the *perception* of costs, dependent on what is considered acceptable (see also Rettberg 2007).

A different analysis has to be provided for those activities in Croatia and Rwanda that were categorized as *non-deliberate* forms of corporate engagement in peacebuilding. For these activities, the economic dimension was the main incentive. Yet, it was not the economic costs of the violent conflicts, nor the economic prospects of peace that spurred these actors, but merely the outlook of being able to realize promising business operations. Peacebuilding was merely a "side-effect" of activities that were realized for profit-making purposes alone.

III. Benefits of a conflict and high (individual) costs from a peace process

The costs that (could have) emerged from peace processes in Croatia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka influenced corporate perception of war and peace in all three cases. The expected terms and consequences of peace processes seemingly undermined the support for corporate engagement in peace with some business actors.

In Rwanda, business actors (though not tourism actors exclusively) supported the genocide in kind with the disposition of weapons as well as financially. Individual entrepreneurs, often with close ties to the political elite of the country, harnessed their resources and networks for the recruitment and the trainings of militias that would later commit the genocide. In addition, many of the media, such as RTLM or Kangura, which were so influential in the events leading up to the genocide, were founded and funded through economic elites. Their active support for the conflict was most likely grounded in a complex set of reasons (see also below), one of them presumably being that the Hutu business elite feared that an increase in Tutsi influence would weaken their privileged status.

In Sri Lanka, there is no indication for an active role of business actors in fuelling conflict, yet, according to interviews, some, mostly Sinhalese business actors opposed an active role of the corporate sector in peace promotion. To which extent this attitude was grounded in economic considerations, is difficult to assess fully. Yet, the Sinhalese nationalist state provided economic resources and a preferential access to the government to members of the same party or political orientation (Gunasinghe 2004; International Crisis Group 2007). The threat of growing Tamil influence and a concomitant loss of privileges may have negatively affected these actors' willingness to engage in peacebuilding.

In Croatia, the secession movement that escalated into the violent conflict also had an economic dimension. Before the civil war, Slovenia and Croatia were the richest regions in Yugoslavia, contributing to more than half of the national GDP. Due to the unequal distribution of wealth, the central state redistributed wealth from the richer to the poorer regions, which fuelled the desire for independence among Slovenians and Croats. In reference to ethnic conflict in Ex-Yugoslavia, Bardhan stated:

"Groups in backward regions usually complain of unfair treatment and 'internal colonialism' by which they refer to extraction of resources for the benefit of and investment in other regions and discrimination by the center against them in jobs, education, and subsidies. [...] Groups in advanced regions in turn complain about their having to unduly subsidize backward regions. For example, the better-off regions such as Croatia and Slovenia in ex-Yugoslavia increasingly and vehemently objected to the redistributive policy of FADURK - the Federal Fund for the Accelerated Development of the Underdeveloped Republics and Kosovo.

[...] For the advanced groups in advanced regions, if one looks at the economic factor alone, it is a tradeoff between the benefits of continuing to participate in a larger state [...] and the burden of subsidizing poorer regions" (Bardhan 1997: 1384-1385).

In fact, the majority of the Croatian business sector supported the secession movement from the former Yugoslavia. Interviews suggested that large parts of the private sector objected to the redistribution of funds generated in Croatia to the poorer regions in favor of the funds remaining within Croatia.

IV. + V. Political and ethnic influences / Reluctance to engage in political processes

The influence of political / ethnic dimensions on the decision of business people to assume an active role in peace promotion and their reluctance to engage in political processes are closely linked to the discussion in the previous paragraphs.

In Rwanda, the above mentioned support of the business elite for the genocide and in Sri Lanka, the opposition against an active role of the private sector in peace, were most likely not only a result of pure economic considerations. Their positions were also influenced by their political convictions, closely associated with their ethnic identities, respectively as Hutus and Sinhalese. Specifically in Rwanda, the economic elite and the political elite strongly overlapped (e.g. represented in the *Akazu*, an elite group, which supported President Habyarimana, 1973-1994). A clear separation between their identity as a businessperson and their identity as a member of an ethnic (elite) group or extended family is not easily possible.

Other political dimensions also played a role: In Sri Lanka, for instance, at the time when the interviews were conducted in October 2008, the wider public, including the private sector, largely supported the latest military approach by the government against the LTTE. The population was "peace-weary" at this time and disillusioned that peace could be reached through peaceful means. Previously frustrated attempts for a negotiated settlement made a military approach appear more promising than renewed attempts for a "peaceful" approach. One hotel-owner, for instance, stated: "We are willing to accept the current costs of the conflict in terms of higher defense spending and less tourists arriving because we hope that the military strategy will once and for all bring peace to the country." A separate Tamil state in the North and East of the country was, in addition, for none of the interlocutors from the business sector an option. These businessmen were, hence, not willing to accept peace at all political costs.⁸

In addition to this, the willingness to engage in peacebuilding was negatively influenced by a certain level of dependence of tourism actors from the state. The tourism sector in Rwanda, for example, relies strongly on the state-led "Rwanda Office of Tourism and National Parks" (ORTPN), for the development of the sector, international marketing etc. In Sri Lanka it is a political system that is shaped by paternalism and clientelism and a culture where resources are redistributed on the basis of favoritism that obstructs an open political discourse (International Crisis Group 2007). Private companies are, for instance, renowned for making substantive donations to any political party in order to assure a privileged access to whoever may win the elections (interviews Sri Lanka, October 2008).

⁸ In the theoretical part, it was stated that lacking acceptance by external observers for corporate engagement in peace could undermine an active role of business actors in peacebuilding. In Sri Lanka, some NGOs criticized the business-led initiatives, arguing that they were badly planned, without much perseverance and primarily motivated by getting publicity. Yet, there is little indication that this criticism deterred companies from further activities.

VI. Lacking awareness, capacity and ability of business actors on how to engage in peace promotion

Qualitative interviews in Croatia and Rwanda suggested that one of the main impediments for corporate engagement of tourism-related businesses was a lack of awareness or sensitivity on what private companies can do in support for peace and stability, particularly in the pre-conflict and conflict phase. While many companies saw a role for themselves in post-conflict reconstruction (though just in the sense that simply by doing business in fragile societies this can be a contribution to peace, see above), establishing a peace constituency or getting active in mediation activities was not something companies considered for themselves.

Lacking awareness may also have played a role in Sri Lanka before 2001. It is surprising that only after the establishment of "Sri Lanka First", were a range of other business-led initiatives in support of peace established (see above). It seems that by being the first broadly visible organized corporate support for peace, SLF paved the way for followers, making other corporate players realize the potentials for businesses in this field.

Beyond this, a number of interview partners particularly from Croatia and Rwanda also stated that they abstained from political engagement in peace since economic considerations would have remained unheard of in light of more powerful political motives that justified the armed hostilities. In a similar vein, among the mostly smaller family-based tourism actors in the East of Sri Lanka the dominant opinion was that they were too distant and excluded from the decision-making processes in Colombo in order to be able to have an impact. This perception reflects a wider problem of West-East discrepancies in Sri Lanka.

VII. Inability to organize effectively

The results are contradictory with regard to whether a lack of organizational capacity impedes corporate engagement in peace. Our empirical research looked particularly at the influence of pre-existing organizational structures, such as business associations and chambers.

Neither in Croatia nor in Rwanda existed effective tourism organizations. In Croatia, for instance, a range of private and governmental, regional, local and national tourism-related organizations existed, such as the Croatian Hotel Association. Yet, the majority of these organizations were weakly staffed, had only few members or little leverage politically. In Rwanda, the leading tourism institution is the governmental ORTPN. The ORTPN existed already prior to the genocide but experienced a major restructuring process and achieved a dominant role in the development of the Rwandan tourism sector only after the genocide. Although in 2006, the Rwandan Chamber of Commerce was established as a private sector body for the national tourism sector, the influence of the Chamber remains limited in comparison to the dominant role of the ORTPN.

Although many representatives of the Sri Lankan tourism sector described the Sri Lankan tourism associations as relatively weak politically, in comparison, the Sri Lankan business associations appear to be better organized than those in Croatia and Rwanda, in terms of membership, structure and capacity.⁹ Yet, it remains unclear if the existence of an organizational structure in Sri Lanka was

⁹ In Colombo, a number of different business associations and chambers exist. The most important for the tourism sector include the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), the Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL), and the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises in Tourism (ASMET). Yet, the influence of these associations is weakened by internal quarrels and little or no unified action. In the areas outside Colombo, organizational weaknesses are of a different nature. Much of the business outside the capital is not at all organized in formal institutions and smaller, family-owned hotels and restaurants,

a positive factor for the private sector's engagement in peace. Despite the fact that the idea behind SLF was "born in the Sri Lankan Tourism Board", SLF developed *outside* existing institutional frameworks as an independent organization. As mentioned above, some members of existing business associations – including, though not only political hardliners - vetoed against the establishment of SLF (or other similar initiatives) within established organizational structures. Although most of the business initiatives for peace that were founded after SLF were either part of or harnessed the structures of existing business associations, resistance from within the ranks of those associations was in part strong.

Hence, the experiences from Sri Lanka seem to suggest that once the idea for corporate engagement in peace is born, business organizations can be a useful, potentially also a vital, condition for more widespread corporate engagement in peace. Yet, established conservative or critical groups within these institutions can also severely hamper the development of business-led peace-promoting activities.¹⁰

VIII. Lacking political and critical space for corporate engagement in peace

Political room for maneuver is not only relevant for private business actors but clearly also for NGOs or international organizations. If, for instance, a restrictive / authoritarian state undermines criticism and a political debate, engagement in peacebuilding can become impossible for corporate actors as well as NGOs. Although options for engagement do probably still exist in most cases in one form or the other, if a conflict is not "ripe", possibilities for successful interventions are limited (for instance Zartman 2001).

In Rwanda, for example, prior to the genocide, the political climate did not allow for a critical engagement. The genocide regime mercilessly persecuted political opponents and those supportive of concessions towards the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF). Also, the current political context makes it difficult to get engaged politically. Although under President Paul Kagame and the RPF, Rwanda has experienced relative peace, stability and economic growth, the government's uncompromising style towards dissent, has been met nationally as well as internationally with criticism. Journalists, NGOs or local human rights activities have experienced severe threats and their work has been hampered.

Seemingly on a different scale, political opposition became also a risky business in Sri Lanka. The breakdown of the peace negotiation in 2003, the change in government in 2005, the subsequent end of the ceasefire, and the upcoming governmental strategy to bring peace to Sri Lanka by military means, fundamentally altered the options for business players (as well as the international community and NGOs) to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict. The government of Mahinda Rajapaksa began to hawkishly suppress those criticizing their military strategy against the LTTE. One prominent businessman, for example, faced stern disapproval for his pro-peace engagement after describing the LTTE as "freedom fighters" in 2006. Following this, nationalist Sinhala groups called for a boycott against his companies. Similarly, businessmen reported cases of random governmental searches for alleged tax evasions, which paralyzed businesses for weeks and made the business

which dominate the tourism infrastructure in the East, do not feel represented by the tourism associations in the capital. Although there is the recognition for the need of a more concerted approach within the tourism sector, the difficulties have not yet been overcome and many of the interview partners from the tourism sector described the institutions as not very politically influential. It can be presumed that similarly to Croatia and Rwanda, the lack of organizational capacity in the East, to some extent, impeded corporate engagement in peace.

¹⁰ The majority of SLF's members were from big or bigger businesses with smaller companies being less represented, which may indicate towards a collective action problem among small companies. Yet, another initiative, the Business Alliance for Peace, is primarily directed towards small and medium companies and become rather successful in mobilizing members, although the organization faced problems with regard to small firms were often not being able to spare staff or financial resources as a contribution to the organization.

community fearful that any type of political involvement would harm their businesses. A climate of fear also comes from kidnappings of businessmen (mostly Tamils and Muslims), and reports about allegedly politically motivated abductions (see for example Human Rights Watch 2008: 70).¹¹

However, Sri Lanka has also experienced a time when the reverse was true and political space was available for corporate engagement: At the time when Sri Lanka First was established in August 2001, the political environment was relatively conducive for active business support to peace. The population was overall war-weary after the LTTE had made important military advances in the year preceding the airport attack. In addition, the United National Party (UNP) promoted a negotiated settlement during the election campaign and since its arrival in government in December 2001. UNP's characteristically business-friendly outlook made the private sector and the party almost "natural" allies, establishing a trustful relationship. In fact, the SLF was often criticized for being too close to the UNP-led government, undermining its independence and ability to work with other parties. A close relationship to the political decision makers was also found conducive for corporate engagement in peace in other countries, such as in El Salvador and Guatemala (Joras 2007a; Rettberg 2007).

Additional to these eight factors, three other points should be mentioned, which in addition to political space and an economic impulse, encouraged corporate actors in Sri Lanka to engage in peace promotion.

The first is the availability of funds, mostly by international donors. There is some obscurity about the funding sources for SLF, but it can be considered as certain that while some funds came from the participating business members, funding from international donors was also made available. Most of the other "business-led" peace related activities that followed SLF also received external, non-private sector funding. In fact, it seems very likely that most of these initiatives would not have been set up if international donor money would not have been available. Whether external, non-business funding, contradicts the underlying idea for corporate engagement in peace, is another matter and cannot be discussed in the context of this research project.

Secondly, the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) should be mentioned. In Sri Lanka, CSR seemed better established in business life than in Croatia or Rwanda, with particularly bigger companies having active CSR-departments. Having said this, it has to be acknowledged that CSR in Sri Lanka suffers - as seen in many other countries and companies - from a tendency to reduce CSR to merely philanthropic activities and a transfer of CSR-activities into separate units of the company, without that the business practices are adapted according to CSR principles. It can be assumed, however, that the fact that CSR has already been implemented by some of the biggest companies in the country increased the corporate propensity to engage in peace promotion. CSR activities may also have a conflict-mitigating quality without that a company is aware of these effects or that the CSR-activities are labeled as a form of "corporate engagement in peace". Yet, this assumption has to be explored further in future research.

¹¹ There is no indication that the tourism sector is in any way specifically affected by the reduction of political space. However, one observer pointed out that labor unions close to the hardliner party JVP are particularly strong within the tourism sector and may make this sector particularly careful with regard to political statements in favor of political compromise with the LTTE. All political parties in Sri Lanka have associated trade unions. The JVP, however, became strong in harnessing unions for their political goals (International Crisis Group 2007: 12-13).

And thirdly, the fact should be highlighted that although the tourism sector was in the vanguard for the establishment of the SLF, the initiative was from a very incipient stage a cross-sectoral movement. This did not only increase the mobilization-base for a corporate initiative in peace promotion, but also increased SLF's visibility.

5 Conclusion

The working paper examined in three case studies, Croatia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka, a broad set of different factors that were assumed to impede or encourage an active engagement of business actors in peacebuilding. The factors discussed are not exhaustive in fully explaining the different strategies that business actors applied in the light of violent conflicts. It was, for instance, not discussed, how international pressure, such as by NGOs make corporate actors assume a more active role in peacebuilding. Furthermore, the working paper is far from being able to provide an in-depth analysis of all the different factors raised. However, the research showed that while the economic costs of a violent conflict can be an important motive that spurs corporate engagement in peacebuilding, it is not a sufficient driver.

First of all, the absolute economic downturn seems to be of limited relevance for corporate engagement in peace. A sudden destructive event can, but does not need to have more “mobilizing-power” than a continued low economic performance caused by a perpetual violent conflict. This is among other factors linked to business actors’ ability to develop coping-strategies in situations where a conflict is going on for some time. Coping strategies are a form of adaptation that allows business actors to continue generating profits and make a living, despite a war being fought close by. They are seemingly the first choice of corporate response to a conflict, before active peace promoting activities are considered as an option. In Rwanda, for instance, the tourism sector did not get actively engaged in peace promotion, despite massive decline in tourist arrival numbers due to the genocide. In Sri Lanka, tourism actors were well aware that the national tourism industry was operating far below its potential but did engage in any active contribution to peacebuilding for a long time, also because it was still possible to generate income from tourism *despite* the violent conflict going on. Only the airport attack in 2001, with the sudden breakdown in tourist arrival numbers mobilized an initiative against the adverse economic effects of the civil war. This behavior also suggests that the threshold of economic costs is high, before corporate actors are mobilized to actively engage in peacebuilding.

Second, the interest calculation of corporate actors does, hence, not only involve the economic costs of a conflict. Their calculations involve numerous other factors, such as the costs of peace, which are shaped by the terms of a peace process; or the costs of engaging in peacebuilding. In all three cases, parts of the private sector considered a negotiated settlement to the conflict as being unattractive since a peace agreement would mostly likely have brought about negative economic impacts. Costs of peace are e.g. influenced by the business actor’s relationships to and dependence on the government, the political views held by business actors, their ethnic identity, personal experiences made during the course of a conflict, etc.

Third, certain preconditions have to be fulfilled to make it at all possible that a corporate *interest* in peace can be translated into *activities* for peace. Most notably it was found that the availability of political space as well as awareness of the options for corporate engagement in peace were prerequisites for an active corporate contribution to peacebuilding. In Rwanda, for instance, the political environment during the genocide-period did not allow for any form of political opposition, making it extremely difficult if not impossible for any actor to take an active stance against the violence.

The oft-made claim that it is sufficient to make the business sector aware of the costs of war in order to rally them to support peace, should hence be regarded with scepticism. Especially local business actors have to be understood in their political, economic and social contexts, which can alter over time. The aforementioned mobilizing and impeding factors were, in fact, of different relevance in the three case-studies. This also implies that business actors should not be perceived as a monolithic block. While one part of a national business “community” may seek to assume an active role in peacebuilding, may others be opposed to any form of corporate engagement (e.g. in Sri Lanka). Different outlooks like these on corporate engagement in peacebuilding may or may not run along sectoral lines, with one specific economic sector assuming a more “pro-peace position” while another sector is more reluctant. An approach to mobilize business actors for peace, hence, has to

actively identify those parts of a business community that has an interest as well as the ability to engage in peacebuilding. Separate and new organizational structures for business-led peace initiatives may have to be set up, rather than relying on existing institutions where those factions opposing corporate engagement in peace may be represented.

In addition, the research made clear that it is necessary to distinguish between different forms of corporate engagement. While, for instance, economic incentives (in terms of costs of a conflict) were seemingly not sufficient to spur private companies into *deliberate* corporate engagement for peace, economic incentives (in terms of gaining profits from a business operation) were the main driver for unintentional contributions to peacebuilding.

Strikingly was the quantitatively bigger relevance of unintentional forms of corporate contributions to peacebuilding in the three examined cases, in comparison to intentional engagement. Unintentional corporate support mostly in form of contributions to post-conflict reconstruction were seemingly rarely actively harnessed in wider peacebuilding-strategies To actively explore and employ win-win situations for private companies and "peace", may be a promising way forward in attempts to mobilize the private sector for peacebuilding.

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