Companies as Peacebuilders: Engaging Communities Through Conflict Resolution

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Abstract

Corporate citizenship is undergoing a paradigm shift. Business is forced to take greater responsibility for environmental and social issues and more recently, human rights and involvement in intra-state conflict. Where multinationals are accused of complicity in human rights abuse and conflict, they must work with advocates of corporate citizenship and develop community engagement strategies that assist them to build, not reduce, peace.

This paper will outline ways in which business is protecting itself by increasingly engaging its stakeholders, which for some companies can include local communities experiencing violent conflict. In particular, the business imperative for including conflict resolution processes in its community engagement will be shown. Such practices will protect a company in its stakeholder relationships including where a company operates in regions suffering intra-state conflict.

This paper will provide guidance on how business can be a peacebuilder through its community engagement strategies: through its core business, community development initiatives and advocacy on public policy. In the long-term, this may include business acting as a mediator between warring parties through key employees who are not just community engagement experts, but also ‘Inter-Track Business Diplomats’.

This paper will present the business case for companies acting as peacebuilders for their profit and long-term growth.

Keywords

Conflict, peacebuilding, business, companies, stakeholder

Introduction

Globalisation has enabled Multinational Corporations (MNCs) to become powerful political and diplomatic actors on the world stage. As a result, business is undergoing a paradigm shift. Companies are being forced to take greater responsibility for environmental and social issues and more recently, human rights and involvement in intra-state conflict.

Companies must therefore engage their stakeholders to develop community engagement strategies that assist them to build, not reduce, peace. These stakeholders could include advocates of corporate citizenship, conflict resolution non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local communities around their sites.

This paper will look at the current global environment and modern intra-state conflict which often cause business to move within a violent world. 'People power' and the limitations on corporate power are analysed, leading to a discussion of a strong business case for companies to develop their role in peacebuilding in regions they operate.

Following this, the paper looks at the current negative impacts of companies on peace but proposes that the potential for companies to mitigate conflict is persuasive and viable. Key actors advocating for, and facilitating, a role for business in peacebuilding are also identified.

Finally, a model will be offered, Inter-Track Business Diplomacy (ITBD), which can assist companies to build their internal capacity and engage as peacebuilders in their stakeholder relationships and proposed four spheres of influence including: core business, social investment, advocacy (Nelson 2000) and peacebuilding. ITBD provides conflict resolution skills and tools which companies can use to strengthen their stakeholder relations and mitigate violence in intra-state conflict. For example, this paper proposes that companies can implement the problem-solving workshop and third party facilitation method.

While many questions remain, it appears clear that due to companies' extensive stakeholder pressure and often violent operating environments, they will be increasingly encouraged to develop community engagement strategies that facilitate a peacebuilding role. Companies should address this issue early on. This will enable them to avoid potential negative outcomes, the least of which is reputational damage, and to build their capacity to positively influence stakeholder relationships and the regions in which they operate.

While the following can apply to all companies, resource companies are focussed upon due to their potential to cause particularly high level, destructive impacts on the regions in which they operate.

Business in a violent world

Modern conflicts

Companies are affected by a range of characteristics of modern intra-state conflict, which currently represents around ninety per cent of the world's armed conflicts (Nelson 2000, p. 18).

A typology of intra-state conflict illustrates that currently, the underlying causes of conflict are likely to be access to resources (competition for economic power and livelihood opportunities), identity (based on competition between ethnic, religious or other communal identity groups for access to political and economic authority and distributive justice) and state 'failure' (government that is weak or corrupt and lacking legitimacy causing competition for political power and participation in political processes) (Rupesinghe 1998, pp. 33-51; Azar and Burton 1986). In each category, economic factors can be fundamental either in causing, or financing, conflict which can have important implications for companies investing in the region (Nelson 2000, p. 42).

Nevertheless, in many intra-state conflicts it is not the poverty, but the amalgamation of social injustice, governmental corruption and human rights abuse that denies the fundamental 'needs' of communities and forges an "explosive combination" that cultivates violence (Rupesinghe 1998, p. 12).

These needs are identity and recognition, security and distributive justice. However, the more security one party senses in each of these, the more security will be enhanced for others (Burton 1996, p. 58).

Companies operating in conflict zones can choose to ignore and (indirectly) exacerbate these conditions, or they can attempt to influence and challenge the host government and other key actors to assuage them.

'People Power' and the limitations to corporate power

In addition, companies face the considerable power of stakeholders to limit and disrupt their operations.

This paper proposes that companies will face growing pressure to incorporate human rights and peacebuilding policies into their community engagement and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) frameworks due to the negarchic and carollian power of CSR advocates.

A company's stakeholders and its international counterparts have the power to balance, check, limit and constrain each other. Daniel Deudney named this power 'negarchy' (Strange 1995, p. 198). This paper posits that negarchic power can also influence and persuade others to take action, as actors exercising this power can choose to cooperate with, and assist, those whose authority they can otherwise restrain. Hence, negarchy may be used to balance the authority of companies in the same way, for example, as the power of the legislature and the judiciary in the United States (US) balances the power of the executive (Strange 1995, p. 198). As Susan Strange states, "To make authority acceptable, effective and respected, there has to be some combination of forces to check the arbitrary or self-serving use of power and to see that it is used at least in part for the common good." (Strange 1995, p. 198)

Therefore, it is possible to postulate that a key role for civil society, governments, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), media and corporate leaders in CSR is to wield negarchic power to balance or limit the increasing authority of companies or persuade them to undertake CSR activity. For example, industry leaders in CSR will encourage others in their industry to undertake CSR activities who may otherwise fear loss of market share. Leading companies can also share information across their industry on best practice to persuade and encourage CSR activity. In addition, insurance companies are increasingly stipulating that companies develop strategies to protect their reputational value from human rights abuse allegations in their evaluations for client insurance coverage (Professor Dinah Shelton, Faculty of Law, George Washington University, presentation, Fullbright Symposium, University of Melbourne, 23 June 2005).

The media and international NGOs may also check companies' behaviour through public education programs and media campaigns. International NGOs can also persuade companies to increase CSR activity through establishing partnerships with companies to assist them to develop CSR strategies and projects. Governments can influence and persuade companies to increase their CSR activity through invitations to assist in public policy development forums which provide companies with channels of influence. Governments may also develop procurement policies that allocate tenders only to those that prove they have strong CSR policies and strategies.

While negarchy may already be found working in the influence of civil society to pressure certain companies to incorporate CSR strategies, other companies have ignored the negarchic power of civil society and have refused to implement a comprehensive CSR policy, leaving themselves vulnerable to smear campaigns, public scrutiny and disparagement.

It is postulated that in an interconnected world of increasingly widespread negarchic power that is often turned against companies such as resource MNCs, it is imperative that *all* companies recognise the power of negarchy to affect their activities. Companies must learn to manage and nurture relationships with political actors and stakeholders, whether they are employees, IGOS, NGOs or citizen grassroots groups, to ward off the negative consequences of negarchic power. Relationships with stakeholders must be managed as well as all corporate strategic priorities. In this way, a company may transform its stakeholders' power to limit its authority into the power and desire to cooperate with the company. To do this, a company must establish a comprehensive CSR policy and undertake activities in each of the four spheres of influence.

The power of a company's stakeholders and civil society to influence companies, it can be postulated, is considerable when also discussed in relation to Berenice Carroll's power of competence (Pettman 1991, pp. 59-74). Negarchy subsumes Carrollian power. Rather than the conventional concept of power as 'power-over', power to dominate, to coerce or deter another, Carroll posits an alternative theory of the 'power-to' (power that is "less as a capacity and more as a process, a dynamic interaction"); a power of competence (Pettman 1991, p. 59). Consider that, "One does not possess power: it is granted to the dominator by hosts of other people, and that grant is not unretractable…It is always true that those whom we control control us." (Pettman 1991, p. 59). Hence, contrary to the belief that they are powerless, the alienated and marginalised masses have the capacity, albeit often "diffuse and disorganised" (Pettman 1991, p. 60), to wield a distinctive power and influence. Carroll presents nine capacities for power of the ostensibly powerless. These are disintegrative power, inertial power, innovative power, legitimising power, expressive power, explosive power, the power of resistance, collective power and migratory power, all of which, Carroll claims, “over time can bring down whole empires, however highly developed, and ha[ve] done so in the past” (Pettman 1991, p. 61).

The distinction between the two powers, it is posited, is that negarchy is exploited by all actors, to a degree, but those which are strong, economically or politically, have greater negarchic power to limit, constrain and influence other powerful actors such as companies. Carrollian power, on the other hand, is utilised by those who, in comparison to companies, are at first glance, very weak: the ostensibly powerless. These may be individuals, small activist groups or national NGOs. When power is reviewed in the context of Carrollian power, one sees that the ‘powerless’ are powerful. Carrollian power, enables such actors, to wield *negarchic* power.

The methods used by ‘weaker’ elements (such as communities) for persuading companies to endorse CSR strategies may be viewed as examples of Carrollian power subsumed under negarchy. Companies may control many aspects of society, but society controls companies too. In today’s global economy where competition is acute and a product can be sold in many markets, corporate reputation has become a strategic priority and is considered a prerequisite for sustaining market share, profit and long-term growth. The number of people who make their decisions for buying goods, services and increasingly shareholdings, on company reputation is rising. Thus, civil society can ‘control’ companies by levering consumer pressure, attacking a company’s reputational value and encouraging compliance to society’s demands for increased CSR.

The business case for peace

While there are considerable global limitations to corporate power, an understanding of these limitations supports a strong business case for peacebuilding as discussed below.

As public expectations for companies to incorporate CSR policies are increasing, more and more people buy products and services based on company reputation. In addition, civil society increasingly manipulates legal channels, shareholder activism and socially responsible investment services to influence companies.

In addition, key CSR advocates are increasingly proposing that companies do indeed have a great impact on governmental policies and peoples’ enjoyment of human rights. Therefore, companies should uphold international law, insist on human rights standards to all third parties along the value chain, and initiate discussions with, or challenge, those in authority and business partners who violate human rights. Silence and inaction, in the face of human rights abuse, whether by the company’s partners, contractors, suppliers, the local or national authorities or unofficial opposition groups, will not be regarded as neutral behaviour, but as complicity in the abuse, particularly if the company’s own activities intensify the abuse (Amnesty International 1998).

A company that develops leadership in CSR and peacebuilding will gain a strong public relations strategy and market advantage. Traditional systems of risk management are no longer sufficient to steer a company away from crises and fail to track changing public opinion as efficiently as stakeholder management and consultation which alerts companies to public outcries and provides early warning systems (Swartz 1999, p. 65). This will provide a public relations 'insurance policy' against future errors, will reduce risk and boost consumer trust and shareholder value.

Meanwhile, Malcolm McIntosh et al. postulate that companies benefit from peaceful, stable business environments where there is democratic, accountable government, a strong civil society, an independent judiciary system to maintain the rule of law, low levels of corruption, strong infrastructure to support healthcare, education, training, transport and housing and a lack of violent social conflict (McIntosh and Leipziger 1998).

On the other hand, in politically unstable areas, the disaffected see no benefits from a company's presence if it appears allied to the government. They may resort to kidnapping employees and destroying installations. This depletes employee morale, raises insurance premiums and threatens the disruption or closure of operations. In such regions, it is also often the case that there is poor social and physical infrastructure and corruption can be rife. This social and political dislocation can consume a company's money and management time (Nelson 2000).

Clearly, the most productive operating environment for business is one in which conflict is managed appropriately and where stakeholders support companies' operations rather than limiting or disrupting them. Nevertheless, companies, particularly resource MNCs, have tended to exacerbate conflict rather than building peace.

Corporates building conflict or building peace

Companies as a cause of conflict

Resource companies, like other companies, have always striven to fulfil their primary responsibility of maximising profit and shareholder value. Yet in fulfilling this goal, they have failed to indicate accountability for their activities to their wider circle of stakeholders beyond shareholders. Perhaps more than any other sector, oil and mineral extraction companies have been vilified most fervently for their "anti-social behaviour" and the environmental and social destruction that they have caused during project implementation (Swartz 1999, p. 34).

While a number of resource companies have directly and indirectly caused or exacerbated intra-state conflict and human rights violations, in many cases they have used their wealth and power to subdue stakeholders, such as environment groups or activists from the communities affected by their projects.

A key issue for resource companies is that their operations can trigger conflict over access to the resources and the revenue generated. As a result, many countries have experienced the privatisation of violence and security. For example, violence is often waged by militias, mercenaries, warlords and private security and military companies. These hired professional military and security personnel often have a monetary motive for maintaining the conflict and postponing peaceful agreements. Resource companies, including Royal Dutch Shell, British Petroleum Amoco and Rio Tinto, all of whom have hired ‘armies’ of state or private security forces, have come under fire for alleged complicity in human rights violations perpetrated by these forces and for increasing the militarisation of areas that are already unstable. CSR proponents argue that companies must denounce and investigate human rights abuse by hired security forces and the links between these forces and any increase in violent conflict in surrounding communities (Amnesty International 1998).

In 1995, Royal Dutch Shell (Shell) became the focus for CSR advocates and assisted the paradigm shift of CSR to include human rights and peacebuilding. Shell came under fire for its policy regarding the proposed dumping of an oil platform, the Brent Spar, in the North Sea and for its alleged complicity in the Nigerian military government’s execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight fellow activists from the Ogoni tribe.

In Nigeria, the company’s security forces were accused of complicity in repetitive violations of human rights. These mostly occurred during clashes between the Nigerian activists and both the state military forces and Shell’s security forces over alleged environmental destruction by Shell and the lack of fair distribution of government oil revenues to the Ogoni people. Scathing media coverage and a campaign by Greenpeace caused Shell considerable reputational damage. Shell was forced to find an alternative plan for the disposal of Brent Spar and to defend its actions in Nigeria. Shell denied its complicity in human rights abuse in Nigeria, arguing that it had no legitimate right to interfere in Nigerian domestic politics. An Ogoni activist replied, “But there lies the political and moral dilemma. Shell is a private company but it is also the source of the country’s wealth. And whether it likes it or not, Shell is intimately bound up in the life and death struggle for the future of Nigeria.” (McIntosh and Leipziger 1998, p. 123).

Shell appeared to have disregarded its social responsibility in the sphere of its own operations and failed to play a proactive political role upholding international human rights standards in its relations with the Nigerian Government. Furthermore, to defend its operations the company had, it seemed, opted for coercive measures. Shell’s unexpected crisis revealed that without a social policy, the internal failure of traditional risk analysis procedures and public affairs departments to understand a significant transformation in societal expectations of business could cost a company dearly in reputational value. Shell’s senior management directed a radical turnaround in policy, incorporating CSR concepts into policy statements and planning and implementation processes.

Companies as potential peacebuilders

Despite these negative experiences, there is a worldwide growth in CSR activities by companies, increasing public and media pressure on companies to accept greater responsibility for mitigating conflict and human rights abuse and a view amongst institutions such as International Alert in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy (US) that business has a role in supporting peace. This suggests that companies may increasingly be encouraged to act as part of a potential solution to intra-state conflict.

Companies are increasingly implementing stakeholder engagement and CSR policies to protect their reputational value. Hence, as companies demonstrate greater accountability and responsibility, they have the capacity to demonstrate leadership in the goal of sustainable development and peace.

Companies also have potential staff talent, resources and a range of conflict resolution tools at their disposal to utilise to ameliorate a conflict situation. The core aim of conflict resolution practices in community engagement is mutual empowerment between antagonists and a better outcome for business in long-term relationships and reputational value.

In addition, traditional state diplomacy and dispute settlement processes (such as traditional mediation, inquiry and arbitration), which rely on coercive and confrontational tactics and power relations, have failed against intra-state conflict. To counter this, conflict resolution and Multi-Track Diplomacy theoreticians have acknowledged diplomatic actors beyond official governmental diplomats to include for example, business leaders and companies. In response, advocates for a business role in peace are developing conflict resolution processes for use by alternative organisations including companies (The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy 2001).

Advocates for a business role in peacebuilding

Louise Diamond from the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD) proposed a Multi-Track Diplomacy (MTD) system of nine Tracks consisting of actors related to peacemaking (Diamond 1996). The MTD system is significant as it acknowledges non-state actors, such as companies, as important in diplomacy and peacebuilding.

The tracks include:

- Track One, governmental diplomacy
- Track Two, non-governmental, professional conflict resolution
- Track Three, business and commerce (incorporating companies)
- Track Four, personal involvement
- Track Five, education and learning
- Track Six, activism and advocacy
- Track Seven, religion
- Track Eight, funding and resource providers
- Track Nine, peacemaking through media, communications and information.

Diamond suggests that through this system, individuals and organisations, including companies, will begin to recognise how they fit into the peacebuilding system, the role they can undertake and how they can further strengthen ties with the other eight Tracks for coordination and resource sharing in conflict.

Since 1995, the IMTD, has researched and developed case studies on business efforts in peacebuilding, conducted seminars for business leaders on conflict resolution, created a seminar training manual on protracted conflicts and institutionalised these tools to form a potential elective course for larger academic learning programs in international business schools (The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy 2001).

Key advocates also include International Alert, Council on Economic Priorities and The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum in the UK which have undertaken research and programs to investigate the role of business in peacebuilding. In addition, Amnesty International has been very active in promoting a role for business in promoting human rights and peace.

Inter-track business diplomacy: A model for corporate social responsibility

If companies are to play a positive role in peacebuilding, they will require a model that assists them to manage the skills and knowledge needed to fulfil this role. This model will build their internal capacity, enabling them to use each of their four spheres of influence to promote peace.

Building internal capacity

To strategically incorporate the skills and knowledge required for companies to become leaders in the four spheres of influence, a company can develop a framework which is here titled Inter-Track Business Diplomacy (ITBD).

A company can establish a ‘diplomacy’ or conflict resolution department with liaisons in its subsidiaries to manage the multiple interfaces between subsidiaries and host country governments. These departments will safeguard foreign assets and ward off potential disruptions along the value chains of interdependent global operations (Saner and Sondergaard 2000).

The company will provide training to relevant staff in ‘Inter-Track Business Diplomacy’ skills. These skills will incorporate conflict resolution processes and create a workforce that can work across different sectors and groups facilitating effective communication.

Firstly, following from the concept of Multi-Track Diplomacy, ITBD recognises companies, and other non-state actors, as important political and diplomatic actors alongside official diplomats.

Secondly, ITBD will facilitate the creation of a ‘multilingual’ workforce that can communicate across different sectors and peacebuilding organisations. Using Diamond’s Multi-Track

Diplomacy theory which portrays a multipolar diplomatic arena in which all diplomacy sectors, or 'tracks', are interdependent, companies must strategically manage the increasingly crucial and numerous *inter-track* relations. Different sectors, or 'tracks' in the Multi-Track Diplomacy system, have their own language, norms and beliefs, which produce barriers to inter-track communication and cooperation (Diamond 1996, p. 18). ITBD will enable companies to develop an understanding of these different organisational cultures and languages and to become truly 'inter-track' communicators.

As a result, in situations of intra-state conflict, a company's Inter-track Business Diplomats will be able to communicate with empathy and have a better understanding of the needs, values and beliefs of host governments, opposing political groups and local communities. He or she will also be able to convey persuasively a company's own needs to these groups.

Initially, Inter-Track Business Diplomats will learn these skills through a mature career which reflects a range of positions in sectors such as international business and governmental organisations and NGOs. Education establishments could also establish courses which provide an understanding of the organisational languages and cultures of different sectors (or 'tracks') as well as the processes of conflict resolution. These courses may be anchored in international relations, diplomacy or business schools. Students can undertake internships which include working for example, with a company and NGO.

Thirdly, all political and diplomatic actors have the potential to absorb Inter-Track Diplomacy competencies. For international business, Inter-Track Diplomacy must evolve in a specific manner to become Inter-Track Business Diplomacy. Thus, ITBD will have as its primary focus, the development of profit and business and commercial relations. For example, Inter-Track Business Diplomats will know how to manipulate international trade rules and regulations to identify business opportunities and be able to work across multiple national business cultures, governments and legal systems.

Fourthly, ITBD will assist the company to implement a significant shift away from adversarial negotiation and dispute settlement practices that do not nurture long-term stakeholder relations. Such practices tend to promote agreements reached by compromise and power bargaining but fail to resolve the core causes of a conflict. ITBD promotes the use of conflict resolution practices. These practices aim to "resolve conflict by encouraging communication, understanding, and collaboration toward shared problem-solving" (Diamond 1996, p. 37). Conflict resolution mechanisms are necessary for constructing more democratic, effective procedures (that create win-win outcomes) for complex negotiations and the resolution of conflict within stakeholder and business relations and to provide the skills and competencies for peacebuilding efforts in intra-state conflict.

Overall, ITBD will add value to stakeholder relationships, augment profit and protect a company in its activities in the four spheres of influence. In each sphere, it is postulated that ITBD skills will smooth the way for activities and negotiations. However, to commence activity in each sphere, a company must first assimilate a basic corporate social responsibility policy.

Promoting peace in the four influence spheres

With an ITBD framework established, a company can develop its CSR policy which will include human rights and conflict resolution policy. From the CEO down, the company's values and mission statements must endorse this policy. The company prioritises stakeholder management, implements social, environmental and conflict risk and impact analyses and has audit and outcomes reports independently verified. This increases accountability and legitimacy. The next step is to align the company's core business activities with its CSR policy.

Sphere 1: Core business

In core business activities firms should undertake regular development and conflict impact assessments of their operations and consult with all stakeholders thoroughly, particularly local communities and the host government, to check that negative impacts are being reduced. Companies should also promote ethnic understanding and tolerance in the workplace, hiring if possible, local people and encourage equality in wealth creation, support local commercial opportunities and provide training for local people.

Companies can also investigate bribery and corruption in the workplace and along the value chain and comprehensively address human rights abuse stemming from the firm's activities. These activities will boost the company's local and global reputation and may assist in decreasing conflict in the surrounding area (O'Reilly and Tickell in Addo 1999, pp. 283-4; McPhail and Davy 1998, pp. 18-25; Nelson 2000).

Sphere 2: Social investment

With core business aligned to a solid CSR policy, the company can focus externally. Social investment must be targeted and thoughtfully managed as community investment can exacerbate social conflict if money is simply thrown at problems. Managed well, social investment can build human and social capital and encourage tolerance and the reintegration of opposing groups through for example, commercial endeavours involving both sides. Initially, capital and resources can build education and health services. The institutional capacity of local government and civil society can be strengthened. The company may also assist these institutions to organise conflict resolution initiatives such as commercial development, diversity programmes, training seminars for local leaders in conflict resolution processes and dialogue forums.

Further, companies can offer networks of contacts, information technology and communication systems, logistics and the development finance. They can also share business management competencies and human and organisational skills. Finally, firms can ensure that revenue generated by their projects is not used to sustain violence (McPhail and Davy 1998; Nelson 2000; O'Reilly and Tickell in Addo 1999, p. 283).

Sphere 3: Advocacy, public policy and civic institution building

The third sphere of influence is a sensitive area to enter but one increasingly being called for by civil society (Nelson 2000, pp. 30-4; Addo 1999, p. 21).

Having set in place a solid CSR policy and strategies for its core business operations and social investment programmes, a company should, theoretically, be in a position to use its influence for promoting social, political and peacebuilding issues in the third sphere of influence, advocacy.

It must be noted that advocacy (and peacebuilding) activities by companies will require consultation procedures and negotiations not only with the host government, Indigenous opposition groups and local communities, but with international NGOs and IGOs. This complex web of interactions necessitates finely tuned ITBD skills, particularly a broad understanding of the organisational cultures, languages and values of each involved actor. This knowledge will provide the company with a stronger understanding of the needs, interests and intentions of those concerned.

Some issues which a company would address during dialogue with host governments and other protagonists in this sphere include: tolerance of ethnic diversity, corruption, human rights violations, distribution of revenue from projects, strengthening civil society, local community access to economic opportunities, education and health services and the need for judicial and security reform (Nelson 2000).

In a situation of intra-state conflict, if at any point there appears an opportunity to bring representatives of the disputing parties together to discuss new ideas for transforming these issues or to negotiate peace agreements as a whole, the company may instigate its proposed fourth sphere of influence, peacebuilding.

Sphere 4: Peacebuilding

A company can bring representatives of disputing parties together to discuss ways to build peace and negotiate peace agreements by proposing the implementation of a problem-solving workshop and third party facilitation process.

For intervention in an intra-state conflict, a company should base its intervention on solid analysis of the conflict. However, the workshop can also be initiated for resolving conflict between a company and its stakeholder (where an outside agency such as a conflict resolution NGO acts as facilitator). In this case, either party should be able to initiate the workshop and begin proceedings quickly in order to halt the conflict before the relationship is threatened.

For peacebuilding in intra-state conflict, the company can either sponsor the workshop and facilitator or act as the facilitator itself. In the latter, the company will organise a panel (to act as the facilitator) consisting of its own Inter-Track Business Diplomats and external conflict resolution practitioners from a conflict resolution NGO. The facilitator (or panel) consists of four to five members (Burton 1996, pp. 61-2).

The facilitator invites representatives from each of the conflict parties to confidential discussions about the conflict, aiming to make a defined contribution to the resolution of the conflict (Rouhana in Melissen 1999, p. 114; Azar 1990, pp. 21-37).

Kumar Rupesinghe has developed three stages for NGO intervention into intra-state conflict, utilising the problem-solving workshop and third party facilitation process (Rupesinghe 1998, pp. 126-133). Rupesinghe's proposed process could also be used as a guide for a company's intervention.

Conclusion

As Diamond states, conflict resolution "is the leading edge of the [Multi-Track Diplomacy] system, reaching into new territory and bringing the rest of the system with it to explore new possibilities" (Diamond 1996, p. 42). Companies, wielding ITBD, can develop their community engagement expertise to include peacebuilding strategies that utilise the more effective processes of conflict resolution. In this way, a company can profitably explore new possibilities for radically enhancing peacebuilding and the environment of the regions in which they operate.

Multiple questions remain regarding the implementation of each of the spheres of influence, particularly the final sphere: peacebuilding. Further research is required. Questions include: are companies best suited for this role and do they have the resources? What is the likely role of perception in that for example, will conflict resolution practitioners accept companies as partners? Finally, should companies currently active in CSR be expected to undertake further initiatives while other companies have no CSR policy?

If public opinion continues to demand that companies promote human rights and contribute to peacebuilding, then comprehensive community engagement, peacebuilding and conflict resolution competencies will become essential.

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