Final Report December 2021
Understanding the Role of SDG 16 and Peace
for the Advancement of the 2030 SDG Business Agenda

General Topic Area(s)

Sustainability, Strategy

Keywords

Sustainability, SDGs, Peace, Conflict, North-South, SDG-16, B Corporation, B Corps, B Lab, Empresas B, Sistema B

Name of Research Supervisor(s) or Principal Investigators (PI):

PI: Peter Jack Gallo, Associate Professor, Creighton University, Associate Professor, Heider College of Business, Creighton University, USA, petergallo@creighton.edu

PI: Ivan Montiel, Associate Professor, Zicklin School of Business, Baruch College, City University of New York, USA, Ivan.Montiel@baruch.cuny.edu

PI: Santiago Sosa, Assistant Professor, Department of Government and Political Sciences, School of Humanities, Universidad EAFIT, Colombia, ssosanor@eafit.edu.co

PI: Andres Velez-Calle, Assistant Professor, International Business Department, School of Management, Universidad EAFIT, Colombia, avelezca@eafit.edu.co

Title: *Peace on the Fringe: Exploring How Private Enterprise Contributes to SDG 16*

Summary

In this project, we undertake academic research on grand challenges and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of social enterprises, by focusing our attention on the often-neglected *SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions* to understand business strategies for peacebuilding and the importance of promoting this particular SDG in order to achieve the 2030 17 SDGs. Due to missing data on the peacebuilding questions that relate to SDG 16 we were not able to conduct a quantitative analysis. Instead, the research efforts have focused on a qualitative multi-case study among Colombian ex-combatants turned entrepreneurs, where SDG 16 and peace-building initiatives are particularly salient.

Keywords: SDG 16, Business for peace, reintegration, entrepreneurship, fringe stakeholders

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Research Article

Revise & Resubmit at *Business Research Quarterly*
Special Issue on **Our House is on Fire! The Role of Business in Achieving the 2030 United
Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

ENTREPRENEURING FOR PEACE: EXPLORING HOW BUSINESS CONTRIBUTES TO SDG 16

Abstract: This article studies the role of business in achieving the United Nations'
Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - to
explore the processes and practices of peacebuilding and the impact on achieving the
targets of SDG 16. In particular, we study an extreme context of post-conflict
entrepreneurship. We study entrepreneurial ventures where ex-combatants seek to create
economic opportunities and challenge the status quo of poverty and inequality in their rural
communities. We develop several qualitative case studies of ex-combatant entrepreneurship
to identify the activities that enable them to promote and consolidate peace while managing
their businesses. We find that these ex-combatant ventures contribute to SDG 16 and
identify a matrix of stakeholder engagement for organizing the variety of multi-stakeholder
arrangements required of both venture success and peacebuilding efforts.

Keywords: SDG 16, Business for peace, extreme context, entrepreneurship, emancipatory
entrepreneuring

Introduction

"Is the house on fire?"
A shrug. A sideways pull of the lips. "Yes."
"And you want to observe the handful of people who're screaming,
Put it out, when everyone else is happy watching things burn."
(Powers, 2018, p. 321)

This article focuses on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - which some scholars have argued is often-neglected by private enterprise (van Zanten & van Tulder, 2018), despite calls by the United Nations to the private sector to commit to addressing the causes of violent conflict (Reade, McKenna, & Oetzel, 2019). SDG 16 states that societies must strive to end, or at least reduce, violent conflict, strengthen institutions at all levels, and promote inclusiveness and justice. Specific targets enumerated by the UN include reducing or eliminating abuse of children, illicit arms sales, organized crime, corruption, and violence (United Nations, 2015).

Issues of peace, justice and strong institutions are relevant to private enterprise in all countries, not just those operating in war-torn regions, because all societies experience some degree of these challenges. SDG 16 has been identified as an enabler of the other SDGs (Sachs et al., 2019) since peace and rule of law are pre-requisites of a stable society and therefore of economic development (North, 1990; Robinson & Acemoglu, 2012). In other words, for firms to thrive, the communities in which they embed should have a strong rule of law and public institutions. Therefore, we argue that SDG 16 is an essential goal for management scholars and firms to focus on, as assuring peace, justice, and accountability will create the opportunities to address all of the other 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015).

In this study, we explore business practices in a disrupted context (Hällgren, Rouleau & de Rond, 2018), a post-conflict zone where firms face peace, justice, and institutional voids that are unavoidable. Post-conflict transitions are highly challenging contexts in which extreme levels of violence and injustice are common. In the transition from war to peace, not only must rebels disarm and demobilize, but they must also return to civilian life, reintegrate into society and participate in the legal economy. However, since ex-combatants are highly stigmatized (McMullin, 2013), and face tremendous challenges, it is no wonder that recidivism rates are seldom close to zero. Actually, around fifty percent

of civil wars result from ex-combatants' remobilization, that is, the conflict's reignition (Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom, 2008).

To overcome these challenges, some ex-combatants pursue entrepreneurship as a means to reintegrate into their country's social and economic life. The success of these ex-combatant ventures' will have a de-facto contribution to peace by virtue of reducing recidivism. Therefore, understanding how these firms acquire, allocate and distribute resources within their extreme context can help us build guidance for firms to proactively contribute to peacebuilding and address SDG 16. Firms may also pursue practices and activities that directly address specific peace, justice, and institutional challenges. Applying the lens of Emancipatory Entrepreneurship, we recognize that these entrepreneurs' ventures are motivated by social change, not just economic gain (Rindova, Barry & Ketchen, 2009). Therefore, by studying the outcomes and activities of these ex-combatant ventures, we can provide insights into how firms directly address the targets and goals of SDG 16.

We explore a unique set of ex-combatant entrepreneurial ventures in Colombia to identify their contributions towards SDG 16 and any insights or normative guidance for how private ventures can accomplish peacebuilding. Specifically, we analyze the activities of entrepreneurial ventures founded by ex-combatants to identify unique business activities and relationships they engage in and how they do or do not contribute to SDG 16. In doing so, we answer two questions: first, how do ex-combatant ventures organize for resource acquisition and exchange to thrive in their extreme context? Second, what specific activities do they engage in to build peace and how do they address SDG 16? Identifying innovative business practices and activities from firms operating in these extreme contexts provides guidance on firm-level actions for addressing SDG 16. This contributes to the literature by providing normative guidance for firms seeking to address SDG 16 in all contexts and thus promoting all of the UN's 2030 SDGs (Sachs et al., 2019).

The article is organized as follows. The second section discusses the literature on businesses' progress towards addressing SDG 16 and peacebuilding. The third section discusses the extreme context of our research setting, and provides an overview of the theoretical lens that supports our focus on ex-combatant entrepreneurship. The fourth section presents our methodology and sample case studies, followed by section five, which shows our results and analysis of the characteristics of the emerging ventures and their

processes, practices, and activities. We conclude with a discussion of the findings and implications of the study.

Literature Review of Business, SDG 16, and Peacebuilding

SDG 16 in business practice and management literature

Studies on business and SDGs have focused primarily on understanding how firms tackle the social and environmental SDGs such as climate change or poverty alleviation while neglecting the governance-focused issues like those under SDG 16 (Reade, McKenna, & Oetzel, 2019). Such research focuses primarily on studying firm-level actions addressing environmental and social impact, but less on how firms can tackle the institutional-level sustainability challenges of governance, democracy, and civil society. Since many of the targets of SDG 16 are outside the scope of firms' operational reach, such as target 16.9 - By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration - (United Nations, 2015), firms and researchers have the impression that the private sector cannot directly contribute to this SDG (van Zanten & van Tulder, 2018).

In fact, when we analyze data from B-Lab's B Impact Assessment (BIA) database (B Lab & United Nations Global Compact, 2020) we find that firms do not see a role for themselves in the targets of SDG 16. The BIA is an assessment tool that companies can use to manage their impact on all SDGs. It surveys companies on a plethora of actions to assess how they may improve their triple-bottom line. This is required for companies to obtain the B-Corp certification. The database has roughly 49,000 respondents of all sizes from all industries and 110 countries, including both developing and developed countries. There are 40 questions related to SDG 16 in the survey, including topics such as supplier code of conduct, code of ethics, stakeholder engagement in governance, anti-corruption practices, peacebuilding, and human rights defense. Although 91% of the sample answered at least one SDG 16 question, not a single firm answered any of the seven questions regarding peacebuilding activities and human rights records. In fact, 40% of the sample answered only one question out of the 40 related to this SDG. This provides evidence that, even among companies devoted to strengthening the triple-bottom line, SDG 16 is not a priority for company reporting.

The focus of firms and researchers on environmental and social sustainability issues reflects the somewhat unbalanced SDG complexity. Some define a clear set of problems

and targets that are more accessible to traditional managerial action. In contrast, others focus on socially complex and institutionally interconnected challenges, which seem beyond the conventional reach of a single firm's management decisions, since they require complex cross-sector and stakeholder partnerships (Van Tulder & Keen, 2018). This bias towards tangible SDG targets exists although SDG 16 is not only acknowledged as both essential to achieving other SDGs, since peace is necessary to ensure health and a productive society (Wesley et al., 2016), but also, according to the United Nations (2020), as the foundation of both sustainability and firm performance:

> The themes of SDG16, peace, justice and strong institutions, are core to sustainable business — they are the foundation not only for business responsibilities, but also business success. However, it can be difficult to understand concretely how these concepts relate to a business's strategies, operations and relationships... (United Nations, 2020).

Less than one percent of firms that joined the UN Global Compact (UNGC) explicitly tackle SDG 16 in their sustainability strategy (Reade, McKenna, & Oetzel, 2019). Nestlé is one of the few firms that has aligned its strategy with SDG 16. In 2018 Nestlé partnered with the UNGC as one of the founders of the UNGC Action Platform for Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions to help advance SDG 16 with businesses' help. This initiative is a two-year program to further sustainable development by integrating UN agencies, civilians, governments and business towards building peace and strong institutions. The objective is to address the challenge of providing guidelines on how companies can align their strategy with this SDG (United Nations, 2020). In this regard Nestlé (2020) states:

> We joined as one of its founding patrons because we think it is crucial to build environments based on strong corporate governance and compliance. This is the foundation not just of a sustainable society, but of our success as a business, providing the basis for long-term investment and growth. (Nestle, 2020)

Nestlé has transformed this commitment to SDG 16 into actionable initiatives. For example, they are actively working in Colombia towards target 16.1 - *significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere-* by working with different stakeholders and empowering youth to reduce violence in the areas of Colombia where the firm operates. However, Nestlé provides very few

details on these projects, and this limited transparency prevents us from determining how effective their efforts are at addressing SDG 16.

SDG 16 remains overlooked by businesses and researchers since it is seen as external to the firm. Few studies look at how firms address SDG 16. For example, van Zanten and van Tulder (2018) lay out a research agenda for engaging MNCs with SDGs. Their exploratory survey shows that companies engage more with SDGs that have actionable targets. However, there is no mention of specific firm-level actions towards any targets such as peacebuilding or reducing violence. Also, Silva (2021) draws on the FTSE 100 list to show how firms respond to different SDGs and reports only a handful of companies addressing SDG 16. Finally, Montiel et al., (2021), suggest that multinational investment geared towards reducing harm to social cohesion could not only have a positive impact on the host country's SDG agenda, but also reduce negative externalities for the firm and boost competitiveness.

Business for Peace

Beyond these studies explicitly linking firms and SDG 16, both management and political science scholars have studied how firms fare in conflict regions or how they contribute to peace. However, the issue is that they rarely talk to each other, so there is little systematic analysis of how firms and other actors seek or impact peace (Melin, 2016). The business literature has addressed peace issues in topics such as the effects of conflict on MNC operations (e.g., Dai, Eden & Beamish, 2013), and MNC responses to conflict and peace accords (e.g, Jallat & Shultz, 2011; Oetzel & Getz, 2012; Albino-Pimentel et al., 2021). This has been dubbed the peace-through-commerce literature (Williams, 2008). More recently, the Business for Peace (B4P) literature presents a paradigm shift in which businesses are put at the forefront of peacebuilding alongside public actors, thus changing the balance between public and private authority and responsibility in ensuring successful conflict management and institutional development (Schouten & Miklian, 2020). Through employment, business to business trade, and stakeholder engagement, among other actions, firms can impact governance, peace and justice – either as enablers or as disablers (Miklian & Medina Bickel, 2020).

Some of this literature focuses on why firms engage in peacebuilding activities. Rettberg (2016) argues that business leaders focus on peace and conflict for three reasons:

need, creed and greed. Regarding need, companies carry high costs when operating in conflict environments and/or institutional weakness. It is in their interest to foster peace to avoid the costs of operating in the midst of conflict. The second reason, creed, refers to a firm's conviction to positively impact society beyond simple economic operations. The Colombian company Nutresa, for example, views social responsibility as an investment rather than as an expense or window-dressing. Finally, greed refers to business opportunities that arise in the aftermath of a conflict: the country needs rebuilding and its economy a jump start. The private sector may therefore be attracted by governments aiming to recover their economy.

These motivations are context-dependent, however. An analysis by Rettberg, Leiteritz and Nasi (2011) shows that, in agriculture, firm characteristics and their environment matter for fostering peace and navigating conflict. For example, small producers are less likely to be the targets of extortion. Therefore, as seen in the coffee sector, decentralized land ownership (small plots instead of big plantations) correlates with farmers being more empowered and providing greater support for institutions. Additionally, Melin (2020) shows that corporations engage in peacebuilding and conflict management when: a) their investment and their reputation are at risk, b) there is a gap in governance (i.e., weak institutions and state presence), and c) when there is an active international mediation into the conflict.

Some works have also studied how firms can foster peace. According to Miklian (2017), there are five ways in which businesses promote peace at a grass-roots level: improving the dividends of peace (economic opportunities), promoting local capabilities development, importing international norms that encourage accountability, constraining root causes of conflict (such as poverty and inequality), and even undertaking diplomatic actions themselves. This is reminiscent of corporate diplomacy, that is, activities in the intersection of business, politics and society to create value for both firms and stakeholders (Henisz, 2014). Similarly, Sachs et al. (2019) argue that SDG 16 is an enabler of six transformations that can tackle societal grand challenges. These transformations are: 1) education to promote growth and socioeconomic and gender equality, 2) health investment, 3) infrastructure development, 4) agriculture, environment and natural resources management, 5) urban development, and 6) technological development. This research

provides some useful areas of focus for private enterprises seeking to contribute to peace, but no research has provided guidance on how these areas of focus can be accomplished through specific firm activities.

Our review of these literatures thus identifies two gaps: first, the studies directly addressing SDG16 focus on firm partnerships with governments and NGOs as a means to achieving various SDG16 targets, and not on how a firm's everyday business activities can lead to peace. Second, while the peace through commerce and B4P literatures do provide some areas of focus or broad recommendations, they lack firm-level *actionable guidance* and linkages to specific targets of SDG16. These gaps exist despite arguments that peacebuilding and development cannot be a top-down but rather a bottom-up, local process (Auteserre, 2021; Christensen et al., 2019), and must draw on a broad range of actors and interest groups (Melin, 2016). The private sector can have a fundamental role to play by providing: resources for peace and development, jobs to populations affected by conflict, and legitimacy to peace processes (Rettberg, 2020).

Ex-combatant Entrepreneurship in Post-Conflict Zones

We propose studying the link between business and SDG 16 in an extreme context such as economic recovery after a civil war. In their taxonomy of extreme context research, this type of post-conflict zone fits Hällgren et al.'s (2018) definition of disrupted contexts. A disrupted context is initiated by unique and unprecedented events that are external to the core activities of the organizations under study (Hällgren et al., 2018). While the end of a civil war is a positive environmental change it is still a context riddled with uncertainty and risk, as well as the broken institutions and damaged social fabric created by the war itself. Exploring the practices and processes of firms operating in disrupted contexts is said to provide insight into "how knowledge and skills are mobilized to help safeguard well-being, security, and human freedoms" (Hällgren et al., 2018, p. 145). Therefore, this research setting is most appropriate for our study into the links between business practice and SDG 16. By studying the decisions and actions of firms operating in a post-conflict zone, we can identify what opportunities business has for promoting peace and avoiding a return to hostilities.

Avoiding civil war recidivism is difficult: many civil wars are simply the continuation of previous wars (Collier et al., 2008). To reduce the risk of a conflict relapse,

countries can implement political reform, distribute international aid and help from the UN (e.g., peacekeeping), and invest in economic development. Collier et al. (2008) argue that economic growth is the best factor to reduce the risk of recidivism. The focus of peacebuilding, therefore, has to be on enabling and protecting economic development. This is not only an issue of enabling economic growth but also of economic empowerment of ex-combatants to avoid recidivism.

However, ex-combatant empowerment and reintegration into society and the formal economy are extremely difficult for several reasons. First, it is not always feasible to translate war-making capabilities to legal economic activity. Many ex-combatants, therefore, require training programs, which are costly and require a significant time investment. Also, insurgents might have little knowledge of how the market economy works, especially if they hail from Marxist rebel groups (stories abound about Soviet missions in capitalist countries asking fundamental questions about capitalism that disconcerted the hosts).

Second, the transition to peace has a differential effect on ex-combatants based on the war hierarchy. Typically, rebel commanders' transition into political leadership positions, be it as part of power-sharing in the executive branch of government or as leaders of new political parties. In Angola, for example, peace between the government and UNITA meant a power-sharing arrangement in which UNITA leaders would be part of a unity government (Spears, 1999). On the other hand, the rank and file are given low-entry jobs and pay, not necessarily too distant from their experience in the armed group. The hierarchy issue is most salient for mid-level officers (Daly, 2014): these are individuals accustomed to having a leadership role (i.e., power), but they are usually lumped together with the rank and file in the post-conflict period. Additionally, mid-level officers were also very likely instrumental in the illegal economic activities that funded the armed group (e.g., drug trafficking). Mid-level officers, therefore, have a heightened risk of recidivism since they have the know-how and the connections to continue in leadership positions in criminal enterprises and a psychological need for maintaining their place in the hierarchy or substituting for their lost power and prestige (Daly, 2014).

Third, the legacy of violence makes it so that communities will likely be hesitant to welcome their former victimizers with open arms, let alone give them direct employment,

as attitudes and assumptions that civilians have towards ex-combatants stigmatize and separate them from communities (McMullin, 2013). This is similar to the issue of reintegrating ex-convicts into society: very few companies are willing to employ former offenders because they represent a high risk. Stigmatized groups, therefore, are seemingly unemployable (Harding, 2003).

Kaplan and Nussio (2018) find that more participatory communities allow for easier ex-combatant social reintegration and makes it so that the latter do not have to find ways to organize but rather take advantage of the opportunities given by the communities. However, if these are not present, then ex-combatants find it much harder to fit in with their new communities and are therefore segregated. But what if ex-combatants themselves flip the script?

Ex-combatants themselves can become the drivers of economic development, new jobs, and peace. By adopting the research lens of Emancipatory Entrepreneuring (Rindova, Barry & Ketchen, 2009), we can focus on the creation of new ventures by these ex-combatants not only as the pursuit of economic opportunity but as efforts to overcome the constraints they face in their disrupted context. Studying the efforts of these ex-combatant entrepreneurs can reveal the processes through which constraints may be overcome and how opportunities may be created, not just discovered. These ventures are much more than individual efforts at wealth-building; they are motivated by grander societal goals that can lead to changes that may benefit the whole community (Rindova, Barry & Ketchen, 2009). Understanding how these firms engage in bricolage of their physical, social, and institutional inputs to construct their resource base and accomplish their organizational goals (Mair & Marti, 2009), can reveal insights on how exactly firm level actions and decisions can impact the broad peacebuilding goals of SDG 16.

Sample and Methodology

Our research setting is the reintegration of ex-combatants in post-conflict Colombia. The country's sixty-year-long civil war left more than 220,000 dead, 45,000 missing, and close to seven million displaced. One of the conflict's principal antagonists was the guerrilla group FARC, which had more than 18,000 fighters (Baumohl, 2020). In 2016, a peace agreement was signed, ending one of the longest civil wars in history. That year marked the end of the armed conflict, but only the beginning of the peace process.

The cross-sector collaboration that resulted from the Colombian peace process defines the institutional field in which ex-combatant entrepreneurs will be competing. We study entrepreneurial ventures taking place in *Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación* (ETCRs), which translates to territorial spaces for training and reincorporation. They are the physical locales in which FARC ex-combatants are concentrated and reincorporated into civil society while living in and contributing to the economic life of nearby communities (Comisión de Conciliación Nacional, 2017). We collect data from entrepreneurial ventures located in these special reincorporation zones. These zones represent complex environments -remote, rural, disadvantaged, disputed, insecure- that fit the definition of disrupted contexts (Hällgren et al., 2018). These special conditions make Colombia a unique setting for exploring the theorized dynamics and challenges of organizations tackling complex societal challenges (Bryson et al., 2015).

Ex-Combatant Venture Case Studies

As of November 30, 2019, the Colombian National Council for Reincorporation and the ARN had approved almost 900 collective and individual productive projects with over three thousand ex-combatants of the FARC. The Colombian government mostly funded these projects at a total cost of over 33 million dollars.

We gather data on four ex-combatant entrepreneurial ventures created in Colombia after the 2016 signing of the peace accords. As in previous research using inductive qualitative research, these four cases were selected in a purposive and adaptive manner following the principle of theoretical sampling (e.g., Gallo et al., 2018). We start by first selecting one of the firms that had gathered the most media attention, and based on analyses of the collected data about the company and its related emerging themes, further cases were purposely selected to generate variance (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2017).

Our first case was Cerveza La Roja, a firm that has gathered wide local and international media attention. It is one of the flagship firms of the post-conflict process in Colombia. As we collected data from La Roja and started analyzing it, other important ventures continued to appear in either national media or peacebuilding conferences and events we attended. The second project that caught our attention was Muñecas Ex-

combatientes por la Paz, which utilized a unique business model and was founded by a team of all-female entrepreneurs. This case also became an essential part of our sample because the project failed during the period of our study, giving us contrasting patterns in our data and more details unidentified in our first case (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Following more data analysis, our third case, Confecciones la Montaña, stood out as an interesting entrepreneurial venture because they used pre-existing combatant knowledge, resources (facilities, etc.) and capabilities, to start the venture. They turned their combatant uniform workshop, materials, and know-how into an outdoor apparel firm that created outdoor gear with sufficient quality to compete with North Face, Columbia, and Patagonia brands. The product quality resulted from their founders' years of experience manufacturing outerwear for extreme conditions such as Colombia's rainforests' high humidity and heat. Our final case chosen was Café Paramillo since it engages in one of Colombia's most traditional and internationally successful industries.

Our four cases then offer some similarities in the sense of being born due to the peace agreement and all operating with minimal start-up budgets. Still, they are different enough in their business models to offer unique insights into the activities and decision-making of ex-combatant entrepreneurs. It is worth pointing out that one of these ventures has already failed and the other three, even though currently viable, have significant challenges if they hope to achieve long-term venture sustainability.

Most of the data were collected from secondary sources such as local, national and international news articles, press releases and videos. These sources were used to construct the narratives of the four chosen ventures, which we present below. These narratives don't include all relevant details but provide a useful introduction and summary to the firms. However, the full richness of these sources was used in our coding and analysis.

Unfortunately, we did not schedule official interviews with any ex-combatants because our attempts to contact them through their intermediaries were received with suspicion and concern. However, we attended events at which they presented their stories, ventures, and products. These events included ex-combatants and representatives from the private sector, Colombian Government, The United Nations and NGOs engaged in supporting ex-combatant ventures. After these events, we were able to speak informally with members of three of the four projects under study. We asked them about their funding,

sourcing and distribution challenges, and their current performance and prospects. Finally, we conducted some informal interviews with sustainability managers at traditional firms in relevant industries, as well as the director of a peace and economic development foundation. All of these informal interviews were useful in the development and validation of our coding items.

Cerveza La Roja

La Roja is an artisanal beer produced by ex-combatants residing in the ETCR – Antonio Nariño, founded in November of 2018, nearly two years after signing the historic peace accords between the government of Colombia and the armed forces of the FARC. At the heart of this micro-brewery's origin story lies the strength of personal bonds and childhood friendship. Nicolas Hurtado and Wally Broderick were adolescent friends who took very different paths shortly after graduating high school. Broderick, of Irish/Colombian descent, left the country and traveled to Europe to pursue higher education opportunities. Hurtado remained in Colombia and joined the FARC at the age of 18 under the pseudonym Carlos Alberto. The two friends eventually reunite when Broderick returns to Colombia to teach English in the capital city of Bogota. The English professor learns that his childhood friend is serving an 11-year prison sentence for crimes related to his membership in FARC and decides to reach out and visit Hurtado in prison (Atehortua, 2019). After the Peace Agreement of 2016, Hurtado turned himself in at the ETCR-Antonio Nariño in the department of Tolima about 124 kilometers from Bogota. Broderick continues to visit with his childhood friend, now at the ETCR, and also starts to volunteer as a literacy instructor.

Despite their vastly different circumstances and choices, their adolescent friendship proves a strong bond that has lasted well over three decades and maintains a network tie between Hurtado and Broderick. And it is this friendship that plays a crucial role in the formation of La Roja. Surveys of ex-combatants by the government reincorporation agency reveal that a vast majority, 96%, dream of starting their own business ventures (Colombia2020, 2019). This entrepreneurial drive was very much alive in ETCR-Antonio Nariño, but Hurtado and his ex-combatant colleagues were having significant challenges in launching successful ventures. It was Broderick, an outsider to the ex-combatant experience, that introduced the idea of producing beer as a potential successful business venture for Hurtado and his partners.

Broderick had a long-standing interest and passion for brewing, and after teaching a brewing class to members of the ETCR he helped Hurtado, and four other members, brew 25 liters of beer in October of 2018 (Atehortua, 2019). This initial batch of beer was distributed by word of mouth by the six founders. They discussed many different possible brands for their product, all of which were related to their ideals and/or guerilla experiences. Eventually, they settled on "La Roja" meaning the red and symbolizing their strong socialist sympathies. After they supplied beer to the anniversary celebration of the communist party, the resulting buzz and attendees' social media postings gave the nascent beer brand a strong boost in recognition. With this popularity and the founders reinvesting their profits in the venture, they grew to 600 liters/month production capacity by January of 2019 (Atehortua, 2019).

The beer built a decent customer base in Tolima's local bars but was also available in specialty shops in Bogota and through online orders (Viaño-Montaña, 2019). In online videos and crowdfunding pitches, the founders claim that demand has continuously outpaced their production capabilities, which reached only 800 liters/month by November of 2019 (DW Español, 2019). The venture was founded with minimal capital investment and needed significant funding to meet its growth ambitions. In fact, at presentations and sales events, we heard from representatives of the firm regarding frustrations with the national government's lack of support for the venture. In La Roja's case, they had plenty of demand for their products but felt they didn't have the capital support nor the infrastructure development in the ETCR to support their growth and development. According to Ruben Dario, a La Roja representative, the infrastructure challenges included a poor-quality connection to the electric grid and lack of good roads (Menéndez, 2019).

The firm had always done an outstanding job of taking advantage of modern social media platforms, from using Twitter for marketing to developing a means for customers to buy the product online. To solve their capital needs, they once again sought resolution through modern information technology options. They turned to crowdfunding and outside investors with a pitch emphasizing the pride of a Colombian-based artisanal beer brand, since the major beers of Colombia are all subsidiaries of huge multinationals. In several interviews and articles, Hurtado makes the point that La Roja's success is more than just a

benefit to the members of the ETCR since it creates economic opportunities throughout Tolima for ex-combatants and their surrounding communities.

Cerveza La Roja is an example of a successful ex-combatant venture, managing to grow demand for a new beer brand while supplying ownership and job opportunities for ex-combatants looking to reintegrate into civil society. By April of 2019, they employed 29 ex-combatants, 11 of which were women, while being named one of the three most popular ex-combatant brands by a national newspaper (Forero-Rueda, 2019). The company still faces many challenges, including achieving less than 1% of its crowdfunding goal as of June 2020 and the challenging economic times precipitated by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. However, by the end of 2020, it is apparent that the firm continues to thrive. La Roja succeeded in moving production from the ETCR to a stainless-steel brewing facility in Bogota, closest to their largest market (Redacción Colombia, 2020).

In addition to their growth and continued economic success, La Roja has demonstrated a continued commitment to the peace process and their local and ex-combatant communities. In the last three months of 2020 the firm introduced a special edition amber ale, whose proceeds would support the construction of kindergartens in three ETCRs. These early childhood education centers would be available to the children of the ex-combatants and locals from neighboring communities in need of the service (Redacción Colombia, 2020). This fundraising initiative was joined by two other ex-combatant beer brands, demonstrating the willingness to collaborate across firms when the results benefit their children's future. This initiative is precisely the type of social sustainability activity that theory predicts these types of embedded cooperative ventures are likely to seek out (Gallo et al., 2018). La Roja continues to grow capacity and sales while maintaining a commitment to sustainability principles. The firm built a successful beer brand that embraces the ideals of its ex-combatant founders while still appealing to a market that has mixed if not outright negative associations with the FARC and ex-combatants themselves.

Muñecas Excombatientes Por La Paz (Ex-Combatant Dolls For Peace)

Muñecas Excombatientes Por la Paz (Muñecas) was a rag doll company founded in 2018 by ex-combatant women residing in the Monterredondo ETCR located in the municipality of Miranda department of Cauca, 50 km away from the third-largest city of Colombia, Cali. The women's initiative focused on dolls that portray a political, social, and cultural message

to preserve the collective memory of the conflict and reconciliation, in addition to messages against discrimination of ethnic minorities and sexual violence towards women (United Nations, 2018). The doll project stands out not only because it is an all-female-owned venture but because of the social message integrated into its product (United Nations, 2018). The project was initially pitched to academic and government institutions at the workshop "Seedbeds of Peace." It was classified by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia as a *fast impact project* after its official founding in 2018.

The project leader was Francis Restrepo, a local artisan and social leader who came to help in the reincorporation process in the Monterredondo ETCR. She provided the business idea to a group of ex-combatant women she met at the workshop and encouraged them to make dolls with her sewing machine. Since they were tired of waiting for funding promises by the government, they took on Francis' challenge. They now had a leader and idea but no sewing skills and no raw materials to begin. Due to this scarcity, Francis taught them how to sew, and they started using ex-combatant camouflaged T-shirts as their raw material to make some parts of the dolls. Later an ETCR leader contributed 300,000 pesos (about 80 USD) to help the women purchase supplies. Fifteen days after the community hall training, a team of six ex-combatant women made the first doll with a camouflaged shirt. By early 2020 there were 14 women employed at Muñecas, eight of which were FARC ex-combatants. The remaining six were local older women, former victims of the armed conflict with the FARC (Forero, 2019). Some had difficulty adjusting since they had no sewing or business experience but gradually put their fears aside with their leader's help. These ex-combatant women said the project signified their self-improvement and desire not to return to arms. They felt proud and gained new skills such as sewing and selling, which have improved their opportunities.

The company produced four types of dolls representing different Colombian communities: Afro-Colombian, indigenous, peasant, and ex-combatant. The afro-Colombian doll represents Colombia's Pacific Coastal region, the poorest, most neglected region in the country. The Nasa doll represents the country's indigenous tribes, and the peasant doll the women in rural Colombia. One of the most popular and significant items was the Miranda doll, representing the ex-combatants and constructed with old guerilla clothes scavenged from leftovers of the members of the ETCR. Using the old uniforms in

this way, they hoped to give a new meaning to those uniforms. What was once used for war can now bring joy and peace to a child (Diario del Cauca, 2020).

Additionally, some of the peasants and ex-combatant employees had worked with medicinal plants (a knowledge they learned from their ancestors), so each doll carries an actual seed as an accessory in her basket. According to an employee we spoke with, the seed symbolizes protection of the environment and their territory, a direct response to multinationals that she believed had stolen the knowledge of traditional medicine and corrupted it by creating transgenic seeds. According to the founders, the dolls represent the peace, reconciliation, and change that took place with the peace agreement, and they intend for their products to carry a message of hope.

The company started by producing as little as six dolls a week but increased production when receiving single orders reaching up to 120 dolls. In December 2018, International Cooperation provided four machines and materials worth around 50 million pesos (approx. 14000 USD) to help Muñecas expand capacity and meet their growing demand. The company soon started getting significant media attention with radio, TV, and print interviews (Peña, 2019).

After several months of effort and dedication, the dolls started shipping and selling throughout Colombia. However, sales were still low due to challenges in commercialization. Therefore, the women received training in sales and promotion by entities affiliated with the reintegration process, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), the UN, the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (ARN), and the Municipality of Miranda. They were invited to craft fairs in major cities and to give talks at universities. These talks and exhibitions are always attended by several of the ex-combatants leading the project so that attendees can learn first-hand the laborious handcrafted manufacturing process, the conditions in which they are being made, and the symbolism and stories of each doll from the women who created them (United Nations, 2018).

Unfortunately, these commercialization efforts were not enough to sustain them through the economic impact of the COVID 19-Pandemic. The women could not promote their products face-to-face anymore, which was one of their key selling points, and sales and profits started declining. The venture out of business in late 2020. Even with the United

Nations' help, the dolls were hard to commercialize. The pandemic provided the final blow, and they did not find their way into a sustainable, profitable market.

Regardless of the business failure, the company symbolized ex-combatant women empowerment and highlighted how ex-combatant and peasant women could become entrepreneurs in harsh conditions. One of the sewing ex-combatants now believes her role as an empowered woman is to continue strengthening her community and showing the world that they can change little by little and that they can make their dreams come true. Although many people have now abandoned the established territorial spaces due to threats from groups outside the law, one of the ex-combatant women affirms that she is part of a group that chose to stay. She hopes to continue the struggle in the ETCR for a better life despite the adversities and difficulties she has faced. Her experience with Muñecas has renewed her confidence in a better tomorrow. This all-women company representing the country's diverse women through their dolls carried not only a message of peace and reconciliation but also a clear signal of female empowerment and women's role in truly equitable economic development.

Confecciones La Montaña

The reintegration space (ETCR) La Plancha has been one of the most economically active and famous since the implementation of the peace accords. It was set up in the municipality of Anorí (Northeast of Medellín in the region of Antioquia), which was besieged continuously by armed groups during the conflict. Indeed, all armed actors were active in the zone, including the paramilitaries. There was a total of 7,456 victims in Anorí alone: 7,163 displaced, 467 killed, 80 threatened, and 21 affected by anti-personnel mines (Pareja, 2018).

The cooperative founded there, whose membership is approximately 120 ex-combatants, has enabled the start of several entrepreneurship projects. The most recognized is Confecciones La Montaña, an apparel company focusing on outdoor activewear with a core group of 25 ex-combatants with experience producing uniforms and gear for FARC (Redacción Digital BLU Radio, 2019). Like other cooperative projects, La Montaña started out of need: because of delays in government assistance, the livelihood of the ETCR members and their families was at stake, so the tailors decided to start the business with

sewing machines that they took out of their jungle encampments. The business's original participants were 10 FARC members with their nuclear families (Monsalve Gaviria, 2019).

These particular ex-combatants had acquired tailoring skills because they had suffered war injuries and could not engage in active combat for Front 36 of FARC (Valencia González, 2019). Despite their injuries, they still wished to contribute to the cause and were put to work retailoring uniforms and other clothing so that FARC members could operate in rough terrain such as mountain forests. Their work has been so successful that La Montaña has started to sell its wares internationally (Carranza Jiménez, 2019). La Montaña is a clear example of a successful translation of skills honed during the war into economically productive skills for peace.

Demand has highly exceeded the supply for their outdoor gear. Cooperative leader and former Front 36 leader Andrés Zuluaga, better known for his alias Martín Batalla, explains that issues with the implementation of the peace accords have left the ETCR underfinanced, which has meant that demand for La Montaña products has highly exceeded their productive capacity. Thus, he continues, since the government did not keep its promise to roll out funding for economic projects for FARC, La Montaña (and the cooperative in general) has had to finance itself and slowly grow capacity (Redacción Digital BLU Radio, 2019).

Despite, or perhaps because of, delays with government funding, members of La Montaña have been proactive in seeking training and public relations. With the support of the National Learning Service (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje*, SENA) and the international community, members have honed their sewing and tailoring skills. Additionally, they have successfully solicited resources from the international community, including the French Embassy, which provided sewing machines and raw materials to continue with capacity expansion (Valencia González, 2019).

The business and its operating tailor shop have become integral to the local municipality: inhabitants of nearby rural areas travel to the ETCR to procure their apparel or get quick tailoring fixes (Pareja, 2018), which has given La Montaña a steadier income and enabled better relations with the community. Regarding the latter, Guillermo León Chansé, a leader of the ETCR, argues that cooperatives and their projects are concrete alternatives for the recovery of the social fabric in the communities (Gutiérrez, 2019). As

such, offering tailoring services in addition to the products they sell has turned out to be a useful tool to create goodwill for the ex-combatants trying to reintegrate in a zone where they were very active militarily.

Indeed, many of the inhabitants of Anorí suffered at the hands of FARC during the conflict, but now thanks to La Montaña and other projects they are turning over a new leaf. La Montaña has become not only a valued business in the region but also an employer: it employs women from the nearby communities (Semana Rural, 2019) and even some returning members of the community that had been displaced during the conflict (Pareja, 2018), which is a clear sign of successful reintegration and reconciliation.

As Chansé argues, they are serving as an example so that these people see themselves as active, rather than passive, subjects of peace (Gutiérrez, 2019). La Montaña has successfully embedded itself in the community and has become a referent of peace and reconciliation: business meetings and informal gatherings between former combatants and the community regularly occur in the tailor shop. Moreover, community members that houses the ETCR argue that their community has changed for the better since the arrival of the ex-combatants: infrastructure has been developed and some essential services like healthcare are now being provided (Pareja, 2018).

Café Paramillo

Coffee provides hope to many FARC ex-combatants who plant the bush in regions where they waged armed conflict not long ago and in which they now wish to harvest peace. Some ex-combatant ventures have emerged focused on growing and producing coffee for either domestic or international markets. We decided to focus our case study on just one brand, Café Paramillo, whose brand was particularly visible in the city of Medellin in the Fall of 2019. Representatives of the brand were making appearances at several educational, cultural, and promotional events at that time, allowing our co-authors to meet the representatives and learn about the company directly from ex-combatants. Café Paramillo is an ex-combatant entrepreneurial initiative located in Santa Lucía, municipality of Ituango, Antioquia about 200 km from the departmental capital of Medellin. The brand name is the same as that of a nearby national park, thereby invoking regional and territorial pride. The brand sources coffee beans from small third-party producers as well as planting and harvesting beans themselves with the help of locals, ex-combatants in the process of

reincorporation and victims of the former armed conflict. Café Paramillo operates under a regional cooperative's auspices named Cooperativa Multiactiva de Emprendedores del Campo Colombiano (CMECC). The beans are shade-grown under native trees or subsistence crops vital to the sustainability of the local region. This practice foremost ensures the local community's nutritional needs are met while also contributing to the quality of the coffee beans themselves (ARN, 2020).

In the speaking engagements where representatives of Café Paramillo were present the discussions focused more on the process of integration and peace, not necessarily the business model of the venture. Very little information was shared regarding membership, founding, and business structure. The venture is fully vertically integrated, planting and harvesting some of their beans and then drying, processing and roasting the coffee for sale in one-kilogram bags for retail customers. At a University speakers' panel, Andrés Zuluaga of Café Paramillo emphasized that the venture is committed to paying farmers a fair price for their beans, and that the operations of the venture are an experience of reconciliation in and of themselves because the community as a whole is engaged in the venture. It represents a self-managed effort between ex-combatants and rural locals, working together to generate economic development in the impoverished region. Zuluaga also indicated that financial support promised by the national government had yet to materialize, that the firm was able to achieve its current level of growth through self-funding. Finally, the firm's biggest challenge was access to domestic markets and here the representative made a direct plea in a packed auditorium to private enterprise to provide market access or marketing resources to help the venture thrive.

Café Paramillo is mostly sold locally in the Ituango region but hopes to grow markets in other territories of the country and maybe even venture internationally. However, distribution and marketing have proven challenging for many ex-combatant brands and Café Paramillo is no exception. There have been many calls from the different reincorporation sites, asking for government, private companies, and NGOs to help improve the opportunities for their projects and help guarantee commercial markets. Café Paramillo made the same plea and it does seem that some external stakeholders responded with assistance that has benefited them in growing their brand's reach and distribution.

One form of assistance came from the national government. To increase demand of ex-combatant products, the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (ARN), Colombia Compra Eficiente and the Unit for the Comprehensive Care and Reparation of Victims managed to modify the guidelines for government purchasing. The new purchasing guidelines include special requirements so that both victims of the conflict and ex-combatants in the process of reincorporation are guaranteed a percentage of the States purchasing of goods and services. The new guidelines include requirements whereby 20% of public purchases made at the national level, not only of coffee but also of other products, should consist of people in the process of reincorporation (Sputnik Mundo, 2020). Because of these changes, the bidding process included Café Paramillo and other coffee brands, from associations or organizations that include ex-combatants in the process of reincorporation and or victims of the former armed conflict. "With this type of announcement by state entities, I am confident that one of our biggest concerns can be solved. That is finding distribution channels for the products that are already being generated from the reincorporation process. Our commitment is to peace and we will continue working so that little by little we are strengthening the organizational processes and also the productive processes of the people who signed the peace agreement," said Mario Rodríguez, representative of the Cooperative Ecomun La Esperanza (CECOESPE) producer of the brand Café La Esperanza (Sputnik Mundo, 2020).

A second marketing opportunity arose from a unique collaboration with a firm outside of the traditional coffee value chain. Café Paramillo was one of three ex-combatant coffee brands featured at a unique marketing opportunity provided by the digital magazine Arcadia at the 2019 Festival of Books and Culture in Medellin (ARN, 2020). Arcadia hosted a tent at the festival with the title "the coffee of the morning (future)", a clever title playing off the fact that the word for morning is the same as the word for tomorrow in Spanish. The tent had space for over 150 attendees who were invited to sample the three coffee brands while engaging in a spirited salon focused on the future of art, culture, and the peace process's continued progress. This was an opportunity to promote the brand to the annual festival's attendees. Of course, representatives of Café Paramillo were on-site with a booth selling from their retail inventory.

Finally, Café Paramillo's marketing efforts have benefited from ex-combatants' entrepreneurial efforts outside of the ETCRs. The cooperative "Knitting Peace" (Cotepaz) consists of 104-members in the Abura Valley, ex-combatants who have moved closer to the large economies of big cities like Medellin (Ruiz, 2019). The purpose of the cooperative is to sell products produced in the ETCRs. In the 2019 Christmas shopping season, Cotepaz had tremendous success with gift baskets featuring Café Paramillo products. So much success that the cooperative exhausted their supply of the Café Paramillo brand and had to supplement with another ex-combatant coffee brand. These gift baskets were delivered to customers' doorsteps by John Lopez, "Calvin," an urban ex-combatant who served a 12-year prison sentence for his involvement in a car bombing. Calvin confirmed that most gift baskets were delivered to some of the highest-end neighborhoods of Medellin to mostly young working professionals living in luxury apartment complexes (Ruiz, 2019).

These three opportunities provided Café Paramillo with access to new markets and further expansion of brand awareness throughout the country. The national government has a vested interest in the success of these ETCR ventures; therefore, the link between the company and sales to the national government seems like a natural relationship. The other two opportunities represent much more innovative relationships and emerge from the unique challenges facing the firm. Despite these innovations, we found the firm didn't capitalize on the opportunities provided to them. In conversations with representatives selling the product at various educational and promotional events, there was a lack of effort to establish long-term brand loyalty. The company did not provide information on where customers could make future purchases; no website, no mail order list, and no means to further engage with the brand. While the company had participated in these unique opportunities that exposed them to new markets, it seems that they did not have the knowledge or ambition to fully capitalize on the opportunities. They focused on the short-term sales but not longer-term initiatives at brand building. Likewise, despite their ecological and fair-trade practices, they did not know potential third-party certifications that could help them break into more international markets and higher price points.

We have already made the case that these entrepreneurial ventures are operating in some of the most extreme socio-political environments imaginable. Café Paramillo's short-term focus on sales and lack of marketing sophistication may be a direct consequence of

that harsh environment. An environment that we did not fully appreciate at the time of our discussions with the firm's representatives. The ETCR of Santa Lucia, where Café Paramillo originated, faced some particularly unique challenges. As it turns out Santa Lucia was located in the middle of strategic trade routes for illegal activities and the residents were constantly at risk of violence between competing bands of smugglers (Lopera, 2020). Because of this insecurity, in July of 2020 Santa Lucia became the first ETCR that had to be officially re-located by the national government (Lopera, 2020).

With this further context, it became clearer why representatives of Café Paramillo rarely gave details of their operations or even their full names at the various events we were able to hear them speak. They were actually under constant threat of physical attack despite their location in an official government ETCR. In fact, of the 214 assassinations of FARC ex-combatants that were registered between the signing of the peace accords in 2016 and July 2020, the greatest number to occur in one location, 12, occurred in Santa Lucia (Lopera, 2020). Therefore, the lack of long-term marketing focus might not result from a lack of ambition or vision but rather intentional efforts to protect their employees' security and inventory.

These security threats and the move of the ETCR to a locality eight hours from Santa Lucia created severe pressure on Café Paramillo. Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic hit hard in various cities of Colombia and the national government responded with shelter in place orders that had significant impacts on the operation of the small shops and village plazas where Café Paramillo was sold (Ortiz & Galvis, 2020). Therefore, Café Paramillo's operations were put on hold for much of 2020, only recommencing in the Fall. The venture will try to continue its growth path from its new location in Mutata, hopefully without the security challenges that threatened their personal safety and hampered their ability to build their venture fully.

There is a sad tragedy in this move to Mutata. Café Paramillo had always focused on paying local farmers fair wages and hiring locals to engage and embed themselves with Santa Lucia's community altogether. But those same locals and farmers are still in the Santa Lucia region, still surrounded by violence. The ETCR has moved to safer ground, and Café Paramillo has a second chance to grow their business; but these locals that were integral to their early success are left in a less secure situation. With the relocation of the ETCR the

region lost the national police force that operated the ETCR. Locals had taken advantage of the ETCRs fences and security during particular periods of violence between bandits (Lopera, 2020). This provides a sobering reminder that Café Paramillo can help accomplish the work of reconciliation, creating bridges between ex-combatants and their former victims, but the country still has many sources of violence that need to be addressed. A single ex-combatant venture can make a positive contribution to peace, but the government, citizenry, and private enterprises of a country must work together in complex long-term efforts to build a peace that can truly last.

Results

In these four case studies of ex-combatant ventures, we observed various operational practices, industries, and stakeholder relationships. Similarities existed in terms of commitment to prior political ideals, acute concerns about safety, and uncertainty about institutional promises. We began by identifying key items relevant to entrepreneurial ventures such as industry, size, funding source, and ownership structure to formalize our coding. As we added cases to our sample and consulted experts, we identified additional items of interest, which led to our final list of 53 items. Appendix 1 shows the coding of our four cases across our final list of items. The author of each individual narrative conducted the first part of the coding. Then, all authors revised each other's coding and a further consensus-building process was used to resolve any inconsistencies. Following Gioia et al. (2013), we grouped the items into first-order categories, which we then refined into 11 second-order themes in Appendix 2. Studying these themes, we were able to identify that firms' activities varied consistently across two key dimensions.

Our analysis identified *stakeholder distance* and *entrepreneurial stage* as two salient categories that capture the variety of processes and practices of our four ex-combatant ventures (see Appendix 2 for further information). Building off these two dimensions, we identified a framework for organizing the variety of stakeholder practices that these firms pursued to gather the resources they needed to help their business succeed. Therefore, we are able to answer our research question about the processes and practices that ex-combatant ventures engage with for survival by providing a typography of their stakeholder engagement tactics. Below we summarize the two key dimensions we identified in our coding process and present our Matrix of Stakeholder Engagement.

Stakeholder Distance

Geography played a central role in both the civil war and the subsequent peace process in Colombia. Safety and violence varied greatly throughout the country, with the most remote and hard to reach regions falling under a reign of lawlessness or guerilla control. The peace process provided for the ETCR structure, and these settlements were mostly situated in remote rural locations, all of which had distinct cultural and political identities. Therefore, the distance between the ex-combatant entrepreneurs and any stakeholder they wished to partner with is a very significant variable that impacts the type and strength of stakeholder tie that is possible.

The importance of stakeholder distance is perhaps most evident in creating engagement with distributors and or customers. La Roja was able to find local customers for their beer simply through word of mouth, with local restaurants and bars in the Tolima region regularly seeking out a new supply of the nascent beer brand. However, breaking into the larger market of Bogota required a stronger network tie. The ex-combatants had strong ties to the communist party, and it was through this pre-existing relationship that they were able to supply the party's anniversary celebration. We also see distance playing a role in the engagement of employee and supplier stakeholders. Café Paramillo sought relationships with local farmers as bean suppliers and locals (both ex-combatants and former victims) as employees in their fledgling venture. Therefore, proximity and shared economic development goals allowed these ex-combatants to forge relationships with individuals with vastly different ideologies and even with possible traumas related to the civil war. But relationships across greater distances seem to require some familial or intimate tie. In La Roja's case, it is the close friendship between Broderick and Hurtado that is essential to introducing Broderick to the members of the ETCR and allows him to bring the entrepreneurial idea to start a brewery and become a founding member of the venture.

In these examples, we identify this key relationship between the stakeholder distance and the reliance on existing ties versus the ability to forge connection over sociopolitical differences. When these ex-combatants moved to the ETCR locations, they were able to become members of the local community. The familiarity and shared living experience allowed them to forge working relationships with the local community (landowners, working poor, military guards, and businesses) despite the stigma of their

combatant past. But stakeholder relationships forged across geographical distance seemed to require some pre-existing relationship or common interest that allowed for a business relationship to form.

Entrepreneurial Stage

Our sample of four firms are all very young. The implementation of the peace accords between FARC and the Colombian government started at the close of 2016. And most of these firms are under two years old at the time of this writing, having been founded in and around 2019. However, even in these young firms, we can discern different stages of entrepreneurship, namely start-up versus growth. Across these two stages, we did observe differences in stakeholder engagement. It could signify that the ventures have different needs at various development stages that require other stakeholder relationships. Or it is possible that the types of stakeholder relationships that are conceivable are dependent on the firm's developmental stage.

Two of our case study firms required significant outside stakeholder engagement through their start-up phase. Both La Roja and Muñecas needed outside stakeholders for the generation of the business idea and capability training. In the case of Muñecas, the ex-combatant women got the idea for sewing dolls and their first sewing machine from a local social justice leader. While this woman was not an ex-combatant, she was dedicated to social justice and equality ideals. In Colombia's current political climate, rural social leaders are some of the most vulnerable and targeted individuals in the country, with a vast number of social leaders assassinated in the last couple of years: 300 in 2019 and 450 in 2020 (ACLED, 2021). It is this identity as a social justice leader that makes her almost as equally marginalized as the ex-combatants. These early-stage stakeholder relationships are not merely transactional, they are profound ties across which resources, capabilities, and ideas are shared. And in the case of Muñecas, the ex-combatant women were able to build such a strong tie with an outsider because of their shared marginalization and commitment to female empowerment.

When firms looked to grow their businesses at a later stage of entrepreneurial development, we observed different stakeholder engagement activities. La Montaña provides an excellent example of the different stakeholder engagement at a firm's growth stage. The outdoor gear company had successfully launched its venture utilizing its existing

capabilities and physical assets. But as demand for their products grew, they required capital to build their production capacity. Almost all the cases mention the challenges in collecting the government's promised capital investments and traditional banking options were not readily available. La Montaña was able to reach out internationally and secure capital, in the form of donated sewing machines and equipment, from the French embassy. Obviously, the French embassy is not a standard stakeholder in the Colombian textile industry. The firm could capitalize on its identity as an ex-combatant venture, integral to the Colombian peace process, to attract outside stakeholders with a vested interest in promoting peace. Therefore, once they have established the viability of their business model during their growth phases, these ventures can reach out and forge regional, national, and even international relationships with NGOs, sovereign wealth funds, and foreign government entities seeking to promote development and peace.

These types of relationships can exist for marketing purposes as well. Café Paramillo's partnership with a digital magazine to co-host a salon discussion at the arts and culture festival is another example. The Café Paramillo story and contribution to the peace process was enough of a hook to attract a stakeholder partnership with a digital magazine. Whereas media may be seen as a traditional stakeholder in the sense of coffee companies buying ad space, this relationship was completely unique. The two firms co-sponsored the event, but Café Paramillo merely had to provide their coffee to the event. This collaboration was a great boost of visibility to the firm's brand with a very minimal investment.

These examples illustrate the variety of stakeholder relationships possible for these entrepreneurial firms at these two distinct development stages. At different stages of entrepreneurial development, the firms have different needs and different levels of attraction to potential stakeholders. Therefore, the exact type and form of stakeholder engagement that these entrepreneurs can build will vary depending on their stage of entrepreneurial development.
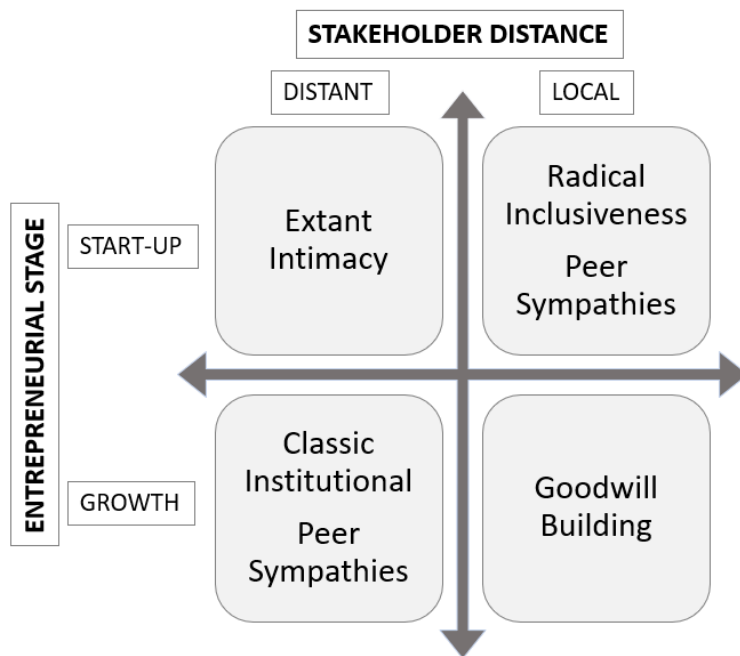
Matrix of Stakeholder Engagement

Some examples we have provided from our four cases address both of the dimensions we have identified. For example, La Roja's stakeholder engagement with Broderick is with a distant stakeholder during the venture's start-up phase. Given this reality, we found that using the dimensions of *stakeholder distance* and *entrepreneurial stage* as the axis of a

matrix provided a useful means to organize our findings. The resulting matrix, Figure 1, identifies four distinct contexts of fringe stakeholder engagement:

I. Local Start-Up – relationships with geographically close stakeholders during the phase of idea generation, founding, and initial start-up.

II. Local Growth - relationships with geographically close stakeholders during the growth phase of the venture.

III. Distant Start-Up – relationships with geographically distant stakeholders during the phase of idea generation, founding, and initial start-up.

IV. Distant Growth - relationships with geographically distant stakeholders during the growth phase of the venture.

Figure 1: Matrix of Stakeholder Engagement

The four categories in this matrix identify distinct stakeholder contexts in which firms may utilize different stakeholder engagement tactics. These categories are not mutually exclusive, any given firm can pursue stakeholder engagement in each of these four categories at different times. The matrix structure helps frame precisely what types of stakeholder engagement options are available in different contexts. Our analysis identified five distinct stakeholder engagement practices that fit along this matrix (Table 1).

Café Paramillo's reliance on local suppliers and engaging both ex-combatants and former victims demonstrates a type of *radical inclusiveness* stakeholder engagement that can occur in the Local Start-Up context. Likewise, the example of Hurtado and Broderick's childhood friendship is the type of *extant intimacy* stakeholder engagement necessary in the Distant Start-Up context. La Montaña provides examples of stakeholder engagement for both of our remaining growth categories: their partnership with the French embassy demonstrates the *classic institutional* stakeholder engagement that is possible in the Distant Growth context, whereas their efforts to provide tailoring services and community meeting space to their local community exemplifies the *goodwill building* stakeholder engagement utilized in the Local Growth context. We also identified *peer sympathies* stakeholder engagement in Muñecas' partnership with a local social leader, as well as Café Paramillo's coffee distribution through a retail cooperative of ex-combatants in Medellin, Colombia. Interestingly, these two examples fall in different contexts, that is Local Start-Up and Distant Growth. This could suggest that *peer sympathies* is a stakeholder engagement practice that is useful in multiple contexts. It is also possible that we are overstating the stakeholder relationship between Café Paramillo and that retail cooperative; the cooperative did quickly replace Café Paramillo coffee with another brand when they ran out. This suggests a lack of coordination and commitment one would expect from a strong stakeholder engagement tie.

Discussion and Limitations

Our case studies of four ex-combatant entrepreneurial ventures provide evidence that private enterprise can contribute towards achieving the goals of SDG 16. Given that recidivism can be prevented through economic development (Collier et al., 2008), these firms' continued operation contributes to peace and violence reduction. That is, while the ex-combatants are actively engaged in managing their entrepreneurial ventures and provide some economic gains to the founding team and the ex-combatant employees, they are not engaged in their prior hostile activities. Three of the four ventures we studied are still growing as of the time of this writing, all of this despite the challenging economic environment introduced by the COVID 19 pandemic. While the doll company focused on female empowerment and memory building did have to close down, we have heard from

third party intermediaries that the women of the venture feel they have gained much confidence in their abilities to contribute to the mainstream economy and have found employment or are seeking new start-up opportunities. This demonstrates that the experience of entrepreneurship alone, independent of the venture's viability, may be enough to prevent recidivism. In other words, entrepreneurship does indeed have an emancipatory role.

Indeed, these promising results demonstrate a positive role for entrepreneurship and private enterprise in promoting SDG 16. However, we found that these firms contribute more to SDG 16 than merely the prevention of recidivism. The entrepreneurial ventures engaged in specific activities that directly promoted SDG 16. At first, we searched for evidence of this by mapping the firms' activities to the twelve national monitoring targets established for SDG 16 (United Nations, 2020). However, if you study Table 2, it was challenging to match specific firm activities to these targets; we only found four matches. Upon further reflection, it seemed that the challenge in this mapping process was not the lack of peace-building activities but rather the focus of the SDG 16 targets. These are nationwide metrics, and it is difficult to demonstrate how a single firm's activities could be successfully attributed to the full metric.

For example, several targets can really only be addressed by the government directly: equal access to justice, combat organized crime, legal identity for all, and strengthen participation of developing countries. These targets and indicators are part of a monitoring process that allows for scorecard measurements demonstrating how a particular nation progresses on SDG 16. These targets are certainly essential in measuring SDG 16 across nations and time but are not the appropriate means for capturing individual firms' SDG 16 activities. The lack of a formal measurement instrument for an individual firm's contribution to SDG 16 is a significant limitation to our study, and perhaps may explain the dearth of management literature addressing SDG 16 specifically. This limitation suggests that future work could be done to build and validate a more formal instrument for capturing firm engagement towards SDG 16.

*** Insert Table 2 about here ***

Since we don't have a formal measurement instrument at present, we decided to develop a simple method of cataloging firms' activities related to SDG 16 by focusing on

its three essential principles: inclusion, institutions, and justice (United Nations, 2015). In Table 3 we generated a column for each dimension and populated the table with specific activities from our four case studies. This table demonstrates that a number of activities engaged by these entrepreneurial ventures directly contributed to the key principles of SDG 16. Many of the activities we identified contributed to the promotion of inclusion, with the firms reaching out to a number of traditionally marginalized members of the Colombian economy, including conflict refugees, women, the disabled, afro/indigenous minorities, and ex-combatants. Our mapping also demonstrates significant activities focused on engagement with or strengthening of institutions. We saw examples of collaboration with formal governmental institutions from local, regional, national to international levels. These ventures also created or participated in many new cooperative institutions, including ETCR ownership cooperatives, ex-combatant nationwide cooperatives, and industry-specific marketing cooperatives at both the national and international levels.

It was a little more challenging mapping activities onto the justice principle if we defined justice through the lens of a formal justice system of laws. There was little evidence of firms' activities influencing the formal legal system. Suppose instead we adopted a definition more akin to restorative justice, that is, processes that seek healing and reconciliation between victims and victimizers rather than merely punishing and/or incarcerating offenders (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). In that case, we could identify activities that contributed to reconciliation and peacebuilding, but they seemed to overlap somewhat with the activities we had already mapped onto inclusion.

*** Insert Table 3 about here ***

Table 3 does not provide a perfect mapping of our ex-combatant entrepreneurial venture activities against SDG 16 principles; however, it does provide enough evidence that these firms contributed significantly to the promotion of SDG 16. In particular, we identified a variety of activities that contributed to improving both inclusion and institutions in the territories where they operated. Beyond evidence that these firms contributed to peacebuilding we also wanted to analyze their activities and identify any generalizable findings. Our analysis process yielded five fringe stakeholder engagement tactics that we could categorize along two critical dimensions. These tactics can be utilized

by entrepreneurs looking to build essential stakeholder relationships in support of their venture's success.

However, it is also possible to flip the perspectives on these tactics and provide guidance to traditional firms and MNCs seeking to engage with local stakeholders. Understanding these five tactics and the particular contexts in which they are most useful is very valuable information for any firm wishing to contribute to peacebuilding in extreme contexts. Understanding the entrepreneurial stage and distance of the stakeholders they are hoping to engage can help identify a tactic that our study has demonstrated has been successful in that context. Of course, a limitation of our study is that we have built our findings on only four case studies. It is very possible that a larger sample would identify more tactics and possibly even more contexts. While this is true, and we hope that future studies will include a greater sample size, it does not diminish our findings' usefulness.

Conclusion

This study focused on identifying if and how private enterprise could contribute to the advancement of SDG 16. To that end, we chose to study an extreme environment where the challenges of peacebuilding were particularly salient and focus on the actions of marginalized ex-combatant ventures rather than the activities of traditional firms. We intentionally chose to study both, an extreme context and actors seeking to free themselves from a woeful status-quo, to identify practices, activities, and tactics that succeed in achieving positive societal outcomes. We framed our study using the lens of Emancipatory Entrepreneurship, which acknowledges that these ex-combatant ventures seek to achieve outcomes with societal benefits beyond profit seeking (Rindova, Barry & Ketchen, 2009). And proceeded to build theory from case studies (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) from a sample of FARC ex-combatants struggling to develop businesses in the ETCRs established in the wake of the 2016 Colombian peace accords.

Our four ex-combatant entrepreneurial ventures encompassed various industries and regions of the country and studying their practices yielded some useful findings that contribute to the SDG and management literature. First, we found evidence in all four sample firms that participation in these economic ventures contributes to reduced recidivism, thereby reducing violence. Second, we were able to identify some activities at

each firm that contributed directly to promote inclusion or build institutions; two primary principles of the SDG 16 definition. And finally, our analysis yielded a matrix of stakeholder engagement organized across the dimensions of entrepreneurial stage and stakeholder distance.

This framework provides valuable guidance to marginalized entrepreneurs seeking to start or grow their businesses but can be equally suitable to traditional firms seeking to partner with local, maybe even fringe stakeholders (Hart & Sharma, 2004). The tactics outlined in our framework can support any firm's effort to address SDG 16 in challenging business environments. Peacebuilding, particularly in war-torn contexts, is some of the most challenging work that any private firm could seek to engage in and requires complex multi-stakeholder partnerships (Sachs et al., 2019). The tactics we have identified in this study allowed some of the most feared and even hated members of Colombian society to build businesses from some of the country's poorest and most remote regions. Therefore, imagine the impact if resource-rich firms and multinationals would engage in these tactics to build stakeholder engagement in these challenging environments and contribute to inclusion, institutions and justice for all.

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