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Multi-stakeholder partnerships and the Sustainable Development Goals

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS IN REALIZING THE SDGS

ALFRED EISENMAYER

SUPERVISOR: Henrik Plaschke

Development & International Relations - Aalborg University

Abstract

This thesis focus lies on the examination of multi-stakeholder partnerships and their role in realizing the SDGs. The point of investigation are partnerships that are specifically targeted to engage in the goals of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development which are being considered as the overall norms for the development goals. A constructivist framework together with the models of norm and policy entrepreneurs and norm dynamics, and the phenomenon of transnationalism serve as the theoretical framework to analyse the chosen problem.

It is being argued that, next to the state, a transnational space evolved where non-state actors are entering the arena of global governance. Due to the challenges of globalization, a normative and institutional need emerged within this space to include the private sector and civil society into the processes of solving development problems. Thus, the interest of research are the dynamics between the emergence of transnational and non-state actors as drivers for institutional change over their role in tackling globalization challenges. The MDGs and SDGs represent important vehicles of communication that originated out of a new conceptualization in the international development agenda on ending poverty. Multi-stakeholder partnerships have been created as a means of implementation that include non-state actors. The analysis illustrates how and why multi-stakeholder partnerships have emerged out of the incentives of norm entrepreneurs within the UN system. It furthermore examines the role of partnerships during the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, and how they have been created and promoted during this process as tools for implementing the SDGs. An analysis of the features and objectives of partnerships as SDG implementation tools reveals several flaws in their conceptualization, but it is also being shown that partnerships do have a role and impact in global governance. Individual partnerships that are e.g. funded by the United Nations Fund for International Partnership (UNFIP), engage in areas where the strategic interests of its partners intersect, and contribute to the realization of the SDGs.

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List of Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	International Organization
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Partnership
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNCDP	United Nations Committee of Development Policy
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affair

UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnership
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
UNMP	United Nations Millennium Project
UNOP	United Nations Office for Partnerships
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

"(...) significant institutional developments are evolving at the global level, among them the emergence of what we might call a global public domain: an arena of discourse, contestation and action organized around global rule making – a transnational space that is not exclusively inhabited by states, and which permits the direct expression and pursuit of human interests, not merely those mediated by the state. One of its major drivers is the expanding role of civil society, and the interplay between civil society organizations and the global corporate sector. This institutional development does not and cannot take the place of states, but it introduces new elements and new dynamics into the processes of global governance."

(Ruggie 2008: 14)

Former United Nations (UN) senior official John Ruggie who first coined the term embedded liberalism in the 1980s has identified a new challenge in globalization that revolves around the emergence of new more inclusive forms of global governance. He emanates from the premise that globalization is changing the global economy into one that will be more fragile, where many developing countries are unable to utilize the opportunities offered by globalization. Thus, it is a challenge to devise a new global economy, where developing countries can achieve poverty reduction and sustainable development.

One of the institutional developments evolving to tackle these global challenges in the 21st century is a new inclusive form of governance that involves civil society and the private sector as drivers of change considering an absence of a global authority, and hence the need for global rules and regulation that aim for a common good. Herein, a new element that has emerged is a collaboration between multiple stakeholders from the public and private sector and civil society. The United Nations as an international organization with its task to take action on these issues has also identified this challenge of globalization and taken up the idea of introducing the concept of multiple stakeholder cooperation as one means to respond to these problems. One of the measures set up by the UN has been the development of the so-called Type II partnerships at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and the successive adoption of multi-stakeholder partnerships into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016 as tools of implementation. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the SDGs as their successors have institutionalized the consensus on eradicating poverty and sustainable development as development objectives. Their widespread use and acceptance by the international community has contributed to a normative shift in the international development agenda from strategies that centred around economic objectives, economic

liberalization, and institutional and governance reforms to a new consensus on eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011).

The interest of research in this thesis are the dynamics between the emergence of non-state actors as drivers for institutional change over their role in tackling the new globalization challenges. The focus lies on the social processes that let multi-stakeholder partnerships becoming a tool for implementation and their specific role in implementing the SDGs. The problem formulation is therefore:

What is the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals?

It will first be examined why multi-stakeholder partnerships emerged in the UN context, followed by the idea of poverty eradication and sustainable development as norms linked to the MDGs and SDGs, and last, the question of how multi-stakeholder partnerships are addressing the SDGs in the processes of global governance with an examination of the case of the United Nations Fund for International Partnership (UNFIP), the largest UN mechanism to fund multi-stakeholder partnerships.

2. History and concept overview

This section will deal with the definition of the term multi-stakeholder partnership, partnership typologies and the history behind the emergence of partnerships.

2.1 Concept definitions

As most literature suffers from vague and loose definitions and rival conceptions regarding multi-stakeholder-partnerships (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2011; Pattberg 2011) the following definition will provide a short general overview over the term itself and specifically clarify the characteristics and features of multi-stakeholder partnerships that will be dealt with within this project. In order to clarify the term itself, multi-stakeholder partnerships are often also referred to as public-private partnerships (Beisheim and Simon 2016; Pattberg 2016), partnerships for sustainable development or Type-II outcomes/partnerships[1] (Pattberg and Zelli 2015), or just partnerships. In this paper it will be dealt with multi-stakeholder partnerships within the UN context, the other terms are nevertheless also acceptable, but for further simplification multi-stakeholder will be referred to as mostly partnerships. The term Type II

[1] the Type II partnerships have their origin at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD

outcomes/partnerships will only be used in the context of the WSSD in 2002 where multi-stakeholder partnerships have been formally established for the first time as a tool to manage sustainable development.

In general, multi-stakeholder partnerships are governance arrangements between several state and non-state actors in order to work together towards a public good (Pattberg and Zelli 2015). These cross-sectoral relationships between several actors aim to create synergies that would produce a total result that is greater than the sum of the individual parts. Andonova (2017: 2) defines partnerships as "(...) voluntary agreements between public actors (IOs, states, or substate public authorities) and nonstate actors (nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], companies, foundations, etc.) on a set of governance objectives and norms, rules, practices, or implementation procedures and their attainment across multiple jurisdictions and levels of governance." This definition corresponds with the United Nations definition, where it is also said that actors within partnerships share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits (UN DESA 2015: 12). Andonova also marks out that the term public-private partnership (PPP) is more restrictively used in business administration literature and these differ from social partnerships in international relations literature. These types of PPPs in business administration literature share mostly a history in infrastructure financing, construction and urban services on the national/community level (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2011).

Another type of categorizing partnerships by scholars is sorting them out into different typologies (Van Huijstee et al. 2007). Partnerships are commonly categorized into typologies such as functions, goals, actors, expected timeframe and the level of institutionalisation (*figure 1*). Pattberg (2012) characterizes the features of partnerships quite adequately as: transnationality, public policy objectives and a network structure. The functions of partnerships differ from agenda setting to rulemaking, advocacy, implementation and service provision, and they appear in different sectors such as sustainable development, health, security and finance and human rights (Pattberg 2012). These features respond to the governance deficit that partnerships are in many cases considered to fill (Van Huijstee et al. 2007). Regarding the problem formulation of this paper, the types of partnerships that are working on a transnational scale and aim to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will be analysed.

Typologies of partnerships				
Functions	**Sectors (priority areas)**	**Actors**	**Timeframe**	**Features of partnerships**
Agenda setting	Climate and energy	Governments	> 1 year	Transnationality
Standard setting and rulemaking	Health and sanitation	Private companies	> 3 years	Public policy objectives
Advocacy	Food security	NGOs	3-5 years	Network structure
Implementation and service provision	Finance and investment	International Organizations	5-10 years	
Knowledge sharing	Human rights and security	Research/Science	10 years <	

Figure 1. Typologies of partnerships

2.2 History of partnerships and the SDGs

This section sets forth an overview about the history of multi-stakeholder partnerships in the UN context. Public-private partnerships are historically not a new phenomenon on the national level, but at the international level partnerships started to be promoted by the UN in the 1990s. Similarly at that time, the pursuit of global sustainable development became an important goal on the political agenda during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro.

In the 1990s, several UN world conferences were held with the aim of finding solutions to global challenges until in 1996, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) formulated the predecessors of the Millennium Development Goals, the International Development Goals. Then, in the period from 1999 to 2001, the Millennium Declaration was drafted by John Ruggie and included the need to tackle global poverty and meet basic social needs. Wisor (2012: 115) calls the

Millennium Declaration "a sweeping document, a robust call for global and social justice, and a fundamental commitment to peaceful, sustainable development in the twenty-first century". The Millennium Development Goals which were later designed by a group of experts from several organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, and the OECS/DAC are based on and extracted out of the Millennium Declaration (Wisor 2012). These have been eight global targets - including the strengthening of global partnerships - for tackling several global challenges with the emphasis on eradicating poverty, that were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals in 2016.

With the stagnation of flows of official development assistance (ODA) after 1990, especially as the US reduced its share to the UN budget, the imbalance between public and private international finance was growing and in contrast, flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) were exponentially increasing (Andonova 2017). Due to the expanding role of the private sector in international governance - also influenced by companies starting to engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies in the mid-90s - the UN felt pressures of transforming its system and redefining its role: "The financial and political pressures on the UN system along with the opportunities associated with the rise of private finance and governance provided important stimuli for institutional change" (Andonova 2017: 72). According to Andonova, these external pressures, however, were not enough to cause change in the UN system. Internal factors reinforced this change, e.g. the role of the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (at this point Assistant Secretary-General), the foundation of the office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Planning with John Ruggie as its head responsible for launching programs for a better collaboration with the private sector, and an official new framing for cooperation with the private sector within the UN. These factors will be further looked upon in the empirical chapter. Due to these reasons, the business sector and civil society are now recognized within the SDGs as essential partners to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty (UNDP 2018).

Historically, the UN has worked with NGOs since its establishment in 1945 (Dodds 2015). The consultative status between the Economic and Social Council and NGOs is included in the UN Charter in Article 71 (UN Charter 2016: art. 71). Also business groups, such as the International Chamber of Commerce and the International Organization of Employers, have been involved in a consultative role since the UN's beginnings (Dodds 2015). The first formal larger partnership with non-state actors and the UN was the foundation of the UN Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) in 1998 (Beisheim and Simon 2016). This was followed by

the launch of the UN Global Compact in 2000, a forum that promotes principles that cover human rights, labour and environment issues - founded alongside the issuing of the *Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector* by John Ruggie - and encourages businesses to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies. In 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development were officially announced as means of implementation towards globally agreed commitments and more than 200 Type II partnerships were generated to advance the progress towards more cooperation with the corporate sector and civil society (Beisheim 2016). NGOs and the private sector could participate during the preparatory process of WSSD. This has been the first time in UN history that partnerships were officially formalized as a tool to implement sustainable development (Van Huijstee et al. 2007).

The WSSD partnerships were accompanied by the Bali Guiding Principles[2] that outlined the meaning for partnerships in the United Nations governance system and their purpose of implementing internationally agreed goals. In 2006, the UN Office for Partnerships (UNOP) was founded to further strengthen partnerships initiatives in the light of implementing the Millennium Declaration and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In the following years after the WSSD, more partnerships were registered with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and in 2012, during the Rio20+, the CSD partnerships database was enlarged by an additional list of 'voluntary commitments' that focus on the newly defined Sustainable Development Goals replacing the focus on the Millennium Development Goals and/or the previously five thematic areas (water, energy, health, agriculture and biological diversity) of the WSSD (Pattberg and Zelli 2015). Dodds (2015: 7) ascertains, that the Rio+20 has been the most inclusive UN conference to date because it included multiple stakeholders such as governments, civil society and the private sector to commit to sustainable development, with a financial commitment of more than $500 billion US towards strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships. Innovative MSPs, that have been launched by the Secretary-General and include stakeholders from all relevant sectors, are e.g. 'Sustainable Energy for all', 'Every Women Every Child' and 'Zero Hunger Challenge' (Dodds 2015). Besides these registered partnerships and voluntary commitments there is a wide range of other MSPs for sustainable development that are not registered within the UN system, but which certainly contribute to the realization of the sustainable development goals or are guided by governments, donors, or stakeholders, e.g. the 'develoPPP.de' program implemented by the

[2] see annex regarding Bali Guiding Principles

German development organization ‘GIZ’. Moreover, as another result of the Rio20+ Conference in 2012, the principles the Sustainable Development Goals build upon have been agreed. During the following years the SDGs replaced the MDGs that ended in 2015. Regarding the implementation of global partnerships, they now include Goal 17 ‘Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development’ that the United Nations sees as a crucial means to deliver all the SDGs (UN DESA 2015: 10). Specifically targets 17.16 and 17.17 are aimed at improving and promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships (UN DESA 2018):

Target 17.16: Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

Target 17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

Herein, multi-stakeholder partnerships as means of implementation are understood as partnerships between several different actors, regardless if there are between the public or private sector or civil society. Priority areas are not defined, partnerships are meant to support achievements in all SDG areas.

3. Literature Review

As the topic of this thesis is the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in realizing the SDGs, the literature review will therefore centre around literature where the focus is put upon multi-stakeholder partnerships that are trying to push forward sustainable development or specifically the SDGs, regardless of the different definitions of the term multi-stakeholder partnership itself and regardless if they are part of the UN partnerships database. Furthermore, since MSPs in sustainable development are a phenomenon and tool that is relatively new in development cooperation most literature has been written during the 1990s and after the WSSD in 2002 when partnerships were formally established in the UN to implement the SDGs.

Van Huijstee et al. (2007) categorize partnership literature into two categories: the institutional and the actor perspective. The institutional perspective understands partnerships as new institutional arrangements in environmental or related governance issues. The actor perspective looks on the partnership itself, as instruments for the goal achievement of specific actors. This

categorization is made due to the big diversity of partnerships as in the typologies of partnerships, and the diverse partnerships literature. It allows for building a common ground between the partnership literature and simplifying the questions that are being addressed by different scholars. This distinction will be used in the following.

In terms of quantity, a lot of literature focuses on the performance and effectiveness of partnerships in general and in particular in case studies in order to improve partnerships and partnership processes through recommendations. This corresponds to the actor perspective on partnerships. Beisheim and Simon (2016), for instance, discuss factors such as the effectiveness of partnerships and options for improving several aspects in partnerships in order to enhance sustainable development together with future recommendations for a better performance. Wetterberg (2011) has done an examination of a specific PPP case about labour standards in Cambodia that deals with the PPP arrangement itself and draws out implications for the global governance of labour standards. One of his arguments rests on the assumption that the strength of the specific PPP in Cambodia lies in the involvement of the national government.

Moreover, the actor perspective often includes benefits and risks of partnering between multiple stakeholders. Van Huijstee et al. (2007: 83) have summarized the benefits/advantages as: access to financial resources, access to knowledge and expertise, innovative solutions, eco-marketing and legitimacy. The risks would be: blurring of tasks and responsibilities, legitimacy loss, cultural differences between parties and insecure outcomes. Furthermore, a prominent scholar in this regard is Philipp Pattberg (2007, 2012, 2016) who has, together with other scholars, written several studies examining the influence, performance and conditions for success of partnerships on global sustainability politics. These studies revolve around the so-called Global Sustainability Database (GSPD), a large-n evaluation of more than 300 transnational partnerships for sustainable development, which has been developed solely for this purpose - a complete book ('Public-private partnerships for sustainable development: Emergence, influence and legitimacy') that is based on the finished database has been published in 2012.

Another prominent scholar is Liliana Andonova who focuses on the reasons why states would partake in partnerships (Andonova 2014) and especially why partnerships between the state and the private sector as a global governance phenomenon emerge at all in sustainable development and the environment, respectively (Andonova 2006, 2010, 2017). The emergence and legitimacy of partnerships would correspond to the institutional perspective. Van Huijstee et al. (2007: 78) argue that "Aspects often included in these analyses are the driving forces behind the partnership trend and the institutional implication of this trend". The institutional

perspective allows for an examination of the driving forces behind the partnership trend and the roles and the functions of partnerships in sustainable governance. The different roles and functions have been pointed out at the definition part of this thesis. In Liliana Andonova's most recent book called 'Governance Entrepreneurs. International Organizations and the Rise of Global Public-Private Partnerships' from 2017, she describes, that so called governance entrepreneurs, that means actors in international organizations, have been mostly responsible for the rise of global partnerships as a response to external pressures. For this she developed the theory of dynamic institutional change which draws on the principal agent model. She further examines the impact of the rise of global partnerships in international relations and how global problems will be addressed in the future.

Further literature by e.g. Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2011) and Felix Dodds (2015) directly deals with the role of partnerships in aligning them with global norms and liberal values (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2011) or the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs (Dodds 2015).

4. Method and methodology

This section sets forth the method and methodological considerations of this thesis. First, the research design will be outlined, followed by an explanation of the selected data that have been chosen, then the delimitations of the author's research will be clarified and at the end, the thesis structure will be illustrated in a conceptual diagram.

3.1 Research design

This thesis focus lies on multi-stakeholder partnerships and their role in implementing the SDGs, therefore the point of investigation are partnerships that specifically are targeted to engage in social and economic development issues, poverty eradication and sustainable development as it is seen and aimed at by the UN. Development in this thesis is measured as targeting and achieving the SDGs and the improvements in its areas.

The ontological point of departure in this thesis is a constructivist framework with the presumptions that the social world consists of intersubjective knowledge and processes and where it is essential to understand how norms, interests and identities originate, how they are created, and how they change or have changed. Change in constructivism is central and perceived as the emergence of new constitutive rules and the transformation of new social structures. It leads to the question about the nature of causality in the processes that are being investigated. The results of the investigation will be causal in the sense that in a constructivist

framework it is essential to analyse how things have been put together (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). Thus, the constitution of things is causal as in this thesis it can explain the effects and outcomes that partnerships have in realizing the SDGs. However, as Finnemore and Sikkink (ibid. 393) claim, because in constructivism explanations "are permissive and probabilistic (...) such explanations are necessarily contingent and partial - they are small-t truth claims." Small-t truth claims stand in opposition to 'absolute' claims. The findings of this thesis represent small-t truth claims because they are interpretive and do not allow for a conclusive generalization on other cases. The narrowing down of the investigation to understand how and why multi-stakeholder partnerships have emerged and their adoption into the SDGs will support to answer what their role is in implementing the SDGs. The case of UNFIP has been chosen because it will allow for a further focus on the specific role of partnerships in this case. But the case will not allow for external validity, because partnership and related partnership mechanisms hold a variety of intervening variables, which means different conditions for the implementation of a partnership.

The research method in this thesis is mainly qualitative in order to do an in-depth analysis of the research question and provide the research with a distinct collection of comprehensive findings of the chosen case. The method is complementary to the theoretical assumption to understand the intersubjective meaning and show the thought processes behind certain actions. The partially used quantitative data will allow for more objectivity, to examine whether the qualitative findings are supported by statistical data, and whether there is a relationship between variables. Moreover, the research is also of an interpretive and explanatory design. From a constructivist standpoint, all research involves interpretation (ibid.), thus in this thesis the interpretive findings allow for the explanatory approach to examine the research question. The research design is of a deductive approach in this thesis because the research question and the theoretical choices drive the examination of the chosen case and the reasoning is based on the theoretical choices. The narrowed down hypotheses are then addressed by the observations in order to interpret it with the chosen qualitative and quantitative methods and assess the applicability of the chosen theory.

3.2. Data collection

The data collection in this thesis has been mainly qualitative and partially quantitative. This has been done through the collection of existing secondary sources, such as books, assessments and articles by various established scholars, official UN reports, transcripts and articles, partnership reports and partnerships websites. A systematic review to the literature research has been done in a previous chapter.

In order to get at first a comprehensive picture on the partnerships term - specifically in the area of sustainable development - and the history of multi-stakeholder partnerships as defined by the UN, the data collection focused on various literature from established scholars in this area, such as Andonova (2006, 20010, 2014, 2017), Biermann, Mert and Pattberg (2007, 2012, 2015) and Beisheim and Simon (2016). Especially findings by Andonova and Pattberg et al. can be regarded as representative and credible as their findings are based on expert surveys, interviews with representatives from various groups and sectors, and UN officials and diplomats involved in partnerships. Then, in order to identify the findings in detail the literature has been categorized in the lenses of the actor and institutional perspectives, as defined by Van Huijstee et al. (2007). That means it has been done an examination of secondary sources that mainly deal with the performance of partnerships on the one hand and the emergence, legitimacy and the driving forces behind partnerships on the other hand. Moreover, UN documents and scholarly assessments (Wisor 2012; Spijkers and Honniball 2014) on the MDGs and SDGs, their history and performance have been analysed in order to get a qualitative picture of their global role. A certain bias in secondary sources and especially in UN documents and partnerships reports can never be excluded, which is why data and sources have been compared against each other to ensure a certain objectivity.

The quantitative findings relating to development and economic indicators and partnerships areas of implementation that have been gathered through UN and secondary sources improve objectivity. However, the official UN ‘Partnerships for the SDGs’ database of the UN Division for Sustainable Development needs to be pointed out as a source that does not allow for generalization. The registration of partnership and voluntary commitments is purely voluntary as well as the sharing of progress reports. That means, not only many partnerships that contribute to sustainable development are not registered, but also many progress reports are missing or are not delivered at all. Especially, it is being criticized by many scholars (Pattberg et al. 2012; Dodds 2015; Beisheim and Simon 2016) that there has not been implemented a control mechanism during the adoption of Type II partnerships after the WSSD in 2002 and

many of the registered partnerships have had no output at all in terms of the criteria applied or could not be attributed to their stated goals.

3.3 Delimitations

The subject matter of multi-stakeholder partnerships, public-private partnerships and other partnerships that involve multiple actors is a topic that has been widely written upon by several scholars from different perspectives. In order to gain meaningful results from the research, certain limitations were imposed throughout to narrow down the research area and create an in-depth analysis.

In order to fit the time frame of this thesis, there have been limits to the available material that could be investigated upon, as well limits to the sources available in Denmark. Due to the constructivist framework of this thesis a focus has been laid upon processes and ideational factors, specifically how and why partnerships have emerged in sustainable development and their implementation in a social structure. Therefore, aspects such as the assessment, effectiveness and organizational factors of partnerships, any lessons learnt from (un)successful partnerships, or the incentives for participation in a partnership have been neglected, as they are more important in a practical environment that depends on assessment recommendations. Moreover, public-private cooperation and the private sector in sustainable development is a topic that is conducted in many forms and initiatives, such as CSR practices or the UN Global Compact, a platform to encourage businesses to adopt socially responsible policies. However, in order to put a certain focus and not to mix up these different practices, the thesis centres around multi-stakeholder partnerships as defined by the UN.

Throughout the research on this thesis the scope of the topic was narrowed down, nevertheless, further limitations could have been imposed in order to specify and potentially simplify the research. Initially, a geographical limit only on LDCs in the empirical analysis was aimed to constrict the topic, however, the research revealed that in a constructivist framework it was necessary to further deepen the reasons for the emergence of partnerships and their adoption into the SDGs. Furthermore, an initial limitation on particular SDGs, such as ‘Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9) or ‘Climate Action’ (SDG 13) - two areas with considerable partnership engagement - and certain individual partnerships involved in their realization could have helped to further narrow down the research and present more detailed findings in a particular area.

3.4 Justification of theories

This part will put forward why constructivism and the phenomenon of transnationalism have been chosen as the theoretical framework in opposition to other classic IR theories.

A constructivist framework has been chosen, because it is understood that the emergence of multi-stakeholder partnerships went through processes that were shaped by the agents and social structures around their creation, so the research questions are posed on how and why these processes have happened. Furthermore, the phenomenon of transnationalism allows for a conceptualization where the state is not an indispensable unit of analysis and not the most important actor in international relations. In transnationalism, this can be explained due to the challenges of globalization that have led to a transformation of the international order with transnational and non-state actors emerging in global governance issues, as such is the case with supranational institutions like the UN and the actors within multi-stakeholder partnerships. Classical realist or liberalist perspectives have their predominant focus on state behaviour, however, this thesis aims to examine the role of both state and non-state actors as in a transnational social structure. The focus of analysis in this thesis does not lie on the state or the interstate relations - as such is also in many parts the focus in Wendt's constructivist paradigm - but the diffusion of social structures by non-state actors as it is the case in transnational relations.

Main constructivist analysis instruments are ideas, values and discourses that shape processes, so it is important to know how things have become what they are, as it will be done in the empirical analysis with the emergence of partnerships and their role in implementing the SDGs. A realist framework's focus would lie on power and security, and the main unit of analysis is the state and the interests of the state. International organizations, such as the UN, as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships would function for the interests of the states because states are self-interested and constantly compete for power in an anarchical world. A realist framework does not account to describe international change, as states are in a constant struggle for power, but change and transformation is essential in constructivism. In liberalism on the other hand, international organizations and cooperation between states to promote peace are the main theoretical propositions, however, in a liberalist framework the focus would rather lie on the impact of partnerships to help to advance common economic and political norms and conditions and elevate interdependence between countries in order to increase liberal values, international institutions and free markets. In this regard, a constructivist framework can be described as rather agnostic because it does not predict the content of ideas, it is better at

describing the past than in recommending policies for the future. But it allows to analyse processes and structures and also to make arguments or not exclude the possibility to make arguments about the content of the ideas and processes in relation to other IR theories.

The models of norm and policy entrepreneurs and norm dynamics set out by Finnemore and Sikkink (2011) are part of a constructivist framework that deals with the purposive construction of norms by actors, norm influences and transformation in international politics. These models will allow to explain the role of norms in connection to the SDGs and multi-stakeholder partnerships as tools of implementation.

3.4 Thesis structure

4. Theory

The following chapter will deal with the IR theory of constructivism, the two associated models of norm and policy entrepreneurs, and norms dynamics and the phenomenon of transnationalism. These will constitute the theoretical framework of this thesis.

4.1 Constructivism

Constructivism in International Relations is a theory that is concerned with how international politics are socially constructed based on the two claims that structure in international politics is social rather than material, and that structures shape actors' identities and interests (Wendt 1995). It is not only applied in IR but in all social sciences in general in order to seek to understand the knowledge with which scholars seek to interpret reality (Adler 2013). Alexander Wendt's and Emanuel Adler's understandings of constructivism belong to the strand of modern constructivism (Ruggie calls it neoclassical constructivism) with other prominent scholars such as Ruggie, Katzenstein and Finnemore who try to uncover causal social mechanisms and social relations to make IR more comprehensible (Adler 2013).

The rise of constructivism in IR began in the 1980s with the end of the Cold War, especially with theorist coming from North America. The prevailing classical theories at that point such as neorealism and liberalism had trouble explaining the now disbalanced world order, and out of this historical context and the predominant theoretical discussion between neorealists and liberalists, constructivism filled out the opened intellectual space (Jackson and Sorensen 2006). Constructivists argue, that neorealism in IR is a materialist theory that insufficiently deals with ideational factors (e.g. Ruggie 1998b) and a constructivist view on ideas and thoughts would lead to a better understanding of power balancing than neorealism. Historically, constructivist thoughts go back to philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, who claimed that people's knowledge about the world will always be subjective as it is filtered through human consciousness. Also, e.g. Max Weber claimed that there is a difference between the social world and the physical world, that is why a different kind of understanding between humans is needed (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001; Jackson and Sorensen 2006).

In general, constructivism adds value to the understanding of several building blocks in IR theory, such as knowledge, ideas, norms and social communication, but also language, power and change. In constructivism ideas matter. Ontologically, the social world consists of intersubjectively and collectively meaningful structures and processes, which through

processes of interaction are produced and reproduced, and these can be e.g. cooperative or conflictual (Adler 2013). Wendt (1995: 81) also states: “To analyze the social construction of international politics is to analyze how processes of interaction produce and reproduce the social structures-cooperative or conflictual-that shape actors' identities and interests and the significance of their material contexts.” John Ruggie (1998a) supports this view by saying that constructivism does not discount the potential for conflict in international relations - as some realist claim. He emphasizes the importance of ideational factors that have normative and instrumental dimensions, express individual as well as collective intentionality, and their meaning and significance are not independent to time and place. Finnemore and Sikkink (2001) describe ontology in constructivist analysis also as ideational and in some way holistic. Shared knowledge constitutes the actors in a situation and the nature of their relationship. Epistemologically, in constructivism it is important how things and structures became what they are and not how they are and “whether we can have objective knowledge of these structures” (Wendt 1995: 75). Adler (2013) describes that “constructivists (...) share an *epistemology* that makes interpretation an intrinsic *part* of social science and stresses contingent generalizations.”

Finnemore and Sikkink (2001: 391) regard constructivism as “an approach to social analysis that deals with the role of human consciousness in social life” and assert that human interaction is shaped by ideational factors, where the most important factors are intersubjective beliefs that construct the interests and identities of purposive actors rather than only individuals. They also state that constructivism focuses on social facts that have no material reality such as money, sovereignty, and rights which only exist due to collectively shared beliefs of people. However, the authors compare constructivism to rational theory as it does not analyse the content of social structures or the actors’ nature in social life, but it rather serves as a framework for social life without making any predictions in politics as it is done by realists, liberalists or Marxists scholars (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001: 393). In international relations, there need to exist mutually accepted rules that rest on collective intentionality so that a mutually coherent conduct can exist at all (Ruggie 1998a). According to Ruggie, the international structure is a social structure.

Alexander Wendt, in particular, shares John Mearsheimer’s neorealist assumptions that international politics are anarchic and rational, and most importantly he also sees states as units of analysis and focuses on systemic theorizing (Wendt 1995). However, systemic structures are where constructivists differ from neorealist, namely in thinking that structures - these consist of shared knowledge, material resources and practices - are made of social relationships,

rather than only material, as mentioned in the beginning. Wendt (ibid. 73) argues, that social structures include material resources: "(...) material resources only acquire meaning for human action though the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded." Without shared understanding and knowledge material capabilities, but also power and interest, would explain nothing, as opposed to neorealism. He further states that social structures only exist in practices and processes, and not in material capabilities or in actors' heads. On the other hand, a critique by neorealists is that constructivism fails to answer how norms and social understandings are formed, because constructivism fails to provide answers to political processes and the expected content of policies in international relations (Jackson and Sorensen, 2006: 174). Moreover, neorealism challenges the constructivist approach by stating that constructivism overemphasizes the importance of norms and in international relations norms are being often disregarded by powerful states if that is in their interest, as such is the case when powerful states undermine the autonomy of weak states (Jackson and Sorensen 2006: 173). For example, Krasner (1994: 16-17) states: "If there is an international society out there it has not had much more impact on the behaviour of states than conventional norms about sex, family, and marriage now have on the behaviour of individuals in North America and Europe." Thus, he follows, the only theories to understand contemporary international relations are realism and liberalism as they focus on actors and not structures; structures must be explained by the capabilities and interests of actors.

Furthermore, neorealist also see a problem in infusing states with certain communitarian norms, as states in the anarchical international structure behave egotistical and there will always be competition and uncertainty between states or political entities. Constructivists would then reply that the nature of anarchy and the egotistical motivation of states and actors cannot be analysed without incorporating the focus on the construction of interests and identities (Jackson and Sorensen 2006). Finnemore and Sikkink (2001) argue, there has been a bias in the critique of classical IR theorist towards constructivism having a focus on 'good' and progressive norms, e.g. human right, environmental protection and democracy promotion. The core of this disagreement comes from neorealist and neoliberal theorists' claim about constructivism not being able to explain negative effects in the international system, such as conflicts and wars between states. However, the focus on good norms by constructivists came from taking up the intellectual space that neorealist and neoliberals left because of their understanding of interest as self-interest. Finnemore and Sikkink state further, that there has also been done constructivist research on the negative effects of the well-intended construction of social structures, e.g. democratization efforts in the Soviet Union that led to the endangerment of human rights. This

thesis, however, cannot oppose this claim, because a focus will be put upon the SDGs, which are generally regarded as goods norms.

In order to analyse the contents of political behaviour and not only focus on how things became what they are, constructivist analysis needs to go more in depth with explaining who the relevant actors are, their aims and reasons for their behaviour and the overall social structures in which they are embedded. In that way, Finnemore and Sikkink (2001: 394) state that in constructivism understanding how things are put together and how they became what they are is not merely description:

> Understanding the constitution of things is essential in explaining how they behave and what causes political outcomes. Just as understanding how the double-helix DNA molecule is constituted materially enables understandings of genetics and disease, so, too, an understanding of how sovereignty, human rights, laws of war, or bureaucracies are constituted socially allows us to hypothesize about their effects in world politics.

That is why, the constitution of things in constructivism is causal. In Wendt's book, 'Social theory of international relations' (1999), he calls this distinction first-order and second-order questions or substantive and foundational level. He states, that in constructivism "second-order questions of ontology and epistemology can be asked of any human association, not just international politics" (1999: 5), but first-order questions are domain specific and deal with certain social systems such as family, the congress or the international system. In these domains, relevant actors and structures need to be identified and analysed in order to develop substantive propositions. As such, it will be done within this thesis.

Adler (2013: 13) states that "(...) if constructivism is about anything, it is about *change."* He adds (Ruggie and Dessler in Adler ibid.), that change is not the alteration of material things but the emergence of new constitutive rules and transformation of new social structures that can originate from agency, processes, structures and/or practices. In this regard, Ruggie (1998b: 871) differentiates between constitutive rules and regulative rules and sets forth that this distinction is perhaps the most consequential difference between constructivism on the one hand and neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism on the other: "Regulative rules are intended to have causal effects (...) Constitutive rules define the set of practices that make up a particular class of consciously organized social activity" (ibid. 871). Here, neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism lack to explain anything that is constitutive in international relations, such as the systems of states or territorial states and they do not have a concept of constitutive rules. Ruggie (ibid. 873) further adds: "(...) lacking a conception of constitutive rules makes it

impossible to provide endogenously the noncausal explanations that constitutive rules embody and that are logically prior to the domain in which causal explanations take effect." This differentiation will help to explain the processes that are being investigated upon in this thesis.

4.1.1 Norm and policy entrepreneurs

One specific research strand of constructivism focuses on the actors - these can be individuals or groups - that purposely try to change social understandings (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). These can be actors within or outside of the arena of states that want to consolidate new norms and social understandings, as they are in most cases unsatisfied with the existing rules and believe that states often only react to political changes in a transnational civil society rather than act (ibid.). In this regard, international organizations can certainly be included as non-state organizations that try to achieve new international rules and norms. This, for example, can be and has been done in the way that organizations - on the presumption that they have enough leverage and legitimacy in the first place - try to teach states new norms and new models of behaviour.

Andonova (2006, 2017) is one of the scholars who applies the approach of identifying norm entrepreneurs in the emergence of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Public-private cooperation has in that sense emerged out of the incentives of different agents - states and international organizations (IOs) - to push forward institutional innovation (Andonova 2006). She continues by analysing the agents and their incentives to push forward institutional innovation in general and public-private cooperation in particular. In her book 'Governance Entrepreneurs: International Organizations and the Rise of Global Public-Private Partnerships' (2017: 21) Andonova expands these arguments by stating that governance entrepreneurs and political coalitions are the drivers behind institutional change within the multilateral system and political actors actively seek a change in establishing more public-private cooperation. However, she differentiates between norm and policy entrepreneurs as policy entrepreneurs do not necessarily need an ethical drive in putting forward their agendas, they instead use their expertise and persistence to advance personal, agency, or interest agenda groups (Andonova 2017: 21).

4.1.2 Norm dynamics

Furthermore, following Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) who build on studies about transnational relations/actors and studies about the ideational turn in the late 1980s with the emphasis on the roles of principles and norms, an essential question in research on social construction processes is the analysis of norms, their origins and emergence and the question of diffusion. The authors (1998: 894) argue that "In an ideational international structure, idea shifts, and norm shifts are the main vehicles for system transformation. Norm shifts are to the ideational theorist what changes in the balance of power are to the realist." On a macro-level, norms provide explanation for system transformation and can produce social order and stability, but the micro-level needs to be examined and identified, as it will be done within this thesis. According to the two authors, norms are defined as a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity that produce social order and stability. They further state (ibid. 891-892): "We only know what is appropriate by reference to the judgements of a community or a society." A distinction is made between regulative and constitutive norms in the same way that other constructivist scholars (e.g. Ruggie 1998b; see norm and policy entrepreneurs) differentiate between regulative and constitutive rules, but Finnemore and Sikkink do not include a suggestion if their definition is to be differently understood than constitutive/ regulative norms. Regulative norms order and constrain behaviour, whereas constitutive norms create new actors, interests or categories of action.

Finnemore and Sikkink further identify a norm life cycle that includes the three stages of norm emergence, norm acceptance and the internalization of norms. Norm emergence is the agenda-setting by transnational actor networks where norm entrepreneurs persuade norm leaders or states, respectively, via an organizational platform through which they promote their norms. Norm entrepreneurs are these actors who create norms or call issue to larger context of social understanding, which is called framing. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 897) argue: "The construction of cognitive frames is an essential component of norm entrepreneurs' political strategies, since, when they are successful, the new frames resonate with broader public understandings and are adopted as new ways of talking about and understanding issue." The main motivation behind the actions of norm entrepreneurs is ideational commitment as they believe in the ideals and values of the norms and ideas they promote. Organization platforms such as NGOs and international organizations are the vehicles from which they promote their norms. Modern organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, or the International Labour Organization would use their expertise and information to change the behaviour of other actors

(ibid.). They would also use their resources and their international leverage over developing states to promote their normative principles. Here, the institutionalization of norms, regardless if it happens before or after the first stage of norm acceptance, and the persuasion of a certain amount of critical states - critical are these states that are essential for the achievement of the norm goal - to adopt the new norms are crucial to the second stage of the norm cycle, norm acceptance. Norms acceptance begins when domestic movements start to accept the new norms which are being socialized by norm entrepreneurs and international organizations to targeted actors. The tipping point of socialization is when enough states and critical states accept the new norms "for reasons that are related to their identities as members of an international society" (ibid. 902). They further argue, that the motivations for states to endorse these norms are legitimation, conformity, and esteem. All these possible motivations are related to the relationships between states, that means the international community. An example would be the acceptance of norms associated with liberalism, as they see it as part of their identity to be a liberal state. That is also the case for state leaders who are concerned about their international image as human rights violators and would make policy changes to alter that image (ibid.). About the effectiveness of such norms Risse (2013: 13) states, that resonance is the crucial factor of acceptance: "The more new ideas promoted by transnational coalitions resonate with preexisting collective identities and beliefs of actors, the more policy influence they will have." The third part of the norm life cycle is the internalization of norms, meaning that norms are so widely accepted to the point that they become very powerful. They possess a quality of being non-controversial where norm accordant behaviour is not questioned anymore, and they become new standards of appropriateness.

Moreover, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 916) argue that rational choice and norms and ideas can be interconnected in IR: "Rational choice theorists can and do have a great deal to say about ideational phenomena and how norms work, just as empirical studies of social construction and norm emergence repeatedly reveal highly rational strategic interaction." They suggest, that e.g. norm entrepreneurs are, according to different empirical research, rationally behaving actors in the achievement of their goals and they engage in strategic social construction. Also, empirical research has revealed that common knowledge - or intersubjective understanding called in constructivism - is something that has been created by rational strategic actors, such as the rules of wars or the general understanding of politics. However, they point out that the main discussion between constructivist and rationalists is not about whether rationality plays a role in norm-based behaviour, but about the nature of the link between rationality and norm-based behaviour.

4.2 Transnationalism

Transnationalism is a social phenomenon in international relations that refers to the increasing processes of interaction of societies across the globe in social, economic, political and cultural matters. It represents phenomena that have reached a particular intensity at a global scale at the end of the 20th century (Guarnizo and Smith 1998). It mainly addresses the areas of interstate politics and political integration processes, the global economy, transnational migration and social movements. Guarnizo and Smith (1998: 4) state, it is a concept that examines the role of transnational practices, interactions and actors. Transnationalism also deals with the identification of transnational actors and the examination of their role in these processes. It allows for a shift away of the unit of analysis from nation-states to the study of the global system (Robinson 1998). As it was discussed in the chapter above, Finnemore and Sikkink build on the works of transnational relations scholars and focus in their essay 'International norm dynamics and political change' (1998) on norm emergence and norm diffusion processes in transnational relations and try to explain the increasing appearance and impact of non-state actors and international organizations in governance issues. In this thesis, the phenomenon of transnationalism will serve as a supporting concept to explain the role of multi-stakeholder partnership in global governance issues and it will help to shift the focus from a rather state-centred paradigm in IR theories to several actors in the international arena, and transnational interactions and organizations.

Following Robinson's claim in his essay 'Beyond Nation-State Paradigms: Globalization, Sociology, and the Challenge of Transnational Studies' (1998) the nation-state framework of analysis is overly emphasized in classical IR theories, and globalization should call for a paradigm shift in scholars' macrosocial inquiries. Robinson (ibid. 562) states, that globalization represents a systemic change to the nation-state framework in a scale that is not yet picked up enough by IR and development theory scholars as the basic unit of analysis. In this thesis multilateral cooperation, as such is the case in multi-stakeholder partnerships, is seen as belonging to a transnationally connected social system that has been brought about by globalization. Thus, a move away from a nation-state cantered paradigm is necessary for a study on partnerships and the SDGs, as they are seen as transnational practices in a global system that impact the international society. According to Robinson (1998: 565), a good social analysis requires to study the transformation of structures and not only the laws of motion of a given set of structures, and as such, studies on transnational relations need to take out the nation-state framework since globalization includes several new supranational social

structures. In the global economy, he states, "territoriality and production are no longer bound together" (ibid. 568), thus the material basis for the nation state is decreasing.

In the late 1980s, constructivist scholars such as Kratochwil, Ruggie and Wendt returned their interest to ideational and social rather than mainly material phenomena in international relations. Similarly, the end of the Cold War meant a shift away from especially structuralist theories to the theorizing about domestic politics and transnational relations (Risse 2013). Thus, the increased interests in ideational factors and transnational relations opened up a space for scholars to theorize about new phenomena. A need for global rules and regulation emerged seeing the absence of a global authority. Risse (ibid. 8) explains further, in the 1990s, a transnational turn emerged with the emphasis on the role and influence of transnational actors on international organizations: "Since the early 1990s, a consensus has emerged in the literature that transnational advocacy networks (TANs), (I)NGOs, transnational social movements (TSM), and other nonprofit actors make a difference in world politics, particularly with regard to the emergence, creation, and implementation of international norms." During this time, scholars of transnational relations started to examine the transnational non-profit sector, value-based advocacy networks, INGOs (international non-governmental organizations), and transnational movements. In this regard, constructivism and sociological institutionalism have heavily influenced the work on transnationalism because it resulted in the focus on the role of transnational actors promoting/diffusing causal knowledge and norms (Risse 2013). And with the beginning of the 21st century, the role of non-state actors in transnational governance and rule-making started to increasingly come into picture in scholarship. Recent literature (Keck and Sikkink 1999; Risse 2013) focuses on the interactions between transnational actors and national/ international/ supranational state actors and the inclusion and contributions of non-state actors in global governance.

Transnational relations are believed to be regulated through cooperation of state and non-state actors to solve global problems. Adler (2013: 18) supports this view affirming that various forms of international and transnational authority, identified as global governance, are helping order international relations. Here, non-state actors also participate in many ways in the norm and rulemaking processes or by providing public services in e.g. health, food security and energy supply through different projects. Transnational actors are defined by Keck and Sikkink (1998: 2) as "those relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services." Their role is to generate new information, discourses and ideas to influence the political value

context, negotiate the meaning of politics, and bring new allies and access points into the political systems. Also, as Risse (2013: 15) states, the most important innovation in research on transnational actors has focused on the active role of transnational actors and non-state actors, respectively, in the direct participation in global governance; transnational actors behave as active governors in world politics. This argument moves away from the traditional view of states being the primary governance actors in international politics. Transnational actors would directly participate in service provision, and norm and rulemaking as it is the case in e.g. public-private partnerships (ibid.). Furthermore, Risse distinguishes between the constitutive purpose of transnational actors that can range from self-interest to the promotion of a global common good - the division between these is fluent. According to him, most transnational advocacy coalitions (these belong to transnational networks which are defined as moral and knowledge entrepreneurs) deliberately promote and construct new norms that resonate with pre-existing norms and intersubjective understandings. In the empirical analysis it will be focused on this point in the case of partnerships and the SDGs.

It is also being argued (e.g. Guarnizo and Smith 1998), supranational institutions that have transnational responsibilities such as the World Bank, the IMF, the UN and the OECD are in many ways performing state services in economic, political and cultural dimensions on a cross-border scale - e.g. management of the global economy, health, environmental protection, infrastructure projects and social services. Thus, it is believed, that the social structure - in these areas where supranational institutions emerge - is increasingly becoming a transnational social structure.

5. Analysis

In the first part of the analysis, it will be argued why and how multi-stakeholder partnerships emerged in the UN environment and how the MDGs/SDGs have become tools of communication to advance the norms of poverty eradication and sustainable development. On this basis it will further be analysed the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in becoming a tool to realize the SDGs on the one hand and their role in implementing the SDGs on the other hand. This will be done in connection to the history of the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaboration, and in light of the constructivist framework.

5.1 Partnerships and norm entrepreneurs

In the theory chapter it has been argued that constructivism deals with ideational factors and processes, and how things have become what they are. In this regard, it will first be explained why multi-stakeholder partnerships as a tool for implementing the SDGs emerged in order to understand the ideas and thought processes behind their construction. In connection to this, the constructivist model of norm and policy entrepreneurs also allows to examine a purposive construction of the Type II partnerships that were adopted during the WSSD in 2002. This will be done to explain how they are changing international governance linked to the development goals. In the phenomenon of transnationalism, the inclusion of non-state actors in the multilateral system is a significant metamorphosis the system has went through in the 21st century and the emergence of partnerships in the international development agenda is therefore one part that needs to be looked upon. Herein, it will be adhered to Andonova's (2017) hypothesis about international organizations as purposive actors that brought about change in global governance phenomena.

Collaboration in multi-stakeholder partnerships is global, in contrast to bilateral or domestic collaboration, as it involves state and non-state actors from several sectors and countries in the international relations field, such as companies, civil society organizations and development organizations. Herein, in order to primarily define partnerships from a constructivist point of view, a partnership is a social fact that has no material reality because it exists only due to the shared beliefs of its actors within. Shared beliefs are regarding the positive outcomes, the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder collaborations and the synergies they are supposed to create. Partnerships are therefore agreements between several sets of state and non-state partners that act according to a set of mutually accepted rules. These would be contracts between the partners that determine each partner's role and responsibility. Andonova (2017: 8) states: "They [partnerships] operate within the broad framework of the multilateral system, connecting sets of actors across jurisdictions in response to problems with transnational dimensions". It indicates that multi-stakeholder partnerships are meant to tackle development problems that do not only have a local character, but problems which transcend boundaries with the help of non-state actors. Also, their networks structure represents a shared authority in the decision-making processes that are targeted to realize shared global goals - the SDGs - which are based on a public purpose and this qualifies partnerships as a tool in (international) governance.

This development has been a new way of introducing non-state actors into the implementation of governance goals related to development in the international system[3]. From a neoliberal perspective, this development can be linked to the growing scepticism about the role of the state that emerged in 1980s and 1990s (Ruggie 2008: 7) and a power shift away from public institutions to the extension of the private sector (Andonova 2017: 27). But as Andonova (ibid. 8) argues, in relation to the constructivist model of norm and policy entrepreneurs, a neoliberal perspective is not sufficient to explain the rise of partnerships. International organizations and the actors within - governance entrepreneurs - are the driving forces behind the institutional change coming from partnerships as a new governance form. Governance entrepreneurs are defined as "political actors actively seeking institutional change" (ibid. 21). Governance entrepreneurs identify problems within the multilateral system and bring in new ideas and institutional solutions driven by their strong incentives into the governance agenda (ibid.). This concept builds upon the theory of norm and policy entrepreneurs introduced earlier in this thesis and it refers to actors, these can be individuals or also international organizations, who want to consolidate new norms and social understandings, and push forward institutional innovation with the main motivation of ideational commitment - next to empathy and altruism (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). As Finnemore and Sikkink (ibid. 898) state: "Ideational commitment is the main motivations when entrepreneurs promote norms or ideas (...)." In this regard, collaboration between state and non-state actors is seen as an appropriate norm to be promoted by the identified entrepreneurs, and multi-stakeholder partnerships are the tool/the institutional solution to realize it. Appropriateness can only be defined by reference to the judgements of a community or society (ibid.) and in this case, the involved entrepreneurs in the UN have identified collaboration with the private sector and civil society as one solution to tackle global challenges coming from globalization.

Andonova therefore speaks of governance entrepreneurs because she sees that partnerships introduce new actors and are a new form governance that can tackle these globalization challenges. Partnerships are thus seen as an institutional innovation that has brought about change in response to globalization. The argument of institutional change in intergovernmental institutions interplays with the concept of transnational relations and transnational governance. Hereby, multi-stakeholder partnerships have emerged within an institutional setting that faced the need for change. However, as it is being argued, globalization and its effects on the social existing structure of state-based institutions as in the concept of transnationalism is just one

[3] see chapter 2.2

aspect to explain the rise of partnerships; the involvement of political entrepreneurs with the incentives and the capacity for the enforcement of rules and the creation of institutions interplays with the rise of partnerships (Andonova 2017; Keohane 2001).

5.1.1 The emergence of multi-stakeholder partnerships in the UN

Within the context of the UN as an international organization and its institutionalization of partnerships between state and non-state actors, the UN Secretariat and the Secretary-General have been the main drivers behind the crafting of a normative space for partnerships. The foundations of the UNFIP and the Global Compact, that happened a couple of years before the WSSD in Johannesburg in 2002, "created institutional space and policy justification for global partnerships with the private sector" (Andonova 2017: 67). Organizational external pressures caused by stagnating ODA flows by the US, that many UN programs relied upon, and at the same time growing foreign direct investments since the 1990s meant a growing imbalance between private and official development finance (*figure 2*). Also, as Andonova argues (ibid.), an increasing number of global companies adopting CSR practices and questions about UN's efficiency forced UN entrepreneurs for collaboration with the private sector, and use its resources and global reach as opportunities. In conjunction to these external pressures, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan together with John Ruggie as the head of Office for Strategic Planning proposed new ideas for UN cooperation with the private sector, which in the end resulted in a new normative framing that distinguished itself from the former intergovernmental approach that focused on local and not global issues. In 1998, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Kofi Annan stressed the importance of bringing the private sector into the development agenda: "So let us choose to unite the power of markets with the authority of universal ideals. Let us choose to reconcile the creative forces of private entrepreneurship with the needs of the disadvantaged and the requirements of future generations" (UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases 2014).

The UNFIP and the United Nations Foundation - which have been found in order to manage a large private donation (the 'Turner Gift') - were the first direct results from this new approach of cooperating with non-state actors, and the Secretary-General was the leading figure for initiating this step towards an institutional change. As Andonova (2017: 81) states: "The UNFIP served as a point of entry by private-sector and civil-society actors to the UN and a broker of partnerships at a very high level in the UN administration." Civil society actors such as NGOs are seen as important channels that can promote dialogue and cooperation between

civil society on the one side and the public sector, governments and development agencies etc. on the other side. The private sector is seen as critical for economic growth and poverty eradication by making financial investments and providing social services in e.g. healthcare, infrastructure, sanitation and micro-credits. Andonova also points out, that in sum the larger share of public-private institutions at that time reflect the agency of UN organizations and the entrepreneurship of UN leaders and non-state actors (Andonova 2006: 31).

From a constructivist perspective, this has been an important milestone in the transformation of new social structures that include non-state actors in development assistance resulting from a change in agency practices and brought about by a group of governance entrepreneurs.

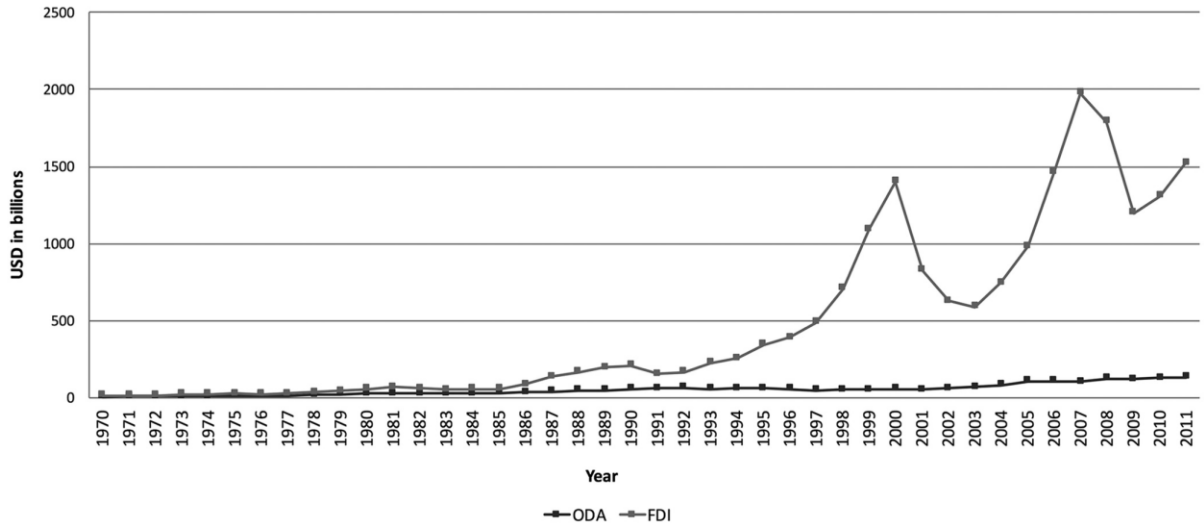

Figure 2. Global ODA and FDI flows, 1970-2011. *Source*: UNCTAD 2013 and OECD 2013 in Andonova figure 3.2 (2017: 73)

It also contradicts the neorealist critique of claiming that constructivism fails to explain how social understandings are formed. When analysing e.g. Kofi Annan's statements, the advantages of multi-stakeholder collaboration have been the main motivation for the entrepreneurs promoting it. If, how it has been noted, ideational commitment is the main motivation for norm entrepreneurs, then it can be argued that a belief in liberal ideas is embodied in this norm of multi-stakeholder collaboration. Moreover, considering the norm dynamics model developed by Finnemore and Sikkink, norm shifts are the main vehicles for system transformation. The micro level that is being identified is in this regard the actions coming from the norm entrepreneurs. In the norm life cycle the norm of multi-stakeholder collaboration has been framed by the entrepreneurs via the organizational vehicle of the UN and thus it represents the first stage of norm emergence.

The following adoption of the Type II partnerships at the WSSD in Johannesburg in 2002, came about in close collaboration with the UNFIP office and led to a diffusion and permanent institutionalization of the partnerships model. Especially the political acceptance by developing countries has been important in the institutionalization of this new governance model (Andonova 2017). Kofi Annan has in 2006 also been the initiator for the foundation of the UN Office for Partnerships. During the development of the SDGs, multi-stakeholder partnerships - being widely recognized and legitimized by now - were adopted into the SDGs as means of implementing sustainable development together with the private sector and civil society organizations. The emergence and adoption of the Type II partnerships has been an important step towards the inclusion of multi-stakeholder partnerships into the 2030 Agenda. Multi-stakeholder collaboration in form of partnerships has thus been formally developed as a tool to manage sustainable development.

5.2 The MDGs and SDGs and norms

To understand the role of partnerships in implementing the SDGs and why it is argued that partnerships as implementation tools are to serve and generate political goals, it is necessary to discuss and analyse the relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs are first and foremost the UN's development goals which partnerships, as one of the means of implementation, are presumed to realize. Poverty eradication and sustainable development are the ideas that stand behind the development goals. Hence, the next part deals with an examination of the SDGs as tools of communications for achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development which have become norms in the international sphere. Linked to the norm dynamics model, the argument of the SDGs as globally accepted norms will help to explain the importance in their realization by multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The MDGs were created for the global aim of poverty eradication that has been first institutionalized in the 1990s as a formal goal in the form of several political declarations and agreements, such as the Millennium Declaration and later the Agenda 2030. Fukuda-Parr and Hulme (2011: 18) specify that the Millennium Declaration is entirely focused on poverty. This is also shown by prioritizing to eradicate poverty as the first goal in the MDGs and SDGs. The Millennium Goals and specifically the partnership goal meant a change in the international community's approach towards a more international cooperation between multiple actors. Fukuda-Parr (2011: 126) points out that the consensus on the widespread use of the MDGs by

the public and private sector and civil society reflects a shift in ideas about the purpose of development, the concept of poverty and the role of the international community. He states (ibid.) that "(...) the consensus on the MDGs reflect an important evolution in acknowledging poverty as a multidimensional concept that is broader than low incomes." Poverty has been started to be seen as a multidimensional concept that needs to be solved from many angles, not just the increase of low incomes. If used on the concept of norm diffusion, it meant a normative shift in the sense of making poverty eradication a maxim for the international community and states to act upon. Fukuda-Parr and Hulme (2011: 18) call poverty eradication a 'supernorm' because it is being considered as unacceptable and it needs to be tackled from different dimensions. Therefore, poverty eradication represented in the form of the MDGs - and later also the SDGs but with the addition of sustainable development - has become a norm, a standard of appropriate behaviour. The development goals represent a clear and specific message that has been accepted by the member states of the UN General Assembly. Herein, Fukuda-Parr (2011: 130) states:

> The MDGs have been a particularly powerful tool of communication, because it uses the power of numbers to simplify complex concepts like poverty, make concrete intangible aspirations like dignity and freedom, and abstract locally embedded challenges into universal objectives. Without such a tool, the normative shift in international development would not have happened.

The measurability by numbers is measured by the development indicators, e.g. SDG indicator 17.17.1 'Amount of United States dollars committed to public-private and civil society partnerships'. Aside from the fact that the MDGs have been replaced by the SDGs, Fukuda-Parr includes the argument of making sustainable development something enumerable that makes it in the end easier to measure and better to be aware of, which means that the mechanisms and strategies to realize poverty eradication and sustainable development are also easier to justify. Though, he also states (ibid. 129) that the MDGs have been used to create a new narrative for international development, but their implementation is done through different instruments, such as multi-stakeholder partnerships in the context of the SDGs.

From a constructivist standpoint, the MDGs and SDGs can be considered as ideational factors that have a normative and instrumental dimension and they are purposely constructed goals that change existing social structures. As Fukuda-Parr and Hulme (2011: 18) argue, the consensus on poverty eradication represents a normative shift in the international development agenda: "An important conceptual advance in development thinking over the 1990s, reflected in both the academic literature and policy of major agencies, is the idea that poverty is multidimensional, and that ending poverty requires addressing different dimensions

simultaneously.” In this regard, poverty eradication has not been on the development agenda until then. Existing structures have been a rather centralised approach on development issues on the national level in the form of mainly using development aid to assist developing countries out of strategic interests by the donor countries. The introduction of multi-stakeholder partnerships in the UN as tools of implementation, for example, is one of the means that represent a change in the direction of a more decentralized approach with the involvement of transnational and non-state actors. Herein, according to the UN definition, multi-stakeholder partnerships are a tool that is aimed to bring together all stakeholders and create synergies through collaboration that can tackle poverty and achieve sustainable development. Considering the phenomenon of transnationalism, it can be argued, that this change of politics can be traced back to the effects of globalization and a more transnationally connected social system. This has started with UN’s collaboration with the private sector and NGOs since its beginnings and resulted e.g. in the adoption of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs with emphasis on the involvement of non-state actors into the implementation of the development goals.

However, the role of sustainable development combined with poverty reduction as an idea that has been promoted and internalized cannot be overly overrated, because poverty eradication as an interest has been certainly on the agenda of national and international development policies in order to achieve macroeconomic stability and economic growth, which is a condition for reducing poverty. But it can be argued, that national political and economic policies combined with the normative ideas of the development goals have both contributed to the diffusion of its agenda.

5.3 The role of partnerships at the transformation from the MDGs to the SDGs

After the WSSD in 2002, multi-stakeholder partnerships were formally established as tools of implementation for sustainable development. However, as the MDGs have been already adopted in 2000, so before the WSSD, partnerships were until then only loosely mentioned in MDGoal 8, namely ‘Develop a global partnership for development’. Therefore, this section deals with the transformation process and the reasons why multi-stakeholder partnerships have been formally adopted into the SDGs, particularly in targets 17.16 and 17.17.

As it has been stated in the history chapter of this thesis, the formulation of the Bali principles and the foundation of the United Nations Office for Partnerships have been essential stepping stones in the further acceptance of multi-stakeholder partnerships as contributors to achieve

intergovernmentally agreed development goals. This has, for example, also been emphasized in a speech by the UN High Representative for least developed countries (LDCs) following the WSSD in 2002 in a special meeting on sustainable development: "Partnerships with Civil Society and the Private Sector, with their special capacity, could be significant for the successful implementation of the Brussels PoA[4]. It calls on NGOs to support the efforts of the LDCs in a spirit of shared responsibility through genuine partnerships" (UN-OHRLLS 2018). Before the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 has been another important event in laying further foundations for the adoption of multi-stakeholder partnership into the SDGs. Among others, following paragraphs reference the importance multi-stakeholder engagement for sustainable development (UN The Future We Want 2012):

Paragraph 46: We acknowledge that the implementation of sustainable development will depend on the active engagement of both the public and the private sectors (...) including through the important tool of public-private partnerships (...)

Paragraph 64: We acknowledge that involvement of all stakeholders and their partnerships, networking and experience-sharing at all levels could help countries to learn from one another in identifying appropriate sustainable development policies, including green economy policies. We note the positive experiences in some countries, including in developing countries, in adopting green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication through an inclusive approach (...)

Paragraph 76h: Enhance the participation and effective engagement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the relevant international forums and, in this regard, promote transparency and broad public participation and partnerships to implement sustainable development;

Next to the Rio+20 Conference, there have also been several other conferences e.g. SAMOA Pathway and Addis Ababa Action Agenda that acknowledge multi-stakeholder partnerships and the involvement of the private sector and civil society to achieve the development goals (UN DESA 2015).

The point herein lies in the process that led to this conceptualization. In all these United Nations conferences and outcomes, it is believed that partnerships are one of the crucial means to realize the SDGs. Considering the norm dynamics model formulated by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), norms are a standard of appropriate behaviour that produce social order and stability. It has already been argued in the previous chapter that the MDGs and SDGs are vehicles for communicating the norms of poverty eradication and sustainable development. The focus now

[4] Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action: Programme for a global partnership to accelerate economic growth and sustainable development for the LDCs

lies on multi-stakeholder collaboration as one of the goals and partnerships as means of implementation. Growing public-private-civil collaboration, considering a constructivist framework, has been - during these UN conferences and meetings - continuously promoted as a positive normative message because it produces or is supposed to produce social order, which in this case is the realization of the SDGs by the means of multi-stakeholder partnerships, among other things. Also, the official name of the Agenda 2030 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' incorporates a global need for transformation and change. In relation to global partnerships it states (UN General Assembly 70/01 2015: 2)

> We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people (...) If we realize our ambitions across the full extent of the Agenda, the lives of all will be profoundly improved and our world will be transformed for the better.

This statement can also be regarded as relevant for multi-stakeholder partnerships and shows that partnerships - next to all the other transformative goals and targets - are believed to be tools of positive change towards sustainable development.

Furthermore, analysing the growing importance of the involvement of non-state actors into the implementation of sustainable development, especially during the transformation process of the MDGs into the SDGs, this process represents an idea shift. In a norm life cycle the first stage has been the emergence of multi-stakeholder collaboration that has been pushed forward by norm and policy entrepreneurs. The second stage is norm acceptance with the dominant mechanism of socialization. In this stage, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 902) put their focus on agents of socialization, either states or norm entrepreneurs, with the incentives of pressuring targeted actors to adopt new policies and ratify new treaties. The transformation process between the MDGs and SDGs has resulted in the tipping point of accepting multi-stakeholder collaboration as a target of the SDGs. The authors state (ibid.): "What happens at the tipping point is that enough states and enough critical states endorse the new norm to redefine appropriate behaviour for the identity called 'state' or some relevant subset of states (such as a 'liberal' state or a European state)." Considering that the Agenda 2030 with the SDGs is an intergovernmental agreement that has been accepted by all the 193 countries of the UN General Assembly (UN General Assembly 70/01 2015), multi-stakeholder collaboration in the form multi-stakeholder partnerships in targets 17.16 and 17.17 as means of implementation has been accepted and reaffirmed to advance the norms of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

5.4 The features and objectives of partnerships

In order to clarify the features and objective of partnerships the following chapter deals with the development process of the Type II partnerships during the WSSD in 2002, and how multi-stakeholder partnerships are implemented in the SDGs. It will allow to further understand their role in realizing the SDGs.

In the Bali Guiding Principles[5] following the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, the objective of partnerships for sustainable development is defined as such (Kara and Quarless 2002: 1):

> Partnerships for sustainable development are specific commitments by various partners intended to contribute to and reinforce the implementation of the outcomes of the intergovernmental negotiations of the WSSD (Programme of Action and Political Declaration) and to help achieve the further implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals.

Partnerships for sustainable development have been promoted and initiated with the objective of *implementing* sustainable development. This is presumed to be achieved through the creation of synergies between all stakeholders that would lead to a win-win situation. Mert and Chan (2012: 21) state that "partnerships are not neutral implementation tools: they are employed in a political context, serve political goals and generate political challenges". They further claim that partnerships exert influence beyond their explicit goals although they are mere implementation tools. This is remarkable in the sense as the Type II partnerships are officially defined as voluntary commitments of a 'self-organizing' nature (Kara and Quarless 2002). Originally at the WSSD in 2002, partnerships were intended to be decision-making mechanisms, to be of a more participatory nature for non-state actors in sustainable development. They were e.g. intended to go beyond intergovernmental decisions, so beyond existing frames of reference such as the MDGs and potentially lead to political changes. Also, an inclusion of business actors into the decision-making processes was intended by committing them to CSR policies and a code of conduct (Mert and Chan 2012). They were furthemore intended to be of a more collective and coordinated approach to provide development support with the connection to a monitoring mechanism. This also shows that the involved actors did not see the status quo of the management of sustainable development as sufficient to tackle sustainable development problems and they started to aim for alternative more participatory and decentralised strategies with the involvement of non-state actors. But due to political controversies between several actors and government representatives during the preparatory

[5] see also annex

process of the WSSD in 2002, the Type II partnerships lost the participatory principle and were loosely defined as voluntary commitments and implementations tools (ibid.).

The intended participatory principle stems from Agenda 21 developed during the Rio Summit in 1992, where it states that sustainable development requires broad-based participation by all social groups in decision-making and partnerships with non-governmental actors (UNCED 1992: par. 1.2). However, in the end the Type II partnerships were indeed the only considerable outcome of the WSSD in Johannesburg with its primary function of implementation. As Ruggie (2008: 25) asserts, "the WSSD would have been an outright failure were it not for the many public-private partnership projects it generated" as the result of the summit. Nevertheless, they were considered as an important stepping stone in the governance of sustainable development. This comes from the involvement of the private sector and civil society in dealing with the development goals that are regarded as global norms.

Mert (2015: 290) states that in fact "in contrast to the 1992 Rio Summit, the overall focus of the 2002 Johannesburg Summit was 'implementation'". In the Bali Guiding Principles for partnerships it also states that partnerships are to be linked with globally agreed outcomes, they are not intended to substitute commitments by governments, and they should be consistent with sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies of the countries of implementation. This is also shown in the 'United Nations legacy review towards realizing the 2030 Agenda' (UN DESA 2015: 5-6) where it explicitly mentions the implementation character towards achieving sustainable development, although it stresses that partnerships cannot substitute government responsibilities and commitments, they should involve those who are able to contribute to sustainable development. That is as well emphasized by Mert and Chan (2012), stating that partnerships were meant to break through existing donor patterns, such as development aid provided by governments, and share responsibilities of implementation with non-state actors.

However, even though the Type II partnerships became mere implementation mechanisms, several case-studies (Wetterberg 2011; Mert and Chan 2012) about individual partnerships show that they still have a major impact and political influence. For example, Wetterberg (2011) examines the case of the partnerships 'Better Factories Cambodia' that protected workers' rights through multi-stakeholder collaboration, which would not have been possible without the partnership's network structure and transnational scope involving the International Labour Organizations. In another case study Mert and Chan (2012: 40) also go as far as to suggest that partnerships "are not just neutral instruments for implementing internationally accepted sustainability norms (...) but rather sites of contestation over distinct technologies and

practices." They illustrate on several partnership cases how the lack of a monitoring mechanism and follow-up process led to a platform for controversial technologies to gain recognition at the UN level.

Nevertheless, in the SDGs the term multi-stakeholder partnership is not necessarily connected to the Type II partnerships, but progress towards the goals is evaluated through a self-reporting mechanism by the partnerships that are registered in the CSD database that has been developed during the WSSD in 2002 specifically for the Type II outcomes. Examining the general progress of SDG 17 and specifically the targets 17.16 and 17.17 that focus on multi-stakeholder partnerships, an ECOSOC report in 2017 states, that a stronger commitment to partnerships and cooperation is needed to achieve the SDGs, and this needs to be achieved through more coherent policies and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors (UN ECOSOC 2017: 19). Furthermore, progress towards the systemic issues regarding the sub-targets is expressed as following:

> In 2016, 125 countries engaged in country-led monitoring of development effectiveness, which demonstrates their commitment to strengthening implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and multi-stakeholder partnerships; 54 of those countries reported overall progress towards those commitments. Countries' own result frameworks were used to define 83 per cent of new interventions supported by donor countries in 2016.

Considering UN's message for the SDGs of 'Leaving no one behind', an enabling environment at all levels and by all actors can certainly be regarded as a message for more inclusiveness, of e.g. least developed countries and marginalized groups, in the process of implementing the SDGs by partnerships. The progress towards targets 17.16 is expressed in the number of countries that report their overall progress of implementing partnerships to the UN. It is not this thesis objective to assess the effectiveness of these methods of measuring progresses, however, it is remarkable that other targets of SDG goal 17 are formulated in a way that is better measurable, such as the ODA amount, remittances to developing countries, least developed countries' share of global exports etc. as can be seen in 'The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017' (DESA 2017). In fact, goal 17.16 asserts that partnerships for sustainable development should be *enhanced,* which is measured by sub-goal 17.16.1 by the number of countries reporting progress. Goal 17.17 stresses *encouraging* and *promoting* effective partnerships, which is then measured by the amount of US dollar committed to partnerships. However, data on this target has not been released until today (U.S. Statistics 2018)

To that end, multi-stakeholder collaboration as a norm and its vehicle multi-stakeholder partnerships that is supposed to realize the SDGs has not been implemented, yet, in a way that is better measurable than the current SDG indicators. It can also be argued, that if cooperation between state and non-state actors in a partnership format is seen as a future and possibly better collaboration form than e.g. state-centred development assistance, it still lacks a better monitoring tool for assessing progress. But case-studies from several scholars show that individual partnerships do have impact in different levels of governance.

5.5 Partnerships in global governance

Moreover, it has been argued that partnerships are a new governance tool that can tackle global challenges, so it is a question of what their role is in global governance and how partnerships can address and advance the norms of poverty eradication and sustainable development and the SDGs.

Global governance is defined as political cooperation among transnational actors that aims to solve problems on a transnational scale (Pattberg and Zelli 2015). In transnational relations, different actors such as governments in collaboration with non-state actors and international organizations engage in global governance. Ruggie (2008: 13) states: “In recent decades, actors and forces for which the territorial state is not the cardinal organizing principle have begun to outflank the state externally and to gnaw away at its governance monopoly from the inside.“ These actors and forces are non-state actors, such as the private sector and civil society, who have emerged in an increasingly transnationally connected social system and who introduce new elements and dynamics into the process of global governance that has been traditionally taken up by the state. Partnerships are due to their implementation character towards the SDGs a tool to address these issues. Andonova (2006) argues, in a positive light, partnerships show an aspect of decentralization and flexibility in governance issue, and a functional need to solve governance gaps that are caused by globalization. Other scholars (e.g. Zammit 2003 and Schmidt 1995) would emphasize a neoliberal policy of the private sector that is coming into the developing world and global affairs in general.

In the partnership format governments and governmental entities have become in many ways contracting agencies of civil society or private organizations that deliver the goods (Ruggie 2008). It is also being argued that partnerships work on a principal-agent relationship, where the agent acts on behalf of the principal, without a conflict of interest (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2011; Andonova 2011, 2017). Andonova (2017: 7) states: “It is the agreement on

a public purpose, meaning a steering toward shared and publicly recognized objectives, that qualifies partnerships as a form of governance." In most cases, responsibility in partnerships is delegated from authoritative actors - national governments or multilateral agencies, as the UN, the EU or the World Bank - to other actors from civil society and the private sector (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2011).

If applied on partnerships in a constructivist context, non-state organizations take up a role of implementing transnational norms that correspond with the SDGs, as such is the case with the partnerships that are funded by UNFIP[6]. Civil society organizations, such as Amnesty International or other human rights organization that work with the private sector, promote human rights as an international norm that needs to be advanced and improved. In a partnerships format this international 'good' norm is promoted by several multi-stakeholder partnerships e.g. the 'Oceania Human Rights Commission & Court Project' or 'Human Rights on the Hill International Human and Peoples Rights Law Program'. However, the partnership format being a sole implementation tool for intergovernmental decisions does not allow for blocking international agreements, a function which is often used by civil society organizations, e.g. the coalition of non-governmental organizations to ban landmines, namely the 'International Campaign to Ban Landmines'. But partnership can take up a role in setting norms and have a major impact on issues that directly address the SDGs. According to Andonova (2006: 1), "public-private institutions do not simply fill governance gaps opened by globalization, but cluster in narrower areas of cooperation, where the strategic interests of IOs, states, and transnational actors intersect." An example of these narrower areas of cooperation will in the following be examined by means of the UNFIP case.

5.5.1 The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)

UNFIP has been chosen as a case because it has been one of the first UN mechanisms to directly collaborate with the private sector and civil society in order to implement projects. It funds a wide range of partnerships in different sectors and therefore allows for a representative illustration of how multi-stakeholder partnerships are diffused in the UN system, and in what governance areas that are related to the SDGs partnerships are realized.

UNFIP is one component of the United Nations Office for Partnerships and it serves as an interface between the United Nations Foundation and the United Nations system in order to realize the SDGs (UNOP 2018). From 1998-2016 UNFIP contributed to the diffusion of the

[6] see chapter 5.5.1

partnership model by funding more than 600 partnership projects worldwide. Its priority areas are global health, women, girls and population, energy and climate and advocacy, communication and other development related issues (ibid.). UNFIP is due to its expertise and relative autonomy under the UN system able to mobilize large amounts of funding and other sources to advance the SDGs. Andonova (2011: 47) states that "UNFIP has contributed to the broader institutionalization and legitimization of collaborative governance in the multilateral system." And it has served as a point of entry for business partners and civil society organizations into the UN. Based on several interviews with UNFIP senior staff, Andonova further argues (2017: 81) that it has been a key objective of UNFIP's mission "to move away from the traditional view of the private sector as a source of charitable giving toward one of more integrative collaboration and strategic partnering."

(United States dollars)

	1988-2015		*2016*		*1998-2016*	
Programme area	*Number of projects*	*Value*	*Number of projects*	*Value*	*Number of projects*	*Value*
Global health	143	966 833 216	6	22 863 854	149	989 697 070
Energy and climate	166	169 890 164	1	500 000	167	170 390 164
Women, girls and population	134	144 975 786	7	1 870 000	141	146 845 786
Peace, security and human rights	62	54 192 943			62	54 192 943
Advocacy, communication, and other development-related issues	87	71 073 332	12	3 265 419	99	74 338 751
Total	**592**	**1 406 965 441**	**26**	**28 499 273**	**618**	**1 435 464 714**

Figure 3. Projects approved by the United Nations Foundation from 1988 - 2016, by programme area. Source: United Nations Office for Partnerships. Report of the Secretary-General. UN General Assembly 72/167, 2017: 2.

Analysing the latest UNFIP report from 2016 (*figure 3*), the largest partnership programme areas are global health that corresponds to Sustainable Development Goal 3, energy and climate (SDGs 7 and 13) and women, girls and population (SDG 5). However, the programme area of global health attracts a larger amount of funding, although the number of projects is quite similar, which is caused by the tendency of some health projects being more resource-intensive and larger in comparison to other areas (Andonova 2011). According to the report (UN General Assembly 72/167 2017: 5), the most resource-intensive projects is the 'Measles and Rubella Initiative', for which during 2016 more than $21 million was disbursed through UNFIP. That is by far the largest project funded by UNFIP and takes up most of the financial value in the UNFIP's programme area of global health in 2016, as can be seen in figure 3.

Andonova (2011: 45) argues that the tendency towards health stems from global health being an area, where its objectives can be broken down into smaller, more technical and deliverable objectives that actors can agree upon and achieve more measurable results than e.g. in the areas of peace, security and human rights (in parts corresponds to SDG 16). The Measles and Rubella Initiative, which is led by the American Red Cross, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), UNICEF and WHO has e.g. since 2001 supported 88 countries to deliver more than 2 billion doses of measles vaccine. The initiative is an example for a partnership which fills a narrower area of cooperation where the interests of the different partners intersect. It is transnational in scope as it is being implemented in African as well Asian countries, it provides the public purpose of health improvement (also the WHO's and US CDC's interests), it is led by the American Red Cross that has a humanitarian interest, and by reducing child mortality it has contributed to several targets of SDG 3. The corporate sector in this partnership mainly provides financial contributions.

In contrast, the majority of UNFIP's funding for peace, security and human rights projects go to civil society organizations where the funding is distributed between projects for accountability and transparency and strengthening good governance or the rule of law (UN General Assembly 72/167 2017). For example, 'Development pacts' a project in Kyrgyzstan has been funded to better involve its rural population and ensure better participation and transparency in governance. Impacts in these projects, as in this case, are usually measured by training participation or satisfaction reports and interviews (UNDEF 2014). Moreover, Andonova (2011: 45.) ascertains that the relative low number of projects in the programme areas of peace, security and human rights implies that these areas tend to be politically contentious and complex and potentially involve a greater risk, as they are more controlled by states themselves. The protection of human rights and the maintenance of peace and security would also be the areas that the UN Security Council and the Human Rights Council are mainly responsible for.

6. Discussion

It has been argued that the emergence of the MDGs and SDGs meant a normative shift in the international development agenda and let poverty eradication and sustainable development become globally accepted norms. It also is understood that the SDGs have become the vehicles to communicate and promote these norms. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) and Ruggie (1998b) differentiate between regulative and constitutive norms/rules. However, according to Ruggie (ibid 872) "social constructivists in international relations have not yet managed to devise a theory of constitutive rules, but the phenomenon is of central concern to them." Therefore, it is a question of how and if this differentiation can be adapted to the SDGs and if it has scientific value in the analysis of the role partnerships play in realizing the SDGs.

Constitutive rules create new categories of action, whereas regulative rules constrain and regulate behaviour, and are intended to have causal effects. The SDGs are legally not binding, which means that in case of non-compliance by the member states of the UN General Assembly that signed their ratification, they do not have legal consequences for its members. Therefore, the SDGs do not have direct causal effects, as a regulative rule would have it in the case someone would drive on the 'wrong' side of the road. If applied on Ruggie's (1998b: 871)[7] definition of constitutive and regulative rules and his examples of chess playing and driving on the right or left side of the road, rules are constitutive if a social activity, such as chess, is dependent on the rules. Hence, regulative rules regulate a pre-existing activity that is independent of the rules, such as driving and following the speed limit. From this perspective, if the SDGs do not have causal effects, they need to be understood as constitutive rules. But are regulative rules only defined as regulative in the case of non-compliance and the deriving causal effects?

It is also claimed that constitutive rules create and define new forms of behaviour. Considering the MDGs and SDGs, which are certainly no rules at all, but goals and targets, the replacement of rules with norms such as it is done by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) possibly sheds more light on this discussion. As it has been argued, norms are defined as a standard of appropriate behaviour that produce social order, and the SDGs are the vehicles to communicate the norms of poverty eradication and sustainable development. Coming back to the legal aspect of the SDGs, although the SDGs do not have legal consequences, they nevertheless promote and

[7] Ruggie builds on works by John Searle. See: Searle, John R. 1995. The Construction of Social Reality. New York: Free Press

create new understandings of behaviour. The development goals have entered the language, policy statements, planning documents and reporting of international development, national development organizations, NGOs, think tanks and the media, and thus, they have become a new habit (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011).

They also already correspond in many ways with international laws e.g. goal 2 ‘Zero Hunger’ which partially corresponds in its targets with the right to food defined in article 11 in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (Kaltenborn and Kuhn 2017; UN OHCHR 2018). The ICESCR is a multilateral treaty that has been ratified by 166 countries and adopted by the UN General Assembly, and includes important economic, social and cultural rights. Also goal 3 ‘Good Health and Well-Being’ includes targets that are already established in the ICESCR in article 12. The SDGs correspond in fact in many parts with already established human right commitments, as Kaltenborn and Kuhn (2017) ascertain. In contrast to the ICESCR, the Agenda 2030 with the SDGs is a resolution that is legally not binding which qualifies it as a soft law. Its function, however, is still of major importance for the spread of norms and development of new habits, that is why the SDGs are dependent on high acceptance. Given the premise that poverty reduction and sustainable development and the Agenda 2030 have become accepted in the international community leaves the question of how its compliance is being respected. Regarding the multi-stakeholder partnership goals 17.16 and 17.17 and their corresponding indicators, it has been shown that the monitoring mechanisms linked to the partnership database are not effective because a partnership monitoring mechanism has not been established by the UN, the progress reports are of a voluntary nature, and many partnerships - e.g. the GIZ’s public-private partnerships programme ‘develoPPP.de’ - that contribute to the SDGs are not registered in the database. An assessment on the effectiveness of the other SDG indicators would, however, exceed the scope of this discussion.

The last point to asses in the discussion between constitutive and regulative norms/rules is if the social activities are dependent or independent of the rules. Social activities regarding the ‘supernorms’ of poverty eradication and sustainable development cannot be easily assessed as they concern a broad range of social and development issues, they would need to be looked at in detail. But comparing it to the simple example of chess and its dependence as a social activity on constitutive rules, a dependence of the many activities that cover poverty eradication and sustainable development seems unreasonable.

At the end, taken all points into consideration, a clear categorization of the SDGs into constitutive or regulative norms/rules cannot be easily done. However, although it was claimed

that they do not have legal consequences in case of non-compliance, a tendency towards the SDGs being regulative rules can be observed. To further assess this categorization, two possibilities remain: the SDGs would either need to be made into laws and rights, or a further definition of what counts as a regulative or constitutive rule, especially regarding legal aspects, needs to be developed in constructivism theory.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in realizing the SDGs has shown a transformation process in the intersubjective understanding of tackling poverty and its means to achieve it. Within a constructivist framework, the MDGs and later SDGs have resulted out of a new consensus in the international development agenda on defining poverty eradication and sustainable development as norms and goals that need to be achieved from different angles in order to tackle global challenges. Due to globalization, a transnational space has developed that involves non-state actors in the processes of global governance. Within these dynamics non-state actors have been identified as new partners in helping to order international relations, and multi-stakeholder collaboration is being considered as one way to tackle challenges in developing and emerging countries. Multi-stakeholder partnerships have thus been promoted and created as a tool to realize the SDGs.

The emergence of the Type II partnerships in 2002 and the later adoption of multi-stakeholder partnerships as tools of implementation into the SDGs has went through a purposive construction by norm entrepreneurs within the UN system. Partnerships have been promoted with the incentives of creating synergies between several actors that can achieve greater results together than the individual partners. Herein, multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as the 'Measles and Rubella Initiative' funded by UNFIP, are operating within areas where the interests of the different partners intersect, and which can take up a space in global governance that contributes to the achievement of the SDGs.

However, as Fukuda-Parr and Hulme suggest (2011: 32) - who analyse the emergence and development of the MDGs - ideas count, but a constructivist approach is not enough to examine the agenda of international development. A realist perspective that takes the economic and political interests of states into account and a neoliberal explanation regarding the interests of the private sector and the agenda of market globalization need to be considered as well to get a more comprehensive picture of the problem.

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Annex

Bali Guiding Principles

During the fourth preparatory committee meeting (PrepCom IV) for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Vice-Chairs Jan Kara and Diane Quarless facilitated informal meetings on partnership initiatives that helped to further clarify their scope and modalities (see their summary). The Vice-Chairs then circulated guiding principles for partnerships for sustainable development known as the Bali Guiding Principles (see text below). These Principles were used by the Secretariat to review proposals for partnerships for sustainable development submitted from the time of the Bali meeting until CSD-11 (28 April-9 May 2003). At CSD-11, governments agreed that partnerships within the context of the WSSD process and its follow-up should be developed and implemented in accordance with a set of new criteria and guidelines, taking note of the preliminary work undertaken on partnerships during the preparatory process for WSSD including the Bali Guiding Principles and GA resolution A/RES/56/76.

Background

In the context of preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, General Assembly Resolution 56/226 encourages "... global commitment and partnerships, especially between Governments of the North and the South, on the one hand, and between Governments and major groups on the other". Decision 2001/PC/3, paragraph 10, adopted by the Organizational Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development states that Governments and major groups "...should exchange and publicly announce the specific commitments they have made for the next phase of work in the field of sustainable development. In the case of major groups, commitments and targets are expected to emerge from national, regional and international consultations of major group organizations. A record of the commitments announced and shared would be made and released as part of the Summit outcome".

Following up on these recommendations, Vice-Chairs Jan Kara and Diane Quarless conducted a series of informal consultations during the third and fourth sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in order to exchange views on

and find a common understanding for the scope and modalities of partnerships to be developed as part of the outcomes of the Summit ('type 2 ' outcomes).
Based on these consultations, the following guiding principles for partnerships are suggested, which should be adhered to in the design and implementation of all partnerships to be recognized as part of the WSSD outcomes:

Objective of Partnerships

Partnerships for sustainable development are specific commitments by various partners intended to contribute to and reinforce the implementation of the outcomes of the intergovernmental negotiations of the WSSD (Programme of Action and Political Declaration) and to help achieve the further implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals.

Voluntary Nature/Respect for Fundamental Principles and Values

Partnerships are of a voluntary, 'self-organizing' nature; they are based on mutual respect and shared responsibility of the partners involved, taking into account the Rio Declaration Principles and the values expressed in the Millennium Declaration.

Link With Globally Agreed Outcomes

Partnerships are to complement the intergovernmentally agreed outcomes of WSSD: they are not intended to substitute commitments made by governments. Rather they should serve as mechanisms for the delivery of the globally agreed commitments by mobilizing the capacity for producing action on the ground. Partnerships should be anchored in the intergovernmentally agreed outcomes of WSSD (Programme of Action and Political Declaration) and help achieve the further implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals.

Integrated Approach To Sustainable Development

Partnerships should integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their design and implementation. They should be consistent, where applicable, with sustainable development strategies and poverty reduction strategies of the countries, regions and communities where their implementation takes place.

Multi-stakeholder Approach

Partnerships should have a multi-stakeholder approach and preferably involve a range of significant actors in a given area of work. They can be arranged among any combination of partners, including governments, regional groups, local authorities, non-governmental actors, international institutions and private sector partners. All partners should be involved in the development of a partnership from an early stage, so that it is genuinely participatory in approach. Yet as partnerships evolve, there should be an opportunity for additional partners to join on an equal basis.

Transparency and Accountability

Partnerships should be developed and implemented in an open and transparent manner and in good faith, so that ownership of the partnership process and its outcomes is shared among all partners, and all partners are equally accountable. They should specify arrangements to monitor and review their performance against the objectives and targets they set and report in regular intervals ('self-reporting'). These reports should be made accessible to the public.

Tangible Results

Each partnership should define its intended outcome and benefits. Partnerships should have clear objectives and set specific measurable targets and timeframes for their achievement. All partners should explicitly commit to their role in achieving the aims and objectives of the partnerships.

Funding Arrangements

Available and /or expected sources of funding should be identified. At least the initial funding should be assured at the time of the Summit, if the partnership is to be recognized there.

New/Value Added Partnerships

Ideally, partnerships for sustainable development should be "new", i.e. developed within the framework of the WSSD process. In case of on-going partnerships, there has to be a significant added value to these partnerships in the context of the WSSD (e.g. more partners taken on board, replicating an initiative or extending it to another geographical region, increasing financial resources, etc.)

Local Involvement & International Impact

While the active involvement of local communities in the design and implementation of partnerships is strongly encouraged (bottom-up approach), partnerships should be international in their impact, which means their impact should extend beyond the national level (global, regional and/or sub-regional).

Follow-up Process

Partnerships should keep the Commission on Sustainable Development informed about their activities and progress in achieving their targets. The CSD should serve as a focal point for discussion of partnerships that promote sustainable development, including sharing lessons learnt, progress made and best practices.

Opportunities to develop partnerships for sustainable development will continue after the WSSD. Submissions of partnerships after the Summit will be considered in the follow-up process.