



OPEN ACCESS

EDITED BY

Jude N. Ogbodo,
Ebonyi State University, Nigeria

REVIEWED BY

Nathan Cooper,
University of Waikato, New Zealand
Nadia Ahmad,
Barry University, United States

*CORRESPONDENCE

Sofia Alexandra Cruz,
✉ sacruz@fep.up.pt

RECEIVED 10 February 2023

ACCEPTED 24 July 2023

PUBLISHED 09 August 2023

CITATION

Cruz SA (2023), SDG 17 and global partnership for sustainable development: unraveling the rhetoric of collaboration. *Front. Environ. Sci.* 11:1155828. doi: 10.3389/fenvs.2023.1155828

COPYRIGHT

© 2023 Cruz. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.

SDG 17 and global partnership for sustainable development: unraveling the rhetoric of collaboration

Sofia Alexandra Cruz*

Faculty of Economics, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

As the 2030 SDG Agenda unfolds, a growing body of the literature from various disciplines is analyzing how sustainable development can be a process for change to achieve a dynamic equilibrium between the economic, social, and environmental dimensions. This article aims to critically examine the evolution and implementation of the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development, with a particular focus on its collaborative approach. It discusses the SDG 17 called “Partnerships for the Goals. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”, devoting particular attention to how this SDG has been found in a blurred vision of collaboration. Actually, there has been much rhetoric about enhancing multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development including the government, business sector, non-government organizations, academia, social partners, and civil society. However, reporting the difficulties and unmitigated success is not common. From the perspective of the theory of collaborative advantage, this paper examines the collaborative advantages and inertias of the process of collaborating and identifies important key elements to consider in SDG 17, such as power relations, trust, goal management, organizational cultures, and leadership.

KEYWORDS

2030 sustainable development goals agenda, SDG 17 partnership for the goals, theory of collaborative advantage, power relations, trust, goal management, organizational cultures, leadership

Introduction

The United Nations 2030 agenda for sustainable development is the result of a long path that has been involving the mobilization of several countries (UN, 2016). Until this agenda is reached, it is possible to highlight a chronology of initiatives, particularly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), between 2000 and 2015, which focused on developing countries, the so-called global south, and consisted of a 15-year plan aiming to double the financial commitments of all signatories and multiply the political efforts in comparison with what had been undertaken until 2000. The year of 2015 was declared as the International Year of Evaluation by the United Nations, during which much reflection took place, within a long process of consultations and negotiations, on why the implementation of MDGs has been largely disappointing and has not come up to expectations. It was a significant year for sustainable development worldwide, with the approval of several international frameworks that represent unprecedented global commitments. It can be mentioned as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk

Reduction 2015–2030, which defined priorities within the scope of resilience and risk reduction. In turn, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, provides visibility to various sources of resource mobilization for development and encompasses cooperation in the fields of technology, science, innovation, trade, and capacity building. It is also noteworthy of the Paris Climate Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which set priorities to keep global warming 2°C below the pre-industrial period and approved at COP21. For its part, the Summit of Heads of State and Government on post-2015 culminated in the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the resolution was entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (A/RES/70/1) on 25 September 2015.

As a universal agenda, approved by the 193 members of the United Nations, it is based on five framing principles, the so-called 5 Ps—people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships—which provide a basis for the 17 Sustainability Development Goals (SDG) and the 169 targets to be implemented by all signatory countries (UN, 2016). The 2030 Agenda implies the integration of the SDGs in policies, processes, and actions developed at national, regional, and global levels, between 2016 and 2030. Unlike MDGs, SDGs are intended to be comprehensive, adopted, and relevant for both the most developed and developing countries. The SDGs introduced changes in the way of approaching development for four reasons (UN, 2016). First, they propose to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental aspects. Second, they are based on universal goals and targets to be implemented not only by developing countries but by all countries. Third, they exhibit a greater concern for fighting inequalities and promoting human rights, as a concern across all SDGs. Fourth, they imply a new way of designing and implementing the dynamics of combining efforts among a multiplicity of actors, such as international, national, and regional authorities, including non-governmental organizations, private business sector, academia, social partners, and other civil society members.

With the media coverage of the 2030 Agenda, research on SDGs has begun to emerge in a wide range of scientific fields, from technological, health, social, and even humanities fields (Bebbington and Unerman, 2018). The literature proves to be very diverse, contemplating mainstream and critical approaches. The former claims that SDGs reflect the complexity of development (Leal Filho et al., 2018; Leal Filho et al., 2019; Pineda-Escobar, 2019; Su et al., 2022). The latter denounces networks of established political and business powers whose main interest is to maintain economic growth, as well as the inability or unavailability of people, in their status as citizens and consumers, to counter such trends (Easterly, 2015; McKenzie et al., 2015; Kopnina, 2016; Blicharska et al., 2019; Sengupta and Sengupta, 2022).

The mainstream research (Leal Filho et al., 2018; Leal Filho et al., 2019; Pineda-Escobar, 2019; Su et al., 2022) considers that SDGs give visibility to organizational values that promote development on an international scale and stimulate concerted action, thus constituting a turning point for global scale collaboration in the 21st century. However, the understanding about collaboration is not robustly discussed; only a set of superficial assumptions are made. This article aims to critically examine the evolution and implementation of the

UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development, with a particular focus on its collaborative approach. Drawing on the theoretical knowledge of the theory of collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Huxham and Vangen, 2004; Huxham and Vangen, 2013), it proposes a collaborating approach to SDG 17 that reveals how key elements, such as power relations, trust, goal management, organizational cultures, and leadership, can raise awareness of their ambiguities, complexities, and tensions.

UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Origins of the 2030 Agenda

The United Nations agenda for 2030 is the result of a long path that has been involving the mobilization of several countries (UN, 2016). During the 1960s, there was optimism about international economic development and it was assumed that the problems of the underdeveloped world would be solved as a result of world economic growth. However, during the 1970s, such optimism gradually faded away (Du Pisani, 2006), and in reports, such as “Limits to Growth” (Meadows et al., 1972), the book “Small is Beautiful” (Schumacher, 1973), economic growth began to be questioned and it was discussed that the modern economy based on growth was not sustainable for planet Earth. In that decade, in 1973, the oil crisis demonstrated the possible consequences of resource scarcity, and with the global recession, a strong awareness of the limits of economic growth was drawn (Du Pisani, 2006). Alongside this, criticism arose of the economic development programs that were being implemented in developing countries for their lack of environmental considerations as they prioritized short-term gains over environmental impacts to biodiversity (Purvis et al., 2019). This demonstrated that economic growth was not the expected solution to global inequalities (Du Pisani, 2006). Seers in his 1969 article “The Meaning of Development” added that economic growth not only failed as a solution to social difficulties but was also their cause (Purvis et al., 2019).

The 1972 United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment marked the first global summit to consider human impacts on the environment and was the first attempt to reconcile economic development with environmental degradation, which were normally considered incompatible. In 1987, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development published the Brundtland Report, a document that has called for “a new era of economic growth—a vigorous growth that is both socially and environmentally sustainable” (WCED, 1987: 14), stressing economic growth as a solution and not a problem. The concept of “sustainable development” was popularized by this Report as the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987: 54). It has recognized that notions of sustainability were promoted by the “Limits to Growth” report (Meadows et al., 1972). Actually, this latter report emphasizes that the planet cannot support economic and population growth rates, and warns about the limitation to natural resources, especially non-renewable ones, and about the rapid deterioration of the planet due to its inability to support the insatiable human use of resources

for much longer. With the publishing of the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987), sustainable development has become considered a predominant paradigm in the environmental movement and its literature grew exponentially (Purvis et al., 2019).

Analyzing the progress of the 2030 Agenda

The institutionalization of sustainable development would continue with the “Rio Process” from the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where the world’s political leaders committed to support sustainable development. From the summit came the publishing of the “Rio Declaration,” which consisted of 27 principles meant to guide future sustainable development, and “Agenda 21,” which formulated a plan to put such principles into practice. Agenda 21, based on the Brundtland Report, advocated economic growth and free trade, and emphasized the need to link social and economic development with environmental protection (UN, 1992).

After 10 years, in 2002, the Heads of State met again, in Johannesburg, in a World Summit on Sustainable Development, in which there was a high participation of multinational countries and civil society. At this meeting, called the Rio+10 Summit, “interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars: economic development, social development, and environmental protection” (UN, 2002: 1) were acknowledged. These pillars of sustainability were reinforced three years later by a resolution adopted by the General Assembly (UN, 2005).

In 2012, the Earth Summit returned to Rio de Janeiro. From this summit, Rio+20, came the Declaration “The Future we want,” which recognizes that the implementation of sustainable development will depend on both public and private sector involvement. This Declaration supported “national policy frameworks that enable companies to advance sustainable development initiatives, taking into account the importance of corporate social responsibility” (UN, 2012: 9). Furthermore, it reaffirmed the commitment to eradicate poverty, to promote sustainable development and a fair, equitable, and inclusive world, and to make efforts to achieve the MDGs. MDGs result from the UN Millennium Declaration in 2001, in which eight goals were outlined to be achieved by 2015, namely, 1—eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2—achieve universal primary education; 3—promote gender equality and empower women; 4—reduce child mortality; 5—improve maternal health; 6—fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; 7—ensure environmental sustainability; 8—develop a global partnership for development (UN, 2001).

Subsequently, in 2015, the United Nations drew up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted, on a voluntary basis, by all member states, which frames a project for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, for the present and the future. The elaboration of the 17 SDGs involved political leaders, industry leaders, and civil society actors (UN, 2015). The sustainable development goals and targets are global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account the realities of different countries, capacities and levels of development, and respecting national policies and priorities. Each government sets its own targets, taking into account the national circumstances, and incorporates them into its processes, policies, and strategies. Governments are

also responsible for following up, evaluating, and being accountable to citizens. The 17 SDGs replace MDGs but grow in scope and ambition, setting 169 targets applicable for developed and developing countries. The targets cover the social, economic, and environmental areas (UN, 2015; Nilsson et al., 2016) and aim to contribute to eradicating poverty, fighting inequality and injustice, and addressing the challenges of climate change.

Partnerships in the 2030 Agenda

From the previous sub-sections, it is clear that the UN highlights the need for several relationships with partnership configuration between the different societal actors, including the government, business sector, non-government organizations, academia, social partners, and civil society, even before the 17 SDG’s agenda (Reinsberg and Westerwinter, 2021; Gorman, 2022). This idea of partnerships for sustainability became stronger after the Rio+10 Summit, in 2002, as a tool to deal with the challenges of environmental governance in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. According to the UN, while MDGs suggested global partnerships on a single issue controlled by a formal structure, SDGs need a more holistic and multiple-issue partnerships that can address the complexity of interlinked goals at the country or local level (Prescott and Stibbe, 2015; Sachs et al., 2019).

Partnerships are defined as voluntary and collaborative relationships where all participants agree to work together to achieve a common goal or perform a specific task and share risks and responsibilities, resources, and benefits (UN, 2015). It is important to critically examine the concepts partnerships, and collaborations used in these UN definitions as they are often used interchangeably.

Global partnerships “are a form of international cooperation that are nested within broader statures and networks of global governance. These partnerships can take many forms, ranging from international organizations to informal networks among private actors” (Gorman, 2022: 505). As multiple state and non-state actors are increasingly involved in the 2030 Agenda (Rashed and Shah, 2021), it is unsurprising that the UN espoused multiple-issue partnerships as fundamental multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementing the 17 SDGs agenda (UN, 2015). Multi-stakeholder partnerships “may involve few as two to three partners (such as when one business and one NGO team up) or bring together 50 or even over 100 stakeholder organizations in global initiatives such as the Global Reporting Initiative or the Voluntary Principles on Human Rights” (Gray and Purdy, 2018: 1).

These multi-stakeholder partnerships are involved in collaborative relationships (Clarke and MacDonald, 2019; Banerjee et al., 2022; Banerjee et al., 2020; MacDonald et al., 2022) that shape a process of collaboration by which stakeholders start from their differences and aim for constructive and mutually beneficial solutions that could not otherwise be found (Gray, 1985; Gray, 1989). Academic scholars considered that the partnership practices have developed over time, and specifically, the partnerships for sustainable development have been taking three different forms (Glasbergen et al., 2007). First are partnerships as collaborative arrangements that are discussed according to their processes of

creation, operation, and determination. Second, it includes partnerships as governance mechanisms where the external effects of partnering and the tools for deliberate societal change processes are the highlight. Third, it includes partnerships as the governance structure focusing on the changes of partnering in the setting of political decision-making configuration. When considering a consecutive order of these three forms, it can be pointed out a “gradual shift away from a purely voluntaristic and intentional analysis toward a more institutional analysis couched in governance terms” (Glasbergen, 2007: 2).

Scientific research on partnerships has highlight many potential benefits of partnerships between different societal sectors related to resources efficiency, cost reduction, innovation and leveraging opportunities (Andonova et al., 2022; Eweje et al., 2021; Marx, 2019; Butcher et al., 2019; Steijn et al., 2011; Kolk et al., 2008). The past few decades have witnessed a remarkable apparent convergence of positions in the international development arena. Actually, the pursuit of development had become the single most important project, and barely any development actor could take serious issue with the way SDGs are currently framed. Thus, in mainstream development institutions and some strands of the academic literature, these ideas favoring partnerships have, in a certain way, created a partnership ideology that tends to disregard these arguments associated with the strengthening of business interests and the neoliberal policy regime (Utting, and Zammit, 2009). Within these partnerships, private actors are presented as the most efficient in providing the necessary means for implementing the SDG policies for sustainable development and, therefore, have emerged very strongly in international development ground (Rashed and Shah, 2021).

However, some scholars have shown that public–private partnerships involve risks and costs for the public sector and may even exacerbate inequalities, decrease equitable access to essential services, and undermine the fulfillment of human rights (Glasbergen et al., 2007; Martens, 2020). Actually, the public–private partnerships are phenomena associated with desirable attributes of collaboration, trust, responsibility, empowerment, participation, and considerable normative power (Cornwall and Brock, 2005). Social movements and critical works of the literature require urgent and deep rethinking on public–private partnerships, thus weakening the grip of corporate powers and their business models on people’s lives. Within these critical perspectives the SDG agenda for development relies in the old model of industrial growth that means ever higher levels of extraction, production and consumption (Hickel et al., 2022; Hickel, 2021). Such a global production and consumption levels are overshooting the planet’s capacity and driving climate change and ecological breakdown, particularly in fragile settings. SDGs rely on growth as a poverty-reduction strategy; however, eradication of poverty (the SDG 1) requires more than growth (Schleicher et al., 2018; De Schutter, 2022). Despite the positive impacts on wellbeing that are expected to be derived from an increase in GDP (economic growth is defined as the increase of GDP or the total economic output measured in the monetary value), the increasing inequalities in almost all countries have largely canceled out those positive impacts (De Schutter, 2022). According to David Malpass, President of the World Bank (World Bank, 2022: 4):

“In the global fight to alleviate poverty and raise living standards, 2022 is likely to be one of the worst years in decades. Real median income has declined further in many countries, and the tragic reversals in development during the pandemic have worsened. Our June Global Economic Prospects report highlighted the risk of stagflation and the concentrated harm to the poor. Inequality is a prominent destabilizer, with global capital and income allocated primarily to high-income countries through their fiscal, monetary, and regulatory policy choices. Inequality is expected to worsen in coming years, leaving development goals out of reach for many.”

Some works of the literature (e.g., Asara et al., 2015; Kopnina, 2020; Kopnina, 2016; Blicharska et al., 2019; Bobulescu, 2022; Hickel et al., 2022) stated that what is really needed is to abandon GDP in favor of a saner measure of human progress that avoided endlessly increasing extraction and consumption. It adds that this has been discussed for a long time but repeatedly blocked by powerful interests in the SDG process and only transposed in a normal way to the very bottom of SDG 17, particularly to the target 17.19 “by 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries” (Table 1). With the publishing of The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021 (UN, 2021), the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on SDGs and the areas that require coordinated and swift action are now known. With particular regard to SDG 17, the report stated that this crisis, with its complex health, economic, social, and environmental dimensions, is further testing global and multi-stakeholder partnerships that were already fragile and unstable. It is noted that public assistance to development increased and remittance flows decreased less than expected in 2020; however, foreign direct investment decreased by 40%. The pandemic crisis has contributed not only to increasing, uneven, debt in many countries, but also constrained countries’ fiscal and policy scope for surgical investments in recovery and, necessarily, in SDGs.

Framing SDG 17 collaboration

Theory of collaborative advantage: what does this theory provide?

For one of the most extensive theorizations (Gray, 1985; Gray, 1989), collaboration is defined as the process by which stakeholders start from their differences and aim for constructive and mutually beneficial solutions which could not otherwise be found. According this perspective, collaboration appears as the constructive management of conflict and the herald of a mutually beneficial form of conflict (Gray, 1989; Gray, 1994). This conflict entails no moral connotations and merely corresponds to another name for the expression of differences. It is associated with shared power, in which stakeholders collectively decide on future paths and authorize each other to take action on behalf of that collective. It also predicts that successful collaborations bring together unequally empowered parties to share power at three distinct phases of the collaborative

TABLE 1 SDG 17 main areas and targets.

| Main area | Target |
|---|---|
| Finance | 17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax, and other revenue collection |
| | 17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments |
| | 17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources |
| | 17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief, and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress |
| | 17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries |
| Technology | 17.6 Enhance north–south, south–south, and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology, and innovation, and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism |
| | 17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination, and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed |
| | 17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017, and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology |
| Capacity building | 17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through north–south, south–south, and triangular cooperation |
| Trade | 17.10 Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory, and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda |
| | 17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020 |
| | 17.12 Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access |
| Systemic issues | <i>Policy and Institutional coherence</i> |
| | 17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence |
| | 17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development |
| | 17.15 Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development |
| | <i>Multi-stakeholder partnerships</i> |
| | 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 |
| | 17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public–private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships |
| | <i>Data monitoring and accountability</i> |
| | 17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing states, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely, and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts |
| 17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries | |

Source: adapted from UN (2015).

process, namely, defining the problem, identifying the direction, and ensuring its implementation.

Superficial assumptions about collaboration emerge when only its positive dimensions are highlighted (Wanna, 2008), associated with creativity, transformation, and beneficial outcomes. It becomes imperative to consider other less positive dimensions and a holistic view about this complex phenomenon. Analyzing the circumstances under which collaborative dynamics take place, namely, the context, the purpose, and the motivations of the stakeholders, as well as the

scale or the degree of collaboration, become essential to diagnose and understand the remarkable diversity of contrasting approaches and perspectives.

The theory of collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2004; Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Vangen and Huxham, 2013; Vangen and Huxham, 2010; Vangen and Huxham, 2005) discusses inter-organizational partnerships in addressing social, economic, and environmental problems that would otherwise be uncovered, and the partners alone could not address. It conceptualizes the

paradoxical nature of collaborations by pointing out the inherent contradictions and the existence of mutually exclusive elements created by the differences between the partners involved. In this discussion, two central concepts emerge, namely, the collaborative advantage and collaborative inertia. The former highlights the advantages of the collaborative processes. The latter emphasizes that many collaborative experiences show little or no progress and consequently tend to generate frustration and conflict. This double perspective is extremely pertinent because it makes both its positive and negative dimensions coexist in the debate on collaboration. If obtaining collaborative advantage is the goal for the parties initiating collaborative processes, why is collaborative inertia so often the result? This relevant question is related to the tensions existing in the course of these collaborative processes (Vangen and Huxham, 2005). Such tensions can be illustrated, for example, with making visible, or putting in the shade, the lack of commitment of some involved parties; including, or not, some decisive stakeholders; trying, or not, to put on the table all the objectives of all involved parties and to clarify their agendas and establish agreements.

Such tensions are framed and discussed in the theory of collaborative advantage from the following five main key elements: power, trust, goal management, organizational cultures, and leadership (Huxham and Vangen, 2004; Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Vangen and Huxham, 2013; Vangen and Huxham, 2010; Vangen and Huxham, 2005). Power is a phenomenon that points to conditions for action, which produces effects, and are therefore related to capacity and empowerment, and to asymmetrical relationships between partners, necessarily associated with domination structures and practices. Trust between partner organizations can be extended over time, with the latter moving on to initiatives, in which they are willing to assume higher levels of risk. Goal management makes it clear that rather than the alignment of goals that is characteristic of a traditional approach, it is important to safeguard the diversity of goals over knowledge and resources as a guarantee of a true collaborative advantage. The diversity of organizational cultures proves to be particularly pertinent to diagnose not only the virtualities of partnership work but also the tensions that arise from it and the need to intervene regarding them. Finally, leadership enables the intersection of the four previous dimensions. Actually, when emphasizing a contextual approach on leadership, the theory of collaborative advantage suggests the need for a parsimonious monitoring of power relationships and of the diversity of partners' organizational agendas. Both needs are crucial to ensure the representation of their members and the promotion of trust relationships that empower toward the management and achievement of the goals set for the collaborative relationship. These five key elements, now briefly introduced, are discussed in the following section in articulation with the premises that characterize SDG 17.

SDG 17 main aims and targets: contradictions and tensions

According to the UN, SDG 17 aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development in five areas, namely, finance, technology, capacity

building, trade, and systemic issues (policy and institutional coherence, enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and data monitoring and accountability), covering nineteen targets (17.1–17.9) (UN, 2015). To achieve such a goal, specific pathways stand out. The pathway of a global partnership for sustainable development led by the governments of different countries to strengthen the international cooperation and the pathway of development assistance are the two types of pathways. Both constitute a field where the use of multi-stakeholder partnerships at global, regional, national, and local levels is another important pathway to promote and share knowledge, technology, know-how, and financial resources to support the implementation of SDGs. The main focus of this global partnership calls for support from countries considered developed and richer to developing and less developed countries (UN, 2023).

As shown in Table 1, main areas and targets of SDG 17 are fundamentally structured around the economic dimension of sustainable development. This is in contradiction with the 2030 agenda statements. Actually, the 2030 agenda stresses that SDGs prove to be integrated, indivisible, and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, and environmental), which should be achieved through economic growth and development (UN, 2015). As aforementioned in the article, this model of market-supported growth has been much criticized on the basis that it is likely to deepen rather than reduce social and environmental problems (Washington, 2018; Washington, 2015; Asara et al., 2015; Easterly, 2015; Kopnina, 2020; Kopnina, 2016; Washington et al., 2017; Blicharska et al., 2019; Sachs et al., 2019; Bobulescu, 2022). This literature has criticized ideas about economic growth and industrial development as they are associated with climate change and pollution, with natural resource scarcity, planetary-scale biodiversity decline, and increased social inequalities. This critical approach is anchored in the oxymoronic purpose of continuous economic growth, which suggested increasing consumption of natural resources and somehow miraculously sustaining these resources for future generations (Kopnina, 2020).

Apart from the aforementioned contradiction, the SDG 17 partnership for the goals postulated that every country should feature partnerships to promote sustainable development. This assumes that partnerships are desirable for sustainable development. To what extent this postulate is consensual? There is a need to raise awareness of ambiguity, complexity, and dynamics in the membership of collaboration in the 2030 agenda. In this context, the mobilization of the theory of collaborative advantage, characterized in the previous section, proves to be pertinent to discuss this issue because it encourages critical reflection on the ideas of the sustainable development and global partnership. The ideas and arguments in favor of global partnership to achieve sustainable development contribute to reproducing the traditional model of cooperation for development, anchored on a public assistance provision for development by developed countries to developing countries. Table 1 illustrates exactly that, as the five main areas flagged are clearly linked to assistance approaches, which do not exactly invest in institutional and human capacity building. This concern is already evident in the 1974 United Nations Declaration on the Establishment of a New Economic Order

(NIEO) (United Nations, 1974) that was directed very much at addressing the problem of inequality between the states that gained their independence in the years following the Second World War, and also in the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States (CERDS) voted in the same year, where the right to development first appeared. NIEO has been characterized by a clear dichotomy between the countries from the first and third worlds (Whelan, 2015). Globalization process has made such categorizations questionable and nowadays inequalities between rich and poor people are the most worrying and whose political effects will be deeply felt at the heart of the rich countries themselves (Anghie, 2019).

SDG 17 does not clearly distinguish the following different concepts, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. However, they need to be clarified as they point to three ascending levels of relationship (Keast, 2011). Cooperation is regarded as a reduced level of connection, nurtured by the exchange of information; coordination is characterized by the alignment of resources and efforts, and finally, collaboration aims at changing systems through interdependent relationships. SDG 17 postulates an understanding of collaboration from a set of superficial assumptions, which tend to emphasize only the positive dimensions (Wanna, 2008), linked to transformation, innovation, creativity, and beneficial outcomes, and to marginalize negative dimensions, as shown in Table 1. It is therefore imperative to consider both dimensions and a holistic view of this complex phenomenon that addresses concepts such as collaborative advantage and collaborative inertia. Actually, it is urgent to consider the synergies that can be created, as well as the situations in which few or no positive transformations are observed in the approach to social, economic, and environmental problems, and, consequently, lead to frustration and conflicts. The five areas characterized in Table 1—finance, technology, capacity building, trade, and systemic issues—due to their amplitude and complexity of actors involved—developed and developing countries—make this approach imperative, given the challenges inherent to collaborative contexts often pointed out by incongruent goals, lack of trust, cultural diversity, ambiguities, and tensions.

Based on the assumptions of the theory of collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Huxham and Vangen, 2004; Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Vangen and Huxham, 2013; Vangen and Huxham, 2010), a collaborating approach to SDG 17 is proposed and discussed, considering the following key elements: power relations, trust, goal management, organizational cultures, and leadership, in the following section.

SDG 17 and the key elements of the theory of collaborative advantage: discussing ambiguities, complexities, and tensions

SDG 17 and power relations

The phenomenon of power is omnipresent on the agenda of SDG 17. Table 1 suggests this issue by mentioning the existence of multi-stakeholder partnerships between developed and developing countries. Power implies relations of autonomy and dependency (Giddens, 1984), recognizing that even the most autonomous parties are to some extent dependent, while the most dependent exhibits

margins of autonomy. In the context of the analysis on SDG 17, and in order to strengthen the understanding of power relations and to contribute to changing the exercise of power at different global, national, regional, and local levels (Gupta and Vegelin, 2016), it is particularly relevant to consider the debate on strategic power analysis (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977). For the latter, power constitutes a strategic relation between organizational parties. It is a relation and not an attribute of the parties, so it is developed through an exchange in certain organizational spaces and times. So far, as each relationship implies exchange and adaptation, it is assumed that power is inseparable from negotiation. Power relations thus have three fundamental characteristics. First, they are instrumental relations, in the course of which the actors mobilize resources. Second, they are non-transitive relations since they are inseparable from the actors and their specific contexts. Third, they are reciprocal and unbalanced relations since they imply trade, although the terms of the trade (the resources) are unequal.

Power is thus seen as a relation of force, in which one party may take advantage of the other, although also one party is never totally destitute towards the other. Within this SDG 17 strategic power analysis, collaborative structures and operating dynamics determine the organizational places (global, regional, national, and local levels) where power relations can be developed (Sachs et al., 2019; Bulmer et al., 2022). The definition of the greatest predictability of action in certain collaborative contexts and the regulation of procedures contribute to the construction and circumscription of uncertainty organizational areas that the parties wish to control so that they can use them according to the goals they intend to reach. Prescription reduces uncertainty, although it never eliminates it. As a matter of fact, areas of uncertainty are present in all power relations within the scope of collaborative relationships between developed and developing countries because, although one of the parties has the advantage, there is always uncertainty as to the goals and intentions of the other party (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977). The parties always play with the duality of the foreseen and unforeseen, which promotes a margin of maneuver and freedom that they try to expand in order to obtain advantages. At the same time, they try to reduce the areas of uncertainty of the other party, making its behavior predictable. This is, therefore, a crucial approach to counter hegemonic views on top-down relationships of developed countries toward developing countries.

SDG 17 and trust

Within these tensions and uncertainties raised by the SDG 17 multi-stakeholder partnerships, it is important to emphasize the key element of trust suggested by the theory of collaborative advantage. Although trust is a pre-existing condition to these partnerships, it rarely happens, which implies creating and developing trust bonds, according to the trust management cycle model (Huxham and Vangen, 2013). In this model, two aspects relevant to initiating a relationship of trust are emphasized: on one hand, the process of forming expectations about the future of the collaboration, particularly the bases that supports it (e.g., reputational level, past behaviors, and formalization of agreements and contracts); and on the other hand, the assumption of risks, as the parties involved need to trust enough to take risks regarding the beginning of the collaborative process. Safeguarding these two aspects, trust can gradually be built up by

designing achievable goals to be successfully fulfilled and thus strengthened by providing the indispensable foundations for a more ambitious collaboration. Trust can be developed over time, gradually leading to initiatives where partner entities are willing to assume higher risks as a higher level of trust is also established. In situations where the levels of risk and uncertainty are considerable, the option of a management that involves incremental increases in resource commitments may be the preferred strategy (Huxham and Vangen, 2013). However, in scenarios with large asymmetries, such as those characterizing SDG 17, the collaborative advantage to be achieved may require partner entities to be more ambitious and consequently take a higher attitude toward risk.

SDG 17 and goals management

The discussion of SDG 17 is revitalized by bringing into the debate the goal management key element of the theory of collaborative advantage as it suggests three important issues: first, a distancing from a more traditional vision, which defines an alignment of goals between the parties involved so that collaboration can take place (Huxham and Vangen, 2013); second, the recognition of the importance of the variety of knowledge and resources; and third, the diversity of goals in order to achieve a true collaborative advantage. Therefore, this approach points to the existence of paradoxical goals, which, by integrating a tension between congruence and diversity in goals, influence the success of collaboration. Recognizing this tension is particularly pertinent to understand what is at stake in SDG 17 different and complex global, regional, national, and local levels (Stott and Scopetta, 2020). Actually, this tension can be better understood by considering the following dimensions: level (collaborative, organizational, and individual), origin (external stakeholders and members), authenticity (genuine and pseudo), relevance (collaboration-dependent and collaboration-independent), content (collaborative process and substantive purpose), and overtness (explicit, unstated, and hidden) (Huxham and Vangen, 2013). Regarding the collaboration level, the collaborative modality corresponds to the public manifestation of the intended collaboration advantage, while the organizational and individual levels concern the collaboration aspirations of the organizations and individuals involved. Concerning origin, although goals mostly express the agenda of the collaboration members, they are also influenced by the goals of organizations or individuals external to the collaboration. Regarding authenticity, the goals expressed by external stakeholders may be genuine statements about what they aspire to achieve or pseudo-goals, in the sense that stakeholders may disguise or make up goals that legitimize their own involvement in the collaboration. The relevance dimension recognizes that there are goals achievable by stakeholders with and without using collaboration. The content of the goals focuses on the purpose of the collaboration, which may include the need to access resources and knowledge, share risks, increase efficiency, and improve coordination in the provision of services and learning. They may also focus on the processes of collaboration, regarding for instance the communication strategies, the relationship modalities between the stakeholders, among other possibilities. The last dimension is related to the fact that goals may be openly discussed and explicitly stated, as well as hidden either deliberately or by the lack of adequate opportunities to make

explicit the goals deemed relevant to stakeholders. The recognition of the existence of paradoxical goals in the collaborating approach to SDG 17 under discussion in this article is very pertinent as it implies greater awareness on the recognition that tensions are multiple and need to be diagnosed and incorporated in the different management action tools related to the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

SDG 17 and organizational cultures

The diversity of organizational cultures among the collaborative parties proves to be fundamental on SDG 17 as it emphasizes two relevant dimensions. On one hand, the phenomena of creativity, stimulation, and reward, and on the other hand, the source of potential conflicts of values, beliefs, and behaviors capable of compromising collaborative relationships (Huxham and Vangen, 2013). As in the goal management key element, within organizational cultures also emerge paradoxical aspects and tensions underlying organizational cultures that need to be identified and incorporated in the management mechanisms in order to generate more collaborative advantage than collaborative inertia. The particular issue of multi-stakeholder partnerships, mentioned in Table 1, deserves to be emphasized in this discussion because in the SDG Partnership Guidebook, it is defined as follows “An ongoing collaborative relationship between or among organizations from different stakeholder types aligning their interests around a common vision, combining their complementary resources and competencies and sharing risk, to maximize value creation toward the Sustainable Development Goals and deliver benefit to each of the partners” (Stibbe and Prescott, 2020: 23). This is a two-level limited conceptualization: first, by assuming that the diversity of stakeholders is always desirable, and second, by assuming the alignment of interests toward a common vision as a condition for sustainable development. What is discussed in organizational cultures and in the goal management key elements allows to refute this mainstream view of the virtuous relationships between multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as the government, business sector, non-governmental organizations, academia, social partners, and civil society.

SDG 17 and leadership

Considering the key elements previously discussed, the concern with leadership is obviously important. However, this is not classical leadership but a leadership profile clearly marked by context (Huxham and Vangen, 2013), requiring the ability to manage the contributions of multiple organizations, as well as to manage relationships between partner entities. Actually, contextual leadership implies knowing how to manage powers and control the stakeholders agendas, representing their members and empowering them for achieving the goals set for the collaborative relationship. Similar to the paradoxical perspectives previously indicated, the theory of collaborative advantage also considers that leadership can assume either a positive dimension, in the sense of integrating, empowering, involving, and mobilizing, or a negative dimension through manipulation and instrumentalization of power relations. When it comes to multi-stakeholder profiles working in areas strongly diverse, as documented in Table 1, managing collaborative processes and practices proves to be a

demanding challenge full of difficulties (Huxham and Vangen, 2013). Overcoming them does not involve complying with a list of normative guidelines about what stakeholders may do to achieve successes, suggested, for example, in publications such as *The SDG partnership guidebook* (Stibbe and Prescott, 2020). Moreover, these successes are always relative depending on the expectations and behaviors of stakeholders and their members (Vangen and Huxham, 2010), as well as on the choice of indicators that enable them to be measured.

Conclusion

This article aims to critically examine the evolution and implementation of the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development, with a particular focus on its collaborative approach. To this end, it mobilizes the theory of collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Huxham and Vangen, 2004; Huxham and Vangen, 2013) to analyze the SDG 17 Global Partnerships, discussing its main key elements, such as power relations, trust, goal management, organizational cultures, and leadership. The paper contribution is threefold: first, it enables debating collaborative advantages and inertias of the collaborating process; second, it provides important insights into revolutionizing the *status quo* on the current mainstream debate around of sustainable development through the global partnership paradigm; third, it questions a model of sustained growth, which has been contributing to widening social and environmental problems (Kopnina, 2020; Kopnina, 2016; Blicharska et al., 2019; Bobulescu, 2022).

Transforming the vision of collaboration and the rhetoric about enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development is no small task at the best of times, and it may seem impossible to achieve in such overwhelming times (UN, 2021; Eurostat, 2023). However, pandemic experiences may

actually help us imagine and enact a different collaborating approach to SDG 17 to ensure less politics and actions of the tribe (Sennett, 2013) and more politics and actions of complexity that contribute to offer new ways of seeing and answer to wicked economic, social, and environmental problems.

Author contributions

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

Funding

This work was funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology under Project UIDB/00727/2020.

Conflict of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors, and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

References

- Andonova, L. B., Faul, M. V., and Piselli, D. (2022). *Partnerships for sustainability in contemporary global governance: Pathways to effectiveness*. Taylor and Francis, 308.
- Anghie, A. (2019). Inequality, human rights, and the new international economic order. *Humanity An Int. J. Hum. Rights, Humanit. Dev.* 10 (3), 429–442. doi:10.1353/hum.2019.0016
- Asara, V., Otero, I., Demaria, F., and Corbera, E. (2015). Socially sustainable degrowth as a social-ecological transformation: Repoliticizing sustainability. *Sustain. Sci.* 10, 375–384. doi:10.1007/s11625-015-0321-9
- Banerjee, A., Murphy, E., and Walsh, P. P. (2022). "National partnerships for the sustainable development goals: Multi-stakeholder partnerships in Ireland," in *Partnerships and the sustainable development goals. Sustainable development goals series*. Editors E. Murphy, A. Banerjee, and P. P. Walsh (Cham: Springer). doi:10.1007/978-3-031-07461-5_7
- Banerjee, A., Murphy, E., and Walsh, P. P. (2020). Perceptions of multistakeholder partnerships for the sustainable development goals: A case study of Irish non-state actors. *Sustainability* 12 (21), 8872. doi:10.3390/su12218872
- Bebbington, J., and Unerman, J. (2018). Achieving the united Nations sustainable development goals: An enabling role for accounting research, accounting. *Auditing Account. J.* 31 (1), 2–24. doi:10.1108/AAAJ-05-2017-2929
- Blicharska, M., Smithers, R. J., Mikusiński, G., Rönnbäck, P., Harrison, P. A., Nilsson, M., et al. (2019). Biodiversity's contributions to sustainable development. *Nat. Sustain.* 2, 1083–1093. doi:10.1038/s41893-019-0417-9
- Bobulescu, R. (2022). Wake up, managers, times have changed! A plea for degrowth pedagogy in business schools. *Policy Futur. Educ.* 20 (2), 188–200. doi:10.1177/14782103211031499
- Bulmer, E., Riviera, M., and Rosa, J. A. (2022). Analysing SDG 17, a critical approach. *J. Leg. Ethical Regul. Issues* 25 (4), 1–7.
- Butcher, J. R., Gilchrist, D. J., John Phillimore, J., and Wanna, J. (2019). Attributes of effective collaboration: Insights from five case studies in Australia and New Zealand. *Policy Des. Pract.* 2 (1), 75–89. doi:10.1080/25741292.2018.1561815
- Clarke, A., and MacDonald, A. (2019). Outcomes to partners in multi-stakeholder cross-sector partnerships: A resource-based view. *Bus. Soc.* 58 (2), 298–332. doi:10.1177/0007650316660534
- Cornwall, A., and Brock, K. (2005). What do buzzwords do for development policy? A critical look at 'participation', 'empowerment' and 'poverty reduction'. *Third World Q.* 26 (7), 1043–1060. doi:10.1080/01436590500235603
- Crozier, M., and Friedberg, E. (1977). *L'acteur et le système. Les contraintes de l'action collective*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- De Schutter, O. (2022). "Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights," in *Banning discrimination on grounds of socioeconomic disadvantage: An essential tool in the fight against poverty* (United Nations: General Assembly). A/77/157.
- Du Pisani, J. A. (2006). Sustainable development-historical roots of the concept. *Environ. Sci.* 3, 83–96. doi:10.1080/15693430600688831
- Easterly, W. (2015). The trouble with the sustainable development goals. *Curr. Hist.* 114 (775), 322–324. doi:10.1525/curh.2015.114.775.322
- Eurostat (2023). *Sustainable Development in the European Union - Monitoring Report on Progress towards the SDGs in an EU Context*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

- Eweje, G., Sajjad, A., Nath, S. D., and Kobayashi, K. (2021). Multi-stakeholder partnerships: A catalyst to achieve sustainable development goals. *Mark. Intell. Plan.* 39 (2), 186–212. doi:10.1108/mip-04-2020-0135
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- P. Glasbergen, F. Biermann, and A. P. Mol (Editors) (2007). *Partnerships, governance and sustainable development: Reflections on theory and practice* (Edward Elgar Publishing).
- Glasbergen, P. (2007). "Setting the scene: The partnership paradigm in the making," in *Partnerships, governance and sustainable development: Reflections on theory and practice*, 1–25.
- Gorman, D. (2022). "Sdg 17 – the history of global partnerships and international cooperation," in *Before the UN sustainable development goals: A historical companion*. Editors M. Gutmann and D. Gorman online edn (Oxford: Oxford Academic), 2022. (Accessed June 27, 2023). doi:10.1093/oso/9780192848758.003.0018
- Gray, B. (1994). A feminist critique of collaborating. *J. Manag. Inq.* 3, 286–293. doi:10.1177/105649269433011
- Gray, B. (1989). *Collaborating: Finding common ground for multiparty problems*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gray, B. (1985). Conditions facilitating interorganizational collaboration. *Hum. Relat.* 38, 911–936. doi:10.1177/001872678503801001
- Gray, B., and Purdy, J. (2018). *Collaborating for our future: Multistakeholder partnerships for solving complex problems*. Oxford University Press.
- Gupta, J., and Vegelin, C. (2016). Sustainable development goals and inclusive development. *Int. Environ. Agreements* 16, 433–448. doi:10.1007/s10784-016-9323-z
- Hickel, J., Kallis, G., Jackson, T., O'Neill, D. W., Schor, J. B., Steinberger, J. K., et al. (2022). Degrowth can work - here's how science can help. *Nat. Dec* 612 (7940), 400–403. doi:10.1038/d41586-022-04412-x
- Hickel, J. (2021). What does degrowth mean? A few points of clarification. *Globalizations* 18 (7), 1105–1111. doi:10.1080/14747731.2020.1812222
- Huxham, C., and Vangen, S. (2000). Ambiguity, complexity and dynamics in the membership of collaboration. *Hum. Relat.* 53 (6), 771–806. doi:10.1177/0018726700536002
- Huxham, C., and Vangen, S. (2004). Doing things collaboratively: Realizing the advantage or succumbing to inertia? *Eng. Manag. Rev.* 32, 11–20. doi:10.1109/emr.2004.25132
- Huxham, C., and Vangen, S. (2013). *Managing to collaborate: The theory and practice of collaborative advantage*. London: Routledge.
- Keast, R. (2011). Joined-up governance in Australia: How the past can inform the future. *Int. J. Public Adm.* 34 (4), 221–231. doi:10.1080/01900692.2010.549799
- Kolk, A., Van Tulder, R., and Kostwinder, E. (2008). Business and partnerships for development. *Eur. Manag. J.* 26, 262–273. doi:10.1016/j.emj.2008.01.007
- Kopnina, H. (2020). Education for the future? Critical evaluation of education for sustainable development goals. *J. Environ. Educ.* 51 (4), 280–291. doi:10.1080/00958964.2019.1710444
- Kopnina, H. (2016). The victims of unsustainability: A challenge to sustainable development goals. *Int. J. Sustain. Dev. World Ecol.* 23 (2), 113–121. doi:10.1080/13504509.2015.1111269
- Leal Filho, W., Azeiteiro, U., Alves, F., PaceMifsud, P. M., Brandli, L., Caeiro, S., et al. (2018). Reinvigorating the sustainable development research agenda: The role of the sustainable development goals (SDG). *Int. J. Sustain. Dev. World Ecol.* 25 (2), 131–142. doi:10.1080/13504509.2017.1342103
- Leal Filho, W., Tripathi, S. K., Andrade Guerra, J. B. S. O. D., Giné-Garriga, R., Orlovic Lovren, V., and Willats, J. (2019). Using the sustainable development goals towards a better understanding of sustainability challenges. *Int. J. Sustain. Dev. World Ecol.* 26 (2), 179–190. doi:10.1080/13504509.2018.1505674
- MacDonald, A., Clarke, A., and Huang, L. (2022). "Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainability: Designing decision-making processes for partnership capacity," in *Business and the ethical implications of technology*. Editors K. Martin, K. Shilton, and J. Smith (Cham: Springer). doi:10.1007/978-3-031-18794-0_7
- Martens, J. (2020). "The role of public and private actors and means in implementing the SDGs: Reclaiming the public policy space for sustainable development and human rights," in *Sustainable development goals and human rights. Interdisciplinary studies in human rights, vol 5*. Editors M. Kaltenborn, M. Krajewski, and H. Kuhn (Cham: Springer). doi:10.1007/978-3-030-30469-0_12
- Marx, A. (2019). Public-private partnerships for sustainable development: Exploring their design and its impact on effectiveness. *Sustainability* 11, 1087. doi:10.3390/su11041087
- McKenzie, M., Bieler, A., and McNeil, R. (2015). Education policy mobility: Reimagining sustainability in neoliberal times. *Environ. Educ. Res.* 21, 319–337. doi:10.1080/13504622.2014.993934
- Meadows, D. H., Meadows, D. L., Randers, J., and Behrens, W. (1972). *The limits to growth*. New York: Universe Books.
- Nilsson, M., Griggs, D., and Visbeck, M. (2016). Policy: Map the interactions between sustainable development goals. *Nature* 534, 320–322. doi:10.1038/534320a
- Pineda-Escobar, M. A. (2019). Moving the 2030 agenda forward: SDG implementation in Colombia. *Corp. Gov.* 19 (1), 176–188. doi:10.1108/CG-11-2017-0268
- Prescott, D., and Stibbe, D. (2015). Collaboration for the SDGs: Exploring the support system for effective partnering. Available at: <https://thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/research-papers/collaboration-for-the-sdgs-support-system/> (Accessed June 27, 2023).
- Purvis, B., Mao, Y., and Robinson, D. (2019). Three pillars of sustainability: In search of conceptual origins. *Sustain. Sci.* 14, 681–695. doi:10.1007/s11625-018-0627-5
- Rashed, A. H., and Shah, A. (2021). The role of private sector in the implementation of sustainable development goals. *Environ. Dev. Sustain* 23, 2931–2948. doi:10.1007/s10668-020-00718-w
- Reinsberg, B., and Westerwinter, O. (2021). The global governance of international development: Documenting the rise of multi-stakeholder partnerships and identifying underlying theoretical explanations. *Rev. Int. Organ.* 16, 59–94. doi:10.1007/s11558-019-09362-0
- Sachs, J. D., Schmidt-Traub, G., Mazzucato, M., Messner, D., Nakicenovic, N., and Rockstrom, J. (2019). Six transformations to achieve the sustainable development goals. *Nat. Sustain.* 2, 805–814. doi:10.1038/s41893-019-0352-9
- Schleicher, J., Schaafsma, M., and Vira, B. (2018). Will the Sustainable Development Goals address the links between poverty and the natural environment? *Curr. Opin. Environ. Sustain.* 34, 43–47. doi:10.1016/j.cosust.2018.09.004
- Schumacher, E. F. (1973). *Small is beautiful: A study of economics as if people mattered*. London: Blond and Briggs.
- Sengupta, U., and Sengupta, U. (2022). SDG-11 and smart cities: Contradictions and overlaps between social and environmental justice research agendas. *Front. Sociol.* 7, 995603. doi:10.3389/fsoc.2022.995603
- Sennett, R. (2013). *Together, the rituals and pleasures of cooperation*. London: Penguin Books.
- Steijn, B., Klijn, E. H., and Edelenbos, J. (2011). Public private partnerships: Added value by organizational form or management? *Public Adm.* 89, 1235–1252. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9299.2010.01877.x
- Stibbe, D., and Prescott, D. (2020). *The SDG partnership guidebook: A practical guide to building high-impact multi-stakeholder partnerships for the sustainable development goals*. UNDESA.
- Stott, L., and Scopetta, A. (2020). "Partnerships for the goals: Beyond SDG 17," in *Revista Diecisiete Investigación Interdisciplinaria para los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible*, 29–38.
- Su, H., Krol, M. S., and Hogeboom, R. J. (2022). The role of context in identifying linkages between SDG 2 (food) and SDG 6 (water). *Sustain. Sci.* 17, 1605–1618. doi:10.1007/s11625-022-01158-3
- United Nations (1992). *Agenda 21*. Rio de Janeiro: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.
- United Nations (1974). *Declaration on the establishment of a new international economic order*. UN. General assembly (6th special sess).
- United Nations (2023). Goal 17 strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. Available online at: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal17> (Accessed January 2, 2023).
- United Nations (2002). *Johannesburg declaration on sustainable development*. Joanesburgo.
- United Nations (2012). *Resolution adopted by the general assembly on 27 July 2012 – the future we want*. Rio de Janeiro.
- United Nations (2001). *Road map towards the implementation of the united Nations Millennium declaration*. New York: Report of the Secretary-General. A/56/326).
- United Nations (2015). Sustainable development goals. Available online at: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html> (Accessed June 28, 2023).
- United Nations (2021). "The sustainable development goals report 2021," in *The decade of action for the sustainable development goals* (New York).
- United Nations (2016). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations (2005). United Nations general assembly resolution 60/214 2005. Available online: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/60/214> (Accessed on June 27, 2023).
- Utting, P., and Zammit, A. (2009). United nations-business partnerships: Good intentions and contradictory agendas. *J. Bus. Ethics* 90, 39–56. doi:10.1007/s10551-008-9917-7
- Vangen, S., and Huxham, C. (2005). *Aiming for collaborative advantage: Challenging the concept of shared vision*. Advanced Institute of Management Research Paper, 015.

- Vangen, S., and Huxham, C. (2013). "Building and using the theory of collaborative advantage," in *Network theory in the public sector: Building new theoretical frameworks*. Editors R. Keast, M. P. Mandell, and R. Agranoff (New York: Routledge), 51–69.
- Vangen, S., and Huxham, C. (2010). "Introducing the theory of collaborative advantage," in *The new public governance? Emerging perspectives on the theory and practice of public governance*. Editor S. P. Osborne (London: Routledge), 163–184.
- Wanna, J. (2008). "Collaborative government: Meanings, dimensions, drivers and outcomes," in *Collaborative governance: A new era of public policy in Australia?* Editors J. Wanna and J. O'Flynn (Australia and New Zealand: ANU Press), 3–12.
- Washington, H. (2018). Education for wonder. *Educ. Sci.* 8 (3), 125–139. doi:10.3390/educsci8030125
- Washington, H. (2015). "Is 'sustainability' the same as 'sustainable development,'" in *Sustainability: Key issues*. Editors H. Kopnina and E. Shoreman-Ouimet (New York: Routledge), 359–376.
- Washington, H., Taylor, B., Kopnina, H., et al. (2017). Why ecocentrism is the key pathway to sustainability. *Ecol. Citiz.* 1 (1), 32–41.
- WCED (1987). *Our common future -the Brundtland report*. Cape Town, South Africa: WCED.
- Whelan, D. J. (2015). Under the aegis of man: The right to development and the origins of the new international economic order. *Humanity An Int. J. Hum. Rights, Humanit. Dev.* 6 (1), 93–108. doi:10.1353/hum.2015.0007
- World Bank (2022). *Annual report 2022, helping countries to adapt to a changing world*. The World Bank.