

The Perspectives and Roles of Multinational Enterprises in Local Sustainable Development

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

As the rate of urbanization increases, cities face mounting socio-ecological challenges. At the local level, businesses are essential for developing cities and livelihoods and providing services to local communities. Local sustainable development addresses pressing urban challenges and future opportunities by mobilizing and empowering multi-level actors for creating transformative changes for societal systems, yet there is limited research linking the private sector, multinational enterprises (MNEs) in particular, and their impact on sustainable development at the local level. MNEs bring distinct strengths to the sustainable development agenda, including: their access to capital, resources, and advanced technology; their ability to transfer resources globally; and their impact on the global economy. Together, their collective resources and assets enable MNEs to reach large-scale solutions needed to coordinate and mobilize pathways for accelerating local sustainable development.

The study used a mixed methods research approach to analyze sustainability reports uploaded and registered to the Global Reporting Initiative's Sustainability Disclosure Database and filtered reports by MNEs with explicit reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In total, the study analyzed 349 sustainability reports. Through discourse and frame analysis, qualitative content analysis, and bivariate analysis, reports were examined to analyze how MNEs frame local-level sustainability efforts and to identify the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development.

The results show that MNEs frame their local-level efforts with sustainability through five perspectives: corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, partnerships, sustainable development, and environmental, social, and corporate governance. The results also identify 10 roles that MNEs can play in local sustainable development, namely through three dominant categories: enabling, facilitating, and coordinating roles. MNEs contribute to local sustainable development as an awareness raiser, community capacity builder, consultant, employee developer, financier, innovator, leverager of supply chains and procurement, partner, product and service provider, and program deliverer.

In conclusion, this thesis helps organizations and practitioners leverage the engagement of MNEs by providing an understanding of how MNEs legitimize their own actions towards society through the self-declaration of contributions in their sustainability reports which frame their efforts on local-level sustainability. The results show that MNEs are indeed willing to participate in efforts for local sustainable development and have the capacities, resources, and willingness to contribute to local sustainable development planning.

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Table of Contents

Author’s Declaration	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures.....	viii
List of Tables	ix
List of Abbreviations	x
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Problem Statement	3
1.2 Research Questions.....	3
1.3 Research Objectives.....	4
1.4 Thesis Outline	4
Chapter 2: Literature Review	6
2.1 Sustainable Development, Sustainability, and the SDGs.....	6
2.1.1 Sustainable Development and Sustainability	6
2.1.1.1 Local Sustainable Development.....	7
2.1.2 UN Sustainable Development Goals.....	8
2.1.2.1 Localizing the SDGs	9
2.2 Business Engagement and Sustainability.....	9
2.2.1 Corporate Sustainability.....	9
2.3 MNEs Engagement with Sustainability and the SDGs.....	11
2.3.1 Defining MNEs.....	11
2.3.2 MNEs and Sustainability	12
2.3.2.1 Sustainability Strategies of MNEs	13
2.3.3 MNEs and the UN SDGs	16
2.3.3.1 MNEs and Sustainability Engagement on SDG-related Topics.....	16
2.3.3.2 MNEs and Implementation of the SDGs	18
2.3.4 Drivers of MNEs’ Engagement with Sustainability and the SDGs	19
2.3.4.1 Internal Drivers	19
2.3.4.2 External Drivers	21
2.4 MNEs and Sustainability Reporting.....	22
2.4.1 Sustainability Reporting.....	22
2.4.2 Trends in Sustainability Reporting	23
2.4.3 Limitations and Challenges of Sustainability Reporting	24
2.5 MNEs’ Framing of Local-Level Sustainability	25
2.5.1 MNEs’ Home and Host Country Engagement in Local Communities	26
2.5.2 MNEs and Local Embeddedness	28
2.5.3 MNEs’ Business-in-Society Relationships	29
2.6 Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development.....	31
2.6.1 Enabling Roles	31

2.6.1.1 Financer.....	31
2.6.1.2 Capacity Builder	34
2.6.1.3 Product and Service Provider.....	35
2.6.2 Facilitating Roles	36
2.6.2.1 Partner	36
2.6.2.2 Innovator	38
2.7 Literature Conclusion	41
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	42
3.1 Pragmatism and Mixed Methods	42
3.2 Methods.....	43
3.2.1 Data Collection	43
3.2.1.1 Selection of Sustainability Reports/Companies	44
3.2.1.2 Population Group	47
3.2.2 Data Analysis	48
3.2.2.1 Coding.....	49
3.2.2.2 Bivariate Pearson Correlation	53
3.3 Limitations	55
3.4 Reliability and Validity	55
3.5 Summary	57
Chapter 4: Empirical Results	58
4.1 Part A – Framing of Local-level Sustainability.....	58
4.1.1 Frame 1: Corporate Social Responsibility	60
4.1.2 Frame 2: Corporate Citizenship	62
4.1.3 Frame 3: Partnerships	63
4.1.4 Frame 4: Sustainable Development	65
4.1.5 Frame 5: Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance.....	66
4.2 Part B – Roles of MNEs.....	68
4.2.1 Qualitative Results	69
4.2.1.1 Awareness Raiser.....	69
4.2.1.2 Community Capacity Builder	70
4.2.1.3 Consultant	72
4.2.1.4 Employee Development	73
4.2.1.5 Financer.....	74
4.2.1.6 Innovator	76
4.2.1.7 Leveraging Supply Chains and Procurement.....	77
4.2.1.8 Partner	78
4.2.1.9 Product and Service Provider.....	79
4.2.1.10 Program Deliverer.....	81
4.2.2 Quantitative Results	81
4.2.2.1 Roles of MNEs by Sector.....	82
4.2.2.2 Roles of MNEs by HQ Region.....	86
4.3 Chapter Summary	87
Chapter 5: Discussion	88
5.1 Research Question 1	88
5.1.1 Frame 1: Corporate Social Responsibility	90
5.1.2 Frame 2: Corporate Citizenship	91
5.1.3 Frame 3: Partnerships	92
5.1.4 Frame 4: Sustainable Development	93

5.1.5 Frame 5: Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance.....	94
5.2 <i>Research Question 2</i>	95
5.2.1 Awareness Raiser.....	96
5.2.2 Community Capacity Builder	97
5.2.3 Consultant	98
5.2.4 Employee Development.....	99
5.2.5 Financer.....	100
5.2.6 Innovator	101
5.2.7 Leveraging Supply Chains and Procurement.....	102
5.2.8 Partner	103
5.2.9 Product and Service Provider.....	104
5.2.10 Program Deliverer.....	105
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	107
6.1 <i>Contributions to Theory</i>	107
6.2 <i>Contributions to Practice and Recommendations</i>	110
6.3 <i>Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research</i>	111
6.4 <i>Concluding Summary</i>	113
References.....	114
Appendices.....	144
<i>Appendix A – Conditions of MNEs’ Engagement in Different Country Contexts</i>	144
<i>Appendix B – Full List of MNEs and Organizational Data</i>	149
<i>Appendix C – MNEs by Sector</i>	160
<i>Appendix D – Combined Sectors</i>	168

List of Figures

Figure 1. Categories of the SDGs Derived from UN (2015, p. 2) and Kolk et al. (2017, p. 11).	17
Figure 2. Hierarchy of Nodes for MNEs Framing of Local-level Sustainability.....	50
Figure 3. Nodes and Sub-nodes of MNEs' Framing of Sustainability.....	51
Figure 4. Hierarchy of Nodes for Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development	52
Figure 5. Nodes and Sub-nodes of the Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development	53
Figure 6. Solar Correlation Map of Significant Relationships between MNEs' Sectors and Roles	85
Figure 7. Solar Correlation Map of Significant Relationships between MNEs' HQ Region and Roles	87
Figure 8. Values of MNEs' Framing of Local-level Sustainability	90

List of Tables

Table 1. MNE Profile Data from GRI Data Legend	12
Table 2. Sustainability Strategies by MNEs	15
Table 3. Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development.....	39
Table 4. Number of MNEs by Sector	47
Table 5. MNEs' Discourse of Local-level Sustainability	59
Table 6. Reports by Overlapping Terms	59
Table 7. Frames of MNEs' Engagement in Local Communities for Sustainability	59
Table 8. Roles of MNEs from Empirical Data Analysis.....	68
Table 9. Roles of MNEs in Empirical Results	69
Table 10. Sig (2-tailed) Values between Roles of MNEs by Sector	83
Table 11. Sig (2-tailed) Values between Roles of MNEs and HQ Region	86
Table 12. Comparison of Framing between Literature and Empirical Findings.....	89
Table 13. Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development: Comparing Literature Review and Empirical Findings.....	95
Table 14. Conditions of MNEs' Engagement in Local Communities in Different Country Contexts	147

List of Abbreviations

ANZ	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BOP	Bottom/Base of Pyramid
CCI	Corporate Community Involvement
CDP	Carbon Disclosure Project
CR	Corporate Responsibility
CSA	Country-Specific Advantage
CSC	Computer Science Corporation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSSP	Cross-Sector Social Partnership
DNV GL	Det Norske Veritas and Germanischer Lloyd
EC	European Commission
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FSA	Firm-Specific Advantage
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
ICSU	International Council for Science
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISSC	International Social Science Council
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LA21	Local Agenda 21
LCA	Life-Cycle Assessment
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LOF	Liability of Foreignness
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MNE	Multinational Corporation
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBV	Resource-Based View
R&D	Research and Development
ROI	Return on Investment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TBL	Triple Bottom Line

TNC	Transnational Corporation
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNCED	The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHS	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
UN SDSN	United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network
WBCSD	World Business Council on Sustainable Development
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

Considering the growing dialogue of international climate negotiations and the articulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is a growing awareness of sustainability. In global policy dialogues, sustainable development is a critical component of several organizations' core development, including governments, businesses, and international agencies (Mebratu, 1998; Robinson, 2004). The concept of sustainable development dates back to indigenous beliefs and traditional wisdom, acknowledging the challenge of people living harmoniously with nature and society (Mebratu, 1998). The most commonly cited definition appears in the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report titled *Our Common Future* and is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 43). Rapid urbanization presents challenges such as poverty and inequity, climate change, and environmental degradation among others (Ochoa, Tan, Qian, Shen, & Moreno, 2018). Today the term is universal in international and national policy agendas as a guiding principle for overcoming socioeconomic and environmental challenges, which have evolved as a result of growing human activity (Deželan & Maksuti, 2014; Dresner, 2008; Mebratu, 1998).

At the local level, businesses are essential for the development of cities and livelihoods and for providing services to local communities (UNGC, 2017). Businesses play essential roles in not only financing solutions for local sustainable development, but for also delivering infrastructure, services, technology, and contributing to the strategic design and implementation of solutions for supporting local systems (SDG Compass, 2015). Business action can also contribute to preserving and investing in cultural and natural heritage, as well as supporting access to essential services for local communities, which include services for the workplace, marketplace, and residential community (UNGC, 2017). Multinational enterprises (MNEs) in particular, compared to other organizations, bring distinct strengths to the sustainable development agenda, such as their scale and scope in the international business landscape, access to capital and resources, the transfer of cutting-edge technologies, the ability to provide goods and services to remote or inaccessible locations (Kolk, Kourula, & Pisani, 2017; Sachs, 2012), the ability to transfer knowledge internally (Minbaeva, Björkman, Fey, & Park, 2014), and organizational best practices that would normally be unavailable to other firms (Málovics, Nagypál Csigené, & Kraus, 2008).

Cities are hubs of innovation, culture, and growth but the speed and scale of urbanization presents increasing challenges for building safe, sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities (Sustainable Cities Programme, 1999; UN SDSN, 2013; World Bank Group, 2016). As more individuals migrate to urban areas seeking better livelihoods, capacity to manage unprecedented urban growth weakens and

challenges in local sustainable development intensify (UN DESA, 2016). Today, over half of the world's population live in urban areas with that number expected to grow rapidly (UN DESA Population Division, 2018). Cities are no longer facing isolated problems but meta-problems such as unsustainable development (Trist, 1983; Waddock, 1989). Today, cities are faced with unprecedented challenges such as rapid urbanization and socioeconomic inequities, in which capacity to manage these challenges are greatly intensified with over half of the world's population living in urban areas (UN DESA, 2016; UN DESA Population Division, 2018). At the local level, sustainable development refers to the challenge of solving the problems cities face, while also recognizing that cities themselves may provide the solutions (Ochoa et al., 2018). Moving forward, local sustainable development will be fundamental to achieve a sustainable future (United Nations, 2015b).

The private sector, along with governments of all levels, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and citizens, have been working collectively to pursue ambitious objectives to create sustainable, resilient, and resource-efficient cities (SDG Compass, 2015). International frameworks encouraging the private sector to report on their sustainability (non-financial) performance are growing in global contexts, for example frameworks from the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are some which encourage businesses to engage in sustainable development and ethical practices (Donovan, Topple, Masli, & Vaniehseni, 2016). However, sustainability reporting has been criticized for the lack of robust frameworks for measuring data and information value, among others (Wanner & Janiesch, 2019, p. 144). This thesis aims to examine MNEs' sustainability impact through their self-reporting of their contributions to local sustainable development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a global framework for tackling sustainability issues (United Nations, 2015a), however all global initiatives require local-level efforts to enable progress on a larger scale (Dresner, 2008; Freeman, Littlewood, & Whitney, 1996). The SDGs are a strategic opportunity for MNEs to contribute to sustainability progress, particularly for advancing action to achieve local-level sustainability (Kolk et al., 2017). The SDGs provide a framework for aligning and connecting priorities, providing businesses with clear targets and measurements for evaluating the effectiveness of their actions (United Nations, 2015a). The SDGs also create a universal language for identifying priorities and challenges related to sustainable development, identifying business opportunities for future-oriented companies (UNGC, 2015). In terms of contributing to local sustainable development, MNEs can play a part in the research and development and the delivery of goods and services with the aim of addressing access to resilient buildings, sustainable transportation, green and heritage spaces, and utilities for

resource-efficient development planning (UNGC, 2017). MNEs also have more political and economic reach than other organizations in the international business landscape and their focus on sustainability is often put in the context of how they operationalize sustainability in business practices and operations (Burritt, Christ, Rammal, & Schaltegger, 2018; Weyzig, 2009). Together, these characteristics enable MNEs to reach large-scale solutions needed to advance sustainable development at local, regional, and global scales (Sachs, 2012). At the local level, MNEs impact on sustainable development is particularly relevant for enabling solutions at regional, national, and global scales. Driving global systemic changes start at the local level and this is where MNEs' can have the greatest impact by combining their collective assets and resources to empower local action that enables delivery with the potential for impact on a global scale (Sachs, 2012).

1.1 Problem Statement

MNEs engagement with sustainable development, sustainability, and the SDGs have been documented through their sustainability reporting practices, and although it is common practice today with more organizations reporting their understanding and alignment (KPMG International, 2017), there is limited research linking MNEs and their impact especially at the local level. Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding on how MNEs frame sustainability at the local level in their business practices, particularly how MNEs legitimate their actions towards society and frame their narrative. There is also a gap in how MNEs identify and address sustainability issues in local contexts given the important contribution of private sector engagement on sustainable development and development progress (Toppo, Donovan, Masli, & Borgert, 2017). That said, MNEs have also been criticized for their negative social and environmental externalities (Kolk et al., 2017), therefore making their roles in local contexts important to understand to identify whether their roles exacerbate unsustainable development or support sustainable development initiatives at the local level.

1.2 Research Questions

The overall objectives of this study are to identify MNEs' contribution to local sustainable development in the context of the SDGs by first identifying how MNEs frame sustainability at the local level, and secondly by identifying their roles in local sustainable development. This thesis focuses on MNEs' framing of sustainability at the local level, in which sustainability refers to MNEs' effects on society, the environment, and the economy. Altogether, sustainable development is a process contributing to the sustainability of communities and the implementation of the SDGs, which is why this thesis focuses on all three concepts, namely sustainability, the SDGs, and sustainable development in local contexts. The

second part of the thesis also focuses on the roles of MNEs in which roles refers to the functions, parts or contributions assumed of MNEs in local sustainable development. As such, the following research questions have been developed to guide the research study:

1. How do MNEs frame their sustainability efforts at the local level?
2. What are the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development?

1.3 Research Objectives

The practical goal of this study is to understand the ways in which MNEs contribute to local sustainable development, particularly for advancing progress towards sustainability, and how MNEs self-declare their roles in local sustainable development. This research will help practitioners understand how MNEs frame sustainability to bridge gaps on the understanding between local sustainability goals and implementation of local sustainable development initiatives. The study also aims to provide both local governments and practitioners with a better understanding of how to leverage MNEs to facilitate private sector engagement, coordinate cross-sector collaboration, develop institutional capacities, and increase access to their collective resources and assets for local sustainable development initiatives by providing an understanding of how MNEs currently self-declare their roles and contributions to society.

This research has contributions to academic literature in the fields of international business and sustainability management. This study identifies preliminary results of how MNEs frame sustainability, while also investigating the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development, which provides evidence of the different ways in which MNEs can contribute to local-level sustainability and thus how other organizations can potentially leverage the engagement of MNEs in local sustainable development planning.

1.4 Thesis Outline

This thesis comprises of six chapters. Chapter one (Introduction) provides an overview of the research context and problem, along with the objectives and research questions which guide the study. Chapter two (Literature Review) provides a comprehensive review of the literature related to the research questions and situates the thesis within current literature and informs the research questions, demonstrating the research gap. The third chapter (Methods) describes the actions taken to investigate the research problem and provides rationale for the application of specific processes and techniques to analyze the problem. The methods chapter also discusses the limitations, reliability, and validity of the research study. The fourth chapter (Results) synthesizes the research findings and data, whereas the fifth chapter (Discussion)

discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and objectives. The last chapter (Conclusion) summarizes the research objectives and findings and provides implications for practice and theory and suggests future research directions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review chapter covers six key areas as they relate to the central research questions on the roles of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in local sustainable development, each is a section in this chapter. The six key areas discussed in this chapter are: 1) sustainable development, sustainability, and the SDGs; 2) business engagement and sustainability; 3) MNEs engagement with sustainability and the SDGs; 4) MNEs and sustainability reporting; 5) MNEs framing of local-level sustainability; and 6) the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development. The first section provides an overview of the concepts of sustainable development, sustainability, and the SDGs, whereas the second section discusses private sector engagement with sustainability. The third section reviews literature on MNEs' engagement with sustainability and the SDGs, followed by the fourth section that reviews MNEs engagement with sustainability reporting. The fifth section explores MNEs' framing of sustainability at the local level, whereas the sixth section explores the roles of MNEs in local communities for sustainable development.

2.1 Sustainable Development, Sustainability, and the SDGs

This section reviews the notions of sustainable development and sustainability, local sustainable development, the global SDGs, and localizing the SDGs.

2.1.1 Sustainable Development and Sustainability

The concept of sustainable development emerged in response to growing environmental concerns and socio-economic challenges (Hopwood, Mellor, & O'Brien, 2005; Mebratu, 1998). In the past 50 years, the earth's ecosystems have been drastically changing due to human activity and rising demands for natural resources, which has resulted in permanent loss of diversity of life on earth (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). The earth has entered a new era known as the *Anthropocene*, where humans are the main driver of change to the Earth's Systems (Crutzen, 2002). For the purpose of this thesis, sustainable development is based on the pathway to achieving sustainability by balancing economic, social, and environmental sustainability harmoniously and follows the definition used by in *Our Common Future*, which will be discussed further below.

Sustainable development first appeared in the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources' (IUCN) *World Conservation Strategy* in 1980 (IUCN, UNEP, & WWF, 1980) and gained salience in *Our Common Future*, a report prepared by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 (Dresner, 2008; Hák, Janoušková, & Moldan, 2016). According to this report, sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 43). This definition focuses on two key concepts, the first being the needs of the world’s poor and the second relating to the idea of ecological limitations, otherwise underling the important linkages between poverty alleviation, economic development, social equity, and environmental considerations (Dresner, 2008; Mebratu, 1998). The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Rio Conference or Earth Summit, was a major turning point for sustainable development and resulted in the production of key international documents, such as conventions on biodiversity and climate change, Agenda 21, and the Rio Declaration (Mebratu, 1998). Agenda 21 called upon the world’s nations to collectively engage in the global pursuit of sustainable development, outlining a plan of action at global, national, and local levels (UNCED, 1992).

2.1.1.1 Local Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development requires action at multiple levels in multiple contexts (Manderson, 2006). The idea of sustainable development from *Our Common Future* greatly influenced the agenda for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, otherwise known as the Earth Summit, in which Agenda 21 was the main document arising from the conference. Agenda 21 placed sustainable development within the context of various levels of action, particularly at global, national, and local scales to address specific priorities of sustainable development (UNCED, 1992). Within Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 was Local Agenda 21 (LA21), which highlighted the need for a locally relevant adaptation of Agenda 21 that considers the priorities of community stakeholders (Bond, Mortimer, & Cherry, 1998). Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 outlines guidelines for local governments tasked with creating LA21s, which are considered crucial to achieving global sustainability goals due to the proximity of municipalities to local stakeholders and the ability to understand the unique context and social demands of the community (Helen Borland et al., 2019; Clarke & MacDonald, 2012; Echebarria, Barrutia, Eletxigerra, Hartmann, & Apaolaza, 2018; UNCED, 1992).

In response to social, ecological, and economic challenges and several internationally-led sustainability programs, local governments have been working with a wide range of stakeholders, including businesses and non-government organizations (NGOs), to formulate and implement sustainable community plans, otherwise known as LA21s (Clarke, 2014). Specific priorities for sustainable development at the local level vary between and within communities all over the world (Sachs, 2012). Within LA21s, there are several community-wide targets or goals that include social, economic, and environmental topics (Clarke, 2014). At the local level, local sustainable development plans include goals for transportation, water, waste, air quality, energy, climate change, land use, ecological diversity, food security, civic engagement,

social infrastructure, housing, safety and crime, local economy, employment, poverty alleviation, noise pollution, and financial security (MacDonald, Clarke, Huang, Roseland, & Seitanidi, 2018; Ordonez-Ponce, Clarke, & MacDonald, 2019).

However, much like the concept of sustainable development, the definition of local sustainable development is broad and difficult to define considering the unique needs of each and every community (Dale & Newman, 2006). The definition mirrors the concept of sustainable development with the significant difference being the geographical scale occurring at the local level (Bridger & Lulloff, 1999). In a broad sense, local sustainable development “emphasizes an integrated response to economic, social and environmental imperatives within a given locale, and an emphasis on intergenerational equity with regard to resource use” (Barraket, 2005, p. 77). The concept highlights the importance between environmental concerns, development objectives, and social relationships (Bridger & Lulloff, 1999). The definition itself is constantly evolving to suit the needs of every community (Roseland, 2000), accounting for the “nested matrix of social, ecological, and economic interactions often defined by a geographical place” (Dale & Sparkes, 2011, p. 477). At the local level, local territories refer to more than physical spaces and includes both communities and systems of relations, as well as representations of managing the economy, social relations, and interactions between society and the environment (ICLEI, 2012, p. 4). Local sustainable development acknowledges a bottom-up approach to sustainability that depends on local socioeconomic, environmental, and economic contexts (Moallemi et al., 2019). The notion of local sustainable development also acknowledges that all efforts for sustainable development require local-level action to enable progress on a larger scale.

2.1.2 UN Sustainable Development Goals

In September 2015, the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015b), which outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 accompanying targets and 304 indicators – agreed upon by 193 countries (Caiado, Filho, Quelhas, Luiz de Mattos Nascimento, & Ávila, 2018; Florini & Pauli, 2018; United Nations, 2015a, 2015b). The SDGs provide a global framework for collective action towards ending poverty, ensuring peace and prosperity, and protecting the planet – all of which require transformative solutions to build the capacity and knowledge of actors for sustainable development through a revitalized global partnership for the goals (Filho et al., 2018; Hák et al., 2016; ICSU & ISSC, 2015; United Nations, 2015b). The SDGs address key systematic barriers to sustainable development and articulate goals, targets, and indicators for measuring progress and enabling global actors at all levels to achieve sustainable development (ICSU & ISSC, 2015). The adoption of the SDGs make way for a new form of governance that relies on cross-sector collaboration and multi-

stakeholder initiatives to achieve the SDGs (Florini & Pauli, 2018; United Nations, 2015b) due to the scale, scope, and complexity of challenges ahead in which no sector can manage alone (Selsky & Parker, 2005). Multi-stakeholder collaboration is a key implementation mechanism for achieving the global SDGs and reporting on SDG progress will require the action of governments across the world (Willis, 2016). In particular, businesses have been identified as relatively significant in achieving the SDGs (McGraw III, Danilovich, Ma, Wilson, & Bharti Mittal, 2015), with notable scholars such as Jeffrey Sachs (2012) arguing that the SDGs are not achievable without them.

2.1.2.1 Localizing the SDGs

Although the SDGs provide a global framework for achieving all 17 goals, each goal requires some local implementation to enable progress on a global scale, and so local governments are critical for turning global vision into a local reality (Steiner, 2017). A dedicated goal, SDG #11, focuses on sustainable cities and communities, requiring the leadership of local governments to work collaboratively with other actors to create inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities (ICLEI, 2015; United Nations, 2015a). SDG #11 focuses on key topics such as affordable housing and basic services, sustainable transport systems, inclusive and sustainable urbanization, protection of natural and cultural heritage, investment in green spaces, increasing resiliency to natural disasters, reducing the impact of cities, and supporting national and regional development planning (United Nations, 2015a). In meeting SDG #11, the collaboration of numerous actors at both local and global levels through innovative collaborative governance structures will be needed to tackle local sustainable development challenges (Ordonez-Ponce, Clarke, & MacDonald, 2019; UN Habitat III, 2016).

2.2 Business Engagement and Sustainability

This section explores private sector engagement with sustainability and covers concepts related to corporate sustainability.

2.2.1 Corporate Sustainability

In a business context, the term sustainability takes on various meanings that are all subject to debate (Haugh & Talwar, 2010; J. Yin & Jamali, 2016). The terms environmental management, corporate responsibility, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and corporate sustainability are all used within the literature, often times synonymously or with explicitly different definitions (Bansal & Song, 2017; Burritt et al., 2018). The literature also acknowledges a broader concept of sustainability that encompasses social, economic, and environmental considerations, which mirror definitions similar to CSR (Palazzo &

Scherer, 2011). Today, business leaders and investors are starting to realize that being primarily concerned with short-term profits can damage long-term prosperity when faced with today's business landscape characterized by an unprecedented mix of risks and opportunities (UNGC, 2015). Over the years, the private sector has become an increasingly dominant social institution, engaging in matters beyond economic affairs, including environmental, social, and political topics (Crane & Seitanidi, 2014) and local governments are turning towards the private sector to implement sustainability at the local level (Clarke, MacDonald, & Ordonez-Ponce, 2018). Today, sustainability is regarded, at least in principle, as a critical component for businesses to address when moving forward (KPMG International, 2017; Lacy, Haines, & Hayward, 2012).

More than 30 years ago, Friedman claimed that the only social responsibility for businesses was to increase its profits (Friedman, 1970). Since then, Friedman's free-market ideology has garnered significant criticism and today, the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be found in many businesses and all large corporations (Knox & Maklan, 2004). There are several different definitions of corporate sustainability that relate to three distinct concepts: 1) social responsibility (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1979); 2) environmental management (Frederick, Post, & Davis, 1988); and 3) business ethics (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Recent institutional changes of corporate sustainability have created a new landscape for businesses to operate, particularly as economic, social, and environmental sustainability have become pillars of institutional legitimacy for corporations, otherwise known as the triple bottom line (TBL) (Lee, 2008). Definitions of CSR focus on balancing stakeholder interests to operate a business responsibly, whereas sustainability in the business context also focuses on long-term prosperity of resources for future generations (Bansal & Desjardine, 2015).

The concept of corporate sustainability has evolved through many decades, beginning in the 1950s with the responsibility of businessmen (Bowen, 1953) until the 1980s with Freeman's stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2010). In the 1990s, the concept of sustainability became integrated with corporate financial performance (Roman, Hayibor, & Agle, 1999) and evolved to connect sustainability with overall corporate competitiveness (Murillo & Lozano, 2006). More recently, the 'social license' between companies and society has grown more inclusive (Boutilier & Thomson, 2011) and current trends in sustainability have moved towards the triple bottom line (TBL) framework, consisting of environmental, social, and economic sustainability – often referred to as 'people, planet, profits' (Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015; Görg, Hanley, Hoffmann, & Seric, 2017; Henriques & Richardson, 2004; Waddock, Bodwell, & Graves, 2002).

The TBL model highlights the interdependencies between environmental, economic, and social sustainability as the three key pillars which form the concept of sustainability for corporations (Elkington, 1998). The standardization of sustainability approaches, such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certifications, eco-labels, sustainability reporting, lifecycle assessments (LCAs) and sustainability scorecards, have also been used to improve organizational practices and performance (Boiral, 2011; Dauvergne & Lister, 2012). The concept of standardization strategies can have very different realities from one organization to another because the application of standards are largely implicit in their method of application (Boiral, 2011).

2.3 MNEs Engagement with Sustainability and the SDGs

This section discusses MNEs' contribution to sustainable development by first defining MNEs and exploring their engagement with sustainability and the SDGs. This section explores MNEs sustainability strategies, engagement on SDG-related topics and implementation of the SDGs. Furthermore, the section also discusses the drivers of MNEs engagement with sustainability and the SDGs.

2.3.1 Defining MNEs

This thesis will use the definition put forward by the European Union (EU). According to the EU, a MNE is defined as an enterprise with headquarters in one country, known as the home country, with operations in at least one other country, the host country (Eurostat, 2018). In other words, a MNE can be defined as an enterprise producing goods and providing services in more than one country (Eurostat, 2018). The European Commission (EC) definition of a small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) is also used to differentiate MNEs from SMEs to complete the definition of a MNE. The EC definition of a SME is based on two factors, namely staff headcount and turnover or balance sheet total (European Commission, 2019). According to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainability Disclosure Database, which uses the EU definition of a MNE, Table 1 demonstrates that companies classified as a MNE have a staff headcount equal to or more than 250 employees with operations in more than one country, and either a turnover equal to or more than £50 million or a balance sheet total equal to or more than £43 million.

Table 1. MNE Profile Data from GRI Data Legend¹

Enterprise Category	Headcount	Turnover	OR	Balance Sheet Total
MNE	≥ 250 AND multinational	≥ £50 million	OR	≥ £43 million

This thesis will use the EU definition of a MNE, as demonstrated in Table 1, because this definition is used in the Global Reporting Initiative’s (GRI) Sustainability Disclosure Database, which is the main data set used for this research. The term MNE has been used interchangeably with multinational corporation (MNC), transnational corporation (TNC), or referred to as multinational or international corporation (Eurostat, 2018). For this study, the term MNE will be used.

2.3.2 MNEs and Sustainability

In 1991, UN Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) called upon the world’s businesses to join the global conversation of sustainability and environmental issues, which brought together 48 CEOs from all over the world leading to the creation of the Business Council for Sustainable Development, otherwise known as the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD) today (WBCSD, 2018a). Shortly after in 1999, the UN called upon MNEs to lead positive action towards sustainable development pressures (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015) with the implementation of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), which calls on the role of businesses and position towards stakeholders to have greater positive impact on for people, planet, and societies (Waddock, 2008). As a result, MNEs moved beyond charitable giving towards a more comprehensive approach in responding to sustainability due to intense institutional pressures.

According to Lee (2008), large corporations are expected to produce goods and services sustainably, meet principles and standards respective to their industry, engage with stakeholders in dialogue, partnerships, and action, and exhibit transparent activities. Due to the increasing scale and scope of international business (IB) activities (Kolk, 2016), MNEs face unique challenges because of their orientation towards international markets, which increases the diversity of stakeholders and presents the ethical dilemma of managing both global and local stakeholder concerns (Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015). Global operations have come under extreme scrutiny by employees, stakeholders, shareholders, suppliers, governments, and

¹ <https://www.globalreporting.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/GRI-Data-Legend-Sustainability-Disclosure-Database-Profiling.pdf>

organizations alike in light of financial crises, growing scandals and implications on the environment and society, and increasing global pressures, such as climate change and poverty (Knox & Maklan, 2004; Kolk, 2008; Kolk & van Tulder, 2010; Waddock et al., 2002). Global pressures like climate change enable opportunities for businesses to engage in opportunities to innovate sustainability solutions and remain competitive in the global market (Wei et al., 2016). For example, the Paris Agreement strengthened a global response to climate change by aspiring to limit global temperature rise to below two degrees Celsius, which will inherently involve reshaping “national economies, development paths, and value chains for companies across the globe” (Wei et al., 2016, p. 2). The Paris Agreement acknowledges the important role the private sector has to play in a global solution for climate change, particularly through investments, financing, and technological advancements (UNFCCC, 2018; Wei et al., 2016).

The evolving institutional infrastructure of sustainability has created a new behavioural landscape for companies, particularly MNEs (Waddock, 2008). Today, sustainability for MNEs goes beyond maximizing shareholder profits and extends to environmental, social, and governance issues, engaging civil society and communities within their spheres of influence (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). For MNEs that operate across national borders in a variety of different contexts with location-specific issues, business structures become increasingly more complex to understand how these firms operate sustainably and pursue sustainability (Shapiro, Hobdari, & Oh, 2018). The complexity of MNE structures can include “wholly owned subsidiaries, joint ventures with companies in host countries, or complex supply chain relationships” (Burritt et al., 2018, p. 2). Considering that some MNEs generate cash-flows that exceed the gross domestic product (GDP) of some developing countries, it becomes increasingly important to understand these influential institutions that impact both the home and host countries in which they operate (Amba-Rao, 1993). Despite MNEs’ global impact and the mainstreaming of concepts such as CSR, corporate citizenship, and sustainability (Garriga & Melé, 2013; Kolk, 2016; Werre & Van Marrewijk, 2003), there has been limited research in the sustainable development discourse regarding the roles of MNEs. Previous scholarship has explored MNEs role in corporate engagement and business ethics, stakeholder management, institutional theory, and political theory, however there has been limited studies focusing on a sustainability-related angle focusing on MNEs impacts on society (Kolk, 2016).

2.3.2.1 Sustainability Strategies of MNEs

According to Filatotchev & Stahl (2015), MNEs who have employed sustainability initiatives typically use three approaches for implementation, notably global, country-level, and transnational approaches. These approaches influence how MNEs choose and pursue sustainability strategies, and for MNEs with influences from offices in industrialized countries, the literature provides a mixed interpretation of

whether MNE sustainability strategies should focus on global circumstances or country-level considerations (Burritt et al., 2018). Table 2 below shows a summary of sustainability approaches used by MNEs that are mentioned in literature, as well as the perceived advantages and disadvantages of each strategy.

Table 2. Sustainability Strategies by MNEs

Strategy	Comments	Advantages	Disadvantages
Global (Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015; Husted & Allen, 2006).	Approach stems from the MNE headquarters and focuses on universal integration and standardization of sustainability activities in each country and cultural context in which the company operates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global consistency and integration of sustainability behaviour, standards, and managerial decision making. • Helps the organization manage and prevent risk. • Fosters a culture of responsibility across the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of priority on local stakeholder concerns • Perceived advantages must outweigh the perceived benefits of meeting local stakeholder demand • Assumption that global principles transcend local values and norms
Country-level (Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015; Husted & Allen, 2006).	Sustainability approach highlights responsiveness to local conditions and considers the local concerns of stakeholders in subsidiary countries, which allows for greater flexibility in terms of sustainability activities and strategies at the community level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attentiveness to local stakeholder concerns in host country • Considers local cultural context, norms, and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to achieve standardization or universally accepted norms • Combined with weak institutions, inadequate regulations, and ineffective law enforcement, may encourage unethical practices
Transnational (Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015).	Sustainability approach integrates similar approaches of global and local sustainability activities by integrating global concerns and local expectations respectively, acknowledging diverse continental/regional contexts and stakeholder interests in strategic sustainability strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid strategy combines advantages of global and local strategy • Provides global template for sustainability activities with adaptability based on local subsidiaries • Feedback loops through dynamics of global learning and global application of local experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in balancing global consistency and local adaptation
Regional (Burrirt et al., 2018).	Approach focuses on the responsibility of subsidiaries in host countries and the requirements of regional headquarters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location-based competitive advantage from gaining knowledge from managers in local and regional markets 	

Another common approach by MNEs is a regional sustainability strategy, as some MNEs operate in different regions and not throughout the world. A regional strategy can be instituted by a MNE that wishes to balance between global and regional strategies (Burrirt et al., 2018). A regional approach focuses on the responsibility of MNEs' subsidiaries in host countries and the requirements of regional

headquarters in determining their sustainability strategy (Burritt et al., 2018). The advantage of this strategy is that companies are able to gain knowledge from local employees that are close to regional markets and as a result, gain a location-based competitive advantage (Jamali, 2010).

2.3.3 MNEs and the UN SDGs

The next subsection discusses MNEs' engagement with sustainability topics related to the SDGs and MNEs' implementation of the SDGs.

2.3.3.1 MNEs and Sustainability Engagement on SDG-related Topics

Kolk, Kourula, & Pisani (2017) in their review of international business (IB) literature on MNEs' engagement with the SDGs provide an analysis based on a focused review of how IB research has explored key themes within the SDGs. These key themes are identified in the preface of the UN document Agenda 2030 (United Nations, 2015b) and are known as the main "Ps" – people, planet, prosperity, peace, and the broader aspect of partnerships. The main "Ps", namely people, planet, peace, and prosperity, are outlined in Figure 1 below and shows the central concepts that these "Ps" relate to within the sustainable development agenda. Through this analysis, Kolk, Kourula, & Pisani's (2017) approach focuses on key goals relating to poverty and inequality, energy and climate change, and peace. These key goals do focus on specific SDGs, for example poverty and inequality relate directly to SDG #1: No Poverty and SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities but also relate more broadly to people and prosperity which are linked to other goals. Key goals relating directly to energy and climate change are SDG #7: Affordable and Clean Energy and SDG #13: Climate Action, but also broadly encompass themes on the planet. For peace, SDG #16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions specifically relates to this key theme. (Kolk et al., 2017). Previous IB research related to these themes shows that MNEs can have an impact on sustainable development and have addressed the SDGs only broadly so far.

Figure 1. Categories of the SDGs Derived from UN (2015, p. 2) and Kolk et al. (2017, p. 11).

<p>People</p> <p>End poverty and hunger; fulfil human beings' potential in dignity and equality, and in a healthy environment</p>	<p>Planet</p> <p>Protect our planet from degradation; sustainable production/consumption and natural resource management; urgent action on climate change</p>	<p>Peace</p> <p>Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence</p>	<p>Prosperity</p> <p>Ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature</p>
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According to Kolk, Kourula, & Pisani (2017), IB research on the key themes of poverty and inequality are related to four broad concepts: 1) trade and inequality; 2) MNE operations in developing countries, 3) business at the bottom of the pyramid (BOP); and 4) microfinance. In terms of trade and inequality, MNEs have been contributing to sustainable development through commercial activities, such as liberal trade, direct investments, and internal agreements (Kolk et al., 2017). In relation to MNE operations in developing countries, five trends impact MNEs operations in developing countries: namely growth between and within regions, growing consumer demand with poor populations in emerging markets, technological innovation, globalization of labour markets, and the access to information and knowledge (Guth, 2009). The literature also shows that MNEs operations in developing countries can potentially have a negative impact on infrastructure in developing countries, particularly by aggravating local governments' financial limitations for providing basic infrastructure (Yamin & Sinkovics, 2009). MNE operations have also been analyzed by examining businesses at the base or bottom of the pyramid (BOP), a term used to describe "business development in the base of the global income pyramid" (Kolk et al., 2017, p. 16). Another approach MNEs have been using to engage in developing countries has been through microfinance institutions (Kolk et al., 2017). Most research on MNEs' as partners of microfinance institutions has been negative (Kolk et al., 2017), with specific topics including the negative societal impacts of commercialization on developing communities (Ault, 2016) and the increasing pressure to transition from a non-profit to commercialized venture, otherwise known as mission drift (Serrano-Cinca & Gutiérrez-Nieto, 2014).

In terms of energy and climate change, IB research has focused on four key themes which relate to stakeholder groups, which are MNEs, governments, entrepreneurs, and consumers (Kolk et al., 2017). For MNEs, balancing institutional embeddedness in home, host, and supranatural contexts (Pinkse & Kolk, 2012), in which environmental considerations have been a central aspect of business planning as early as 1992 (Poduska, Forbes, & Bober, 1992). MNEs have also used corporate citizenship initiatives to address climate change, in which research shows that MNEs similar themes are adopted across an industry with differing levels of implementation (Shinkle & Spencer, 2012).

Regarding key themes in IB studies on peace, studies have focused on the interactions between business and conflict, MNEs' responses to conflict, employees' reactions to conflict, and MNEs and terrorism. MNEs play an integral role in fostering cooperation via international commerce (Henisz, Mansfield, & Von Glinow, 2010). Global and local stakeholder pressures also play a role in how MNEs respond to conflict in subsidiary countries. Research has shown that local stakeholder pressure inflicts a direct response to conflict, whereas global stakeholder pressures enforces an indirect response (Oetzel & Getz, 2012). Threats to peace, such as terrorism, pose direct threats on international business operations that increases transaction costs and creates barriers to free flowing goods and exchanges for MNEs (Czinkota, Knight, Liesch, & Steen, 2010, 2005; Kolk et al., 2017).

2.3.3.2 MNEs and Implementation of the SDGs

The SDGs provide a global framework for the business sector, particularly MNEs as their awareness of the SDGs is growing (Mhlanga, Gneiting, & Agarwal, 2018). Through sustainability reporting, MNEs have demonstrated their alignment with the SDGs through their materiality matrixes, which indicate an organizations' assessment of material issues in relation to the SDGs (Topple et al., 2017). Through networks such as the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), MNEs have indicated their desire to contribute to local sustainable development but it is unknown how MNEs translate these commitments on the ground (UNGC, 2018; Wilkinson & Mangalagiu, 2012). Research on MNEs' sustainability operations and how they translate the SDGs into their sustainability practices is limited, especially in developing countries (Topple et al., 2017). Moreover, MNEs' awareness of the SDGs has remain limited to sustainability departments and top-level management and has not trickled into the entire organization, therefore limiting SDG implementation, engagement, and innovation within MNEs' core operations (Mhlanga et al., 2018).

According to a global survey conducted by the WBCSD and Det Norske Veritas and Germanischer Lloyd (DNV GL), which surveyed WBCSD members and Global Network partners, approximately 78 per cent of companies have made efforts to prioritize the SDGs in their organizations (WBCSD & DNV GL, 2018). The survey gathered responses from approximately 250 companies across 43 countries and four continents. In terms of how MNEs are engaging and prioritizing SDG implementation in their own activities, results show that companies are focusing on the positive impacts their operations are contributing to the SDGs, with only a small portion of companies identifying their negative impacts on the SDGs (WBCSD & DNV GL, 2018). The lack of evidence supporting MNEs' identification of their negative impacts on the SDGs represents a missed opportunities for MNEs to contribute in a meaningful way to assess the lifecycle impacts of their value chains (WBCSD & DNV GL, 2018).

MNEs are also analyzing the SDGs primarily through their direct operations rather than SDG impacts across value chains (WBCSD & DNV GL, 2018). Companies view the SDGs as a framework to identify more business opportunities as opposed to a framework for identifying and managing potential risks, suggesting another overlooked opportunity for remaining proactive to sustainability challenges (WBCSD & DNV GL, 2018). Most MNEs are also engaging with the SDGs at a goal level, rather than identifying specific targets to measure progress, presenting a neglected opportunity for meaningful and impactful engagement (WBCSD & DNV GL, 2018).

Since the adoption of the SDGs, business engagement with the SDGs has been mixed. According to a study by Oxfam, which reviewed a sample of 78 of the world's largest companies and how they engage with the SDGs, there has been an increasing amount of companies incorporating the SDGs into their strategic vision and new partnership initiatives have emerged for achieving the SDGs, but corporate engagement has been inconsistent overall (Mhlanga et al., 2018). There is a large gap between the evidence that companies will engage with the SDGs to help solve the world's most pressing challenges and the expectations that businesses will step up to help deliver on the SDGs (Mhlanga et al., 2018). The study also reveals that companies with increased SDG awareness are only found within sustainability departments and top-level management and consequently have not been embedded in all aspects of the organization, which limits greater integration, alignment, and innovation for the SDGs within core business operations (Mhlanga et al., 2018). The results do show however that SDG awareness among large MNEs with headquarters (HQ) in North America and Europe are greater, with some exceptions, in comparison to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and other companies from non-Western countries (Mhlanga et al., 2018).

2.3.4 Drivers of MNEs' Engagement with Sustainability and the SDGs

2.3.4.1 *Internal Drivers*

Understanding the drivers behind MNEs' engagement with sustainability can lead to a greater understanding of how MNEs frame sustainability, particularly by identifying the main drivers for MNEs pursuing sustainability and the SDGs across their entire organization. On a holistic level, there are many reasons as to why MNEs engage in global sustainability initiatives considering the shifting landscape of sustainability practices and wider governance roles for private corporations (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012). The concept of corporate sustainability itself has largely been driven by large corporations, including MNEs, in which different drivers leverage change (Lozano, 2015). According to Lozano (2015), these drivers are classified into external and internal drivers. External drivers could include national policies,

motivations to enhance brand reputation, and commitments to partnerships and alliances to name a few that lean towards more reactive measures from organizations (Lozano, 2015). Internal drivers have more proactive measures and can include ethical leadership, managing risks, and attracting and retaining employees as some of many examples (Lozano, 2015). Internal drivers can also be motivated by employee attraction and retention, building trust with the organization or a more compliant workforce, increasing employee productivity and/or product quality, increasing innovation and innovative practices, managing risks, assets, and internal processes, increasing efficiencies, and improving performance and generating profits and growth (Lozano, 2015).

For organizations, sustainability is seen as a strategic tool for achieving business goals, which includes reduced costs, greater efficiencies, increased revenues and markets, and improved supply chain productivity and performance (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012), which are all seen as internal drivers (Lozano, 2015). In a broad sense, sustainability is seen as an opportunity to build a company's business (Haanaes et al., 2011). The core premise of this argument is that pressures from sustainable development provoke changes in MNEs organizational setting that require strategic adaptation or risk the compromise of core business objectives (Freeman, 2010; Payne & Raiborn, 2001; Petersen & Vredenburg, 2009; Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998). Sustainability is seen both as an opportunity to create transformational change and build a competitive advantage, while also responding to external pressures that risk current business landscapes (Lozano, 2015).

Addressing sustainability challenges and remaining proactive to sustainable development pressures is also seen as a source of competitive advantage for firms, while also increasing efficiency and accessing emerging markets (Hall & Vredenburg, 2003; Hart & Milstein, 2003). Sustainability as a driver of business value also provides justifications for improving a firm's competitiveness in global markets competitiveness by improving their relationship with customers, employees, and stakeholders (Carroll & Shabana, 2010), which also provides companies with the opportunity to align sustainability efforts with core business competencies (Porter & Kramer, 2002). Engaging in sustainability initiatives also helps large corporations increase revenues and access emerging markets by attracting new customers, thereby increasing sales and accessing financial markets (Gugler & Shi, 2009; Kolk & Pinkse, 2008). An important way that MNEs demonstrate their alignment with sustainability is through their sustainability reporting practices (Kolk, 2003), yet there has been no formal research analyzing MNEs framing of sustainability strategies at the local level.

2.3.4.2 External Drivers

Increasing institutional pressures from social and external contexts also influence MNEs' decision to respond to sustainable development pressures (Kolk, 2016; Newenham-Kahindi, 2015), pressures which are seen as external drivers (Lozano, 2015). Several factors, such as advocacy campaigns, consumer demand, employee interest, and environmental legislation, can influence MNEs' decision to adopt sustainable practices and/or implement sustainability initiatives in the areas in which they operate (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Dauvergne & Lister, 2012; Kolk, 2016). External drivers can also be motivated by external regulations, gaining public trust, obtaining a social license to operate, meeting stakeholder demands, ethical behavior, improving relations with regulators, expand access to both markets and customers, improve customer satisfaction, enhance brand reputation, and respond to pressures from NGOs (Lozano, 2015). For many MNEs, sustainability is a pragmatic response to increasing public pressure regarding their operations in developing countries, particularly their supply chain operations (Amaeshi, Osuji, & Nnodim, 2008; Görg et al., 2017; Gugler & Shi, 2009; Ite, 2004).

The need for MNEs to meet multiple stakeholder interests at the global and local level creates increasing challenges related to sustainability, business ethics, and corporate governance given that MNEs must respond to global integration and local responsiveness (Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015; Husted & Allen, 2006). A central driver influencing MNEs' sustainability orientation is the desire to gain legitimacy and develop a stronger reputation (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Kolk, 2016; Kurucz, Colbert, & Wheeler, 2008; Newenham-Kahindi, 2015; Zadek, 2000). A primary motivation for MNEs to implement sustainability strategies and practices is to increase their corporate reputation and strengthening their legitimacy, which is seen as a strategic factor in value-creation and sustained financial outcomes (Aguilera-Caracuel, Guerrero-Villegas, & García-Sánchez, 2017; De Castro, López, & Sáez, 2006; Kurucz et al., 2008; Roberts & Dowling, 2002). In more recent landscapes, MNEs have been incorporating environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) risks into their long-term strategies and portfolios to protect brand reputation and increase corporate value (Deloitte, 2017; Kocmanová & Šimberová, 2014). Investors and customers are now looking towards companies that incorporate ESG risks into their strategy and decision-making as a key element of successful financial performance (Deloitte, 2017). These demands are driven by external motivations, which not only include enhancing brand reputation but also increase access to markets and customers, as well as enter future sustainability markets (Lozano, 2015).

There are several ways that MNEs implement sustainability initiatives to increase legitimacy, for example, through sustainability reporting, impact assessments (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015), and disclosure of social and environmental issues (Brammer & Pavelin, 2004). Growing demands from civil

society organizations (CSOs), consumers, shareholders have influenced increasing pressures for global suppliers to create products that meet higher social and environmental standards, which in turn has led MNEs to implement sustainable supply chain management (Rueda, Garrett, & Lambin, 2017). The ability of a MNE to strategically adapt to this new organizational landscape influenced by sustainable development pressures also increases shareholder value (Freeman, 2010; Payne & Raiborn, 2001; Petersen & Vredenburg, 2009), thereby increasing the legitimacy of a company's actions. The position rests on the idea that if all stakeholder interests are met, while business operations continue, this competitive advantage becomes mutually reinforcing and creates a virtuous circle (Porter & Kramer, 2002). This value creation also leads to new levels of cooperation with other firms or institutions, such as universities or research institutes, leading to knowledge creation and transfer within organizations (Kolk & Pinkse, 2008). Companies focusing on value creation are also able to leverage improvements in reputation and legitimacy by aligning stakeholder interests with business propositions (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). External drivers such as partnerships and alliances with other organizations also motivate MNEs' behaviour to enact certain roles in society (Lozano, 2015).

2.4 MNEs and Sustainability Reporting

This subsection discusses MNE engagement with sustainability reporting, including reviewing previous scholarship on motivations for sustainability reporting, trends in sustainability reporting, and the limitations and challenges of sustainability reporting.

2.4.1 Sustainability Reporting

Corporate discourse in sustainability reporting is viewed as organizational responses to the contexts in which MNEs' operate in and how companies attempt "to shape and manage the institutional field of which they are a part" (Hardy & Phillips, 1999, p. 1). To this end, representation of MNEs' engagement with sustainability and the SDGs demonstrate how companies define and engage with local sustainable development (Milne et al., 2009). Sustainability reporting is driven by a number of different influences, for example corporate leadership, investor demands, stakeholder concerns, material risks, and policies on corporate non-financial disclosures (Kareiva, McNally, McCormick, Miller, & Ruckelshaus, 2015). However, the content and depth of sustainability reports are inconsistent from report to report, with sustainability reporting being defined broadly (Kareiva et al., 2015; Kolk, 2008). Sustainability reports can include any aspects related to ethics and environmental and/or social issues (Kolk, 2008). According to Kolk (2009), greater awareness of environmental issues within the organization is one of the key factors that have influenced MNEs to report on sustainability-related disclosures, forcing companies to

look at the environmental, social, and economic externalities of their operations and their associated impacts on society. With the re-emergence of non-financial reporting in the late 1980s, the focus of non-financial disclosures dealt with environmental issues but broadened as time progressed to include wider social and economic aspects (Kolk, 2009).

With increasing discussions on the private sectors role in achieving sustainable development, so has the quantity of corporate disclosures regarding environmental and social issues grown (Laine, 2005). Global actions and initiatives, such as international frameworks from the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, have encouraged MNEs to engage in voluntary reporting of sustainability performance, otherwise known as non-financial disclosures (Donovan et al., 2016). Sustainability reporting plays an important role in how companies understand and communicate sustainability to the general public (Higgins & Coffey, 2016). Reporting of non-financial disclosures has also allowed businesses to self-declare their commitments to social and environmental performance, providing communities and the general public with a better understanding of how companies interact and engage with sustainability (Higgins & Coffey, 2016).

2.4.2 Trends in Sustainability Reporting

According to the GRI, studies show that there are common themes that companies focus on in terms of which sector they belong to. For example, companies in the food processing sector tend to focus on various issues including, but not limited to, supply chains, health and nutrition, agricultural impacts on the environment, transportation, packaging, animal welfare, and procurement (Global Reporting Initiative, 2008b). In the construction and real estate sector, companies tend to report on issues such as, but not limited to, community economic impact, reduction of GHG emissions, waste reduction, pollution, resource use and raw materials, water conservation, and green construction materials and building design (Global Reporting Initiative, 2008a). Furthermore, there is also some literature that healthcare organizations are also innovating green building facilities, including certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) buildings (Senay & Landrigan, 2018).

The use of international sustainability standards and guidelines such as these provide MNEs with a greater opportunity of considering and incorporating the SDGs into business practices and have a greater influence on MNEs reporting practice in terms of what sustainability issues and goals to consider (Topple et al., 2017). In sustainability reporting practices today, sustainability standards and guidelines, such as the GRI standards, are well accepted and adopted by MNEs (Topple et al., 2017). Companies are using

sustainability reporting strategically and embedding the concepts of sustainability and the SDGs in their strategic goals (Higgins & Coffey, 2016). MNEs using sustainability reporting strategically narrate and argue a perspective of sustainability by creating a dialogue, which provides stakeholders with the means to engage with companies (Higgins & Coffey, 2016). The framing of sustainability in corporate disclosures also introduces new discourses that demonstrate how MNEs contribute to sustainability and the SDGs (Higgins & Coffey, 2016).

With globalization and rising NGO campaigns against the negative effects of globalization and the power of MNEs, MNEs began to increase their accountability to stakeholders by accounting for their commitments and initiatives for social and environmental issues (Kolk, 2009). Non-financial reporting with an explicit focus on the environment re-emerged in the late 1980s and since then, has broadened to include a wide range of social issues (Kolk, 2009). Today sustainability reporting combines corporate reporting with social and environmental policies, impacts, and performances and their interactions between these aspects (Buhr, Gray, & Milne, 2014; Schaltegger, 2012).

MNEs have acknowledged the SDGs through sustainability reporting with initiatives such as *Business Reporting on the SDGs*, led by the UNGC and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) spearheading further transparent disclosure of sustainability related topics (GRI, 2017). *Business Reporting on the SDGs* complements existing GRI standards and the UNGC Communication on Progress, enabling MNEs to better measure and report on their implementation of the SDGs (GRI, 2017). Despite growing attention on the importance of non-financial disclosure reporting, companies reporting on the SDGs has been relatively limited and inconsistent as SDG reporting standards are still in their infancy (Mhlanga et al., 2018). MNEs' engagement with SDG implementation requires the aggregation and coordination of reporting regarding their sustainability activities, goals, targets, and progress for achieving the SDGs (Mhlanga et al., 2018). While many MNEs are reporting on SDG-related information through sustainability reporting (GRI, 2017), standardized SDG reporting processes and benchmarks are required to analyze firms' progress on SDG implementation and will be crucial for understanding MNEs' engagement with the SDGs (Mhlanga et al., 2018).

2.4.3 Limitations and Challenges of Sustainability Reporting

The voluntary nature of sustainability reporting itself and the lack of clear, consistent standards and guidelines can lead to inconsistency and noncomparability of data in sustainability reports. The lack of consensus about what aspects of performance to include, which methodologies to follow, and how data should be presented are all key issues of the sustainability reporting landscape (Kolk, 2008; Livesey &

Kearins, 2007). Similarly, the lack of consensus on what performance to report on can also lead companies to misrepresent their environmental and/or social performance, with a large inconsistency in corporate environmental and social performance indicators (Kareiva et al., 2015). In terms of sustainability reporting on the SDGs, the lack of consistent expectations, benchmarks, and reporting frameworks regarding companies' engagement with the SDGs further complicates issues with sustainability reporting. The recent adoption of the SDGs presents a larger challenge for MNEs in terms of measuring their progress on meeting the SDGs and contributing to sustainable development (Mhlanga et al., 2018).

In terms of sustainability reporting, organizations use the term sustainability for non-financial reporting synonymously with CSR reporting or TBL reporting when accounting for non-financial disclosures, therefore presenting a fundamental problem with the definition of sustainability itself (Džupina & Mišún, 2014) as there is no standardized terminology for interpreting report content (Buhr & Gray, 2012). For this reason, the term sustainability will be used synonymously with CSR and TBL reporting despite the researcher acknowledging that the operational definitions of sustainability, CSR, and TBL are all inherently different.

The engagement of MNEs is critical to achieve sustainable development at multiple scales. However, the relationship between MNEs and sustainable development has been extensively debated and criticized as they can also undermine development initiatives (Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia, 2012). As such, it is important to not only understand the drivers for influencing MNEs' engagement with sustainability but to understand how MNEs' frame their alignment with local-level sustainability and how they contribute to sustainable development at the local level, particularly whether their roles help or hinder the local sustainable development agenda (Boiral, 2007).

2.5 MNEs' Framing of Local-Level Sustainability

This subsection explores MNEs' framing of local-level sustainability, particularly how previous scholarship identifies MNEs' home and host country engagement, local embeddedness, and MNEs business-in-society relationships. In particular, this subsection presents three approaches to framing MNEs engagement in local communities, in which the final approach is used for analyzing MNEs framing of their sustainability efforts.

2.5.1 MNEs' Home and Host Country Engagement in Local Communities

At a local level, businesses play a key role in local sustainable development because their roles can help encourage local authorities to transform into more proactive organizations that go beyond traditional roles when articulating sustainable development initiatives (Rotheroe, Keenlyside, & Coates, 2003). For firms operating in multiple institutional contexts, positive community relationships reduce the amount of regulations imposed on the firm, which is especially relevant for businesses operating across many different countries. Since MNEs are large corporations with operations across the world or at least in two countries, there is an intrinsic value for engaging in the local communities in which they operate. The literature reveals three broad areas, which focus on maintaining relationships with stakeholders, overcoming liability of foreignness (LOF), and increasing reputation and legitimacy (Burritt et al., 2018). The relationship between headquarter and subsidiaries or joint ventures located in other countries also creates key concerns over cultural differences, regulatory requirements, and institutional settings (Burritt et al., 2018).

Maintaining relationships is crucial for MNEs to satisfy internal and external stakeholder demands, both at the parent-company and local level. For MNEs primarily engaging in sustainability programs to add value to stakeholders, engaging in societal relationships with the local community, including employees, can help improve the effectiveness of a firm's sustainability initiatives (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). By engaging with the local community first for sustainable development activities, authors argue that MNEs can more effectively localize their sustainability programs at work and the communities where they operate (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). By focusing on a localized approach, MNEs can increase business innovation and market opportunities (Prahalad & Hart, 2004; Selmier, Newenham-Kahindi, & Oh, 2015) and gain access to capital, resources, and large distribution networks, and improved efficiency and accountability (O'Regan & Oster, 2000). Effective partnerships with local community actors can also help businesses establish a responsible reputation and offers a tangible approach for business-community relationships to enable corporate citizenship (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019; Muthuri et al., 2012; Ordonez-Ponce, Clarke, & Colbert, 2019).

The disagreement surrounding the impact of distance between home and host countries can also influence MNE sustainability strategy (Burritt et al., 2018). The concept of liability of foreignness (LOF) is defined as a set of costs regarding unfamiliar operating environments, administrative and cultural disparities, and the coordination of organizations spanning large geographic distances (Zaheer, 1995). MNEs face substantial sunk costs with setting up subsidiaries in foreign markets, in which they are unfamiliar with the business environments of the host countries (Patnaik, Temouri, Tuffour, Tarba, & Singh, 2018). These

upfront costs arise from the differences between MNEs' home and host countries, which creates the need for MNEs' to invest a significant amount of time, effort, and resources to understand the local contexts of their operations. Therefore, engaging in local communities is critical for MNEs to reduce LOF and overcome challenges by employing efforts to understand the local context of their operations (Oetzel & Doh, 2009). For MNEs to overcome LOF challenges, companies need to have significant country-specific advantages (CSAs), in which addressing sustainability and environmental issues is seen as a green-specific advantage (Kolk & Pinkse, 2008). Companies that adapt sustainability behaviors to those of local companies are viewed as better performing and signal the company's commitment and legitimacy to the host country (Patnaik et al., 2018). This approach offers MNEs a way to adapt their different institutional environments through reducing transaction costs and limiting risk, which is particularly valuable for firms operating in emerging markets (Patnaik et al., 2018). Engaging communities at the local level also enables MNEs to engage local managers' knowledge and contributions for operational, market, and institutional value (Berger, Choi, & Kim, 2011).

MNEs also find value in seeking opportunities to enhance their reputation and increase legitimacy in their global operations by engaging in local communities (Muthuri et al., 2012). Through a wide range of social initiatives, with inherent implications on local sustainability, MNEs have gone beyond traditional philanthropic responsibilities to incorporate more engaging initiatives in political, social, and economic spheres of the community (Visser, 2009). MNEs demonstrate their contributions to the local community through their 'corporate citizenship' (Muthuri et al., 2012), with many companies viewing their engagement in local community relationships as a key part of their duty to society (Valente & Crane, 2010). MNEs recognize the significance of local community partners as key stakeholders in their operations and as such, must act responsibly in response to stakeholder expectations (Muthuri et al., 2012). Sustainability initiatives also form a critical component of localizing corporate reputation (Gardberg & Fombrun, 2006; Hillenbrand & Money, 2007) and identity (Arendt & Brettel, 2010; Balmer, Fukukawa, & Gray, 2007).

Research shows that MNEs operating in different country contexts contributing to local sustainable development have inherently different embedded institutional strategies for engaging in local communities (Scott, 2014). Although these strategies are ultimately dependent upon the context of each country and community, the literature reveals that in a broad sense, MNEs engage in the local communities of each country differently due to several factors, such as the MNE's country of origin, response to local institutional conditions (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015), stakeholder orientation (Topple et al., 2017), societal expectations (Muthuri et al., 2012), implementation strategies (Newenham-Kahindi,

2015), and international conventions (Topple et al., 2017) all influence sustainability operations of MNEs operating in different country contexts at the local level. As there are a growing number of MNEs based in developing countries or emerging economies, attention in the literature is beginning to shift towards the possible differences between sustainability strategies focusing on the location of headquarters (Doh, Husted, & Yang, 2016). In this case, it is important to understand how MNEs' country of origin, otherwise referred to as the location of a MNEs' HQ, has an influence, if any, on their engagements in the local community for contributing to sustainable development. For more information on how the aforementioned factors influence MNEs' engagement in local communities, see [Appendix A](#).

Similarly, MNEs' engagement in local communities is also largely influenced by the sector in which the organization operates in. For example, MNEs in the extractive sector have been responding to sustainability challenges in the community by adopting partnerships with local suppliers as a method of contributing to poverty alleviation and securing a social license to operate (Idemudia, 2009). In the extractive industry, particularly the mining sector, CSR-based corporate identity and reputation is critical for generating good relationships among the community. Working closely with the communities helps MNEs in this sector to positively contribute to broader socio-economic development concerns in the local area, which also helps to mitigate LOF challenges (Moeller, Harvey, Griffith, & Richey, 2013). In the agricultural sector, research has suggested that agricultural value chains tend to have a negative impact on local poverty levels (Minten, Randrianarison, & Swinnen, 2009). In the food industry, MNEs tend to adopt environmental and social standards of supply and production policies imposed by the home country (Codita, 2007). The literature acknowledges that MNEs belonging to certain industries can potentially impact the roles they play in society, particularly for achieving local sustainable development. For this reason, it is important for future research to identify whether there are any relationships between the roles MNEs play in local sustainable development and MNEs by sector.

2.5.2 MNEs and Local Embeddedness

According to Pinkse and Kolk (2008), understanding how MNEs respond to institutional pressures is dependent on how MNEs interact with a complex network of home, host, and supranatural institutional contexts. Global challenges, such as climate change, can pose threats to global capitalism and challenges the current state of production and consumption (Pinkse & Kolk, 2012). For MNEs, responding to institutional pressures is extremely important to address because these issues show considerable variations across locations and will be determinant in how MNEs overcome liabilities related to foreignness, multinationality (Zaheer, 1995), and nationality (Ramachandran & Pant, 2010). MNEs engage in a delicate balancing act to manage embeddedness in supranatural, home, and host contexts in which there

are several institutional factors that play a critical role in helping MNEs develop a critical advantage for advancing sustainable development efforts. However, the article by Pinkse and Kolk (2012) does not consider the embeddedness of local contexts at the community level.

According to Aerni (2018), there is an increasing amount of research situating MNEs and their embeddedness in the regions and communities they operate; this research provides significant value for understanding MNEs impact in local sustainable development. The concept of embeddedness itself has a strong relation to CSR and sustainability (Aerni, 2018). The concept of embeddedness derives from sociology, an idea that companies are interconnected networks of personal relations in which economic behavior is embedded in networks of interpersonal relationships (Granovetter, 1985). In other words, a company is embedded in particular social and cultural relations. The concept of embeddedness originated from economic historian Karl Polanyi, which stated that all actions of individuals are influenced by the functioning social relations (Machado & Cardoso, 2011).

MNEs are the largest actors in global business and consequently the most scrutinized, yet there is the assumption that MNEs' global operations are inherently disconnected from local cultural and social activities (Aerni, 2018). Local cultural and social dimensions are critical to understanding MNEs' global economic relations and therefore, local embeddedness forms the basis of corporate culture (Aerni, 2018). According to the literature, companies that are locally embedded in their corporate responsibility actions are more likely to take on active responsibility for individuals in the local community and bring prosperity to local environments (Aerni, 2018). MNEs with a commitment to local embeddedness in their sustainability operations gain the necessary social capital to be accepted in the local economy and culture, while also securing a long-term license to operate (Aerni, 2018). In other words, embeddedness is closely related to the success of a company's sustainability strategy and secures the long-term interests of business-in-society relationships (Aerni, 2018).

2.5.3 MNEs' Business-in-Society Relationships

The concept of sustainability and sustainable development in corporate discourse represents diverse meanings to different individuals in various contexts (Laine, 2005). Previous scholarship has called on companies to move beyond descriptive research to studies creating a more qualitative analysis of what corporate disclosures are actually saying about their non-financial performance (Kolk, 1999; Thomson & Bebbington, 2005). According to Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia (2012), the relationship between MNEs and local sustainable development has shifted to focus on the reconceptualization of business-in-society relationships, which focuses on the roles of MNEs in supporting or undermining existing processes for

local sustainable development planning. By understanding how MNEs frame their engagements in society, there is a greater understanding of how MNEs aim to innovate their efforts for addressing local sustainable development issues (Muthuri et al., 2012). Corporate framing of business-in-society engagements shows that MNEs frame their local-level engagements for sustainability through the perspectives of CSR, corporate citizenship, and business-society partnerships (Muthuri et al., 2012).

The reconceptualization of corporate thinking about global supply chains has encouraged MNEs to consider responsible business systems beyond risk management (Muthuri et al., 2012). MNEs have moved towards the discourse and practice of ‘CSR’ and ‘corporate citizenship’ as a strategy for managing opportunities and risks, particularly when operating in developing countries (Muthuri et al., 2012). The concept of CSR in corporate discourse and practice is viewed as a result of corporate community involvement (CCI) in society. Issues such as poverty, disease, illiteracy, homelessness, corruption, and pollution are among the many other aspects of traditional CSR agendas (Chapple & Moon, 2005; Porter & Kramer, 2002; Selsky & Parker, 2005). According to Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia (2012), the framing of CSR focuses on MNEs engagement in community initiatives through corporate philanthropy and paternalism, as well as the decision to manage business-in-society engagements (Idemudia, 2009).

The framing of corporate citizenship views MNEs’ engagements in local communities as providers of social entitlements and as a result, are granted ‘citizenship status’ based on their active participation and engagement in social activities and provision of public services and goods (Crane, Matten, & Moon, 2008; Gardberg & Fombrun, 2006; Muthuri et al., 2012; Waddock, 2008). The concept of corporate citizenship is based on the notion of *human citizenship*, in which corporate citizenship is based on businesses’ active participation and engagement in local community relations, social activities, and provision of public goods (Muthuri et al., 2012). MNEs are also seen as ‘citizens’ of the community when their roles in local communities are cast into political roles, such as delivering essential products and services and administering aspects of citizenship rights for individuals in local communities (Crane et al., 2008). Positive community relationships between businesses and the community can also help them be viewed as a corporate citizen, fulfilling their ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. According to Carroll (1991), ethical responsibilities in practice represent standards, norms, or expectations that reflect concerns of what consumers, employees, shareholders, or the overall community see as fair or respectful of shareholders’ moral rights. Philanthropic responsibility refers to actions of the firm that respond to a society’s expectation of what constitutes business as a good corporate citizen (Carroll, 1991).

Partnerships for social and business innovation also demonstrate tangible methods of enacting business-society relationships, acknowledging MNEs roles in supporting processes for sustainable development at

the local level (Muthuri et al., 2012). According to Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia (2012), the framing of business-society partnerships are informed by studies from Kolk and Lenfant (2012), Valente (2012), and Owen and Kemp (2012). In particular, the framing of business-in-society engagements through the perspective of partnerships shows MNEs' role in managing business-society relationships through collaboration with governmental agencies (Seitanidi, 2010), NGOs alone (Moon, 2002), and all three sectors (Muthuri, 2007). In conflict settings, corporate involvement in the community is viewed through a framework of business-NGO collaboration, in which Kolk and Lenfant (2012) identify three styles of partnership relationships: philanthropic, engagement, and transformation. However, previous scholarship does not reference private sector engagement, particularly MNE engagement, with their impacts on local-level sustainability and their roles in local communities. Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia's (2012) framing provides a basis for understanding how MNEs engagement in local communities is enacted through business-in-society relationships, rather than business-and-society relationships, which acknowledges MNEs role in potentially supporting existing processes for local sustainable development.

2.6 Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development

This subsection discusses previous scholarship on the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development through MNEs' past and current engagements in local communities for sustainability. The literature shows that there are several dominant categories in which organizations enact their roles in local sustainable development, namely enabling and facilitating roles (Yan, Lin, & Clarke, 2018). In the context of this research, these categories are used to frame the existing literature on how MNEs have contributed both negatively and positively to local sustainable development (Muthuri et al., 2012). However, in the same way that MNEs can play enabling and facilitating roles, previous scholarship also shows that MNEs can inhibit these roles and contribute negatively to local sustainable development. For this reason, this subsection explores both MNEs positive and negative contributions to enabling and facilitating local sustainable development.

2.6.1 Enabling Roles

The first dominant category relates to enabling roles, which includes a focus on investments and financing, capacity building, and product and service provision.

2.6.1.1 Financer

MNEs have been making investments by mobilizing financial capital through investment-based activities, such as FDI, business at the BOP, micro-entrepreneurship, microfinance, and social entrepreneurial

ventures (Chelekis & Mudambi, 2010; Kolk et al., 2017; Kolk, Rivera-Santos, & Rufin, 2014, 2018). As a transnational entity, MNEs possess the power to access financial capital by leveraging global capital markets (Narula, 2018). MNEs not only deliver financial capital through these initiatives but create economic opportunities for the local communities in which they operate. MNEs have also been investing in trade-based activities including global value chains incorporating the most vulnerable populations (Kolk et al., 2018; Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2015; Werner, Bair, & Fernández, 2014) and sustainable supply chain management (Neu, Rahaman, & Everett, 2014).

Through FDI, MNEs are able to offer direct employment for local citizens (Aaron, 1999; Bardy, Drew, & Kennedy, 2012; Jain & Vachani, 2006), while also creating new revenue streams, decreasing costs of products sold in host countries (Gohou & Soumaré, 2012; Harrison & McMillan, 2007; Kaplinsky, 2013), and offering higher-quality products (Agénor, 2004). These investments also help local firms and international entrepreneurial ventures grow by joining and investing in MNEs' local ecosystem, thereby leading to more employment opportunities (Kaplinsky, 2013; Kiss, Danis, & Cavusgil, 2012).

Investments from MNEs also create opportunities for other firms and entrepreneurial ventures to invest in the country, therefore leading to more opportunities in the economic market through employment prospects (Kaplinsky, 2013; Kiss et al., 2012). (Kolk et al., 2018). However, there is also the assumption that FDI will inherently benefit a country's economic prosperity and quality of life, thereby affecting sustainable development, but there is a distinct gap relating positive benefits of FDI for developing countries (Donovan et al., 2016). Furthermore, Fortanier and Van Wijk (2010) indicate that although MNEs bring local jobs to developing countries, they also take away talent from local businesses (Kolk et al., 2017) and therefore, inhibit the sustainable development of the local economy. The role of FDI on local poverty levels has also been highly debated as to whether it contributes positively or negatively with most research focusing on the negative effects (Hamann & Bertels, 2018; Idemudia, 2009; Zulu & Wilson, 2012).

As a dominant social institution (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009), MNEs' role in implementing the SDGs at a local level can also be defined by their contribution to poverty alleviation and addressing inequality (Kolk et al., 2017). Similarly, MNEs have pursued business at the BOP to help alleviate poverty through targeting emerging market opportunities for the world's most vulnerable populations (Prahalad & Hammond, 2007; Prahalad & Lieberthal, 2003). MNEs have implemented sustainable supply chain management as a method of alleviating poverty to assess the impact of value chains on local poverty levels (Neu et al., 2014). Value chains focusing on market failures in low-income countries have been studied to have the most positive impact on local poverty levels (Werner et al., 2014), whereas

institutional voids prevalent in the market have direct impacts on the structure and outcomes of a firms' sourcing strategies (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2015).

Pursuing BOP strategies forces MNEs to go beyond local manufacturing and production facilities (Schuster & Holtbrügge, 2012) to develop new market knowledge, thereby leading to developing new products, business models, and strategies to enter these markets effectively (Gradl, Sobhani, Bootsman, & Gasnier, 2008; Reficco & Márquez, 2012; Rivera-Santos & Rufin, 2010; Webb, Kistruck, Ireland, & Ketchen, 2010). Through BOP strategies, MNEs help to facilitate social capital and build local legitimacy, in which the commitment of local communities has been a critical factor impacting the success of BOP projects (Gifford & Kestler, 2008; Gifford, Kestler, & Anand, 2010; Gold, Hahn, & Seuring, 2013). By pursuing new business models at the BOP, MNEs are able to innovate their products and services for emerging markets where these products and services are typically unavailable (Eyring, Johnson, & Nair, 2011). These ventures have helped MNEs to create new, profitable revenue streams and develop a competitive advantage, yet more importantly, have delivered unique products and services to areas where these offerings are otherwise unavailable in the local or domestic market (Eyring et al., 2011).

MNEs also play an economic role by leveraging local micro-entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurial ventures to increase competitiveness between local firms. Through this approach, MNEs can develop direct sales channels to remote areas, having a positive impact on both local economic and social outcomes (Chelekis & Mudambi, 2010). As partners of microfinance institutions, MNEs help to mobilize financial capital by creating opportunities for microloan borrowers to maintain decision-making power and actively manage community relations to create high-performing ventures that create employment opportunities for those outside their immediate family (Bruton, Khavul, & Chavez, 2011). However, MNEs have been criticized for contributing to less inclusivity through the commercialization of microfinance institutions targeting wealthier clients (Ault, 2016).

MNEs also engage in local communities by leveraging local micro-entrepreneurship to compete with local firms, where MNEs can direct sales channels to rural and remote communities in emerging economies that provide local economic and social benefits for both individuals and communities (Chelekis & Mudambi, 2010). Through microfinance institutions, MNEs pursue sustainability initiatives at the local level by contributing as partners to the commercialization of microfinance (Kolk et al., 2017). Microfinance institutions perform better with a strong impact from international influence (Mersland, Randøy, & Strøm, 2011). However, the role of MNEs as partners of microfinance institutions have also been reviewed negatively in the literature through pressures known as mission drift (Serrano-Cinca &

Gutiérrez-Nieto, 2014). On a global scale, MNEs have also been contributing to local sustainable development through investments for sustainability-related projects, such as climate financing to support communities' climate change adaptation measures (Averchenkova, Crick, Kocornik-Mina, Leck, & Surminski, 2016).

2.6.1.2 Capacity Builder

In a social context, MNEs are playing a substantial role by responding to communities' challenges through the implementation of sustainability initiatives, while also contributing to poverty alleviation at the local level (Kolk et al., 2018; Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). In recent years through growing sustainability initiatives, large corporations have been gaining legitimacy in the global arena and as such, their political authority has been shifting towards greater corporate power (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012). According to a study by Newenham-Kahindi (2015), MNEs use sustainability programs as a means of responding to community challenges by engaging local employees as intermediaries with local communities. By engaging MNEs in local sustainable development activities first through employees by way of training or career development, employees can then inform MNE strategies of the significance of localizing sustainability programs in their local community (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). The use of employees as intermediaries with local stakeholders influences integrative implementation of sustainability programs within the local community and leads to effective corporate stakeholder engagement. From a corporate perspective, the use of existing employees was a method of using the company's existing resources to deliver public goods and services in a local context (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015).

Since the globalization of international business, MNEs have been making strategic investments to developing countries with the overarching goal to deliver positive social change (Sachs, 2012). As mentioned earlier, approximately 99 per cent of urbanization will occur in developing countries from 2015 to 2050 (Runde, 2015), which is why understanding MNEs' roles in local sustainable development will be crucial for leveraging their engagement, especially in developing countries (Moser, 2001). This is not to say that local sustainable development challenges of the future are limited to developing countries but that MNEs engage in developed and developing country communities differently and therefore it will be critical to understand how to leverage the engagement of MNEs in different institutional contexts (Burritt et al., 2018; Jamali, 2010). MNEs have also been criticized in host countries for acting against the direct interests of these countries, particularly by fostering poor working conditions, outsourcing corrupt operations, sourcing illegal labour below adequate pay levels, exploiting lenient social and environmental standards (Jamali, 2010). This criticism has been regarded as a 'race to the bottom', yet MNEs are also

large institutions capable of improving conditions in local communities through channels such as employment and community programmes (Burritt et al., 2018).

MNEs' contribution to local sustainable development challenges in communities all over the world can stem from helping the world's most vulnerable populations (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). Sustainable development activities of MNEs have often been reported through public sustainability websites, campaigns, or archival documents, which highlight the company's social activities and involvement in communities worldwide. These activities are wide ranging to support a variety of priorities in each community, extending from social to environmental to economic concerns (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015).

2.6.1.3 Product and Service Provider

The role of MNEs as product and service providers has been viewed negatively for undermining the role of local governments in their host countries (Kolk et al., 2017) and often casts MNEs in a political role. Fundamental shifts in institutional relationships between businesses and governments have leveraged the engagement of private corporations to step into roles traditionally played by governments (Crane et al., 2008; O'Rourke, 2004). Local governments can potentially leverage the engagement of MNEs sustainability strategies as a means of filling institutional voids for local sustainable development. According to Yamin and Sinkovics (2009), strategies of MNE engagement in local communities can aggravate the municipal governments' financial constraints on developing basic infrastructure, thereby imposing a negative impact on the development of infrastructure in developing countries. In countries where local government capacity to provide basic infrastructure or public services is limited, MNEs operating in those countries are then forced to fill voids in public welfare across communities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2011, 2015; Newenham-Kahindi, 2010; Selmier et al., 2015). In the past, MNEs have used CSR strategies and programs as a method of easing tensions with community stakeholders (Newenham-Kahindi & Beamish, 2010).

The role of MNEs in the political sphere as drivers of global change to tackle sustainability have been highly debated in the literature (Christmann, 2004; Christmann & Taylor, 2001). In broad terms, arguments for and against MNEs have been situated around their contribution or undermining of sustainability efforts at all levels (Kolk & Pinkse, 2008). In recent years however, more research has focused on the role of MNEs as part of the solution, rather than the problem. MNEs have shown a great deal of interest in not only dictating the rules of global governance, but also shaping the terms of governance (Dam, 2001). Rising legitimacy of MNEs also brings concerns relating to accountability, representation, and global equity (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012). However, increased legitimacy for MNEs

also brings about new governance tools and increased capacity for global environmental governance to match the scale and pace of growing challenges in the world economy (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012).

2.6.2 Facilitating Roles

The second dominant category includes roles related to partnerships and innovation for local sustainable development.

2.6.2.1 *Partner*

In the past decade, there have been an increasing number of partnerships between MNEs and local stakeholders with the aim of addressing local sustainable development challenges (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). MNEs are increasingly encouraged to take part in societal problem-solving (Waddock, 1989) through collaborative approaches with other sectors that take shape in a number of different forms (Ritvala, Salmi, & Andersson, 2014). There are several types of partnerships, some of which are led by local governments in collaboration with the business sector and civil society (Kolk, van Tulder, & Kostwinder, 2008). Other are led by private stakeholders partnering with the public sector, whereas other forms can be between private corporations and NGOs (Kolk et al., 2008). Partnerships range in the number of partners, geographic scope, time duration, funding sources, functions, and goals (Glasbergen, 2007). For the private sector, a growing number of partnerships take shape with governments in the form of contracts, which are known as a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) (Brown, Vetterlein, & Roemer-Mahler, 2010).

Sustainability initiatives, such as cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs), play a key role in driving social change as most sustainability partnerships are aimed to tackle a core social problem (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). As mentioned earlier, MNEs have pursued cross-sector partnerships as a means of implementing sustainability activities to drive progress towards sustainability solutions and business innovation (Ritvala et al., 2014). MNEs are encouraged to partake in societal problem-solving (Waddock, 1989) through collaborative approaches with other sectors (Ritvala et al., 2014). According to Waddock (1989), social partnerships address social issues by “combining organizational resources to offer solutions that benefit partners as well as society at large” (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). CSSPs are an increasingly common tool in addressing complex social and ecological challenges (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Clarke & Fuller, 2010; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Mutual benefits such as knowledge about social issues at the local level can be valuable for MNEs and other partners when operating in a local context (Rondinelli & London, 2003). For private corporations, partnerships offer the opportunity to address public pressures and expectations for social responsibility, while it gives NGOs the chance to be more efficient and

accountable, and allows the government to provide benefits and services in a more transparent manner (Selsky & Parker, 2005).

According to a study by Newenham-Kahindi (2015), managers from two MNEs understood the challenges of implementing social initiatives through sustainability programs but acknowledged the importance of contributing to the social well-being of both the employees and communities if sustainable development activities are to be effective in the community context (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). CSSPs combine organizational resources to coordinate the development of solutions that create benefits for partners, but more importantly, address complex issues that benefit the entire community (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Waddock, 1989). MNEs can benefit from partnerships as a method of advancing sustainability activities, gaining physical, financial, organizational, social, and human capital (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019).

The public and civil society sector can benefit from the involvement of the private sector and potentially even more so with MNEs (Sachs, 2012). MNEs can play a vital role in helping NGOs scale up their organization in a more effective manner as they have the resources available for them to do so (Torres-Rahman, Grogg, & Hahn, 2018). All partners can benefit from increased capacity as the partnership provides a new method of engaging with community stakeholders (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). This will benefit MNEs in their sustainability strategies, as partnerships will provide companies with an effective means of reaching out to stakeholders that can be crucial for certain industries (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). Research has also shown that MNEs engage in partnerships, particularly with NGOs, to increase their social legitimacy and gain credibility for their actions (Kourula, 2010).

Although the private sector acknowledges that local cross-sector partnerships play a crucial part in achieving sustainability (Clarke & Crane, 2018), yet literature linking sustainability operations of MNEs' initiatives to local partnerships has been limited. Kolk et al. (2017) refer to partnerships as the fifth dimension of sustainable development, the other four being people, the planet, peace, and prosperity (United Nations, 2015b) In IB literature, MNEs operations relating to the SDGs and partnerships for the goals refers to a firm's strategic alliances and joint ventures (Kolk et al., 2017). Local CSSPs offer an effective method of monitoring and evaluating the actions of each partner on an organizational level (Clarke, 2014). CSSPs can provide MNEs with balances and checks on their social impact through the lateral exchange of knowledge between organizations (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). In terms of physical or financial capital, Clarke & MacDonald (2019) have found that partners can gain cost savings and improved efficiency due to individual partners implementing more effective sustainability measures in line with their partnership commitment. In addition, CSSPs can provide MNEs with financial and

physical capital through knowledge sharing within the partnership that can help companies move from compliance mechanisms to integrated sustainability initiatives in their global operations (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). CSSPs can also help to facilitate companies' implementation of corporate citizenship programs (Bhanji & Oxley, 2013).

2.6.2.2 Innovator

The practices of MNEs have been viewed as integral to global development outcomes, which includes sustainable development (Kareiva et al., 2015; WCED, 1987). MNEs are in a distinct authoritative position to direct prominent levels of research and development resources towards sustainability initiatives, with the complementary ability to deliver technological advances around the world (Patchell & Hayter, 2013). As such, learning to engage MNEs in sustainability efforts is crucial to improve the quality of products and processes of global supply chains (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012). Moreover, MNEs also possess the technological capacity to access resources in locations where access is typically limited and difficult to reach, thereby making their role valuable to the sustainable development agenda at local, regional, and global scales (Kraemer & van Tulder, 2009). MNEs' technological capability also makes them an actor with a tremendous potential for innovation in terms of developing sustainable products and services (Hall & Vredenburg, 2003). However, there is uncertainty regarding MNEs' efforts to invest in sustainable technologies if this means moving away from traditional technologies that are familiar and reliable (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012).

Through shifting sustainability trends, MNEs are now implementing sustainability governance as a means of improving competitiveness and overall business value to leverage sustainability for business growth, while also contributing to lessening the impacts of environmental impacts on society (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012). Through measures such as eco-efficiency, MNEs are making efforts to decrease the environmental impacts of per unit intensity outputs and leveraging sustainability initiatives to drive positive environmental change (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012). The world's largest brands have supply chains with vital leverage points to create the scale, response, and coordination of driving systematic global market changes to address sustainability challenges at all levels (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012). As mentioned earlier, MNEs commit resources to sustainability initiatives, such as pollution prevention and waste management, when there is a direct impact on improving the company's environmental and industrial performance (Kolk & Pinkse, 2008). As mentioned previously, MNEs possess the technological capacity to innovate new products and services that are sustainable (Hall & Vredenburg, 2003), thereby playing a fundamental role in the sustainable technologies that have the potential to reach local sustainability goals and the global SDGs (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012).

Previous studies have highlighted MNEs' initiatives to promote sustainability, which include, for example, reporting on corporate sustainability performance or citizenship involvement (Codita, 2007), ethical purchasing strategies (Perez-Aleman & Sandilands, 2008), supply chain greening (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012), green product and process design (Christmann, 2004), social collaborations (Selsky & Parker, 2005), and other environmental initiatives (Ritvala et al., 2014). For MNEs' sustainability initiatives, capability development is a significant facilitator for implementing sustainability activities (Poisson-de Haro & Bitektine, 2015).

Table 3 below shows that there are two dominant categories in which MNEs demonstrate their roles in local sustainable development, namely enabling and coordinating roles, however the literature also shows that MNEs can inhibit these roles and contribute negatively to local sustainable development. Table 3 provides a summary of the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development found in the literature, highlighting key findings and references.

Table 3. Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development

Roles		References	Key Findings
Enabling Roles	Financer	Chelekis & Mudambi, 2010; Kolk et al., 2017, 2014, 2018; Werner et al., 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNEs have been making investments to developed and developing countries by mobilizing financial capital through investment-based activities, such as FDI, business at the BOP, micro-entrepreneurship, microfinance, and social entrepreneurial ventures (Chelekis & Mudambi, 2010; Kolk et al., 2017, 2014, 2018) - As a dominant social institution (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009), MNEs' role in implementing the SDGs at a local level can also be defined by their contribution to poverty alleviation and addressing inequality (Kolk et al., 2017) - Value chains incorporating the poor (Werner et al., 2014)
	Capacity Builder	Kolk et al., 2018; Newenham-Kahindi, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNEs are playing a substantial role by responding to communities' challenges through the implementation of sustainability initiatives, while also contributing to poverty alleviation at the local level (Kolk et al., 2018; Newenham-Kahindi, 2015) - MNEs use sustainability programs as a means of responding to community challenges by engaging local employees as intermediaries with local communities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015)
	Product and	Crane et al., 2008;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With growing legitimacy, MNEs are gaining political authority and greater corporate power as private

Service Provider	Dauvergne & Lister, 2012; Detomasi, 2007; Muthuri et al., 2012; Newenham-Kahindi, 2015; Yamin & Sinkovics, 2009	governors of sustainability governance (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012) - MNEs will not be the only solution to sustainability, but their role is too large to ignore and are arguably the most powerful actors within governance systems (Detomasi, 2007) - MNEs are forced to fill institutional voids and play roles traditionally played by local governments for providing basic infrastructure and public welfare (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015; Yamin & Sinkovics, 2009) - Stakeholder expectations for MNEs to play wider governance roles are attributed to changes in institutional relationships between businesses and governments (Crane et al., 2008; Muthuri et al., 2012)	
Facilitating Roles	Partner	Clarke & MacDonald, 2019; Kolk et al., 2017; Newenham-Kahindi, 2015; Ritvala et al., 2014; Waddock, 1989	- Increasing number of partnerships between MNEs and local stakeholders with the aim of addressing local sustainable development challenges (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015) - MNEs are increasingly encouraged to take part in societal problem-solving (Waddock, 1989) through collaborative approaches with other sectors that take shape in a number of different forms (Ritvala et al., 2014) - Partnerships play a crucial part in the SDGs, yet literature linking sustainability operations of MNEs' initiatives to local partnerships has been limited. (Kolk et al., 2017) - Cross-sector social partnerships can provide MNEs with balances and checks on their social impact through the lateral exchange of knowledge between organizations (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019).
Innovator	Dauvergne & Lister, 2012; Hall & Vredenburg, 2003; Kraemer & van Tulder, 2009; Patchell & Hayter, 2013; Yunis, Jamali, & Hashim, 2018	- MNEs have the resources to mobilize research and development and deliver technological advances around the world (Patchell & Hayter, 2013; Yunis et al., 2018) - MNEs have the technological ability to increase access to resources for remote communities (Kraemer & van Tulder, 2009) - MNEs have huge potential for technological innovation for designing sustainable products and services (Hall & Vredenburg, 2003) - Through shifting sustainability trends, MNEs are now implementing sustainability governance as a means of improving competitiveness and overall business value to leverage sustainability for business growth, while also contributing to lessening the impacts of	

Previous scholarship has highlighted MNEs contribution to sustainable development through various enabling and facilitating roles, however there is a gap in the research indicating MNEs contribution for achieving local-level sustainability and there is a lack of research compiling all roles of MNEs in local sustainable development.

2.7 Literature Conclusion

By reviewing the literature, it can be noted that the private sector has been contributing both negatively and positively to sustainable development in various ways, but little attention has been given to MNEs' roles in contributing to local sustainable development. This study aims to identify how MNEs frame sustainability efforts at the local level to understand how MNEs use corporate discourse to legitimate their actions to society and construct realities of sustainability, namely the literature has shown that MNEs frame their efforts through their engagement in home and host countries, local embeddedness in the communities they operate in, and their business-in-society relationships (Muthuri et al., 2012). The literature reveals that MNEs have made commitments of aligning their business operations with sustainability and the SDGs in their sustainability reports but there is a gap in the evidence suggesting that MNEs are in fact contributing to solving sustainable development challenges in practice (Mhlanga et al., 2018).

In addition, by reviewing the literature, it can be noted that MNEs have been playing various roles for local sustainable development through two dominant categories, the first relating to enabling roles such as financing, capacity building, and product and service provision, and the second through facilitating roles focusing on partnerships and innovation. There is limited research in the literature regarding MNEs' roles in local sustainable development on SDG-related topics and their implementation of the SDGs, as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was only recently adopted in 2015 (United Nations, 2015b). There is also a lack of research that compiles all of MNEs roles in local sustainable development, which limits the understanding of MNEs contribution to the sustainability agenda at the local level.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology chosen for this research study and provide a thorough explanation of the methods undertaken to answer the research questions. This study uses a mixed methods approach to analyze multinational enterprises' framing of local-level sustainability and to identify MNEs' roles in local sustainable development. The chapter begins with an overview of the methodology (Section 3.1), followed by the methods for data collection, data analysis (Section 3.2), limitations of the methodology (Section 3.3), and concludes with the reliability and validity of the study (Section 3.4).

3.1 Pragmatism and Mixed Methods

The philosophical perspective used in this thesis subscribes to a pragmatic worldview. According to Creswell (2003, p. 39), pragmatism “arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions”. This worldview focuses on the individual researcher and their freedom of choice to identify the particular methods, techniques, and procedures of the research that meet their specific needs and purposes (Creswell, 2003). Pragmatism acknowledges that choosing between one position of ontology or epistemology is unrealistic in practice, thus the research questions should be a key determinant in choosing the position (Ihuah & Eaton, 2013). This worldview allows the researcher to focus on the research problems directly as opposed to the specific methods, allowing the researcher to use various methodological approaches to understand the research problem in depth (Creswell, 2003; Mounce, 2000). This worldview explores applications of effectiveness to understand problems without subscribing to one approach over another.

This research applies a concurrent nested (embedded) mixed method design to examine MNEs' framing of local-level sustainability and to identify their roles in local sustainable development. Due to the data and resources available, a mixed methods approach allows the research questions to be answered holistically by providing a comprehensive understanding of the social phenomenon through the triangulation of data (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, a mixed methods design is most appropriate for this study due to the context of the social phenomenon, the role of the researcher, the sources of data collection, and the emergent design of the study (Creswell, 2003). A concurrent nested (embedded) design in mixed methods research includes one phase of data collection in which priority is given to one approach and the other approach plays a supporting role. For this thesis, there is only one phase of data collection which can be found below in [Section 3.4](#). For this thesis, priority is given to qualitative

approaches (discourse and frame analysis and qualitative content analysis), whereas quantitative data analysis (bivariate analysis) plays a supporting role for the second research question.

3.2 Methods

The study analyzed 349 MNEs' most recent sustainability reports uploaded and registered to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainability Disclosure Database as of December 2018. The study used discourse and frame analysis, qualitative content analysis, and bivariate analysis to analyze sustainability reports, in which NVivo 10 qualitative research software was used to assist in managing and analyzing the qualitative data. For this thesis, all data was stored in NVivo as a database for saving and categorizing sustainability reports used in discourse and frame analysis, as well as content analysis. NVivo was also used as a tool to further explore and analyze content within the sustainability reports, specifically to compile data regarding patterns of word frequencies, and search keywords relevant to the research questions.

3.2.1 Data Collection

To understand MNEs framing of localizing sustainability and their roles in local sustainable development, the study analyzed data from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainability Disclosure Database. The GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database provides free access to “all types of sustainability reports, whether GRI-based or otherwise, and relevant information related to the reporting organizations” (GRI, 2019, para. 1). The database allows users to use the search functionality to filter by several characteristics to sort and refine search results. The database is also accessible as a Microsoft Excel export of both the report and organization metadata. The GRI Database is the most comprehensive platform for sustainability reporting, as most companies use a form of guidance or framework for reporting non-financial disclosures (KPMG International, 2017). It is important to note that there are many different reports uploaded to the GRI Database, including but not limited to integrated reports, GRI content indexes, sustainability/CSR reports, sustainability updates, registration documents, and annual reports. According to a 2017 KPMG survey of corporate responsibility (CR) reporting (KPMG International, 2017), which reviewed sustainability and CR reports from 4900 companies in 49 countries, the GRI framework is the most commonly applied framework for sustainability and CR reporting. Moreover, approximately two-thirds of companies surveyed applied the GRI-G4 guidelines or standards, which is the most recent and comprehensive guideline provided by GRI (KPMG International, 2017).

3.2.1.1 Selection of Sustainability Reports/Companies

The empirical material for this study consisted of sustainability reports from MNEs who published and registered their reports in the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database as of December 2018 with explicit reference to the UN SDGs within their reports. Access to the GRI Reports List² was granted by GRI via email by following the order procedures for student acquisition of the Reports List. The GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database was used to collect information on MNEs' most recent sustainability reports uploaded and registered in the database explicitly mentioning the SDGs. GRI provided a free student copy of the full GRI Reports List, a Microsoft Excel export of the report and organization metadata of sustainability reports registered in the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database. Companies on the GRI Reports List were filtered using the Excel data filter functionality by organization size (MNE) and reports explicitly mentioning the SDGs, which is a column on the GRI Reports List only available for reports uploaded and registered by 2016 and onwards.

The following section identifies criteria used for selecting the population group, followed by rationale for selecting each criterion.

1. The company must be a MNE according to the EU definition (see [Section 2.3.1](#) for full definition) from the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database Data Legend;
2. The company must have at least one sustainability report available on the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database;
3. The company's most recent sustainability report uploaded and registered in the GRI database by December 2018 must explicitly mention the SDGs;
4. Sustainability reports must be available in English;
5. The report must be currently accessible by URL link or PDF on GRI database; and
6. The report must not be a duplicate upload of the same report on the GRI database.

The first criterion relates to the EU classification of a MNE, which is the definition followed by the GRI in the Sustainability Disclosure Database and for this reason, will be the definition used in this study. Organizations in the GRI database can be classified as SME, Large, and MNE. For this thesis, the size classification of MNE was used to filter and sort organizations because this study focuses specifically on MNEs, which is defined previously as a company with a staff headcount equal to more than 250

² Excel spreadsheet with organizational and report data on all reports registered in the GRI database

employees with multinational operations, and a turnover equal to or more than £50 million or a balance sheet total equal to or more than £43 million. However, the most important aspect for analyzing MNEs is their multinationality and how their operations in multiple countries contribute to local sustainable development.

The second criteria states that MNEs must have sustainability reports available on the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database because this is the main database analyzed for this study. In addition, the GRI database was selected for this study since because it is the most comprehensive platform with sustainability reports and the GRI releases guidance and frameworks for reporting non-financial disclosures that are widely accepted among organizations (KPMG International, 2017).

The third criterion narrows the list of MNEs by only considering companies who have explicitly referenced the SDGs in their most recent sustainability report. Since the SDGs were recently adopted in 2015, only the most recent sustainability report is considered because reports explicitly mentioning the SDGs are only available to filter on the GRI database after 2015. The SDG filter indicates an explicit reference to the UN SDGs in the report, with yes meaning the report has referenced any of the SDGs in the report, which is only a filter available on the Reports List for reports registered and uploaded by 2016. The SDG filter was applied to sort organizations by their alignment with the SDGs, in which sustainability reports can potentially provide information on how MNEs are addressing global priorities as set forth by the SDGs. Moreover, the SDGs require local-level efforts and implementation to enable action at a global scale. Explicit reference to the SDGs is also a key criterion in this study because the study wanted to analyze a smaller subset of all MNEs' most recent sustainability reports uploaded on the GRI database. The study also wanted to explore MNEs' contribution to local sustainable development through the context of the SDGs so that results of the thesis could be relevant to the SDGs. The study does not aim to make generalizations to a larger population of MNEs; only those aiming for the SDGs.

The list was then further narrowed to only consider each company's most recent sustainability report. If a company had multiple sustainability reports explicitly mentioning the SDGs registered and uploaded in the database by 2016, only the most recent report was considered. The study considered all MNEs in the population, so if there were multiple reports from MNEs with regional offices, for example, Nestlé and Nestlé Malaysia, both reports would be considered if they were different reports. The researcher did this by first looking at all MNEs with reports registered and uploaded in 2018 explicitly referencing the SDGs with the same criteria of reports by MNEs in 2017, comparing the list of companies in 2018 with 2017 by using Microsoft Excel to check duplicate values. The researcher did this by highlighting the two columns of companies in 2018 and 2017 and using the conditional formatting feature in Microsoft excel to check

duplicates to highlight cell rules by duplicate values to highlight only unique or duplicate values. Duplicate values (e.g. duplicate companies) were highlighted in a different background and font colour and then removed and remaining values were then checked for duplicates with MNEs with reports registered and uploaded in the database explicitly mentioning the SDGs in 2016. Similarly, duplicate values in the 2016 year were eliminated to create the final list of the companies in this study. In total, the list of MNEs and their most recent reports were narrowed down to 530 reports in all languages. When only considering English reports, there was a total of 362 reports, which limits the research in that organizations with headquarters in countries where English is not the primary language are not considered in this study and thus reduces the scope and representativeness of the study population.

The study only considered MNEs most recent sustainability report because the timeframe for conducting this thesis was limited and analyzing multiple reports was not feasible when analyzing reports at the appropriate depth. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to look at one report from each company so that results would not be skewed towards companies that had multiple reports since 2016 versus companies with only one report. By looking at only one recent report, the results are comparable by the same unit of analysis which is one sustainability report.

In addition, the researcher is limited to carrying out the study in English only and therefore, criterion four dictates that all available data and resources must be available in English. Sustainability reports were extracted via the hyperlinks in the GRI Reports List, which provided links to the sustainability report address and the GRI database.

The fifth criterion states that the report must be accessible from the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database by HTML link or PDF. Reports registered and uploaded on the GRI Database are accessible by links to the PDF and/or HTML version. Therefore, if links to the report are broken (e.g. links that do not work) or no longer accessible, the report from that company will not be considered due to time constraints of the data collection phase and overall time constraints of the study. For companies with reports only accessible by HTML or via a web page link, two actions were taken to import these reports into NVivo for analysis. In total, nine of the 349 reports were only accessible by a HTML or web page link. First, the researcher used the HTML link to access the sustainability report website. In some cases, there was an option on some companies' websites to download the sustainability reports through a 'report builder' in which the researcher could customize which aspects of the report to download. For this purpose, the researcher downloaded the entire sustainability report from these companies. For companies' websites where there was no option to download the report, NVivo's NCapture feature was used to capture screenshots of web pages of these sustainability reports so that the PDF version of each web page could

be saved and combined into a single PDF using the Preview application on MAC OSX operating system, which was then imported in NVivo for analysis.

The final criterion relates to duplicate reports by the same company in the GRI database. If the company uploaded and registered their latest sustainability report more than once and both reports were identical, only the first upload was considered. A report was also not considered if it was a duplicate upload from a parent MNE. For example, the most recent sustainability report uploaded on the GRI Database by ArcelorMittal and ArcelorMittal UK were the same document, therefore the report from ArcelorMittal was only analyzed once. However, as mentioned earlier, if the report from MNEs with regional offices were different, for example Nestlé and Nestlé Malaysia, each report was considered. After following all the criteria, there was a total of 349 reports to analyze.

3.2.1.2 Population Group

This subsection provides a list of the number of MNEs within the population group organized by their sector, which is presented in Table 4 below. [Appendix B](#) provides a complete list of all MNEs considered in this study based on the criteria mentioned earlier and includes organizational data about the company, such as the company's sector, country of origin, and HQ region. For a list of companies by their organization name and sector only, see [Appendix C](#).

Table 4. Number of MNEs by Sector

Sector	Number of Companies
Agriculture	8
Automotive	10
Aviation	3
Chemicals	14
Commercial Services	10
Computers	7
Conglomerates	10
Construction	10
Construction Materials	5
Consumer Durables	3
Energy	16
Energy Utilities	4
Equipment	8
Financial Services	47
Food and Beverage Products	32
Forest and Paper Products	6
Healthcare Products	17
Healthcare Services	1
Household and Personal Products	9
Logistics	5

Media	3
Metals Products	5
Mining	12
Non-profit / Services	1
Public Agency	2
Real Estate	11
Retailers	16
Technology Hardware	18
Telecommunications	11
Textiles and Apparel	4
Tobacco	1
Tourism and Leisure	6
Toys	1
Other	32

3.2.2 Data Analysis

This study used discourse analysis and framing theory to identify different perspectives of MNEs’ approach to sustainability at the local level. Discourse analysis is used for Part A of data analysis to analyze how sustainability efforts are framed in the corporate discourse of sustainability reports. Corporate disclosures such as sustainability reports are seen as a “medium in which social reality is constructed” (Laine, 2005, p. 400). Using discourse analysis helps to identify how MNEs’ legitimate their actions towards society by constructing their approach to sustainability at the local level and in turn, how their framing of concepts is understood in social reality. Discourses represent structured methods of representation that foster particular interpretations or understandings of that “enable particular types of actions to be envisaged” (Hugé, Waas, Dahdouh-Guebas, Koedam, & Block, 2013, p. 188). In other words, discourse also takes into consideration how words are framed but also focuses on the practices in which particular ways of looking at different details are embedded (Buizer & Van Herzele, 2012). The researcher used discourse analysis to analyze the terms MNEs use to portray their sustainability efforts. Frame analysis is used to strengthen the discourse analysis to understand how multiple perspectives are encountered throughout corporate discourse. According to Entman (1993), framing is a method of choosing certain aspects of a perceived reality and emphasizing them to promote a particular view of a problem. The way in which MNEs frame their approach to sustainability at the local level is critical to understanding how their approaches are discussed and perceived and their relevancy to society (Benford & Snow, 2000). The study focused on analyzing how concepts of sustainability at the local level were used and presented in the corporate discourse of sustainability reports. In this manner, it was possible to analyze several themes among MNEs’ sustainability approaches and engagement with the SDGs at the

local level. The researcher used frame analysis to further understanding of how terms are used to derive meaning and construct realities of MNEs' sustainability efforts in the context of the SDGs.

Qualitative content analysis allows for making “replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a practical guide to action” (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 108). In other words, as a research technique, content analysis can provide new ways of understanding a social phenomenon or inform decisions on important actions (Krippendorff, 2010). Content analysis was used to identify the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development and analyze the different perspectives in how MNEs frame their local-level engagements and business operations with sustainability. Content analysis has also been a successful method in previous academic work analyzing patterns of annual report disclosures (Laine, 2005).

3.2.2.1 Coding

Upon the completion of data collection, the researcher used a deductive approach to build a coding tree for discourse and frame analysis and for qualitative content analysis, followed by inductive coding for both analyses.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher used NVivo as a database to save and categorize data and explore and analyze reports. In particular, the researcher used NVivo to search for keywords related to the research questions based on preliminary coding frameworks based on the literature. The researcher first began by briefly reading each sustainability report to become more familiar with the data and generate an understanding of the how data is represented. During this process, the researcher coded sections under broad topical themes for future reference and later went through each coded reference line by line. Both coding frameworks were revised inductively after conducting the main analysis of sustainability reports by adding new codes found in the empirical results when going through coded references line by line.

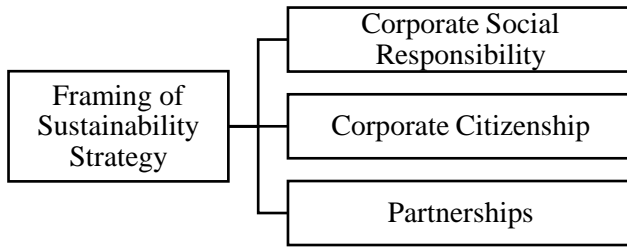
The researcher was then able to code text selections as nodes in NVivo. Nodes refer to a “collection of references about a specific theme, place, person or other area of interest” (QSR International, 2014). Nodes can also be categorized under other nodes (sub-nodes) and can be organized by hierarchy. The nodes created for this study represented topical content related to each research question and contained sub-nodes underneath that used analytical coding to organize topical content into sub-themes.

3.2.2.1.1 Coding of Research Question 1

The researcher first began by building a coding tree based on Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia's (2012) study on corporate innovation and sustainable community development in developing countries by using the frames of business-in-society engagements related to CSR, corporate citizenship, and business-

community partnerships to identify MNEs' approach to sustainability. The study followed this framework because Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia's (2012) research focused on MNEs' role in society, particularly at the community level and is relevant in this field of research with approximately 100 citations. For this reason, the study aims to test and contribute to this framework to study MNEs' framing of sustainable development in the local communities in which they operate. The researcher created an initial coding tree deductively to focus more on testing and building on Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia's (2012) findings, rather than creating a new framework to create a new theory. Figure 2 shows the node hierarchy for content relating to MNEs' framing of local-level sustainability efforts based on the literature mentioned in Subsection 2.5.3 on MNEs' business-in-society relationships from Chapter 2.

Figure 2. Hierarchy of Nodes for MNEs Framing of Local-level Sustainability



Based on these categories, the researcher then coded each sustainability report in the study population and coded any relevant sentences and/or paragraphs that focused on the company's sustainability strategy at the local level, their alignment with the SDGs, their sustainability engagements in local communities, and their involvement in local-level sustainability initiatives. Figure 3 below shows the node and sub-nodes relating to MNEs' framing of sustainability, following both the deductive and inductive coding.

Figure 3. Nodes and Sub-nodes of MNEs' Framing of Sustainability



To answer the first research question, the researcher used the Text Search query on NVivo to search for specific words and explore the context of their use under the framing node to understand how MNEs use corporate discourse to portray their local-level sustainability efforts in the context of the SDGs. The researcher based the Text Search queries on the deductive and inductive coding tree based on Figure 3 above. During the coding process, the researcher did consider “sustainability” as a synonym for the frame of “sustainable development”, however this classification was too broad and the researcher decided to only use the search term “sustainable development” to identify phrases in the sub-node on sustainability strategy. In particular, the researcher used the following Boolean search terms to find all the terms listed below and the frequency of their occurrences in 349 sustainability reports in the population group:

- Discourse 1: “Corporate social responsibility”, “CSR”
- Discourse 2: “Corporate citizenship”
- Discourse 3: “Partnership”, “partnerships”, “partner”
- Discourse 4: “Sustainable development”
- Discourse 5: “Environmental, social, governance,” “environmental, social, and corporate governance,” “ESG”

The results of the Text Search queries were then saved into nodes and labelled according to the appropriate discourse. For queries that included multiple search terms, for example “corporate social responsibility” and “CSR”, the results were combined into one node labelled “CSR”. The results of this quantitative analysis looking at word frequency of the discourses in MNEs self-reporting can be found in Chapter 4 in [Section 4.1](#), specifically in Table 5 and 6.

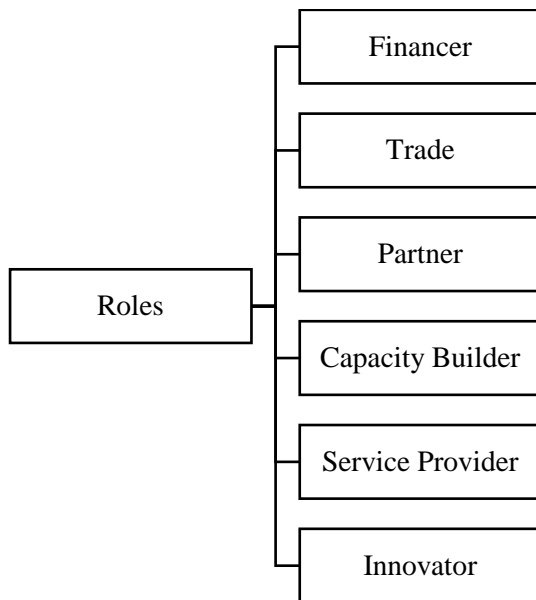
Once all content was coded under sustainability strategy in NVivo under the appropriate frames as found in Figure 3 above, the researcher then opened all coded references frame by frame to identify the distinguishing features of each frame in the qualitative analysis by searching for distinct keywords in each frame. Distinct keywords were written down in a word document and revised throughout the process of

identifying distinguishable features. Furthermore, the researcher considered frames in relation to where the sustainability agenda is set based on internal/external sustainability priorities and whether firms are acting independently or collaboratively with other organizations to deliver their sustainability efforts in the context of the SDGs. The results of this qualitative analysis can be found in Chapter 4 in [Section 4.1](#), which specifically led to Table 7 and is further discussed in the matrix in Figure 8 in Chapter 5, [Section 5.1](#).

3.2.2.1.2 Coding of Research Question 2

For the second research question, the researcher also created a deductive coding tree based on findings in the literature related to the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development. The framework is based on a summary of findings from the literature regarding the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development, which can be found in Table 3 from [Section 2.6](#). The researcher used a deductive coding tree based on existing literature to contribute knowledge to existing scholarship on the topic by aiming to add to this field, acknowledging that previous research exists on the topic but that there is a need to further understand MNEs' roles at the community level. Figure 4 below shows the initial node hierarchy of content regarding MNEs' roles in local sustainable development.

Figure 4. Hierarchy of Nodes for Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development



Based on these nodes, the researcher coded all sustainability reports in the study population and coded MNEs contribution to local sustainable development through their various roles, which could include

products and/or services for the local community, business activities aimed at local-level sustainability, commitments to partnerships and/or alliances, the coordination of leadership of local initiatives, providing knowledge products, tools, and/or resources, etc. Nodes were added inductively to the coding frame to account for findings in the empirical results that were not found in the literature. After reading through all sustainability reports multiple times, Figure 5 below shows the nodes and sub-nodes in NVivo related to the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development.

Figure 5. Nodes and Sub-nodes of the Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development



3.2.2.2 Bivariate Pearson Correlation

The bivariate Pearson Correlation was used to measure correlations within MNEs roles in local sustainable development and between MNEs by sector and their headquarter (HQ) region. The analysis aims to reveal the associations between continuous variables and does not aim to make any inferences about causation.

Correlations between MNEs by sector and HQ region and their relation to the roles they pursue in local sustainable development were computed in two stages in SPSS to test relationships between MNEs sector and HQ region by their roles. The Sig. (2-tailed) value is used to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between the variables in the dataset. Three values will be used to determine the significance level of the Sig. (2-tailed) value, which are 0.1, 0.05, and 0.01 because they correspond to the probability of observing these extreme values by chance.

In the first stage, the original data was recoded into a new dataset for SPSS to analyze MNEs by sector and their roles. All MNEs were grouped into file classifications on NVivo to conduct the next step of creating a new dataset. The new dataset was based off the results of a matrix coding query on NVivo that looked at companies by sector and how many companies within each sector referred to any of the roles. Companies were grouped by sector according to sectors in the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database legend. According to the GRI Data Legend, all organizations are classified into 37 categories. When only considering MNEs in this study, organizations are classified into 35 sectors.

In the second stage, the data was condensed into fewer categories for the correlation analyses because some sectors only included a few cases, for example the tobacco sector only contained one company. For a full list of sectors and accompanying cases, see [Appendix C](#). Sectors were condensed into fewer categories to allow for a higher number of companies in each category to conduct statistical analyses. Similar sectors were grouped together, for example Energy and Energy Utilities. The study combined categories with fewer than 10 companies in each sector, so if there were less than 10 companies in a sector, they were combined to the best of the researcher's judgement with another similar sector. For categories that could not be combined with other sectors, such as Tourism and Leisure, these companies were put into the Other category and were consequently not included in statistical analysis. To view the combined categories, see [Appendix D](#). The dataset was recoded according to these condensed categories and correlations were tested for significant relationship with roles in local sustainable development.

The same process for creating a new dataset was done to analyze correlations between MNEs by HQ region and their roles in local sustainable development. MNEs were also grouped into file classifications by HQ region, which include Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and Oceania. The purpose of testing this classification is to identify the importance, if any, of regional headquarter location and the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development. Considering the study's focus on sustainable development at the local level, the classification of MNEs by HQ region is to test whether companies by region have any correlation to the roles they pursue at the local level. This is not to assume that all companies in certain regions are the same but to provide a preliminary perspective on

whether companies from different regions self-declare different roles. The new dataset for analyzing this relationship used a matrix coding query result that listed all MNEs by HQ region and their reference to roles.

3.3 Limitations

As a method of empirical inquiry, a mixed methods research study aims to provide a holistic description of the social phenomenon being studied through the triangulation of data (Creswell, 2003), however data collection and analysis for mixed methods is extensive and as such, the researcher is limited in time, which can impact the depth of the study. For a mixed methods design, extensive familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative approaches would have allowed the researcher to analyze data more easily. Since the study used a concurrent nested (embedded) design in mixed methods research, a qualitative approach was prioritized for analyzing MNEs' framing of local-level sustainability and the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development. A quantitative approach played a supporting role for understanding MNEs role in local sustainable development, limiting the depth of analysis and interpretation of the quantitative results.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

Reliability in mixed methods research refers to the absence of random errors, which enables succeeding researchers to arrive at the same perceptions following the same methodological approaches in this study (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). The researcher minimized threats to reliability by focusing on transparency and researcher reflexivity by documenting each step of the research process in the [Section 3.2](#). To reduce inconsistencies in data collection, a single researcher reduced, coded, and analyzed the data. The researcher read through each sustainability report multiple times and reviewed all coded references line by line and recategorized coded references as needed throughout the coding process to allow for the deductive coding framework to more actively reflect the data-driven nature of qualitative content analysis, which refers to the inductive process of adding to the deductive coding frame.

The researcher also made a consistent effort to reflect on the data collection and analysis process by discussing ideas with her supervisor and committee member. The researcher also made an effort to discuss data collection methods with experienced colleagues in the department at the University of Waterloo. Limitations and research assumptions are also discussed in [Section 3.3](#) to acknowledge any biases and issues in the research design.

The researcher also conducted multiple analyses to determine the population group to only consider the most recent reports from MNEs who have registered and uploaded their reports in the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database explicitly referencing the SDGs so that every MNE that could be included in the study based on the criteria were included. The results of the study can be replicated with access the GRI Reports List from the Sustainability Disclosure Database, which is available to all individuals for free or a fee depending on their personal affiliation. Replicability of the results from qualitative content analysis may be challenging as coding paragraphs or sentences under categorial nodes is subjective based on the researcher's interpretation of the code. To avoid this, the researcher followed a deductive framework identified from the literature for analyzing results related to both research questions.

Validity is a crucial criterion to ensure the researcher's findings are accurate from the perspectives of the participants, the researcher, and the readers of the study (Bolderston, 2012; Creswell, 2003). The study's validity is reflected in the use of a mixed methods approach to analyze both research questions that guide the study. A concurrent nested (embedded) design is used to prioritize a qualitative approach in providing an in-depth analysis of MNEs' framing of local-level sustainability and the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development, whereas a quantitative approach is used to support the findings on MNEs' roles in local sustainable development, and to analyze sector preferences and HQ region influences on MNEs' engagement in local communities.

There are various threats to internal validity, which concerns studies with objectives that make causal claims (Creswell, 2003). Since this study is concerned with examining the relationship and framing of MNEs and their roles in local sustainable development, threats to internal validity were identified and minimized early in the research process by developing a coding framework to analyze the language of the sustainability reports. The creation of a clear research framework, which demonstrated the relationship between variables, helped to ensure internal validity. In addition, the literature review provided a sound basis for comparing and discussing relationships within this study and previous studies in various contexts (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). The researcher was able to ensure internal validity by first conducting a literature review and receiving feedback throughout the process from her supervisor and analyzing multiple sources of evidence, which encourages convergent lines of inquiry and the triangulation of data (Creswell, 2003; R. K. Yin, 2014).

External validity refers to the extent to which the research results can be generalized beyond the study (Creswell, 2003). In other words, external validity refers to the transferability of the research findings to other contexts by the reader (Creswell, 2003). The researcher considered the generalizations made in the study to ensure they are generalizations towards theory and not entire populations. This research does not

aim to generalize the results of this study to all MNEs but only represents the population based on the criteria mentioned in [Section 3.2.1.1](#).

3.5 Summary

To conclude, this chapter introduces the research design and methods of data collection to study MNEs' framing of local-level sustainability efforts and the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development. The study used a concurrent nested (embedded) mixed methods research design, prioritizing a qualitative approach and using quantitative analysis to support the qualitative results. Data collection consists of collecting sustainability reports uploaded and registered to the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database, filtering by size (MNE), latest publication year, and reference to the SDGs. A total of 349 sustainability reports were analyzed to identify MNEs' perspectives of sustainability at the local level and the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development.

Chapter 4: Empirical Results

This chapter presents the empirical results of the data analysis from 349 sustainability reports from MNEs. This chapter begins by presenting the empirical results which answer the first research question related to MNEs' framing of local-level sustainability efforts in Part A. Part B of the empirical results aims to answer the second research question on the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development, followed by the statistical results of conducting correlations between roles of MNEs by sector and MNEs by headquarter (HQ) region. As a reminder, below are the two research questions which guide the study:

1. How do MNEs frame sustainability efforts at the local level?
2. What are the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development?

4.1 Part A – Framing of Local-level Sustainability

This subsection presents the empirical results for the research study that aims to answer the first research question.

The research aims to introduce the different perspectives on the framing of local-level sustainability at the local level by initially using a deductive framing work that follows Muthuri, Moon, and Idemudia's (2012) frames of business-in-society engagements. The study used discourse analysis and frame analysis to further the understanding of MNEs' different perspectives on approaching sustainability at a local level by analyzing corporate discourse in sustainability reports. The concept of sustainability at the local level is an exemplary case of a concept that is constantly being reconstructed and reproduced through corporate discursive action as several definitions of sustainability exist.

As shown in Table 5, framing of business-in-society engagements were analyzed through the following frames: CSR; corporate citizenship; partnerships (Muthuri et al., 2012); sustainable development; and environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG). For this study, business-in-society engagements are defined as MNEs' engagement in local communities. It is important to note that many terms are interconnected in terms of their definition and association, while some terms are also used synonymously to represent other meanings that are similar to other terms found in the empirical results. The results of this analysis look specifically at the terms in which MNEs choose to exemplify their engagements with local-level sustainability efforts and the words used associated with the discourse to provide a broad understanding of how MNEs perceive the concept of sustainability. Table 5 details the five discourses and whether the frames are explicitly mentioned in the title of the report, the number of reports that mention each frame, as well as the total number of times each frame is mentioned in all reports. Table 5 shows that

CSR is mentioned the most in the report titles compared to other frames, whereas sustainable development is mentioned in the report content of 256/349 companies' sustainability reports. The third column shows that in total, the frame of sustainable development is mentioned 849 times in the 256 sustainability reports that mention this frame in their report content.

Table 5. MNEs' Discourse of Local-level Sustainability

Frames	Reference in Title	References in Number of Reports	Total References in All Reports
CSR	47	78	275
Corporate Citizenship	2	35	42
Partnerships	0	80	127
Sustainable Development	6	256	849
ESG	4	17	30

Table 6 below shows the overlapping terms used of MNEs' discourse of sustainability efforts at the local level. For example, organizations that use CSR as a discourse in their reports may also use corporate citizenship in the same report as part of their discourse. In this case, Table 6 below shows the number of organizations with overlapping terms used of discourse and the number of organizations that only use one discourse. To illustrate, organizations that only use CSR as a discourse within the wording of their report is a total of eight companies, whereas 21 companies also use corporate citizen, 17 use partnerships, 64 use sustainable development, and 6 companies use ESG as a discourse.

Table 6. Reports by Overlapping Terms

	CSR	Corporate Citizenship	Partnerships	Sustainable Development	ESG
CSR	8	21	17	64	6
Corporate Citizenship	21	17	22	59	6
Partnerships	17	22	6	53	6
Sustainable Development	64	59	53	95	15
ESG	6	6	6	15	1

Table 7 below shows a summary of the frames found in corporate discourse, with definitions found in the empirical results and the values associated with each frame about local-level sustainability efforts.

Table 7. Frames of MNEs' Engagement in Local Communities for Sustainability

Frame	Definitions	Values
CSR	Engagement in communities as a responsibility to society and societal stakeholders by integration of philanthropic concerns into business model and value creation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate value - Stakeholder perception - Focus on philanthropy - Internal sustainability agenda

Corporate Citizenship	Active participation, engagement, and moral obligation in community relations as a member of the community that mirrors the concept of human citizenship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human citizenship - Moral obligation as community member - External sustainability agenda
Partnerships	Cross-sector partnerships further progress on local sustainable development by combining resources from various organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multi-stakeholder partnerships - Collaborative initiatives for pursuing sustainability efforts - Shared sustainability agenda
Sustainable Development	Equitable development that meets the needs of the enterprise and stakeholders, as well as the community within ecological limits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social equity - Value creation - Environmental mitigation - Internal and external sustainability agenda
ESG	Managing environmental, social and corporate governance risks are a key priority for financial performance and business success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate value - Investment - Internal sustainability agenda

4.1.1 Frame 1: Corporate Social Responsibility

This frame reflects a perspective of MNEs' engagement in local-level sustainability that focuses on social responsibility, philanthropy, value creation, transparency, trust and legitimacy, and brand reputation.

When looking at MNEs' sustainability efforts at the local level, 78 reports referenced this term 275 times. Compared to other frames, CSR is mentioned the second most after the frame of sustainable development in 78 reports, however in the 78 reports CSR is mentioned 275 times in total, which is again second to the sustainable development frame. CSR discourse in sustainability reporting emphasizes MNEs' self-regulation that is driven by internal needs to be socially accountable to the company itself, stakeholders, and the general public. Companies framing their engagements in local communities through CSR operate in ways that consider their public impact on the environment, society, and economy through their philanthropic. For example, Arkema, a chemicals company headquartered in France, frame their sustainability strategy and local engagements as a way of gaining trust with local communities and establishing relationships with local stakeholders:

As a responsible company in an increasingly interconnected world, the Group is particularly attentive to the need to nurture close ties with all its stakeholders. Around the world, the Group is deploying nearness communication initiatives to foster high-quality, trust-based relationships with host communities. This open dialogue also helps the Group to better understand the expectations of people living in nearby communities and ensure that they are properly addressed in its CSR strategy. (Arkema, 2017, p. 123)

MNEs also reiterate this frame of CSR by considering how their positive impacts can address the philanthropic needs of local communities, which are viewed as critical to their business success:

We endeavour to give back to our communities through our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts and to play a part in the development of our communities. Our CSR initiatives include fundraising, contributing space for events and outreach activities, engaging with our neighbours, supporting the arts and actively participating in community projects. Through this wide range of activities, we hope to address the varied needs of different sectors of the local communities and make a real difference to those who have been key to our business success. (Frasers Centrepoint Limited, 2016, p. 114)

In terms of MNEs framing of the SDGs through a CSR discourse, MNEs view the SDGs as a core business competency critical to the success of their business for gaining the trust and legitimacy of stakeholders, as well as distinguishing their philanthropic commitments to global priorities. MNEs in this frame view the SDGs as an opportunity to develop business-led solutions not only to help achieve the SDGs, but for also responding to rising stakeholder concerns. The frame of CSR views MNEs sustainability efforts as a perspective that satisfies environmental, economic, and social standards, while also complying with the overarching goals of societal expectations. In this manner, MNEs implement sustainability efforts through CSR by integrating both environmental and social concerns into the company's business model and value creation. One example is the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ), which applies the SDGs as a global framework for integrating social, environmental, and economic concerns into their business operations and process for value creation:

ANZ is committed to the SDGs, which we consider represent an opportunity for business-led solutions and technologies to be developed and implemented [...] we have sought to better understand the SDGs and the linkages to our business. We have again this year mapped relevant SDGs to our sustainability targets and have also embarked on an exercise of mapping the SDGs to our Project and Export Finance book to understand some of the key sustainability drivers underpinning that business. (ANZ, 2017, p. 7)

In the same manner, other MNEs use the SDGs as a method of informing their sustainability initiatives and programs to better contribute to the overarching goals of society and strengthen the company's impact for creating value for societal stakeholders:

Companies can use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a variety of ways: from shaping their own sustainability programmes to understanding the contribution their business activities make. We want to demonstrate the private sector's central role as agents of change in overcoming these global challenges. (Carlsberg Group, 2016, p. 9)

This frame captures MNEs' perspectives on engagements in local-level sustainability as a wider responsibility to society, creating value for stakeholders, and for gaining trust to build their brand

reputation and legitimacy with local communities, all of which are seen as critical to the success of businesses operating internationally.

4.1.2 Frame 2: Corporate Citizenship

Through this frame of corporate citizenship, MNEs view their engagement with sustainability at the local level as their active participation and engagement in community relations to address social, environmental, and economic challenges in the local community. The term corporate citizenship is referenced in 35 reports with 42 references when analyzing MNEs' approach to sustainability at a local level, which is second least referenced frame. Through roles related to engagements such as service provision, MNEs are placed in a position where they often serve to supplement government services or act as citizens by overseeing rights related to social responsibilities in the community. By serving local communities, this frame shows MNEs acting as corporate citizens by improving community capabilities to accelerate positive change for sustainability:

Corporate citizenship is central to our vision to improve the way the world works and lives—from closing employment gaps to advancing client sustainability to accelerating gender equality in the workforce. Our global capabilities, digital experience and innovation mindset help us develop solutions that address a wide range of societal issues. Together with our people, partners and clients, we focus on creating economic growth, tackling social challenges and promoting environmental sustainability in our communities. (Accenture, 2016, p. 4)

As a multinational entity, MNEs also frame their approaches to local-level sustainability through a global perspective related to corporate citizenship and view their engagements in society as a moral obligation as a community member:

A global citizenship approach to sustainability focuses on the company's responsibility to the global community as a good corporate citizen. Companies use this approach to frame their sustainability efforts as an act of good measure as a corporate citizen. Our Global Citizenship strategy focuses on five cornerstones: People, Community, Environment, Innovation and Integrity. (Flex, 2016, p. 3)

This frame also reflects corporate discourse on MNEs' strategies for building legitimacy with local stakeholders and gaining the trust of local residents. This frame is similar to the framing of CSR in that corporate citizenship involves the company's responsibility to society, but differs in that companies identifying their engagements in communities through the corporate citizenship frame want to be seen as 'good corporate citizens' and extend their social, legal, and political responsibilities to their community engagements.

The empirical results of this frame reveal that MNEs using a local sustainability approach take into account the context of the local community and focus on various aspects such as supporting local businesses, training local community members, and fostering local economic development. According to DyStar, communities form the foundation of a company's success and investing in the community as a corporate citizen also means investing in the local economy to foster employment opportunities for local residents:

Communities are the bedrock of society and, at DyStar, we are constantly reminded that they are also the pool from which our talent is drawn. At locations where we operate close to local communities, it is not enough to be responsible about managing environmental risks; we also adopt a mutually beneficial approach by actively providing jobs and training opportunities to residents. In some places, when DyStar invests in local communities, we are also indirectly securing the future of our workforce. (DyStar, 2016, p. 52)

In this perspective, companies that adopt this frame in their approach to engaging in local communities for sustainability view their role in the community as one that mirrors the concept of *human citizenship*, which companies view their engagements in society as a moral obligation as a member of the community.

4.1.3 Frame 3: Partnerships

The next frame identified in MNEs' engagement in local communities focuses on partnerships, which is defined by MNEs' willingness to collaborate with multiple stakeholders to achieve progress and action for local sustainable development. Partnerships are referenced in 80 reports 127 times in MNEs' local-level sustainability strategy and approach to the SDGs, the third most referenced frame after sustainable development and CSR. Through this frame, MNEs recognize collaboration and partnerships as critical factors to achieve the scale and scope of solutions needed to address local sustainable development, as well as helping partners address their own sustainability challenges on a greater scale. The framing of partnerships focuses on a company's relationship with other partners that involves co-creation, interdependency, shared risks and responsibilities, and organizational transformation to achieve organizational and partnership goals.

A key value of this frame also identified MNEs' engagement in local communities through multi-stakeholder partnerships. More and more companies are engaging with multiple sectors to address multifaceted challenges, from the public sector to civil society. For 3M, partnerships and collaboration help the company achieve their own strategic sustainability goals, but also helps the company to accelerate solutions on a wider scale through their partners' actions:

It is through collaboration and partnerships that 3M can accelerate Sustainability in our company and in the world. We value our partnerships with numerous stakeholders as a way to not only

address our Sustainability issues, but to help our partners address their Sustainability challenges. 3M has joined numerous organizations globally to advance Sustainability through collaboration with the organization and its members. Memberships have provided a forum for working on key Sustainability issues that are relevant to both 3M and our stakeholders. (3M, 2018, p. 72)

This frame also highlights MNEs' core understanding that the best way to tackle global challenges is through collaboration to achieve transformational change across entire value chains:

Urgent global challenges are best addressed collaboratively. We continuously push ourselves and others to achieve more, and are committed to understanding challenges and advancing transformational change through partnerships across the value chain. Amcor works with colleagues, customers, suppliers, industry groups, investors, and non-governmental organisations to identify, assess, prioritise and manage sustainability-related opportunities using an enterprise risk-management framework. (Amcor, 2018, p. 6)

This frame reflects the perspective that partnerships are also an important factor in embedding sustainability across the entire value chain for MNEs, whose operations span globally. Partnerships allow MNEs to gain legitimacy by working with other partners to further their own sustainability objectives at the local level:

Partnerships and communications are essential parts of the Group's sustainability enablers. We believe that sustainability drives growth and one of the keys to embedding sustainability successfully is through partnerships. Therefore, in integrating sustainability and driving corporate responsibility programmes, we are partnering with different credible and reputable international NGOs, sustainability consulting companies; educational institutions; governmental bodies and developmental finance institutions. (FBN Holdings, 2016, p. 16)

At the local level, this frame helps companies to achieve transformational progress and scale solutions for global progress by partnering with other organizations from various sectors. For Johnson and Johnson, their partnership with C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group has allowed the company to sponsor programs linking climate action and cities with air quality and human health, which helps to drive greater action and impact at a larger scale to reach more cities all over the world (Johnson & Johnson, 2017).

This frame in corporate discourse is a central element in MNEs' strategy for addressing and embedding the SDGs in their operations. For Compass Group, the SDGs are a global framework that creates a shared language in which companies can use to leverage local partnerships: "The SDGs provide a useful platform and common language upon which we can build new, and strengthen existing, global and local partnerships to progress our sustainability activities" (Compass Group, 2017, p. 16). Corporations understand the importance of their role in leading and coordinating collaborative efforts with multiple stakeholders across various industries to help achieve greater progress on the SDGs:

The corporate sector will play a critical role in achieving the SDGs. Citi's business efforts and values, as articulated in our Mission and Value Proposition, are aligned with these goals. Access to financing will be key, and Citi, as a global institution that connects governments, businesses and civil society with capital markets, recognizes that we have an important role to play in financing the SDGs. (Citigroup, 2016, p. 9)

The framing of partnerships views cross-sector collaboration as moving beyond responsibility to fostering meaningful relationships and creating shared value with other institutions for achieving transformational change for local sustainable development.

4.1.4 Frame 4: Sustainable Development

Another perspective found in corporate discourse is the frame of sustainable development, in which MNEs engagements in communities are driven by community priorities and consider the economic, environmental, and social contexts in which the firm operate. The frame of sustainable development in corporate discourse is mentioned in 256 reports and is referenced 849 times in the reports, which is referenced the most in all sustainability reports. Through this frame, companies view sustainable development as a process for achieving the company's sustainability goals and an opportunity to align with the SDGs that meet the needs of the company and stakeholders, while also focusing on sustaining ecological resources for future generations. Companies also view sustainable development as a long-term pathway for addressing trends in sustainability and equitable development. This perspective reflects MNEs' understanding of sustainable development as core to their business strategy, which increases business performance while also granting their social license to operate:

Sustainable Development remains core to our business strategy. As reflected in our five strategic focus areas, our attention to safety, people and sustainability provides a foundation which enables success in the other four areas. We believe that superior sustainable development performance not only gives us our social licence to operate, but also drives better business performance. Being compliant qualifies us to conduct our business. Moving beyond compliance, our sustainable development performance serves as a source of competitive advantage. (AngloGold Ashanti, 2016, p. 16)

This frame differs in that sustainable development focuses the economic, environmental, and social contexts in which companies operate in and how their actions contribute to their long-term equitable growth for meeting both the company's goals and stakeholder perceptions, as well as securing ecological resources for community:

As we set our sights on sustainable long-term growth, we remain deeply committed to implementing responsible management and sustainable development practices that balance out our economic ambitions with good environmental and societal considerations. (CCM Duopharma, 2017, p. 16)

This frame of corporate engagement in communities not only views sustainable development as a process of addressing community needs, but also as a strategic opportunity to encourage innovation and resource efficiency within the organization, as well as creating shared value by protecting and sustaining ecological resources for a sustainable future. MNEs view their sustainability engagements in society as a case for creating new opportunities, enhancing innovation, and creating shared value for internal stakeholders and society:

The business case for sustainable development is strong and gaining momentum in the global context [...] This approach [...] has the effect of creating new opportunities for businesses, governments and civil societies; unleashing and stimulating innovation and enhancing efficiencies and shared value. Companies that are not agile and forward looking enough to see the value of embracing a sustainable development approach risk becoming sterile and uncompetitive. AngloGold Ashanti as a company exists in this shifting landscape and our thinking on sustainable development continues to evolve as in the macro context. (AngloGold Ashanti, 2016, p. 10)

The frame of sustainable development in corporate discourse focuses on long-term goals to achieve sustainable development and the interrelated notions of economic growth, social inclusion, ecological limits, and environmental protection. MNEs are measuring their engagement with the SDGs through material issues and business operations that contribute to sustainable development:

CDL firmly believes that a sustainable society can only be achieved with the support of the corporate community, and as such we have assessed the ways in which the management of our material issues can contribute towards sustainable development through specific SDGs. (City Developments Limited, 2016, p. 18)

The frame of sustainable development in corporate discourse focuses on the processes, operations, and values for achieving progress on local sustainable development, in which companies consider community priorities and the ecological, economic, environmental, and social contexts external to the firm and align those with business opportunities.

4.1.5 Frame 5: Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance

Another frame found in corporate discourse is the perspective of environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG), in which companies frame their engagements in society by considering the impact of environmental, social, and governance issues on financial performance and decision-making capabilities. This frame is found in 17 reports and is referenced 30 times in total throughout, which is mentioned the least in reports compared to other frames. Stakeholders are now holding corporations to a higher standard by investing in companies that support ESG standards. As a result, there has been a recent shift in corporate discourse for MNEs to frame their business-in-society engagements through ESG

considerations. Through this frame, companies consider how ESG factors are embedded in their performance and operations as criteria for securing long-term interests:

[...] We integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles throughout our investment and insurance business by holding business decisions up to the light and asking ourselves, ‘Will this benefit society and our customers in the long term?’ [...] We apply sustainability principles across our entire business. We promote strong, sustainable portfolios using ESG considerations and our customers’ long-term interests. (Allianz SE, 2016, p. 4)

Compared to the other frames identified in the empirical results, this frame is driven primarily by an internal agenda, in which the firm takes action to secure their long-term interests to remain financially attractive to investors. For MNEs in the population group, ESG criteria is a reflection of shared values for companies, customers, and stakeholders:

The added value of Corporate Responsibility (CR) is not fundamentally a moral issue, but in fact, can be measured directly. This can take place, for example, by gaining and securing licenses, attaining legal certainty, lowering costs through efficient use of resources or prevention of accidents and illness, as well as recruiting the best talents on the market and creating long-term relationships with our customers and partners. The fact that environment, social and governance (ESG) criteria are quickly spreading as criteria for investors and customers, is a reflection of these shared values. (Novomatic AG, 2016, p. 38)

The framing of local-level sustainability through the framing of ESG views sustainability as an overarching goal influenced by ESG factors that motivates action to increase corporate value:

First, the company will focus on opportunities arising from ESG issues. More specifically, we have confirmed our policy of helping resolve issues society is confronting through our business activities with an eye to contributing to the realization of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other sustainability targets. By doing so, we will sustainably enhance our corporate value. (Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, 2017, p. 45)

Through this frame, companies build ESG considerations into their sustainability strategy to ensure long-term success not only from an investor perspective, but for decision-making processes. MNEs also view ESG criteria as a key component to enhance sustainability and innovation across the entire value chain and an integral aspect of decision-making:

Enel’s sustainable business model considers sustainability and innovation as an inseparable pairing, which creates value for the Company and for all its stakeholders and allows new opportunities to be taken. Enel integrates sustainability into all aspects of the business, in order to constantly seek out new solutions to reduce environmental impact, to satisfy the needs of customers and of local communities and to improve relations with employees and suppliers by putting people’s safety first [...] A key element to this approach is the activation of the ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) sustainability indicators across the whole value chain [...] in order to bring decisions forward. (Enel, 2016, p. 52)

Overall, the framing of local-level engagements and operations through ESG considerations provides corporations with measurable methods of tracking ESG metrics in all aspects of the business, including internal operations and external processes, both of which are driven by internal interests to the firm. This frame mitigates negative impacts and strengthens positive impacts in a company's own operations.

4.2 Part B – Roles of MNEs

The roles of MNEs were determined by using a deductive coding framework based on the literature and revising the coding structure inductively throughout the coding and data analysis process. At the deductive coding stage, five roles were identified in the literature. The remaining roles were identified inductively by analyzing the study population. These 10 roles are identified and classified into the categories in Table 8. It is important to note that the roles are distinct from one another but many MNEs play roles that may overlap. For example, if a company initiates a partnership with other organizations to deliver healthcare products for underserved communities, that passage would be coded under both partner and product and service provider because the company provided goods and services to the local community and partnered with other organizations.

Table 8. Roles of MNEs from Empirical Data Analysis

Roles	Related Comments
Awareness Raiser	Raises awareness for local sustainable development issues.
Community Capacity Builder	Builds capacities of communities and fosters local economic development through educational programming, skills development, and knowledge transfer.
Consultant	Offers skills, experience, resources, pro bono and consulting services to individuals, organizations, or the community.
Employee Development	Provides local mentorship opportunities, develops internal company capacities, and engages local employees through incubator programs, internships, apprenticeships, training, and events.
Financer	Provides financial capital through charitable donations, scholarships, and grants and invests in local communities through microfinance, social and micro entrepreneurship.
Innovator	Innovates new sustainable solutions through research and development (R&D), process and product design, and technological advancements to inform sustainability initiatives and share best practices with governments, other organizations, the community, and the general public
Leveraging Supply Chains and Procurement	Leverages supplier relations, implements sustainable supply chains, and incorporates local economy in procurement value chains.
Partner	Partners with individuals, organizations, or communities in multi-stakeholder processes, such as partnerships and joint ventures.
Product and Service Provider	Provides products or services for the local community such as infrastructure, healthcare, and education, among others.

Program Deliverer	Coordinates delivery of programs and initiatives for the local community designed to address local sustainable development issues.
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4.2.1 Qualitative Results

Qualitative content analysis of sustainability reports from 349 MNEs was conducted using NVivo Qualitative Coding Software. This subsection presents the qualitative empirical results of the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development. Table 9 below shows the number of reports referencing each role and how many references there are in total to each role. The second column indicates the number of reports that reference each role, where the third column identifies how many times the role in total the role is referenced in all reports. The third column is important for understanding that although a certain number of reports will reference the role, some roles are referenced multiple times in all reports and therefore, this information is significant for understanding how dominant the role is in the empirical findings. Following Table 9, each role is explained in alphabetical order.

Table 9. Roles of MNEs in Empirical Results

Role	Reports mentioning this role	References to this role
Awareness Raiser	118	195
Community Capacity Builder	201	499
Consultant	20	28
Employee Development	301	1034
Financer	298	1564
Innovator	170	473
Leveraging Supply Chains and Procurement	122	187
Partner	270	1140
Product and Service Provider	242	1085
Program Deliverer	321	2249

4.2.1.1 Awareness Raiser

Considering the wide-reaching scale and scope of MNEs, their role for raising awareness of local issues, impacts, and strategies are important for communicating information exchange to increase understanding of local issues, as well as for mobilizing communities to encourage behavioral change needed to take action. In total, 118 companies declare they play a role in local sustainable development as an *awareness raiser*, with 195 references to this role in total. Awareness raising efforts can include advocacy work, which relates to the idea of actively influencing thoughts, opinions, or behaviours, or can be purely informational for knowledge exchange. As an *awareness raiser*, MNEs have highlighted important issues or causes through community engagement activities, events, and campaigns.

Companies are raising awareness and advocating for issues related to children and youth, women, education, environment, health, and social issues. MNEs have different goals as an *awareness raiser*, for example Hang Lung Properties, a real estate MNE subsidiary of Hang Lung Group based in Hong Kong, their role as an *awareness raiser* is to “enhance public awareness and understanding of environmental issues, and encourage members of the public to join hands with us in making a positive environmental impact” (Hang Lung Properties, 2017, p. 41). Hang Lung Properties focuses on a non-active form of awareness raising by using their role to facilitate information exchange and increase understanding of local environmental issues.

For other companies, raising awareness is important for sparking behavioural change for creating inclusive societies; for Hasbro, a toy and board game company headquartered in the United States of America, raising awareness through their sustainability efforts advocates for children to be empathetic, courageous, and compassionate in standing up for and including others (Hasbro, 2016). Through advocacy initiatives, Hasbro aims to provide “resources and programs that teach and inspire kids to be inclusive, appreciate each other’s differences, be compassionate toward one another and know the feeling of fulfilment that comes with making a difference” (Hasbro, 2016, p. 81). The results show that MNEs play an increasingly important role through awareness raising for local sustainable development issues, impacts, and strategies through advocacy and information exchange to facilitate communication, increase understanding, and mobilize individuals to create positive change in their communities.

4.2.1.2 Community Capacity Builder

As a *community capacity builder*, MNEs play an important role in local sustainable development for developing community capacities to enable individuals and organizations to develop and strengthen local capacities and assets needed to help communities develop sustainably. Under the community capacity building role, there are a total of 209 reports mentioning this role with 499 references. Community capacity building initiatives include community educational programming, skills development, economic opportunities, and community collaboration. This role specifically highlights different methods in which MNEs deliver community capacity building, which can include efforts delivered through knowledge products, events and awards, funding opportunities, and programs and activities.

MNEs have been providing mentorship opportunities for people in local communities, providing specialized skills training and mentorship opportunities for children and youth, women, students, and underrepresented groups in the community. For General Motors, an American-based automotive manufacturer, investing in mentorship programs and internships for youth helps to provide experiential learning for education and joining the workforce:

In 2017, GM Student Corps celebrated its fifth and largest year of helping young people in underserved school districts transform their communities and jumpstart their futures through paid internships, life skills training and career and college preparation. An extension of GM's commitment to education, Student Corps matches teams of high school interns with retired GM executives and college interns to plan and execute community service projects, usually at schools and parks. (General Motors Company, 2017, p. 152)

This initiative from GM provides an example of community capacity building by offering life skills training and career and college preparation.

For MNEs, community capacity building helps communities to develop, implement, and sustain the skills, resources, and processes needed to develop sustainable, resilient, and inclusive communities built on core societal values. For example, for Al-Najat Charity, a non-profit organization based in Kuwait, their development programs focus on developing community capacities to help communities identify goals for action and local sustainable development:

The development of communities is a way of strengthening society by prioritizing the actions and perspectives of the communities in the development of social, economic, and environmental policies. This development seeks the empowerment of local communities. It strengthens the capacity of people as active citizens through various organizations and networks, which work in conjunction with them to shape and determine the change in their communities [...] The development of communities strengthens core societal values such as human rights, social inclusion, equality, and respect for diversity, and also helps in developing specific skills and knowledge base necessary for ensuring a sustainable livelihood for the communities. (Al-najat Charity, 2017, p. 19)

The role of a *community capacity builder* provides MNEs with a significant opportunity to support local organizations and community groups by providing opportunities for strengthening and expanding existing capacity building resources, which in turn can strengthen processes for community decision-making, create a shared understanding and vision, facilitate progress towards local goals, and create effective community organizations. Community capacity building also focuses on community-led action, which includes careful consideration for social inclusion and equity, as well as supporting the individuals leading that process. Companies in this role also help to strengthen community leaders by helping to develop the skills necessary to make a positive impact in the community. For example, Freeport-McMoran Copper & Gold, a mining multinational from the United States, invest in local capacity building efforts for sustainability projects:

In North America and South America, we have maintained investments in local capacity building through training for local leaders and technical assistance in developing and planning projects. At operating communities in the U.S., we further progressed "Leadership for Sustainable Communities," an initiative aimed to guide civic leaders through a process to enhance a community's economic and social resilience. (Freeport-McMoran Copper & Gold, 2017, p. 22)

As a *community capacity builder*, MNEs support local sustainable development by developing community capacities to develop the abilities, competencies and skills to pursue objectives for local action through fostering local experiences and knowledge, strengthening community assets, and encouraging community collaboration.

4.2.1.3 Consultant

As a *consultant* in local sustainable development, MNEs have been offering skills, experience, resources, and expertise to individuals or organizations in the local community through services such as pro-bono consulting and skills-based volunteering. From the 349 sustainability reports, 20 companies were identified with this role, with a total of 28 references. The *consultant* role specifically helps other organizations, social enterprises, government agencies, and community groups with achieving progress on their own performance and goals by providing experience, expertise, and guidance in specialized fields related to the company's business. For example, 3M provides pro-bono consultancy services to local communities that are relevant to the company's operations, which gives employees the opportunity "to lend their business skills, experience, and energy to local non-profit organizations, social enterprises, and government agencies in markets where the need is great and the work is relevant to 3M's businesses" (3M, 2018, p. 24). 3M is an American multinational conglomerate with operations in many different industries, such as automotive, commercial solutions, communication, consumer products, design and construction, electronics, energy, healthcare, manufacturing, mining, oil, and gas, safety, and transportation (3M, 2019).

Through activities such as pro-bono consulting and skills-based volunteering, MNEs leverage their skills, experience, and specialized knowledge to make a meaningful impact on local communities. In addition, MNEs also extend their pro-bono services as a consultant by using the financial resources available to the company to deliver results that benefit the local community. The availability of a company's financial resources allows their pro-bono services and skills-based volunteering to leverage the company's full range of services. KPMG Romania, a multinational consultancy firm based in Romania, also noted the importance of providing pro-bono services that align with the company's vision for achieving positive change in the community:

We encourage our professionals to carry out pro bono work in order to develop and build upon their professional skills while helping community organizations advance towards their goals. Providing pro bono professional services is consistent with KPMG values of leading by example and our commitment to our communities, which is an integral part of our role as a responsible business. (KPMG Romania, 2016, p. 29)

More specifically, the role of a *consultant* in local sustainable development provides expertise or professional experience in particular areas or specialized fields for a wide range of clients, which includes community involvement initiatives. Through a long-term partnership between Wolters Luwer, a multinational information services company in the media sector based in the Netherlands, local organizations, and the UN program Hinari, the company provides expertise and guidance to increase accessibility to health care services in low- and middle-income countries:

In long-term partnerships with local organizations, Wolters Kluwer aims to improve the quality of life in a certain community by providing expertise, skills, knowledge, and motivation. In many cases, community involvement initiatives coincide with our area of expertise. The long-term collaboration with the United Nations program Hinari, enabling communities in need to download Wolters Kluwer Health digital solutions free of charge, has resulted in a total contribution of 982,357 downloads over the past three years. The World Health Organization set up Hinari together with major publishers to enable low- and middle-income countries to gain access to one of the world's largest collections of biomedical and health literature. (Wolters Kluwer, 2016, p. 43)

The findings indicate that the *consultant* role is common for MNEs' engagement in local sustainable development for providing knowledge, expertise, and skills that are relevant to the needs of local communities. However, this role is only found in a handful of reports, indicating that MNEs fulfill other roles related to local sustainable development.

4.2.1.4 *Employee Development*

As MNEs focusing on employee development in local sustainable development, MNEs focus on developing internal capacities through employee training and career development and engaging employees in local sustainable development initiatives. The role of *employee development* has 1034 references in 301 reports from MNEs.

For some companies, such as Eldorado Gold, a multinational gold mining company from Canada, developing internal capacities in the company includes investing in the workforce through various training initiatives to enhance skills development and knowledge transfer to bolster the local economy:

Developing workforce capacity and conducting regular training across all of our sites is an ongoing priority. The majority of our workforce comes from local communities and regions [...] We believe there are significant social and economic benefits to building a local workforce and economy, and we invest in relevant training and development initiatives to improve the productivity and safety of our employees. (Eldorado Gold, 2016, p. 43)

In particular, MNEs provide mentorship opportunities that create employment for local citizens through internships, apprenticeships, incubator programs, and recruitment initiatives. MNEs are a direct source of job creation and help to create local economic opportunities for the communities they operate in.

Developing, engaging, and retraining employees is crucial to the operations of MNEs with multiple operations spanning geographical boundaries, therefore this role plays an integral aspect of contributing to the local community operations.

By offering employment opportunities, MNEs encourage knowledge sharing approaches that focus on skills development and knowledge transfer among the local community. Nestlé Malaysia, a food and beverage company that is a Malaysian-based subsidiary of Nestlé, invests in local community programs to development new talent and foster economic development:

Through our Global Youth Initiative, we support the development of communities while ensuring the sustainability of our talent pipeline, bringing diversity and new skills to the organisation and developing the next generation of Nestlé employees and leaders. (Nestlé Malaysia, 2017, p. 62)

Through this role, MNEs play a fundamental role in helping tackle key issues in local communities, such as youth unemployment. BT Group, a telecommunications MNE based in the United Kingdom, offers a mentorship opportunity that provides youth with training and work experience:

We are a founding partner of the Movement to Work initiative, led by UK employers committed to tackling youth unemployment through vocational training and work experience opportunities. We want to help young people kick-start their careers by building the skills they need for the world of work. (BT Group, 2015, p. 28)

The empirical results indicate that MNEs have stated their commitment to offering mentoring programs and opportunities to foster talent development to enhance local economies of the communities they work in by focusing on the role of *employee development* in local sustainable development.

4.2.1.5 *Financer*

MNEs play a large role as a *financer* for local sustainable development because MNEs contribute financially to local sustainable development issues through a number of different channels, including funding, grants, scholarships, fundraising, microfinance, loans, sponsorships, charitable donations, entrepreneurial ventures, and taxes. As a *financer*, 298 reports have referenced this role and there are a total of 1564 references. MNEs have funded and sponsored various initiatives for local sustainable development, as well as provided grants and scholarships to support children and youth in local communities. Charitable donations include both financial donations and product and service donations, for example the donation of equipment and materials. Furthermore, MNEs provide financial services to local communities through microfinance, entrepreneurial ventures, and loans that foster local economic development. In one example, MNEs, such as Citigroup, an American multinational investment bank and

financial service, use microfinance institutions and programs as a way of encouraging financial literacy and inclusion among the local community:

Microfinance can be a valuable tool in creating income-generating opportunities that support the livelihoods of low-income individuals and their families. Through a range of programs and partnerships, Citi invests in microfinance initiatives that promote financial inclusion and enable economic growth for underserved market segments. (Citigroup, 2016, p. 80)

Some MNEs also consider their compliance with paying taxes in the different regions they operate in as an initiative to the local community. Other MNEs have taken on the role as a *financer* and established charitable foundations to disperse financial capital for philanthropic efforts. In certain cases, companies encourage their employees to support local community initiatives by providing matching donations or funding volunteer initiatives. For DuPont, a chemicals MNE headquartered in the United States, financial contributions are a way of investing in the communities they operate in:

DuPont gives back to the communities in which we live and work, as part of our commitment to improve quality of life, vitality and sustainability around the world. DuPont has backed this commitment with financial contributions and the active volunteer participation of our employees with our partner, the United Way. We focus on enabling programs and nonprofit organizations that enhance sustainability in the communities in which we operate around the world. (DuPont, 2016, p. 3)

Another company, Scotiabank, a commercial banking MNE based in Canada, also confirms the role of a financer for local sustainable development and highlights the importance of investing in local communities to foster a sustainable future:

At Scotiabank, investing in our communities has been a focus for over 185 years. Our goal has always been to help create a better life for people that we serve around the world, and we believe investing in young people is a crucial component on the path to community prosperity. In 2016 we took a new approach to our community investment strategy. We aim to support organizations that are committed to helping young people in the community reach their full potential, particularly in the areas of health and well-being, and education. We believe this is an investment in the long-term security, stability and growth of both our communities and our business. (Scotiabank, 2016, p. 30)

The findings indicate that MNEs declare themselves playing an important role by offering financial contributions and investments that enable the delivery of initiatives and programs for local sustainable development. Financing the transition to a sustainable future is key to ensuring local communities have the resources they need to develop sustainably.

4.2.1.6 Innovator

As an *innovator*, MNEs have the tools and resources to innovate new solutions for solving pressing challenges related to local sustainable development. The role of an *innovator* is referenced 473 times in 170 reports. MNEs are working towards innovative solutions to solve local sustainable development challenges through processes such as product and process design, research and development (R&D), and technological advancements. MNEs have been engaging in research activities to not only enhance their business knowledge but to inform their sustainability initiatives and engagement strategies to increase their impact and reach in the community. As an *innovator*, MNEs have commissioned research reports and projects to contribute to local sustainable development. MNEs have also been partnering with academic institutions to advance knowledge on community challenges and needs, collaborate on research projects, and support existing programs and initiatives. By partnering and supporting other organizations with research, MNEs are able to develop a stronger understanding of community priorities and help companies launch and innovate sustainability initiatives and programs that are more effective. For BHP, a mining MNE from Australia, investing in research initiatives through cross-sector partnerships are key to implementing effective, innovative, and scalable solutions that successfully meet the needs of the community:

BHP also invests in long-term research activities to better understand critical success factors for progressive rehabilitation and closure. An example of this includes the Restoration Seed bank initiative, a five-year partnership that commenced in 2013 between Western Australia Iron Ore, the University of Western Australia and the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, to address science, knowledge and technical skill gaps to cost-effective and scalable rehabilitation. (BHP, 2018, p. 60)

MNEs also play the role of an *innovator* to stimulate social innovation in local communities by delivering new products and services. For MediaTek, a semiconductor MNE in the computers sector based in Taiwan, they “promote social innovations and support solutions for social problems from technological innovations and applications” (MediaTek, 2016, p. 104). MNEs are also innovating solutions through product and process design for new markets:

We launched the Tomorrow’s Markets Incubator in 2016 with the goal of developing new products and services, as well as overall business models, to bring high-quality education to learners in low-income and underserved communities. (Pearson, 2017, p. 28)

The role of an *innovator* is distinct from other roles found in the empirical results because this role focuses on innovating new solutions for local sustainable development that may enable other roles to be delivered more efficiently or have a greater impact. For some MNEs, for example Cisco Systems Inc., a networking hardware multinational based in the United States, leveraging technological innovations are

key to making an impact on the local community that addresses a key challenges and needs identified by experts in the community:

Taking an outcome-driven approach, members of the Cisco team spent time in Africa, learning firsthand from the local experts about the challenges and needs. The issues are complex and the environment is harsh. The solution had to be adaptable, resilient, easy to operate and maintain [...] We can take on these types of challenges, think big, and apply our technology precisely to solve the needs of those on the ground. (Cisco Systems Inc., 2017, p. 10)

The findings indicate that the role of an *innovator* specifically focuses on introducing new solutions, ideas, methods, products or services for addressing challenges and needs of the local community to enable sustainable development.

4.2.1.7 Leveraging Supply Chains and Procurement

Through leveraging supply chains and procurement, MNEs play a crucial role in managing relations with suppliers, implementing responsible policies and practices across supply chains, and leveraging value chains to incorporate the local community. The role of *leveraging supply chains and procurement* is referenced 187 times in 122 reports. As a company leveraging supply chains and procurement, MNEs, such as Leumi Group, a financial services multinational based in Israel, pursue “initiatives to enhance positive impact[s] on the community through procurement” (Bank Leumi, 2015, p. 156). MNEs, such a BHP, an Australian mining multinational, pursue local procurement strategies that benefit the communities they operate in and foster local economic development by incorporating the local economy in their value chains:

We support local businesses by seeking to source products and services locally. All our assets are required to have local procurement plans that benefit local suppliers, create employment and build capacity through training of small business entrepreneurs. (BHP, 2018, p. 43)

By focusing on diversity and inclusion in global supply chains, MNEs like DuPont, a chemicals company with headquarters in the United States, ensure inclusive supply chains which benefit even the smallest local suppliers. Through supplier diversity programs which focus on the inclusion of small and diverse suppliers, MNEs ensure that local businesses benefit from inclusive programs and contribute to fostering local economic development:

For almost four decades, DuPont has actively engaged with small and diverse suppliers. We regularly purchase materials and services from the suppliers in the local communities in which we operate as part of our business strategy to capture the benefits of working with small and diverse suppliers. We are committed to working with local, small, and diverse suppliers to help them understand the DuPont business model and other elements of our procurement strategy. We recognize the importance of a robust diverse supplier base not only as a means to support equal opportunity and satisfy the voice of our customers, but also to develop and sustain the

communities where these suppliers are located and the economy as a whole. (DuPont, 2016, p. 41)

MNEs, such as Nestlé, a food and beverage products company headquartered in Switzerland, also pursue sourcing programmes that reflect MNEs' social, environmental, and ethical concerns at the local level:

Farmer Connect is our unique flagship sourcing programme, helping ensure the supply of high quality agricultural raw materials, along with providing traceability back to farm level. Through Farmer Connect we engage with farmers directly, to develop a supply chain that meets our social, environmental and ethical requirements. It also helps towards establishing consistent and fair pricing, improved yields and reduced environmental impacts. Farmer Connect places an emphasis on activities such as local sourcing, assistance, farmer training, developing alternative income. (Nestlé, 2016, p. 79)

The findings indicate that MNEs declare a key role in managing the sustainable development of their supply chains, which includes strengthening the local economy and providing economic opportunities for local communities.

4.2.1.8 Partner

The *partner* role brings people, groups and processes together through partnerships, collaborative initiatives, joint ventures, memberships and associations, and other multi-stakeholder initiatives to support local sustainable development. 270 reports from MNEs referenced their participation in various initiatives as a partner with 1140 references. MNEs are leading, responding, and participating in collaborative processes with other organizations and communities to deliver progress on a wide range of topics related to local sustainable development through a variety of initiatives and programs, which may overlap with other roles identified in the empirical results. The empirical results explicitly emphasize the role of a *partner* in terms of MNEs engagement in communities for local sustainable development due to the fact that MNEs are increasingly convening in collaborative processes for tackling global sustainability issues, which require efforts on a local scale.

According to Accenture, a multinational services company based in Ireland with operations in consultancy, strategy, innovation, technology, digital, and operations, their role as a partner helps to drive systemic change needed for a sustainable future:

[Accenture] continue[s] to grow our role as a collaborator, convener and thought leader, and to deliver research and insights to help drive systemic change. By partnering with a diverse set of organizations—including our nonprofit partners, clients, government agencies, employers and other stakeholders—we are able to develop innovative solutions and make an even greater impact. (Accenture, 2016, p. 6)

MNEs role as a *partner* shows that MNEs engage with local sustainable development through collaborative efforts to jointly tackle issues and problems. MNEs, such as Woodside Petroleum, an Australian petroleum exploration and production MNE, also value strategic partnerships to assist the local communities they operate in to be more sustainable:

Working sustainably is one of our core values and we recognise the vital role strategic partnerships have in assisting the communities in which we operate to be more sustainable. We are proud to partner with a wide variety of organisations and support programs that contribute to a more innovative, inclusive and resilient community and environment. SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals emphasises the importance of collaboration and is one of our key SDGs. (Woodside Petroleum, 2016, p. 60)

MNEs, such as Unilever, a multinational consumer goods company based in the United Kingdom, also use multi-stakeholder approaches to determine how to engage with local communities and determine avenues for addressing complex issues:

Our multi-stakeholder approach enables us to understand the challenges preventing society and our ecosystems from thriving, and helps us find ways to begin addressing them. We engage shareholders, governments, NGOs and civil society organisations, and shape the business landscape through advocacy. By leveraging partnerships, blended (public/private) finance, digital and new business models, we believe transformational change is possible. (Unilever, 2019, para. 10)

As a *partner*, MNEs declare an important role in leading, responding, and participating in collaborative processes that bring individuals, organizations and civil society together for addressing complex sustainability challenges. MNEs view their role in society as a collective effort that needs to leverage partnerships and collaboration to tackle the world's most pressing issues, particularly at the local level.

4.2.1.9 Product and Service Provider

As a *product and service provider*, MNEs help to provide local communities with products and services related to local sustainable development. In this role, MNEs support supplementary service delivery and provide essential services to the community. MNEs play this role by providing products and services through programs and initiatives or offering products and services through their core business operations and peripheral business activities. The role of a *product and service provider* is referenced a total of 1085 times in 242 reports. MNEs have been largely providing products and services for education, health, food, and infrastructure. One company, Diageo, a multinational beverage company based in the United Kingdom, confirmed the role of MNEs as product and service providers in terms of providing basic infrastructure for water to supplement essential services in the local community:

Our Water of Life programme (to bring access to clean water, better sanitation, and education around hygiene to those who need it) contributes in some places to the development of local infrastructure. We have increasingly prioritised communities in close proximity to our operations and communities from which we source our local raw materials. (Diageo, 2016, p. 26)

Providing access to quality services and community infrastructure is crucial for local sustainable development and MNEs have been playing an increasingly important role in local communities through the delivery of products and services to support the development of sustainable communities. By partnering with other organizations for service delivery, MNEs like BT Group, a United Kingdom-based multinational telecommunications firm, can have a larger impact on local communities:

Partnering with SOS Children's Villages, we've connected 30 villages in 13 countries across Africa since we started in 2012. These connections – via satellite technology – have already reached nearly 145,000 people, providing access to better education, healthcare and other services. (BT Group, 2015, p. 37)

MNEs, such as Ajinomoto Group, a multinational food and biotechnology corporation headquartered in Japan, are also working to deliver quality services in communities to supplement government services for vulnerable populations:

Ajinomoto Group saw an opportunity to help by making affordable healthy products for children in need of better nutrition, particularly the poorest. In doing so, the Group aimed not only to supplement underdeveloped government services, but also to explore a promising new business opportunity [...] Collaborating with various partners from the other sectors, the Group has been working to develop a successful business model for supplying KOKO Plus to the most vulnerable children. (Ajinomoto Group, 2016, p. 54)

Through core business operations, MNEs are delivering products and services for the local community that support sustainable development. Pfizer for example, an American multinational pharmaceutical enterprise, collaborates with other non-profit organizations to deliver access to healthcare products and services in communities lacking essential healthcare services:

Since 2014, the Pfizer Foundation* has supported a program with Save the Children to improve access to childhood immunizations and family planning services for women in Malawi. The initiative provides vital newborn services like immunization, along with access to information and services in family planning for post-partum women. Through this program we have reached over 290,000 children with health and nutrition services while working with the local Ministry of Health to address barriers to integrating family planning services. (Pfizer, 2016, p. 35)

The findings indicate that MNEs have often been providing quality services and products for the community and supporting supplementary services provided by the local government to assist the community in achieving goals related to local sustainable development through core business operations and peripheral business activities.

4.2.1.10 Program Deliverer

As a *program deliverer*, MNEs play a key role in coordinating the delivery of initiatives and programs for local sustainable development. In total, 321 reports reference initiatives or programs 2249 times.

Initiatives and programs can target both community and company capacities, such as employee volunteering for local community initiatives and community outreach programs. Local sustainable development initiatives also include different methods that companies use to initiate programs for the community, such as knowledge products (e.g. toolkits, research reports, etc.) and events (e.g. conferences, workshops, etc.) for knowledge dissemination. Initiatives and programs can include thematic focus areas such as biodiversity, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, poverty, social development, health, education, and many more.

One company, Allianz, a financial services MNE based in Germany, confirms this role of the program deliverer for various initiatives that tackle a wide range of issues:

Allianz operates 14 independent charitable foundations that are linked to its subsidiaries all over the world. Together, these foundations enable us to support a wide range of initiatives that tackle social, environmental and cultural issues in many countries. (Allianz SE, 2016, p. 20)

Many MNEs are taking action to turn their sustainability strategies to create social change by leading programs that foster local sustainable development and target key issues in the community. Agrium, for example, an agricultural company subsidiary of Nutrien based in Canada, leads key programs that empower future generations to take action on challenges facing the world today:

By leading the development of programs like Seed Survivor®, Caring for Our Watersheds®, Journey 2050™ and Agriculture for Life®, we help encourage a new generation to learn more about the challenges and opportunities we face in the world today and to take action. In addition to education, these programs often include a component that involves direct student participation in advancing sustainability. Agrium is committed to continue taking a leading role in teaching children about sustainability. (Agrium, 2015, p. 20)

The findings confirm that MNEs have been reported to lead several initiatives and programs for local sustainable development and play a key role in initiating positive change in local communities by developing local solutions that aim to address the world's most pressing issues.

4.2.2 Quantitative Results

This subsection conveys the results from the analysis of companies by sectors and headquarter (HQ) region in relation to their roles in local sustainable development. Although one of the main objectives of this thesis is to identify the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development, understanding the

relationships between sectors and HQ region and their correlation to roles is helpful for understanding how companies in different sectors and HQ in different regions are related to their roles in local sustainable development. A correlation test was used to evaluate the strength of association between MNEs by sector and roles in local sustainable development, as well as the association between MNEs by HQ region and roles. Significance is measured by the p -value and are measured in three values, $\alpha = 0.10$, $\alpha = 0.05$, and $\alpha = 0.01$ because they correspond to the probability of observing these extreme values by chance based on decision theory (Steele & Stefánsson, 2016).

4.2.2.1 Roles of MNEs by Sector

Bivariate Pearson Correlations were computed among 150 categories relating to the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development and sectors of MNEs and Table 10 on the following page illustrates the Sig. (2-tailed) values of these correlations.

Table 10. Sig (2-tailed) Values between Roles of MNEs by Sector

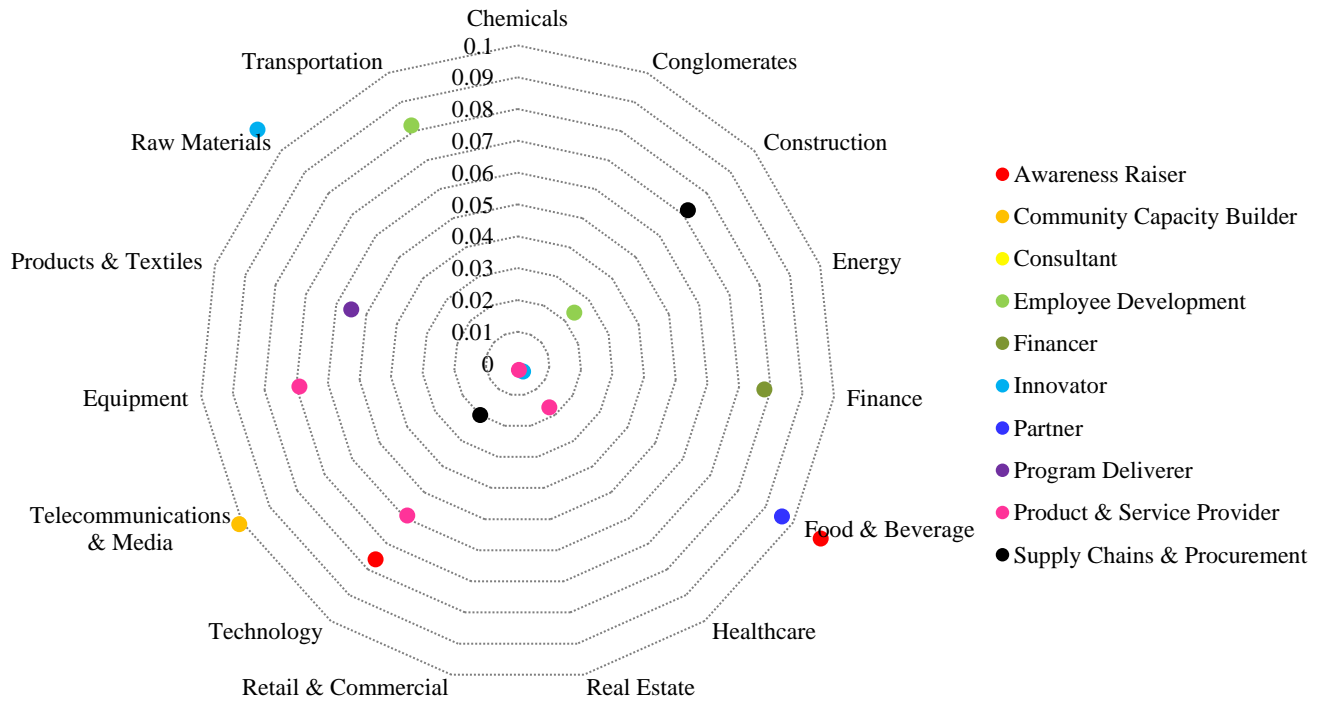
	Awareness Raiser	Community Capacity Builder	Consultant	Employee Development	Financier	Innovator	Partner	Program Deliverer	Product & Service Provider	Supply Chains & Procurement
Chemicals	0.949	0.751	0.318	0.962	0.862	0.478	0.704	0.244	0.839	0.488
Conglomerates	0.691	0.637	0.592	0.727	0.660	0.179	0.574	0.158	0.948	0.735
Construction & Materials	0.240	0.751	0.318	0.024**	0.572	0.216	0.313	0.844	0.440	0.072*
Energy	0.692	0.831	0.245	0.405	0.192	0.714	0.795	0.238	0.687	0.147
Financial Services	0.327	0.198	0.441	0.506	0.078*	0.344	0.811	0.110	0.230	0.172
Food & Beverage Products	0.110	0.382	0.954	0.163	0.246	0.535	0.096*	0.329	0.718	0.142
Healthcare Products & Services	0.343	0.521	0.272	0.713	0.254	0.003**	0.231	0.199	0.017**	0.393
Real Estate	0.421	0.421	0.395	0.649	0.757	0.812	0.270	0.895	0.002***	0.584
Retail & Commercial Services	0.219	0.712	0.220	0.734	0.521	0.764	0.667	0.949	0.675	0.706
Technology & Computers	0.076*	0.307	0.600	0.320	0.990	0.268	0.596	0.540	0.059*	0.020**
Telecommunications & Media	0.309	0.101	0.857	0.465	0.948	0.939	0.158	0.261	0.433	0.534
Equipment & Materials	0.394	0.377	0.354	0.862	0.458	0.358	0.526	0.279	0.069*	0.394
Products & Textiles	0.939	0.988	0.233	0.469	0.238	0.304	0.686	0.055*	0.808	0.214
Raw Materials	0.259	0.667	0.395	0.179	0.243	0.110	0.277	0.895	0.694	0.927
Transportation, Logistics & Metals	0.145	0.521	0.933	0.082*	0.829	0.569	0.536	0.622	0.823	0.875

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed); **. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); ***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show that eight correlations had statistically significant (2-tailed) values, in which the Sig. (2-tailed) values were less than $p < 0.10$. Three correlations were statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, two-tailed. Two correlations were statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level, two-tailed. Figure 6 below shows a solar correlation map and illustrates significant correlations at the 0.01, 0.05 level, and 0.1 level between MNEs' roles in local sustainable development and sector. In general, the results suggest the following relationships between sectors and roles in local sustainable development for MNEs:

- MNEs belonging to the construction and construction materials sector tend to pursue the roles of *employee development* and *leveraging supply chains and procurement*;
- MNEs belonging to the financial services sector tend to pursue a role as a *financer*;
- MNEs belonging to the food and beverage products sector tend to pursue a role as a *partner*;
- MNEs belonging to the healthcare products and services sector tend to pursue roles as an *innovator* and *product and service provider*;
- MNEs belonging to the real estate sector tend to pursue a role as a *product and service provider*;
- MNEs belonging to the technology and computers sector tend to pursue roles as an *awareness raiser*, *product and service provider*, and *leveraging supply chains and procurement*;
- MNEs belonging to the equipment and materials sector tend to pursue roles as a *product and service provider*;
- MNEs belonging to the transportation, logistics, and metals sector tend to pursue a role in *employee development*; and
- MNEs belonging to the household, paper, forest products and textiles sector tend to pursue a role as a *program deliverer*.

Figure 6. Solar Correlation Map of Significant Relationships between MNEs' Sectors and Roles



4.2.2.2 Roles of MNEs by HQ Region

Correlations were computed among 60 categories relating to the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development and MNEs by the location of their headquarter region for all companies in the study population that are categorized according to their HQ region. Table 11 below shows the Sig. (2-tailed) values of MNEs by HQ region and their roles.

Table 11. Sig (2-tailed) Values between Roles of MNEs and HQ Region

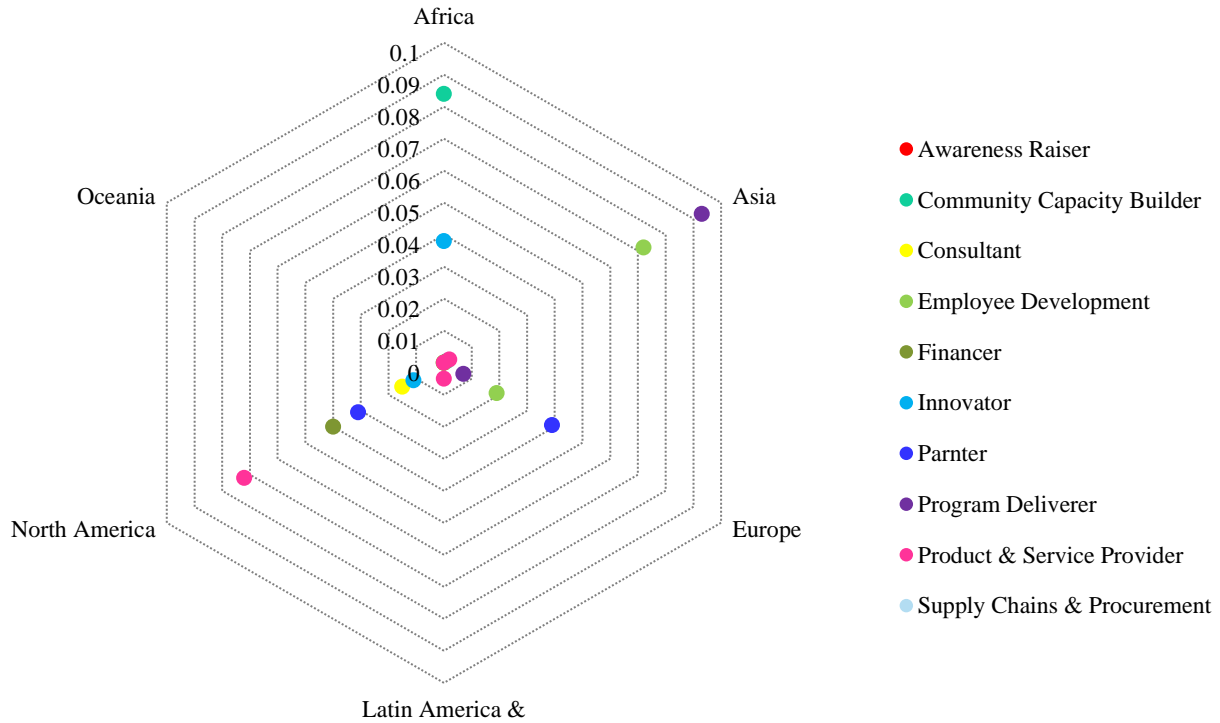
	Awareness Raiser	Community Capacity Builder	Consultant	Employee Development	Financer	Innovator	Partner	Program Deliverer	Product & Service Provider	Supply Chains & Procurement
Africa	0.198	0.084*	0.406	0.917	0.238	0.038**	0.872	0.400	0.726	0.551
Asia	0.138	0.001***	0.092*	0.072*	0.157	0.133	0.923	0.093*	0.002***	0.606
Europe	0.281	0.000***	0.852	0.019**	0.000***	0.853	0.039**	0.007***	0.000***	0.627
Latin America & Caribbean	0.372	0.705	0.544	0.325	0.886	0.114	0.107	0.433	0.005***	0.345
North America	0.428	0.205	0.015**	0.999	0.040**	0.011**	0.031**	0.258	0.072*	0.283
Oceania	0.319	0.286	0.348	0.465	0.972	0.235	0.158	0.902	0.314	0.229
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed); **. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); ***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).										

The results show that five correlations had statistically significant (2-tailed) values and were less than $p < 0.10$, two-tailed. Seven correlations were significantly significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, two-tailed. Seven correlations were significantly significant at the $p < 0.010$ level, two-tailed. Table 11 shows the statistical analysis of correlations between roles of MNEs and MNEs by HQ region. Figure 7 below shows a solar correlation map and illustrates significant correlations at the 0.01 level to 0.1 level between MNEs' roles in local sustainable development and MNEs' by their HQ region. In general, the results suggest the following relationships between MNEs by HQ region and roles in local sustainable development for MNEs:

- MNEs with HQs in Africa tend to pursue roles as a *community capacity builder* and an *innovator*;
- MNEs with HQs in Asia tend to pursue a role as a *community capacity builder*, *consultant*, *employee development*, *program deliverer*, and *product and service provider*;
- MNEs with HQ in Europe tend to pursue a role as a *community capacity builder*, *consultant*, *financer*, *partner*, *program deliverer*, and *product and service provider*;
- MNEs with HQ in Latin America & the Caribbean tend to pursue a role as a *product and service provider*; and

- MNEs with HQ in North America tend to pursue a role as a *consultant, financier, innovator, partner, and product and service provider*.

Figure 7. Solar Correlation Map of Significant Relationships between MNEs' HQ Region and Roles



4.3 Chapter Summary

The first part of the study identified five frames of MNEs' framing of local-level sustainability. The study also identified 10 roles that MNEs' play in local sustainable development in the second part of the study, as well as some significant relationships between business sector and roles. The empirical results are discussed and interpreted in the following section.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This section synthesizes and discusses the empirical results from the research in relation to the literature review to answer the two research questions posed in this study. This chapter aims situate the thesis within the larger field of research and explores the findings in the context of the literature and existing knowledge on the subject. The discussion first aims to answer the first research question, followed by the second research question.

5.1 Research Question 1

1. How do MNEs frame sustainability at the local level?

A study by Muthuri, Moon, and Idemudia (2012) illustrates that MNEs frame their business in society engagements, particularly in developing countries, through the perspectives of CSR, corporate citizenship, and partnerships. The empirical results show that MNEs frame their engagements in local-level sustainability through five frames, three of which are identified by Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia (2012), validating the frame of CSR and extending perspectives on corporate citizenship and partnerships. The results also show that MNEs' local-level engagements in the community are framed through two expanded perspectives revealed in the empirical findings, sustainable development and environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG). This subsection aims to understand MNEs' framing in the context of the SDGs.

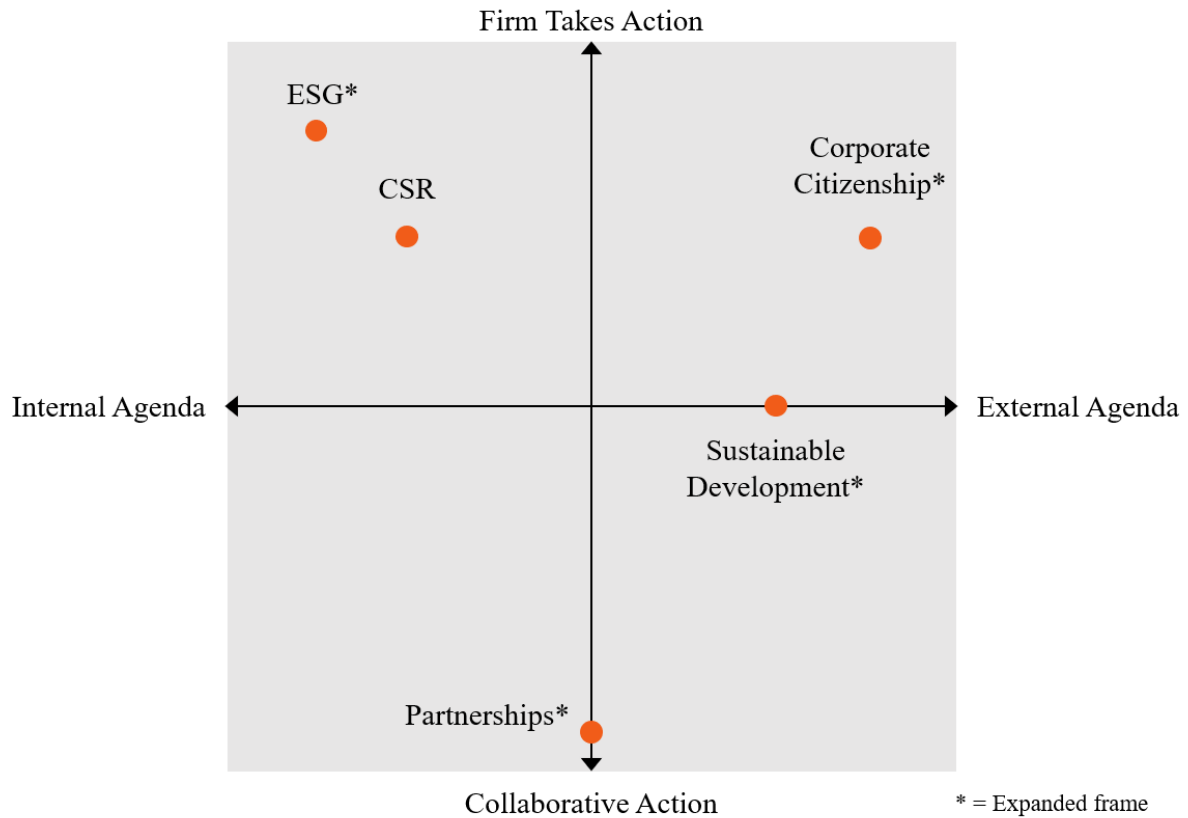
While the qualitative framing analysis shows diverse views on sustainability, assessing multiple frame usage reveals that corporate discourse surrounding local-level sustainability is relatively ambiguous, with certain terms used simultaneously with other terms. Table 12 provides a summary of the empirical results and findings identified in the literature related to MNEs framing of local-level sustainability.

Table 12. Comparison of Framing between Literature and Empirical Findings

Frame	Literature Review	Empirical Findings	Comments
Corporate Social Responsibility	Corporate community involvement is seen as the origin of CSR and corporate philanthropy is a core aspect of companies' CSR agenda.	Engagement in communities as a responsibility to society and societal stakeholders by integration of philanthropic concerns into business model and value creation.	Validate
Corporate Citizenship	Active participation and engagement in community relations, social activities, and the provision of public goods.	Active participation, engagement, and moral obligation in community relations as a member of the community that mirrors the concept of human citizenship.	Expand
Partnerships	Partnerships are a tangible mode of business-society relationships for enabling corporate citizenship.	Cross-sector partnerships further progress on local sustainable development by combining resources from various organizations.	Expand
Sustainable Development		Equitable development that meets the needs of the enterprise and stakeholders, as well as the community within ecological limits.	Expand
Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance		Managing environmental, social and corporate governance risks are a key priority for financial performance and business success.	Expand

According to Figure 8 on the following page, the matrix shows the nexus between each frame and the values influencing firms to take action alone or through collaborative avenues through the frames, as well as the internal or external drivers behind each frame that motivates MNEs to engage in local-level sustainability. Following the figure, each frame is discussed in terms of the drivers for taking action for sustainability at the local level, as well as how MNEs frame their engagements for taking action collaboratively or alone.

Figure 8. Values of MNEs' Framing of Local-level Sustainability



5.1.1 Frame 1: Corporate Social Responsibility

MNEs approach to sustainability through the frame of CSR focuses on contributing to the creation of sustainable societies by embracing social responsibilities to society and societal stakeholders (Bridgestone, 2015). The literature validates this finding as business involvement in the local community is regarded as the foundation of CSR, which is a core aspect of MNEs' CSR agenda (Muthuri et al., 2012). In the wider body of literature, the term corporate sustainability has several definitions that relate to social responsibility (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1979). The empirical findings engage with these definitions as MNEs view their roles in local sustainable development as a social responsibility to create value for stakeholders. MNEs also frame their engagements in society as a response to society and stakeholders that demonstrates their impact on the environment, society, and the economy (Frederick et al., 1988). In terms of business ethics, MNEs framing of local-level sustainability efforts through CSR is driven by external requirements to be accountable to the company itself, provide strong governance

frameworks, and integrate philanthropy in their business model (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Freeman, 2010).

The empirical results show that MNEs with this perspective view their responsibility in the community to address local priorities and respond to societal stakeholders, while also integrating local philanthropic engagement in their key programs for addressing sustainability. In this manner, MNEs sustainability priorities are mainly driven by an internal agenda as their interests are also inherently driven by securing their internal long-term interests to the firm, which include responding to community priorities. CSR is still motivated by external drivers such as reducing pressures from societal stakeholders such as NGOs and local communities and supports their future needs (Lozano, 2015). For this reason, CSR is placed in the upper-left quadrant in Figure 5 above to indicate being driven by an internal agenda, but slightly to the right of this quadrant because companies are also driven by external priorities such as responding to community stakeholders (Lozano, 2015). The results also show that MNEs pursue internal action such as enhancing business ethics within the organization, which is why CSR is placed on the upper-left quadrant where the organization is taking action, as opposed to being primarily collaborative action.

5.1.2 Frame 2: Corporate Citizenship

The frame of corporate citizenship is found in MNEs' sustainability reports is validated in the literature as a perspective that metaphorically grants 'citizenship' status to MNEs based on their active involvement in society for the provision of public goods and services and participation in social activities for individuals in local communities (Crane et al., 2008; Gardberg & Fombrun, 2006; Muthuri et al., 2012; Waddock, 2008). The literature also notes that MNEs are often directed in political roles when pursuing local engagements in the community through the frame of corporate citizenship, in which companies play distinct roles as 'governments' or 'citizens' in terms of administering aspects of citizenship rights for community members (Crane et al., 2008). The literature identifies this frame as corporations bridging gaps between public sector organizations and helping local communities achieve development goals (Muthuri et al., 2012).

The empirical results suggest that MNEs who frame their local engagements through corporate citizenship are likely to pursue roles related to service provision, acting as a 'citizen' of the community by overseeing social responsibilities and basic rights to society. By delivering services and products to the community, firms are typically delivering action alone but can also partner with other organizations to increase their reach and impact on the community. MNEs act as a citizen by developing community capacities to accelerate positive change for sustainability, as well as maintain a global identity in the local

communities in which they operate. The empirical results show that MNEs expand on this frame by viewing their role in society as one that improves community capabilities to address environmental, economic, and social issues to accelerate transformative change for local-level sustainability efforts. MNEs act as a corporate citizen in local sustainable development by supporting the local economy through training local community members, supporting local businesses, and fostering local economic development.

Through this frame, MNEs view their engagements in the community as a method of building legitimacy with local stakeholders and gaining the trust of citizens by acting as a corporate citizen, which is driven by external sustainability priorities set by the community's needs (Lozano, 2015). For this reason, corporate citizenship is placed on the upper-right quadrant of Figure 5 above and differs from CSR in that their sustainability agenda is driven more by external community priorities (Lozano, 2015). The literature shows that organizations have been acting as a 'citizen' of the community by supplementing products and services, acting as private governors (Muthuri et al., 2012), and therefore they are placed higher on the upper quadrant higher than CSR for taking action alone.

5.1.3 Frame 3: Partnerships

According to the literature, partnerships are a tangible output of business-society relationships, in which companies demonstrate their corporate citizenship (Muthuri et al., 2012). The frame of partnerships is validated in the literature as a method in which MNEs manage their business-in-society relationships by partnering with other organizations for engagement and transformation (Kolk & Lenfant, 2012). The literature shows that MNEs have engaged in business-community partnerships with governmental agencies (Seitanidi, 2010), NGOs (Moon, 2002), and all three sectors together (Muthuri, 2007).

According to the empirical results, MNEs frame their local-level engagements with sustainability through a collaborative approach. Partnerships offer MNEs an opportunity to enhance their impact to meet shared sustainability objectives for local sustainable development (MacDonald, Clarke, Huang, & Seitanidi, 2019). The empirical results also show that MNEs engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships to engage in local communities for local sustainable development.

According to Muthuri, Moon, and Idemudia (2012), the authors argue that MNEs' engage in business-community partnerships as a way to manage community relationships, however, the empirical results extend this frame by showing that MNEs co-create solutions for sustainability and achieve organizational transformation to help achieve both the corporate and partnership goals. MNEs engage in partnerships to increase their impact on a greater scale, which involves interdependency between partners and sharing

risks and responsibilities to achieve the scale and scope required for addressing local-level sustainability. MNEs view partnerships as more than just a way to manage community relationships, but as a critical component for driving transformational change on global issues. The empirical results also extend this frame by highlighting the importance of embedding sustainability across the entire value chains for engaging in local partnerships. MNEs also view the SDGs as a central element in partnership strategy, which is implemented in part through embedding the SDGs in their local-level operations. In this frame, MNEs' sustainability priorities are driven by both internal and external demands to address local sustainability issues but pursue collaborative action to address their roles in society. This frame is placed in the middle of the lower quadrant of Figure 5, equally between both internal and external agendas.

5.1.4 Frame 4: Sustainable Development

The empirical results reveal an extended frame found in MNEs' sustainability reports which focuses on the concept of sustainable development. While Muthuri, Moon, and Idemudia (2012) do not identify this frame in their study, other authors do engage with the frame of sustainable development. Developments in the literature on discourse regarding non-financial disclosures that have broadened to include social and environmental aspects of the company's impact and performance have often been framed through the perspective of sustainable development (Kolk, 2009). The literature also acknowledges that the way in which organizational members write and talk about sustainable development and the natural environment are important aspects of environmental management and corporate sustainability, which demonstrates how companies attempt to respond to the contexts in which they operate (Milne et al., 2009).

In terms of corporations' framing of sustainable development, MNEs view their engagements in the community for sustainability efforts as a process for value creation and competitive business advantage that meets the needs of the enterprise, while also sustaining future resources for current and future generations. Companies pursue initiatives and activities for local sustainable development to achieve sustainability and enable progress for reaching the SDGs, a where at the same time looked at sustainable development as core to strengthening business performance. This frame views MNEs' engagements and operations in society within the contexts of the ecological, environmental, and social contexts in which the company operates. For MNEs, the empirical results show that companies are adopting strategies, practices, and activities that advance corporate performance, create value for shareholders, and enables local socially equitable development and environmental sustainability.

Compared to other frames, this frame is guided by community needs and ecological limits external to the firm which influence the company's sustainability priorities. This particular frame focuses on the long-

term considerations for environmental, economic, and social issues related to the community, specifically within ecological limits. On Figure 5, this frame is driven by mainly an external agenda to address their impacts on the community, in which sustainability priorities focus on meeting the company's needs while sustaining ecological resources for current and future generations. For this reason, sustainable development is placed further to the right on Figure 5 as MNEs' sustainability strategies are mainly driven by an external agenda, but is placed equally between the firm taking action and collaboration action because companies pursue both to pursue their sustainability efforts and engage partners in local sustainability solutions. This frame is a core aspect of addressing the needs of the community, while also considering the finite limits of natural resources, which focuses on processes and strategies for integrating interconnected aspects of economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection into the company's business agenda. Through this frame, MNEs are integrating their approach to embedding sustainability through their material issues and business operations to measure their contribution for local sustainable development.

5.1.5 Frame 5: Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance

The framing of corporate community engagement through the perspective of ESG is an expanded frame found in the empirical results. Muthuri, Moon, and Idemudia's (2012) study does not discuss this frame, however practitioner dialogues have more recently engaged with ESG indicators as a framework for measuring sustainability performance in corporations (Kocmanová & Šimberová, 2014). Moreover, practitioner dialogues also show that corporations are seeing ESG indicators become increasingly important to protecting brand reputation and creating corporate value (Deloitte, 2017). The academic literature also acknowledges that ESG indicators are being incorporated into decision-making processes, in which ESG is seen as an investment strategy to secure the firm's long-term profitability (Kocmanová & Šimberová, 2014). The recent shift in practitioner dialogues and the limited studies on MNEs' framing of local-level sustainability through ESG can be a result of the shifting landscape of reporting practices to include ESG standards in current sustainability reporting trends.

The empirical results show that MNEs apply sustainability principles in their entire operations by operating according to ESG standards, adopting a responsive sustainability approach to local community engagement, and to promote sustainability across the entire value chain. Integrating ESG issues in the corporation's long-term strategy also has implications on financial performance and decision making in the firm, which can help to enhance innovation and sustainability within the organization. The empirical results also reveal that MNEs' incorporate ESG risks and use ESG criteria to secure long-term interests with customers, shareholders, and investors. Furthermore, the results show that MNEs' are holding their

decision-making capabilities to a higher standard by considering how their sustainability decisions affect customers in the long term. In comparison to other frames, the framing of ESG views sustainability priorities as driven by an internal agenda to secure the company’s long-term financial performance and business operations, in which the firm takes action to secure their interests. For this reason, ESG is placed in the upper-left quadrant of Figure 5. ESG is not only valuable for the company itself, but reflects shared values among stakeholders, customers, and investors to confront business activities with ESG standards with the intention of contributing to the SDGs.

5.2 Research Question 2

2. What are the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development?

Table 13 below shows that the literature review discussed six roles of MNEs in local sustainable development, namely *financer*, *capacity builder*, *product and service provider*, *partner*, *innovator*, and *leveraging supply chains and procurement*, which were also found in the empirical findings. The *capacity builder* role was expanded into two categories in the empirical results, *community capacity builder* and *employee development*. In addition, the roles of *innovator* and *program deliverer* were expanded in the empirical results. Two new roles were identified in the empirical results, *consultant* and *awareness raiser*. The discussion following Table 13 discusses the comparison between the literature review and empirical findings related to the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development. The roles are discussed in alphabetical order following the tables.

Table 13. Roles of MNEs in Local Sustainable Development: Comparing Literature Review and Empirical Findings

	Literature Review	Empirical Findings	Comments
Enabling Roles	Financer	Financer	Validate
	Capacity Builder	Community Capacity Builder	Expand
		Employee Development	Expand
	Product and Service Provider	Product and Service Provider	Validate
		Consultant	New Role
	Awareness Raiser	New Role	
Coordinating Roles	Leveraging Supply Chains and Procurement	Leveraging Supply Chains and Procurement	Validate
	Program Deliverer	Program Deliverer	Expand
Facilitating Roles	Partner	Partner	Validate
	Innovator	Innovator	Expand

5.2.1 Awareness Raiser

The empirical results reveal a new role for MNEs, the role of an *awareness raiser*. Awareness raising fosters communication and information exchange with communities, in which MNEs impact the lives of community members by making the public aware of local sustainable development issues, providing a voice for the community, raising awareness, and exercising public influence for policies and practices. In the literature, MNEs respond to local community challenges in a number of different ways, for example by investing in local communities (Chelekis & Mudambi, 2010; Kolk et al., 2017, 2014, 2018), building community capacities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015), and service provision for local communities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2011, 2015; Newenham-Kahindi, 2010; Selmier et al., 2015). However, the empirical results emphasize a much larger role that MNEs play in terms of awareness raising for local sustainable development issues. The literature acknowledges that the private sector plays a fundamental role in local sustainable development for helping local authorities transform into proactive organizations for articulating sustainability initiatives (Rotheroe et al., 2003). This role finds that awareness raising is a critical component for changing attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs for supporting existing systems of local sustainable development, as well as informing the general public about resources available to support local sustainable development.

With concerns for economic, environmental, and social impacts of sustainable development issues, such as climate change, these issues are continuing to gain momentum in the agendas of governments and organizations. This growing awareness of sustainable development issues and how they impact communities can be part of the reason of why this new role is found in MNEs' sustainability reports and not in the recent literature. The shift in awareness exerts pressures on MNEs' daily operations, as well as their behaviours in local communities. The literature notes that one of the factors influencing MNEs to report on sustainability-related issues is greater awareness of broader environmental issues within the organization (Kolk, 2009). Both external and internal forces have been pushing corporations to pay attention to the negative environmental, social, and economic externalities of their operations, particularly their impacts in local communities. With the recent climate negotiations in 2015 at the UN's Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris, France, countries have committed to ambitious emissions reductions to reduce global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2018). The SDGs also provide a framework and targets for achieving progress on sustainability-related goals, and as such, MNEs can better understand sustainability issues and develop an approach that accelerates business growth and local sustainable development simultaneously.

MNEs enact this role of an *awareness raiser* in active methods for engaging the community, such as advocacy efforts, as in non-active manners through information exchange. Awareness raising is also a critical component for changing attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs for supporting existing systems of local sustainable development, as well as informing the general public about resources available to support local sustainable development. Through campaigns, programs, initiatives, and events that raise awareness for social, environmental, and economic issues, MNEs play a key role in engaging employees, organizations, local government agencies, and local community members. MNEs use advocacy campaigns, outreach programs, events and awards, and other initiatives to spark conversation or drive social change for local issues by playing the role of an *awareness raiser*.

Companies in the technology hardware and computers sector have a statistically significant relationship with the role of an *awareness raiser* for local sustainable development. MNEs in this sector mention the *awareness raiser* role in their sustainability reports through various campaigns for raising awareness for local sustainable development issues. These companies also highlight many calls to action through programs, campaigns, events, and awards.

5.2.2 Community Capacity Builder

The *community capacity builder* role found in the empirical results is expanded from the role of *capacity builder* found in the literature. The literature highlights the importance of MNEs' roles in local communities through the implementation of sustainability initiatives and programs as a means of responding to local challenges and engaging local stakeholders (Kolk et al., 2018; Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). The literature also notes that MNEs have engaged in local communities to support community capacities through programs for addressing challenges such as poverty alleviation and inequality (Kolk et al., 2018). The empirical results also show that MNEs focus on developing community capacities through educational programming, skills development, economic opportunities, and community collaboration.

The empirical results show that MNEs also focus on developing capacities of the company through initiatives such as employee training and career development. As such, the role of the *capacity builder* from the literature has expanded into two roles: *community capacity builder*; and *employee development*. This subsection discusses the role of the *community capacity builder*. The role of *capacity builder* found in the literature is expanded because MNEs' motivations for engaging in community capacity building versus employee development are distinct. In the case of community capacity building, MNEs are motivated by the needs of local communities and how MNEs are able to support existing systems to help

communities develop, implement, and maintain the collective skills, resources, and processes for local sustainable development.

There is a statistically significant relationship between MNEs with headquarters in Africa, Asia, and Europe and the role of a *community capacity builder*. In total, there are 249 companies with headquarters belonging to the three regions. The literature mentions that there are different sustainability approaches and institutional strategies employed by companies whose headquarters are from developed versus developing countries (Scott, 2014), yet the lens this research takes on how MNEs enact their roles in local sustainable development does not provide any insights into how countries from these regions pursue a role as a *community capacity builder*. However, the literature discusses briefly how MNEs belonging to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopt sustainability policies based on participatory, qualitative engagement with stakeholders (Topple et al., 2017).

5.2.3 Consultant

The new role of a *consultant* found in the empirical results emphasizes MNEs' role in offering skills, experience, resources, and expertise to individuals and organizations in the community through services like pro bono activities and consulting to support services, operations, or organizations in the community. The literature acknowledges the roles of MNEs in the plan formation of a partnership, where companies and organization share resources and knowledge to help further the understanding of social and environmental issues when planning partnerships (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). In this case, MNEs can be brought in as *consultants* in this stage of partnership formation as cross-sector partnerships are identified in the population group as key ways of contributing to local sustainable development, as MNEs in this role can provide specialized guidance and expertise in fields related to the company's business.

The empirical results show that MNEs offer their business skills, expertise, and experience to help serve local communities and foster the development of sustainable communities to support civil society organizations, social enterprises, government agencies, and community groups on their goals and performance for contributing to sustainable development. MNEs with headquarters in Asia and North America show a statistically significant relationship with the role of a *consultant*. The *consultant* role particularly offers specialized services for free that benefit a particular cause or the general public through pro bono services or volunteering. In comparison to the role of *community capacity builder*, the *consultant* role focuses on MNEs' efforts in providing expertise, experience, and skills to advise an individual, group, or organization as opposed to supporting communities through processes and activities that maximize community potential. The *consultant* role provides free business services that help to

advise communities on certain aspects of local sustainable development, rather than developing systems and processes for continuing engagement with community development. Moreover, the *consultant* provides services that communities find valuable, in which companies will offer their traditional business offerings for free to benefit the community.

5.2.4 Employee Development

The empirical findings reveal the expanded role of *capacity builder* found in the literature, in which this section discusses internal capacity building through employee development. As mentioned earlier, the role of the *capacity builder* is expanded into a new role, in which MNEs focus capacity building efforts for the community externally and internally through their own organization. This subsection focuses on the role of *employee development*. The literature emphasizes MNEs role in responding to community challenges by engaging local employees as intermediaries with local communities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015), but does not specifically highlight MNEs crucial role in supporting professional and personal development in strengthening the local economy. The empirical results highlight the distinct category of *employee development* as an expanded role of *capacity builder* because MNEs' are also driven by an internal agenda to develop capacities within the organization, investing in employees as a measure of investing in the local community.

The literature also shows that MNEs have been providing investments for social and micro-entrepreneurship initiatives (Kolk et al., 2017) that focus on developing internal employee capacities. The empirical results show that MNEs have been providing opportunities for skills development by hosting social and micro-entrepreneurship initiatives for employees, such as incubator programs. By engaging with local employees and developing internal capacities through training and career development, MNEs are able to inform the significance of their local sustainability strategies in local communities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). The literature also highlights employee development as a method of investing and expanding human capital within the organization.

MNEs also offer mentorship opportunities for employees through incubator programs, innovation labs, competitions, and other creative ventures. Through *employee development*, MNEs play an important role in fostering local economic development through retaining employees and attracting new talent. This role also helps to foster the local economy and create opportunities for local businesses to strengthen their business plans and create scalable solutions. The empirical results also show that MNEs in this role provide skills development and capacity building initiatives for employees through training and career development.

The results also show that there is a statistically significant relationship with companies the sectors of construction and construction materials and transportation, logistics in relation to pursuing the role of employee *development* for local sustainable development. The empirical findings also identify a relationship between MNEs with headquarters in the regions of Asia and Europe and the role of *employee development* for local sustainable development. In other words, this could suggest that MNEs in these sectors or with headquarters in the aforementioned regions pursue a wide range of initiatives for developing employee capacities and engaging employees in initiatives for local sustainable development and consider them relevant enough to mention in their sustainability reports. According to a report by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) from 2008, commonly reported themes from companies belonging to the construction sector include training, education, and health exams for employees (Global Reporting Initiative, 2008a).

5.2.5 Financer

In the literature, *financer* was a commonly cited role as MNEs have been making strategic financial investments to local communities through investment-based activities, such as FDI, business at the BOP, micro-entrepreneurship, microfinance, and social entrepreneurial ventures (Chelekis & Mudambi, 2010; Kolk et al., 2017, 2014, 2018). The empirical results show that MNEs are providing financial capital through additional avenues, such as funding, grants, scholarships, fundraising, loans, sponsorships, and charitable donations. The empirical results also reveal that certain companies view their contributions to local sustainable development as compliance with paying taxes in the multiple regions in which they operate. Through investments of financial capital in local communities, MNEs influence local poverty levels (Gohou & Soumaré, 2012; Harrison & McMillan, 2007; Kaplinsky, 2013) and as a result, enable communities to provide basic services to local residents (Kolk et al., 2018). In the literature, MNEs role in contributing financially to the SDGs has helped addressed the issues of poverty and inequality in local communities (Kolk et al., 2017). The empirical results show that MNEs have provided funding, sponsorships, grants, and scholarships targeted at underrepresented groups, such as children and youth, to ensure that they have access to socially equitable opportunities.

This role was emphasized in the literature as one of the primary roles MNEs pursue in local sustainable development for fostering economic opportunities and local economic growth, however the literature has also criticized MNEs for attracting talent away from local businesses (Fortanier & Van Wijk, 2010; Kolk et al., 2017). The literature has also criticized MNEs engagements with microfinance institutions, particularly for making these services less inclusive by commercializing microfinance (Ault, 2016) and catering to customers that are wealthier than the average customer it was intended for, a pressure known

as mission drift (Serrano-Cinca & Gutiérrez-Nieto, 2014). The empirical results show that MNEs use microfinance institutions and programs as a method of strengthening financial literacy and inclusion in local communities, yet do not address the negative criticisms found in the literature.

In practice, understanding the different methods in which MNEs help contribute to financing local sustainable development initiatives will help other organizations, businesses, and agencies work more proactively by providing knowledge on capital planning and project financing for local sustainable development. This role is particularly important in local sustainable development as financing sustainability initiatives, programs, and activities is critical for enabling actions for sustainable development at the local level.

MNEs belonging to the financial sector tend to pursue the role of a *financer*, as well as an *innovator* and *employee development*, which could be a result of MNEs providing investments, financing, and funding services for various local sustainable development issues. The financial sector is the largest sector in the study population and includes 48 companies in total. Furthermore, the literature acknowledges that financial institutions play an increasingly important role in advancing sustainable development. For example, financial institutions have access to funds and therefore have a direct impact through investments and leading activities (Elalfy & Weber, 2019). MNEs in the financial sector also contribute financial capital in various forms, such as funding and grants, to help enable innovative solutions for local sustainable development issues. Financial capital is a critical component for enabling innovative solutions because funding is necessary to develop bankable projects and innovative business models for sustainable development. Providing financial capital for local sustainable development initiatives and programs are significant for mobilizing early-stage, pre-development resources from multiple avenues. The results also show that MNEs with headquarters in Europe and North America have a statistically significant relationship with the role of a *financer*. The results show that 47 companies in the population group belong in the financial services sector, 26 of those companies have headquarters in the regions of Europe and North America.

5.2.6 Innovator

The role of an *innovator* is validated in the literature as a role MNEs pursue for innovating new solutions for contributing to local challenges for sustainable development. In the literature, MNEs are recognized as having the resources to mobilize R&D and deliver technological advances globally (Patchell & Hayter, 2013; Yunis et al., 2018), as well the technological capacity to access inaccessible locations (Kraemer & van Tulder, 2009). The literature acknowledges that MNEs have the resources and tools to advance

research and technological advancements to innovate new sustainable products and services (Hall & Vredenburg, 2003) and as such, play a fundamental role in encouraging more sustainable products (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012). For example, innovating new solutions for local sustainable development is key to creating transformative change in local communities and MNEs possess the tools, resources, and capacity to reach large-scale solutions needed to address sustainability goals on a global scale (Sachs, 2012). The empirical findings show that through processes such as product and process design, research and development (R&D), and technological advancements, MNEs are playing an important role in local sustainable development to develop innovative solutions for sustainability. The empirical results also highlight MNEs' role in advancing knowledge on local sustainability issues to inform the company's sustainability strategy, initiatives, and programs to increase their impact and reach in the local community through research. MNEs carry out research activities in partnerships with other academic institutions or organizations, fostering skills development and knowledge exchange between organizations, which can help organizations mutually benefit by implementing more effective sustainability measures in cohesion with their partnership commitments (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019).

Companies belonging to the healthcare products and services sector have a statistically significant relationship with the role of an *innovator* for local sustainable development. Through processes such as R&D, companies in the healthcare products and services sector are constantly evolving to address, develop, and implement healthcare innovations to address the needs of society. According to a study on large healthcare organizations from the United States, many corporations are innovating solutions for building sustainable facilities, including certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) facilities (Senay & Landrigan, 2018). The empirical results also reveal that MNEs with their home country in Africa and North America tend to pursue a role as an *innovator*. In total, there are 88 companies belonging to these categories.

5.2.7 Leveraging Supply Chains and Procurement

The role of *leveraging supply chains and procurement* is extended by the empirical results. Previous literature does not identify this role explicitly in the literature as a key role in local sustainable development, but previous scholarship does mention how MNEs invest in trade-based activities in their global value chains. For example, MNEs are implementing sustainable supply chain management (Neu et al., 2014) and incorporating the local economies in their value chains (Kolk et al., 2018; Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2015; Werner et al., 2014). In addition, the literature also notes that MNEs' supply chains have vital leverage points which are needed to create the scale, response, and coordination for encouraging systemic change in global markets to address sustainability challenges (Dauvergne & Lister,

2012), yet there is limited research indicating how MNEs use their supply chain management and procurement strategies to contribute to local sustainable development. Sustainable supply chain management has also been studied to have an influence on local poverty levels because sustainable supply chain management is viewed as a method of helping to alleviate poverty (Neu et al., 2014), yet research on supply chain management and impacts on other issues of local sustainable development have not been acknowledged.

The empirical results show that MNEs role in *leveraging supply chains and procurement* forms a key function in managing supplier relations and implementing responsible supply chain policies and practices, as well as leveraging value chains for local communities. This role found in the empirical findings presents a distinct role in which MNEs consider the needs of the community that drive local procurement strategies and manage supplier relations, which reflects MNEs' response to their ethical, environmental, and social concerns. MNEs role in a *leveraging supply chains and procurement* is important in local sustainable development for fostering local economic opportunities and providing opportunities for local employers to join MNEs' value chains. This role also helps MNEs to ensure diverse workforces and inclusive supplier management, for example through supplier diversity programs. MNEs in the construction and constructional materials sector and technology and computers sector statistically show a role in a leveraging supply chains and procurement. The literature validates this finding and shows that companies in the construction sector focus on supply chain analysis in terms of reporting on their climate footprint (Global Reporting Initiative, 2008a).

5.2.8 Partner

The *partner* role validates the literature as MNEs partner with other organizations and communities through cross-sector collaboration. MNEs' role as a *partner* is referenced in the literature as MNEs' leading partnerships with local stakeholders to address local sustainable development challenges (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015), in which MNEs are increasingly encouraged to take part in societal problem-solving through multi-stakeholder approaches (Ritvala et al., 2014; Waddock, 1989). The literature discusses various types of partnerships with different organizations leading the partnership process, which can range in terms of number of partners, geographical scope, time and duration, vision and goals, funding sources, and functions (Glasbergen, 2007). For example, local governments can convene businesses and civil society organizations in partnerships (Kolk et al., 2008). The private sector can also convene public sector actors and/or NGOs in collaborative processes (Kolk et al., 2008).

In international business (IB) literature, there is limited understanding regarding MNEs' initiatives in local partnerships linking the SDGs to the sustainability operations of MNEs (Kolk et al., 2017). Previous scholarship has shown that in order for MNEs to achieve greater progress on the SDGs, they need to do so through partnerships, yet IB research mostly focuses on MNEs' impact on people, the planet, peace, and prosperity without specifically addressing how MNEs aim to achieve progress collaboratively (Kolk et al., 2017). The empirical results reveal the role of a *partner* includes MNEs' role in collaborative processes beyond partnerships, such as joint ventures, memberships and associations, and support for other multi-stakeholder initiatives. The empirical results show that more and more companies are viewing their engagement with local sustainable development as a process that needs to be taken collaboratively with other organizations, particularly through local cross-sector partnerships (Clarke & Crane, 2018). Furthermore, some companies are also aligning with SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals as a key priority in their operations and engagements.

According to the GRI, common themes highly reported by companies belonging to the food processing sector tend to include issues on sourcing and supply chains, food safety, health and nutrition, transportation, environmental impacts of agriculture, packaging, and animal welfare (Global Reporting Initiative, 2008b). The empirical results show that there is a statistically significant relationship between companies in the food and beverage products sector and the role of a *partner*. The results show that many companies in the food and beverage sector are partnering to create innovative packaging to be more sustainable, whereas other companies are joining memberships and associations to address their environmental impacts. The empirical findings also show that MNEs with headquarters in the region of Europe and North America also have a statistically significant relationship with the role of a partner. In total, there are 209 companies belonging to these categories.

5.2.9 Product and Service Provider

The *product and service provider* role in the empirical results also validates the literature as MNEs have been playing increasingly important roles in delivering products and services to local communities by supporting or supplementing roles traditionally played by local governments and agencies (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015; Yamin & Sinkovics, 2009). The literature identifies wider governance roles taken on by MNEs in terms of filling institutional voids, gaining political authority, and acting as one of the most powerful actors within governance systems (Crane et al., 2008; Dauvergne & Lister, 2012; Detomasi, 2007; Muthuri et al., 2012; Newenham-Kahindi, 2015; Yamin & Sinkovics, 2009). The empirical results show that MNEs play a large role in delivering products and services to local communities, particularly in the areas of education, health, food, infrastructure, and other product and service delivery. Service

provision for education is the most commonly referenced thematic topic within the role of a *product and service provider*. The literature only identified MNEs' role in providing basic infrastructure and public welfare (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015; Yamin & Sinkovics, 2009), but did not specifically highlight MNEs' role in providing education or any other thematic topics related to local sustainable development.

In the healthcare products and services sector, companies in this sector statistically self-declared roles as a *product and service provider* and *researcher*. Companies belonging to the healthcare products and services sector commonly pursue a role as a *product and service provider* as they deliver healthcare products and services to local communities through their sustainability initiatives, programs, and activities, such as product provisions and healthcare clinics for underserved communities. The real estate sector also has a statistically significant relationship with the role of a *product and service provider*, providing products and services to the local market that are core to their business operations, such as sustainable buildings, affordable housing, and green building standards (Global Reporting Initiative, 2008a). Furthermore, the technology and computer sector, as well as the equipment and materials sector, have statistically significant relationships with the role of a product and service provider. MNEs with headquarters in the regions of Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America have a statistically significant relationship with the role of a product and service provider. In total, there are 327 companies with HQs in the regions mentioned above.

5.2.10 Program Deliverer

MNEs play a key role as a *program deliverer* for local sustainable development. According to the literature, sustainability initiatives are seen as a form of strategic CSR (Porter & Kramer, 2002) and MNEs take various actions to promote sustainability through different programs and initiatives. The role of MNEs as a *program deliverer* is not explicitly referenced in previous scholarship as a distinct function but the literature acknowledges that MNEs engage in sustainability programs to create value for stakeholders and maintain societal relationships, which can contribute to the effectiveness of sustainability actions (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). The novel contribution of this role relates to the coordinating category of the three dominant categories of roles found in the literature (Yan et al., 2018). The literature also shows that MNEs coordinate the delivery of programs and initiatives through collaboration with other organizations through local cross-sector partnerships (Riikinen, Kauppi, & Salmi, 2017) to benefit both partners and increase impact on the community (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). However, the collaborative aspect is only one part of MNEs role of coordinating the delivery of programs and initiatives.

The empirical results show that MNEs play a distinct role as a *program deliverer* in terms of coordinating the delivery of programs and initiatives for local sustainable development. This role specifically highlights MNEs function in coordinating the delivery of programs and initiatives that may address multiple different issues of local sustainable development. The empirical results also show that MNEs belonging to household, personal, forest and paper products and textiles sectors and MNEs with home countries in Asia and Europe have a statistically significant relationship to the role of a *program deliverer*, yet there is no research in the literature that delves into sector preferences and the roles they pursue at the local level. In total, there are 241 companies in especially this category as MNEs play a key role in coordinating the full delivery of programs and initiatives for local sustainable development and focus their efforts on identifying effective mechanisms for program delivery.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The private sector is essential for the development of cities, livelihoods, and providing goods and services for the community (UNGC, 2017). Rapid urbanization brings many challenges for the development of sustainable, resilient, and inclusive cities (Runde, 2015). Issues such as poverty and inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation are widespread and are only a few of the existing challenges that communities face today with the rise of growing ecological crises and social inequality (Ochoa et al., 2018). Cities face problems such as unsustainable development, yet cities are also able to provide solutions for these local sustainable development challenges (Ochoa et al., 2018). This thesis explored how MNEs frame local sustainability efforts in the context of the SDGs and the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development. To reiterate, the following research questions were used to guide the entire study:

1. How do MNEs frame sustainability efforts at the local level?
2. What are the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development?

This section discusses the summary of research contributions to theory and practice, as well as recommendations for practice. This section also presents research limitations and suggestions for future research directions.

6.1 Contributions to Theory

Overall, this thesis makes several contributions to theory, especially to the literature interested in multinational enterprises. Throughout the thesis, the researcher answers both research questions and therefore, answers to the research questions account for both the theoretical and practical contributions of the study. This research has wider contributions on academic literature in the fields of international business, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability management.

The first research question identified and analyzed how MNEs frame sustainability, which is answered in [Section 5.1](#). The empirical findings identified five frames in which MNEs view their engagements, particularly CSR, corporate citizenship, partnerships, sustainable development, and ESG. The answers to this research question provide results for understanding how MNEs frame sustainability at the local level. For this study, coding for frames helps to understand how language use is used to frame the narrative of MNEs' self-declaration of their perspective on sustainability. The first research question provides a preliminary understanding of how MNEs frame sustainability at the local level. For discourse analysis, the study looked at term usage and their relation to frames without checking the meanings found in MNEs

sustainability reports, whereas frame analysis furthered understanding of term usage by framing their meanings associated with the words used.

This thesis also made contributions to the framework developed by Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia (2012), which validated the framing of CSR and expanded the frames of corporate citizenship and business-community partnerships. Furthermore, the study identified two new frames that were not referenced in Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia's (2012) article but were mentioned in previous academic literature and practitioner dialogues, and therefore this thesis also extended the understanding of MNEs framing of sustainable development and environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG). This study found that MNEs framing their sustainability efforts through corporate citizenship view their role in society as a moral obligation in community relations in which sustainability priorities are determined by the community's needs. The extended framing of partnerships found that MNEs engage in cross-sector partnerships to further sustainability engagement and impact at the local level, while also contributing to local sustainable development by combining organizational resources from all sectors. The extended frame of sustainable development also highlights MNEs' focus on equitable development, ecological limits, and sustaining resources for current and future generations, while also meeting the needs of the organization. The final extended frame of ESG has extended the literature by acknowledging that ESG considerations are instrumental for securing the company's long-term business success and profitability.

The second research question explored the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development, which is answered in [Section 5.2](#). Previous scholarship on the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development have acknowledged that MNEs face unique challenges due to the increasing scale of IB activities (Kolk, 2016), such as their orientation towards international markets, which increases the diversity of stakeholders and amplifies the challenge of balancing stakeholder concerns in local community operations and global HQ strategies (Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015).

The literature found seven roles MNEs play in local sustainable development, in particular *financer*, *capacity builder*, *product and service provider*, *partner*, *innovator*, *program deliverer* and *leveraging supply chains and procurement*. The theoretical contribution of this study is that three of those six roles found in the literature were expanded in empirical findings, particularly the role of *capacity builder*, which was expanded into two roles, *community capacity builder* and *employee development*, and the roles of *innovator* and *program deliverer*. The empirical results also revealed two new roles, *consultant* and *awareness raiser*. It should also be noted that many MNEs self-report multiple roles in local sustainable development and a large majority of companies in the population group view collaboration as a key factor for achieving local-level sustainability. The roles of MNEs in local sustainable development provide a

basis for understanding the different ways in which MNEs contribute to the development of sustainable communities and how to best leverage the engagement of MNEs in local sustainable development planning. The research shows that it is common practice for the studied MNEs to enact a role in society, as self-declared in their sustainability reports. Since MNEs are regarded as powerful institutions with worldwide reach and much more, it is not surprising that there were no MNEs in the population group that did not play a role as the private sector is increasingly recognizing the shift towards local sustainability and the importance of engaging with sustainability to secure long-term profitability (Carroll, 1991; Clarke & MacDonald, 2019).

Another theoretical contribution of this study is that there is a distinct relationship between the sector and roles pursued by MNEs in local sustainable development. A main goal of this study was to identify what roles MNEs pursue in local sustainable development, however, this study also identified statistically significant relationships between sectors and the roles in local sustainable development. This thesis also showed that there are some statistically significant relationships between MNEs by HQ region and the roles pursued in local sustainable development. Previous scholarship revealed that MNEs with HQ locations in developed countries tend to pursue a more holistic approach to sustainability (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015), therefore the study considered whether or not there are any relationships between MNEs by HQ region and their roles in local sustainable development. The results from this study provides new insights to the HQ and sector conversation in the literature regarding MNEs roles in local sustainable development.

The study showed that there are distinct relationships between MNEs in the construction and construction materials sector the roles of *employee development* and *leveraging supply chains and procurement*; the financial services sector the role of a *financer*; the food and beverage products the role of a *partner*; the healthcare products and services sector and the roles of an *innovator* and *product and service provider*; the real estate sector tend and the role of a *product and service provider*; the technology and computers sector and the roles as an *awareness raiser*, *product and service provider*, and *leveraging supply chains and procurement*; the equipment and materials sector and the roles of a *product and service provider*; the transportation, logistics, and metals sector and the role of *employee development*; and the household, paper, forest products and textiles sector and the role of a *program deliverer*. This research also identified significant relationship between MNEs with HQs in Africa and the roles of a *community capacity builder* and an *innovator*; MNEs with HQs in Asia and the roles of *community capacity builder*, *consultant*, *employee development*, *program deliverer*, and *product and service provider*; MNEs with HQ in Europe the roles of *community capacity builder*, *consultant*, *financer*, *partner*, *program deliverer*, and *product*

and service provider; MNEs with HQ in Latin America & the Caribbean the role of a *product and service provider*; and MNEs with HQ in North America tend and the roles of a *consultant, financier, innovator, partner, and product and service provider*. The Sig. (2-tailed) values provide evidence that there are significant associations within and between variables of MNEs' roles in local sustainable development and MNEs by sector and HQ region. Given this preliminary analysis, the results provide a starting point for future studies that could further explore these associations and their impact for MNEs' contributions to local sustainable development. This study does not aim to make generalizations beyond the data collected, which is a subset of MNEs who have engaged with the SDGs.

6.2 Contributions to Practice and Recommendations

The practical goal of this thesis is to organizations from all sectors leverage the engagement of MNEs by understanding how MNEs can contribute to local sustainable development through various roles that enable, facilitate, or coordinate local sustainable development solutions. This thesis also aims to help practitioners working with local communities better understand how MNEs are framing their roles, operations, and local-level engagements with sustainability to leverage MNEs' engagement in sustainability initiatives that create impact but also drive business value. Moreover, a preliminary understanding of how MNEs' frame their roles helps to comprehend how MNEs construct their approach and how their framing of local-level sustainability is understood in social reality. This thesis will also help other organizations and practitioners facilitate private sector engagement, foster cross-sector collaboration, develop institutional capacities, and increase access to funding sources by understanding MNEs' self-declaration of their contributions to sustainable development. As such, this thesis identified the roles MNEs play in local sustainable development and provide local governments and practitioners with an understanding of how MNEs can contribute to the development of sustainable communities. According to what MNEs declare in their sustainability reports, the results show that many MNEs are indeed willing to participate in efforts for local sustainable development and have the capacities, resources, and willingness to contribute to local sustainable development, according to what they declare in their sustainability reports.

This thesis has practical contributions for local governments, as the research results show that MNEs contribute to building community capacities as a *community capacity builder* and help to foster job creation and strengthen the local economy by playing the role of *employee development*. Local governments can engage MNEs in sustainability initiatives, programs, or activities to build the capacity of local communities to develop, implement, and maintain solutions for challenges in their environmental, economic, physical, social, and cultural contexts. MNEs also play crucial roles in enabling solutions for

local sustainable development through program delivery and product and service provision through local cross-sector collaboration. MNEs also play a key role in enabling solutions by providing financial capital; potentially for local governments opening new funding sources for local sustainability action. Cities will also benefit from community action for local sustainable development in which local governments have a stronger understanding of how they can engage the private sector in local sustainable development initiatives and drive the sustainability agenda.

This research will also have practical contributions for practitioners in terms of how to effectively engage MNEs in collaborative initiatives for local sustainable development. It will provide practitioners with a greater understanding of how MNEs frame their local-level engagements for the sustainability to better develop collaborative models for bridging gaps between local-level sustainability goals and implementation of local sustainable development initiatives. The study helps to define terminology, frames and concepts so local sustainability practitioners can speak ‘business’ language. There is existing research and knowledge that private sector collaboration projects and initiatives already exist and are being carried out around the world (WBCSD, 2018b). Through initiatives such as the WBCSD, Climate-KIC, and C40, MNEs are engaging in local sustainable development projects and practitioners can benefit from the results of this study by combining imperatives for local governments, communities, and businesses wanting to contribute to innovative action for local sustainable development.

This research will also have practical implications for the private sector and provides MNEs with a better understanding of the different roles they can play in local sustainable development, which will enable MNEs to deliver programs and initiatives with a better understanding of how they can contribute more effectively to achieve local-level sustainability. Understanding MNEs’ framing of sustainability will also help to deliver a better understanding of the various ways in which MNEs present their perspectives on local-level sustainability. Further research on MNEs’ framing of local-level sustainability is needed to understand why businesses organize their sustainability strategies in certain perspectives over others.

6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The purpose of this section is to recognize the limits of the overall research study, which includes the chosen research design, methodology, methodological-related decisions employed in this study, as well as the broader limitations. Moreover, this section highlights the explicit awareness of research assumptions in this study and the potential for future research.

In terms of scope and population representativeness, the study considered all MNEs that met the criteria as outlined in [Section 3.2.1.1](#). Many reports in other languages were excluded from the population group.

Excluding reports that were not available in English limited the scope of companies with HQs where English is not the primary language. In total, there were 530 reports in many languages and after filtering for only reports in English, there was 349 reports left in the population based on the criteria developed above. This thesis does not aim to represent all MNEs or MNEs beyond this population, although the results of this study may be useful for MNEs who did not specifically reference the SDGs or have a recent report uploaded and registered in the GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database. Given this preliminary analysis, future studies could identify whether there are any significant relationships between companies by their home country and their roles in local sustainable development, which would be a much larger study on its own. In addition, a further study of all reports in all languages would enable a deeper understanding of sectors and HQ without a focus on the SDGs.

The decision to analyze sustainability reports also presents a limitation as sustainability reporting is entirely voluntary and there is no consistent framework for reporting on the SDGs and social and environmental impacts, performances, or activities. For this reason, there are several different types of reports uploaded in the GRI Database that were considered for this study, which includes integrated reports, annual reports, sustainability/CSR/sustainable development/corporate governance reports, GRI content indexes, sustainability updates, registration documents, and more. Therefore, there is a large discrepancy between the depth and scope of each sustainability report in the study population when considering the voluntary nature of sustainability reporting and the varieties of output for documenting non-financial disclosures. The voluntary nature can result in selective reporting and interpretation of sustainability outcomes, which can include greenwashing (Hahn & Lülfs, 2014). Further research could analyze sustainability reports in the GRI database classified under by the report type, which allows reports to be sorted by GRI Standards or previously existing Sustainability Reporting Frameworks. Future studies could also focus on the limitations of sustainability reporting and how this impacts MNEs' self-declaration of their roles and contributions to local sustainable development.

This study did not use this criterion as classification for selecting reports and companies because the study wanted to analyze the larger scope of MNEs' self-declaration of contributions to local sustainable development. A future study may consider the depth of reporting on these topics based on their alignment with certain reporting standards or frameworks. Future studies could also focus on a critical discourse analysis of how MNEs frame their roles in the context of local sustainable development and progress on achieving the SDGs (Kolk, 2008; Livesey & Kearins, 2007).

The study also looked at MNEs' most recent sustainability report mentioning the SDGs and framing of sustainability efforts used in each report may vary from company to company, which can present

ambiguities in the analysis (Atieno, 2009). In other words, companies have various methods of naming and defining the same concept, which can create confounding and difficulties in the coding process since a deductive approach was used to create coding frames for answering both research questions. A deeper dive into inconsistent use of terminology versus frame/meaning over time would offer insights into the current discourse and its evolution. Additional research is also greatly needed to understand the implications of MNEs roles in local sustainable development for achieving the SDGs. Research studies could focus either on individual SDGs or clusters of SDGs related to the P's of the SDGs (i.e. people, planet, prosperity, peace, partnership). Further research explicitly positioning MNEs roles in local sustainable development for achieving the SDGs is needed for understanding how MNEs contribute to the SDGs, as well as how partnerships play a key role in mobilizing MNE action for sustainability (Kolk et al., 2017).

This thesis did not have a geographical focus and as a result, it is unclear how transferable all the findings are in different geographical contexts. Future research could identify how roles of MNEs in local sustainable development can be translated or transformed for companies operating across geographical boundaries in their sustainability strategy. Future research directions can also look at how MNEs advance local sustainable development and implementation of the SDGs in different regional contexts.

6.4 Concluding Summary

To conclude, this thesis analyzed how MNEs frame sustainability efforts and examined the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development. The study revealed five frames when considering MNEs' contribution and there are 10 roles that MNEs play in relation to local sustainable development, based on the analysis of 349 sustainability reports. In addition to contributing to the academic knowledge in fields of international business, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability management, the study also has practical implications for local governments, sustainability practitioners, and businesses to better understand how the involvement of MNEs in local-level sustainability initiatives can be leveraged for their contribution to local sustainable development and localizing the SDGs. Overall, this study helps to situate MNEs within the context of contributing to innovative solutions for sustainable development at the local level, in which their roles play an important part in mobilizing collaborative action for sustainability.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Conditions of MNEs' Engagement in Different Country Contexts

The local cultural imperatives of MNEs with subsidiaries in host countries can also impact the perceptions of MNE sustainability strategies (Burritt et al., 2018). According to Burritt et al. (2018), one tension that is not explicitly referenced in the literature, is that home country culture can be absorbed within universal standards and global strategy that is then implemented across all MNE units, including subsidiaries, joint ventures, and suppliers, among others (Bondy & Starkey, 2014). MNEs are often subject to developing and preserving their own cultural consideration into their sustainability strategies across home and host organizations, with considerations for how these organizations interact dynamically over time (Epstein & Roy, 1998).

The country of origin or home country of the MNE is an influential factor in how MNEs engage in local sustainability efforts in developed and developing country contexts (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). MNEs from developed countries face internal pressure from stakeholders in their home country, whereas MNEs from developing economies face external pressures because stakeholders in these countries have limited sustainability experiences (Gugler & Shi, 2009). As mentioned earlier, sustainability is a concept derived from Western societies, and therefore there is a lack of comprehensive understanding for developing economies and limited sustainability engagement among developing country MNEs (Muthuri & Gilbert, 2011). The role of MNEs from developed countries and their sustainability operations in developing countries has been highly debated in the literature (Kolk, 2008, 2016; Kolk et al., 2017), particularly as a negative influence exacerbating inequalities of small suppliers from developing countries (Gugler & Shi, 2009). MNEs from developing countries are often in a disadvantageous position concerning MNEs from developed countries in global competition (Gugler & Shi, 2009).

The country of origin also affects how MNEs respond to local institutional conditions (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). When dealing with institutional negotiations between employees of MNEs and community stakeholders, a study by Newenham-Kahindi (2015) looked at the roles and initiatives of two MNEs, one from a developing country (South Africa) and the other from a developed country (Canada) – both operating in the same country and community. The study found that the MNE from the developing country used an approach based on consensus and inclusivity to ensure all stakeholders involved in sustainability initiatives are committed to development initiatives, whereas the Canadian MNE did not use local employees to engage with local communities and NGOs for their sustainability programs (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). Employees of the Canadian MNE felt that sustainability programs were

often misleading and ambiguous as they did not reflect local conditions of the community (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). MNEs' response to local institutional conditions have also been criticized for favouring business perspectives of local sustainable development over community perspectives (Newell, 2005). As a result, corporate community involvement is often seen as insensitive to local priorities (Fox, 2004; Kapelus, 2002; Muthuri et al., 2012). As such, MNEs have been criticized for failing to meet the needs of local communities, particularly countries with weak governance systems and institutions (Canel, Idemudia, & North, 2010). MNE engagement can also have negative impacts on the development of infrastructure by exasperating local governments' financial role for developing basic infrastructure (Yamin & Sinkovics, 2009). In some cases, a company's reputation can be a burden for MNEs operating in least developed countries, constricting their actions in unknown environments (Musteen, Rhyne, & Zheng, 2013).

A company's orientation for meeting stakeholder demands and pressures also influences the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development initiatives (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015; Topple et al., 2017). Considering the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders is critical for enabling MNEs to find a sustainable solution for the particular challenge (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). Corporate motivation to engage in developmental problems in developing countries also results through a strong moral commitment to the company's stakeholders, or because the company has a pragmatic interest in doing so (Ackerman, 1973; Gutiérrez & Jones, 2004; Kapelus, 2002). MNEs that choose to engage with stakeholders to identify important sustainability issues through participatory approaches often lead to helping determine, refine, define, and prioritize sustainability issues for the company's operations in different country contexts (Topple et al., 2017). Linking MNEs' business operations and meaningful stakeholder engagement to identify local concerns for sustainability ensures that MNEs design and implement local sustainability initiatives that address the community's needs (Topple et al., 2017). Altogether, these pressures form a complex set of forces that dictate the sustainability practices of MNE subsidiaries, since they must satisfy local demands in a host country, while also conforming to the parent company's requirements for sustainability practices (Yang & Rivers, 2009).

Societal expectations from governments, civil society, and local communities of MNEs in developing countries may also differ significantly from those in developed countries (Muthuri et al., 2012). Communities often expect MNEs to engage in various social, economic, and environmental initiatives that improve the community's well-being and livelihoods (Muthuri et al., 2012). Due to the increasing reach of MNEs, their business activities have been intensely debated on their role and function in local communities in both country contexts (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). In developing country contexts,

business operations of MNEs are often framed within the discourses of development, poverty alleviation, and the MDGs (Visser, 2009). Developing countries with institutional voids and unregulated economic activities pose several different challenges, opportunities, and risks for MNEs (DeSoto, 2000). MNEs operating in developing countries are often characterized by limited governmental presence, high rates of poverty and diseases, lack of basic social infrastructure, and the challenge of environmental degradation (Muthuri et al., 2012). As such, the role of MNEs either aggravates or improves these challenges and their respective impact on local communities (Muthuri et al., 2012). The engagement of MNEs in developing countries often places them in a political role due to governance shortcomings in host countries where they operate, highlighting the resources, networks, and capacity of MNEs to deliver sustainable solutions to even the most isolated communities (Muthuri et al., 2012). However, this can also put MNEs in a position to take advantage of cheap labour, lack of environmental and social standards, and limited levels of governance (Strike, Gao, & Bansal, 2006).

The implementation of sustainability strategies in developed and developing countries differs due to local institutional contexts. MNEs from developed country origins tend to use a top-down sustainability approach, engaging in sustainability strategies and programs across communities before addressing local employees and stakeholders' concerns (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). MNEs from developed countries also utilize resources based on global sustainability standards and practices, which are considered to be 'best practices' for addressing sustainable development activities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). Their sustainability strategies are often based on best practices from their home country (Kim, Kim, Marshall, & Afzali, 2018). MNEs from developing countries tend to use a more inherent approach in gathering views from stakeholders and local communities when prioritizing and addressing local sustainability challenges (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). Furthermore, MNEs operating in countries included in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) tend to adopt sustainability policies based on participatory engagement with local stakeholders (Topple et al., 2017).

International conventions, principles, or standards also play a significant role influencing MNEs' engagement in local sustainability initiatives in different country contexts (Topple et al., 2017).

International standards or guidelines, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standard, the UNGC principles, the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards, play a key role in MNEs' sustainability initiatives at the local level (Topple et al., 2017). Sustainability policies are often developed at the parent company level in the home country, in which those policies trickle down in many ways into divisions across MNE subsidiary operations (Topple et al.,

2017). MNE subsidiaries can translate sustainability policies and reporting practices from parent-company operations into systematic practices at the local level (Topple et al., 2017).

Table 13 provides a summary of the factors that influence the roles of MNEs in local sustainable development in different geographical contexts. The influential factors are not a definitive list of all factors that influence a company's engagement in local communities. The distinction between developed and developing countries is not a definitive distinction and this study acknowledges that not all countries classified as one or the other are alike.

Table 14. Conditions of MNEs' Engagement in Local Communities in Different Country Contexts

Conditions	Developed Country	Developing Country
Country of Origin (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNEs face internal pressure from stakeholders in their home country (Gugler & Shi, 2009) - Sustainability is a concept derived from Western societies (Muthuri & Gilbert, 2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNEs face external pressure from stakeholders (Gugler & Shi, 2009) - Lack of understanding regarding sustainability as developing countries have limited engagement with sustainability experiences (Gugler & Shi, 2009; Muthuri & Gilbert, 2011)
Response to Local Institutional Conditions (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability approach from developed country MNE reflected the home country concerns and do not reflect the local institutional context or local stakeholder concerns (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability approach from developing country MNE based on consensus and inclusivity to reflect local stakeholder concerns and local priorities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015)
Stakeholder Orientation (Topple et al., 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNEs face internal pressure from stakeholders in their home country on how to engage in sustainability initiatives (Gugler & Shi, 2009) - MNEs face unique pressures to conform to the parent company's requirements for sustainability practices, while also stratifying local demands in a host country (Yang & Rivers, 2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNEs only pursue sustainability initiatives at the local level if there is a strong moral commitment from the company's stakeholders (Ackerman, 1973; Gutiérrez & Jones, 2004; Kapelus, 2002) - For MNEs to be successful, they should identify sustainability issues through participatory approaches to prioritize sustainability initiatives (Topple et al., 2017)
Societal Expectations (Muthuri et al., 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communities expect MNEs to engage in social, economic, and environmental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business operations of MNEs are framed by development,

	<p>initiatives that improve the community's well-being and livelihoods (Muthuri et al., 2012)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNEs' business activities have been debated on their role and function in local communities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015). 	<p>poverty alleviation, and the MDGs (Visser, 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to institutional voids and unregulated economic activities (DeSoto, 2000), MNEs often play a governance role to fill voids or take advantage of developing country communities (Strike et al., 2006)
<p>Implementation Strategies (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed country MNEs use a top-down sustainability approach in local communities (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015) - MNEs use global sustainability standards and practices before engaging with local stakeholders (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing country MNEs use an inherent approach to identifying local sustainability issues by considering local stakeholder concerns (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015)
<p>International Conventions (Topple et al., 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability policies are developed at the parent level in the home country (Topple et al., 2017) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since sustainability policies are developed at the parent level, it is assumed that these policies will trickle down to MNE subsidiaries (Topple et al., 2017)

Appendix B – Full List of MNEs and Organizational Data

Company Name	Sector	Country	Region
3M	Conglomerates	United States of America	Northern America
ABB Management Services Ltd.	Equipment	Switzerland	Europe
Aberdeen Asset Management	Financial Services	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Accenture	Commercial Services	United States of America	Northern America
AccorHotels Australia	Tourism/Leisure	Australia	Oceania
Acer	Computers	Taiwan	Asia
Ad Plastik Group	Automotive	Croatia	Europe
Advanced Semiconductor Engineering (ASE)	Technology Hardware	Taiwan	Asia
Agrium	Agriculture	Canada	Northern America
Ahold Delhaize	Retailers	Netherlands	Europe
Ajinomoto	Food and Beverage Products	Japan	Asia
Al -Najat Charity	Non-Profit / Services	Kuwait	Asia
Allianz SE	Financial Services	Germany	Europe
Amcor	Other	Australia	Oceania
Amer Sports	Equipment	Finland	Europe
Amgen Inc.	Healthcare Products	United States of America	Northern America
AngloGold Ashanti	Other	South Africa	Africa
Arab Bank	Financial Services	Jordan	Asia
Arcadis N.V.	Real Estate	Netherlands	Europe
ArcelorMittal	Metals Products	Luxembourg	Europe
ArcelorMittal Poland	Metals Products	Poland	Europe
Arkema	Chemicals	France	Europe
Asia Pulp&Paper Indonesia (APP Indonesia)	Forest and Paper Products	Indonesia	Asia
Aspiag Service Srl	Retailers	Italy	Europe
Auditor General of South Africa	Public Agency	South Africa	Africa
Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd	Other	Australia	Oceania
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ)	Financial Services	Australia	Oceania
Avnet	Technology Hardware	United States of America	Northern America
Avon Products	Household and Personal Products	United States of America	Northern America
Axis Bank	Financial Services	India	Asia
Axis Communications	Technology Hardware	Sweden	Europe
Bank Audi	Financial Services	Lebanon	Asia

Bank Leumi	Financial Services	Israel	Asia
BD (Becton Dickinson and Company)	Healthcare Products	United States of America	Northern America
Bechtel	Construction	United States of America	Northern America
BHP	Mining	Australia	Oceania
BillerudKorsnäs	Forest and Paper Products	Sweden	Europe
BMO Financial Group	Financial Services	Canada	Northern America
BONDUELLE SAS	Food and Beverage Products	France	Europe
Brambles	Logistics	Australia	Oceania
Braskem	Chemicals	Brazil	Latin America & the Caribbean
Bridgestone	Chemicals	Japan	Asia
British American Tobacco (Holdings)	Tobacco	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Brown-Forman Corporation	Food and Beverage Products	United States of America	Northern America
BT Group	Telecommunications	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Bunge	Food and Beverage Products	United States of America	Northern America
Caesars Entertainment	Tourism/Leisure	United States of America	Northern America
CaixaBank	Financial Services	Spain	Europe
Camfil	Other	Sweden	Europe
CapitalLand	Real Estate	Singapore	Asia
Cargill Aqua Nutrition	Agriculture	Norway	Europe
Carlsberg Group	Food and Beverage Products	Denmark	Europe
Carlsberg Malaysia	Food and Beverage Products	Malaysia	Asia
Carrefour Groupe	Retailers	France	Europe
CCM DUOPHARMA	Healthcare Products	Malaysia	Asia
China Airlines (CAL)	Aviation	Taiwan	Asia
China Development Financial Holding Corporation (CDIBH)	Financial Services	Taiwan	Asia
China Life	Financial Services	Taiwan	Asia
CIC HOLDINGS	Conglomerates	Sri lanka	Asia
Cigna	Healthcare Services	United States of America	Northern America
Cisco Systems, Inc.	Technology Hardware	United States of America	Northern America
Citigroup	Financial Services	United States of America	Northern America

City Developments Limited (CDL)	Real Estate	Singapore	Asia
Clas Ohlson	Retailers	Sweden	Europe
Coca-Cola Enterprises	Food and Beverage Products	United States of America	Northern America
Coca-Cola FEMSA	Food and Beverage Products	Mexico	Latin America & the Caribbean
Coca-Cola Hungary	Food and Beverage Products	Hungary	Europe
Comerica Bank	Financial Services	United States of America	Northern America
Commerzbank	Financial Services	Germany	Europe
Compal	Computers	Taiwan	Asia
Compass Group USA	Food and Beverage Products	United States of America	Northern America
ConvaTec	Healthcare Products	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Coop	Retailers	Switzerland	Europe
Credit Suisse	Financial Services	Switzerland	Europe
Crescent Enterprises	Conglomerates	United Arab Emirates	Asia
CSC (Computer Sciences Corporation)	Commercial Services	United States of America	Northern America
CTBC Holding	Financial Services	Taiwan	Asia
Daikin Industries	Household and Personal Products	Japan	Asia
Dainippon Sumitomo Pharma	Healthcare Products	Japan	Asia
Daniel J. Edelman Companies	Other	United States of America	Northern America
Deloitte LLP	Commercial Services	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Delta Electronics	Technology Hardware	Taiwan	Asia
Desso Holding B.V.	Textiles and Apparel	Netherlands	Europe
Diab	Construction Materials	Sweden	Europe
Diageo	Food and Beverage Products	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Digi.com	Telecommunications	Malaysia	Asia
DIPPED PRODUCTS PLC	Other	Sri Lanka	Asia
DNV GL	Commercial Services	Norway	Europe
Doosan Infracore	Equipment	Korea, Republic of	Asia

DS Smith	Forest and Paper Products	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
DSV	Logistics	Denmark	Europe
Dundee Precious Metals	Mining	Canada	Northern America
DuPont	Chemicals	United States of America	Northern America
DyStar Group	Chemicals	Singapore	Asia
Eastman Chemical Company	Chemicals	United States of America	Northern America
EcoWorld International	Real Estate	Malaysia	Asia
Egetæpper	Household and Personal Products	Denmark	Europe
Eldorado Gold	Mining	Canada	Northern America
Elkem ASA	Metals Products	Norway	Europe
Emmi	Food and Beverage Products	Switzerland	Europe
Enel	Energy Utilities	Italy	Europe
Enel Chile S.A.	Energy	Chile	Latin America & the Caribbean
Eni S.P.A.	Energy	Italy	Europe
Equinix	Other	United States of America	Northern America
Eurobank	Financial Services	Greece	Europe
Eva Air	Aviation	Taiwan	Asia
EYGS LLP	Financial Services	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd	Healthcare Products	Switzerland	Europe
FBN Holdings	Financial Services	Nigeria	Africa
FCA	Automotive	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Felda Global Ventures Holdings Berhad	Agriculture	Malaysia	Asia
Fenix Outdoor	Other	Sweden	Europe
FIAT CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILES (FCA)	Automotive	Italy	Europe
Flex	Technology Hardware	United States of America	Northern America
Fluor	Other	United States of America	Northern America
Ford Motor Company	Automotive	United States of America	Northern America
Fransabank	Financial Services	Lebanon	Asia
FRASER & NEAVE HOLDINGS BHD	Food and Beverage Products	Malaysia	Asia

Fraser and Neave Limited	Food and Beverage Products	Singapore	Asia
Frasers Centrepoint Limited (FCL)	Real Estate	Singapore	Asia
Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold	Mining	United States of America	Northern America
FrieslandCampina	Food and Beverage Products	Netherlands	Europe
Frigoglass	Food and Beverage Products	Greece	Europe
Fubon Financial	Financial Services	Taiwan	Asia
FUJI XEROX SINGAPORE PTE LTD	Other	Singapore	Asia
Fujitsu	Equipment	Japan	Asia
Garanti Bank	Financial Services	Turkey	Asia
Gasum	Energy	Finland	Europe
GEK TERNA	Construction	Greece	Europe
General Electric (GE)	Conglomerates	United States of America	Northern America
General Mills	Food and Beverage Products	United States of America	Northern America
General Motors Company	Automotive	United States of America	Northern America
Generali Group	Financial Services	Italy	Europe
Godrej Consumer Products	Household and Personal Products	India	Asia
GOJO	Healthcare Products	United States of America	Northern America
GPIC	Chemicals	Bahrain	Asia
GrandVision	Retailers	Netherlands	Europe
Grupo Argos	Construction Materials	Colombia	Latin America & the Caribbean
Grupo EULEN	Commercial Services	Spain	Europe
Hang Lung	Real Estate	Hong Kong	Asia
Hannstar	Other	Taiwan	Asia
Hasbro Inc	Toys	United States of America	Northern America
Hayleys PLC	Conglomerates	Sri lanka	Asia
Heijmans	Construction	Netherlands	Europe
Heineken N.V.	Food and Beverage Products	Netherlands	Europe
Heineken Vietnam Brewery	Food and Beverage Products	Viet Nam	Asia
Hemtex	Textiles and Apparel	Sweden	Europe
Henkel	Household and Personal Products	Germany	Europe
HEXPOL	Chemicals	Sweden	Europe

Honda Motor Co., Ltd	Automotive	Japan	Asia
HP - Hewlett-Packard	Computers	United States of America	Northern America
Huawei	Technology Hardware	Mainland China	Asia
Hyundai Engineering	Construction	Korea, Republic of	Asia
Hyundai Glovis	Logistics	Korea, Republic of	Asia
Hyundai Motor Company	Automotive	Korea, Republic of	Asia
IBSA	Other	Switzerland	Europe
ICA	Retailers	Sweden	Europe
IHI	Energy Utilities	Japan	Asia
Inditex	Retailers	Spain	Europe
Indorama Ventures Public Company Limited	Chemicals	Thailand	Asia
Infosys Limited	Commercial Services	India	Asia
Inpex	Energy	Japan	Asia
Integrated DNA Technologies	Healthcare Products	United States of America	Northern America
Intel Corporation	Technology Hardware	United States of America	Northern America
International Flavors and Fragrances (IFF)	Household and Personal Products	United States of America	Northern America
International Paper	Other	United States of America	Northern America
Inventec	Computers	Taiwan	Asia
ISA	Energy	Colombia	Latin America & the Caribbean
Jain Irrigation Systems	Agriculture	India	Asia
Johnson & Johnson	Healthcare Products	United States of America	Northern America
JX Holdings	Energy	Japan	Asia
Kencana Agri Limited	Agriculture	Singapore	Asia
Kendrion N.V.	Other	Netherlands	Europe
Kesko Corporation	Retailers	Finland	Europe
Kingfisher	Retailers	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Kinross Gold Corporation	Mining	Canada	Northern America
Komatsu	Other	Japan	Asia
KONE Corporation	Other	Finland	Europe
Konica Minolta Group	Technology Hardware	Japan	Asia
KPMG Romania	Other	Romania	Europe
L'Oréal France	Household and Personal Products	France	Europe
Lagardère	Media	France	Europe
Lcy Chemical Corp.	Chemicals	Taiwan	Asia

Leonardo	Conglomerates	Italy	Europe
Lexmark	Technology Hardware	United States of America	Northern America
LG Display	Technology Hardware	Korea, Republic of	Asia
LG International	Energy	Korea, Republic of	Asia
LIXIL Group	Construction	Japan	Asia
Lucara Diamond Corp	Mining	Canada	Northern America
Lukoil	Energy	Russian Federation	Europe
Lundin Petroleum	Energy	Sweden	Europe
LUX* Resorts & Hotels	Tourism/Leisure	Mauritius	Africa
Magyar Telekom	Telecommunications	Hungary	Europe
Mandarin Oriental International Limited	Tourism/Leisure	Singapore	Asia
ManpowerGroup	Commercial Services	United States of America	Northern America
McGraw Hill Financial	Financial Services	United States of America	Northern America
MediaTek (MTK)	Computers	Taiwan	Asia
Merck & Co., Inc.	Healthcare Products	United States of America	Northern America
Merck Germany	Healthcare Products	Germany	Europe
MetLife	Financial Services	United States of America	Northern America
MetLife, Inc.	Financial Services	United States of America	Northern America
Metso	Equipment	Finland	Europe
Mindtree	Computers	India	Asia
Mirae Asset Daewoo	Financial Services	Korea, Republic of	Asia
Mitr Phol Group	Food and Beverage Products	Thailand	Asia
Mitsubishi Estate	Real Estate	Japan	Asia
Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group	Financial Services	Japan	Asia
Mitsui & Co.	Other	Japan	Asia
MMG	Mining	Hong Kong	Asia
Molson Coors Brewing Company	Food and Beverage Products	United States of America	Northern America
Monsanto	Agriculture	United States of America	Northern America
National Australia Bank (NAB)	Financial Services	Australia	Oceania
National Bank of Kuwait	Financial Services	Kuwait	Asia
NEC Corporation	Technology Hardware	Japan	Asia
Nespresso	Food and Beverage Products	Switzerland	Europe
Nestlé	Food and Beverage Products	Switzerland	Europe

Nestle Malaysia	Food and Beverage Products	Malaysia	Asia
Nestle USA	Food and Beverage Products	United States of America	Northern America
Netafim	Agriculture	Israel	Asia
New Forests Company	Forest and Paper Products	Mauritius	Africa
New Gold	Mining	Canada	Northern America
Newmont Mining Corporation	Mining	United States of America	Northern America
Nexeo Solutions	Chemicals	United States of America	Northern America
NGK Insulators	Chemicals	Japan	Asia
NIBE Industrier AB	Other	Sweden	Europe
Nielsen	Other	United States of America	Northern America
NN Group	Financial Services	Netherlands	Europe
Nobia	Household and Personal Products	Sweden	Europe
Nolato	Other	Sweden	Europe
Northern Trust	Financial Services	United States of America	Northern America
Novartis	Healthcare Products	Switzerland	Europe
Novomatic	Tourism/Leisure	Austria	Europe
NSK	Automotive	United States of America	Northern America
NTT Data	Telecommunications	Japan	Asia
OANDO PLC	Energy	Nigeria	Africa
Odebrecht Angola	Construction	Angola	Africa
Oil Search Ltd	Energy	Australia	Oceania
OK-Q8	Energy	Sweden	Europe
Olam International Limited	Agriculture	Singapore	Asia
OMV	Energy	Austria	Europe
Orica	Chemicals	Australia	Oceania
Outotec	Equipment	Finland	Europe
Owens Corning	Construction Materials	United States of America	Northern America
Partners Group	Financial Services	Switzerland	Europe
Paşabahçe Cam Sanayii ve Ticareti A.Ş.	Food and Beverage Products	Turkey	Asia
Pearson	Other	United States of America	Northern America
PepsiCo	Food and Beverage Products	United States of America	Northern America
Pfizer	Healthcare Products	United States of America	Northern America
Pfizer Austria	Healthcare Products	Austria	Europe

Philips	Consumer Durables	Netherlands	Europe
Pirelli	Conglomerates	Italy	Europe
Plantasjen	Retailers	Norway	Europe
POSCO	Metals Products	Korea, Republic of	Asia
POSCO Engineering & Construction Co., Ltd.	Construction	Korea, Republic of	Asia
PostNL	Logistics	Netherlands	Europe
Powertech Technology Inc. (PTI)	Technology Hardware	Taiwan	Asia
PPL Corporation	Energy Utilities	United States of America	Northern America
President Chain Store Corporation	Retailers	Taiwan	Asia
PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Finland	Commercial Services	Finland	Europe
PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Luxembourg	Financial Services	Luxembourg	Europe
Prologis	Real Estate	United States of America	Northern America
Prysmian Group	Equipment	Italy	Europe
Puma	Textiles and Apparel	Germany	Europe
Qualcomm	Telecommunications	United States of America	Northern America
Ramboll Group A/S	Construction	Denmark	Europe
RB	Household and Personal Products	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
RELX Group	Media	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Rémy Cointreau	Food and Beverage Products	France	Europe
Rio Tinto	Mining	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
ROCKWOOL Benelux	Construction Materials	Netherlands	Europe
Royal HaskoningDHV	Commercial Services	Netherlands	Europe
Salini Impregilo	Construction	Italy	Europe
Sandfire Resources NL	Mining	Australia	Oceania
Sanofi	Healthcare Products	France	Europe
SAP Labs	Forest and Paper Products	United States of America	Northern America
SAP SE	Other	Germany	Europe
Scotiabank	Financial Services	Canada	Northern America
Sdi Corporation	Technology Hardware	Taiwan	Asia

Shiseido	Consumer Durables	Japan	Asia
SIAM COMMERCIAL BANK	Financial Services	Thailand	Asia
Siemens	Conglomerates	Germany	Europe
Sime Darby Property	Real Estate	Malaysia	Asia
Şişecam Glass Packaging	Other	Turkey	Asia
SK Hynix	Other	Korea, Republic of	Asia
SK Telecom	Telecommunication s	Korea, Republic of	Asia
SKF Group	Metals Products	Sweden	Europe
SM Prime Holdings, Inc.	Other	Philippines	Asia
Solidium Oy	Financial Services	Finland	Europe
SOLVAY s.a.	Chemicals	Belgium	Europe
Sonda	Computers	Chile	Latin America & the Caribbean
Sonova	Healthcare Products	Switzerland	Europe
SPIL	Technology Hardware	Taiwan	Asia
Stanley Black and Decker	Consumer Durables	United States of America	Northern America
State Street Corporation	Financial Services	United States of America	Northern America
Stockland	Real Estate	Australia	Oceania
Stockmann	Retailers	Finland	Europe
Sumitomo Electric Industries	Technology Hardware	Japan	Asia
Sumitomo Trust and Banking	Financial Services	Japan	Asia
Sun Life Financial	Financial Services	Canada	Northern America
Syngenta	Chemicals	Switzerland	Europe
Sysmex	Equipment	Japan	Asia
Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (TSMC)	Technology Hardware	Taiwan	Asia
Talanx	Financial Services	Germany	Europe
Target	Retailers	United States of America	Northern America
Tarmac	Construction Materials	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
TD Bank Financial Group	Financial Services	Canada	Northern America
Tech Mahindra	Conglomerates	India	Asia
Telekomunikasi Indonesia	Telecommunication s	Indonesia	Asia
Telia Company	Telecommunication s	Sweden	Europe
Telstra	Telecommunication s	Australia	Oceania
TenneT	Energy Utilities	Netherlands	Europe
Teranga Gold	Mining	Canada	Northern America

Thai Airways International Public Company Limited	Aviation	Thailand	Asia
Thai Union Group	Food and Beverage Products	Thailand	Asia
Tiffany & Co.	Retailers	United States of America	Northern America
Tokio Marine Holdings	Other	Japan	Asia
Ton Yi Industrial	Other	Taiwan	Asia
Toray Industries Inc	Textiles and Apparel	Japan	Asia
TOTAL	Energy	France	Europe
UBS	Financial Services	Switzerland	Europe
UEFA	Tourism/Leisure	Switzerland	Europe
UEM Group Berhad	Construction	Malaysia	Asia
Unilever N.V.	Food and Beverage Products	Netherlands	Europe
United Microelectronics Corporation (UMC)	Technology Hardware	Taiwan	Asia
United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Public Agency	Denmark	Europe
UPS	Logistics	United States of America	Northern America
Valeo	Automotive	France	Europe
Valmet	Conglomerates	Finland	Europe
Vermilion Energy Inc.	Energy	Canada	Northern America
VF Corporation	Retailers	United States of America	Northern America
Viet Nam Dairy Products Joint Stock Company	Food and Beverage Products	Viet Nam	Asia
Vion	Food and Beverage Products	Netherlands	Europe
Visa, Inc.	Financial Services	United States of America	Northern America
Vodafone Turkey	Telecommunications	Turkey	Asia
Volvo Group	Automotive	Sweden	Europe
Vygon (UK) Ltd	Healthcare Products	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Wallenstam	Real Estate	Sweden	Europe
Weber Shandwick	Commercial Services	United States of America	Northern America
Westpac Banking Corporation	Financial Services	Australia	Oceania
Wistron NeWeb Corporation (WNC)	Telecommunications	Taiwan	Asia
Wolters Kluwer	Media	Netherlands	Europe
Woodside Petroleum	Energy	Australia	Oceania

Workday	Other	United States of America	Northern America
WPP	Other	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe
Xylem	Other	United States of America	Northern America
Yfy Inc.	Forest and Paper Products	Taiwan	Asia
Yuanta Group	Financial Services	Taiwan	Asia
ZEISS Group	Other	Germany	Europe
ZENITH BANK PLC	Financial Services	Nigeria	Africa

Appendix C – MNEs by Sector

Sector	Companies	Total
Agriculture	Felda Global Ventures Holdings Berhad Jain Irrigation Systems Kencana Agri Limited Netafim Olam International Limited Cargill Aqua Nutrition Agrium Monsanto	8
Automotive	Honda Motor Co., Ltd Hyundai Motor Company Ad Plastik Group FCA FIAT CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILES (FCA) Valeo Volvo Group Ford Motor Company General Motors Company NSK	10
Aviation	China Airlines (CAL) Eva Air Thai Airways International Public Company Limited	3
Chemicals	Bridgestone DyStar Group GPIC Indorama Ventures Public Company Limited Lcy Chemical Corp. NGK Insulators Arkema HEXPOL SOLVAY s.a. Syngenta	14

	Braskem DuPont Eastman Chemical Company Nexeo Solutions Orica	
Commercial Services	Infosys Limited Deloitte LLP DNV GL Grupo EULEN PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Finland Royal HaskoningDHV Accenture CSC (Computer Sciences Corporation) ManpowerGroup Weber Shandwick	10
Computers	Acer Compal Inventec MediaTek (MTK) Mindtree Sonda HP - Hewlett-Packard	7
Conglomerates	CIC HOLDINGS Crescent Enterprises Hayleys PLC Tech Mahindra Leonardo Pirelli Siemens Valmet 3M General Electric (GE)	10
Construction	Odebrecht Angola Hyundai Engineering LIXIL Group POSCO Engineering & Construction Co., Ltd. UEM Group Berhad GEK TERNA Heijmans Ramboll Group A/S Salini Impregilo Bechtel	10
Construction Materials	Diab ROCKWOOL Benelux Tarmac Grupo Argos Owens Corning	5
Consumer Durables	Shiseido Philips	3

	Stanley Black and Decker	
Energy	OANDO PLC Inpex JX Holdings LG International Eni S.P.A. Gasum Lukoil Lundin Petroleum OK-Q8 OMV TOTAL Enel Chile S.A. ISA Vermilion Energy Inc. Oil Search Ltd Woodside Petroleum	16
Energy Utilities	IHI Enel TenneT PPL Corporation	4
Equipment	Doosan Infracore Fujitsu Sysmex ABB Management Services Ltd. Amer Sports Metso Outotec Prysmian Group	8
Financial Services	FBN Holdings ZENITH BANK PLC Arab Bank Axis Bank Bank Audi Bank Leumi China Development Financial Holding Corporation (CDIBH) China Life CTBC Holding Fransabank Fubon Financial Garanti Bank Mirae Asset Daewoo Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group National Bank of Kuwait SIAM COMMERCIAL BANK Sumitomo Trust and Banking Yuanta Group Aberdeen Asset Management Allianz SE	47

	<p>CaixaBank Commerzbank Credit Suisse Eurobank EYGS LLP Generali Group NN Group Partners Group PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Luxembourg Solidium Oy Talanx UBS BMO Financial Group Citigroup Comerica Bank McGraw Hill Financial MetLife MetLife, Inc. Northern Trust Scotiabank State Street Corporation Sun Life Financial TD Bank Financial Group Visa, Inc. Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ) National Australia Bank (NAB) Westpac Banking Corporation</p>	
<p>Food and Beverage Products</p>	<p>Ajinomoto Carlsberg Malaysia FRASER & NEAVE HOLDINGS BHD Fraser and Neave Limited Heineken Vietnam Brewery Mitr Phol Group Nestle Malaysia Paşabahçe Cam Sanayii ve Ticareti A.Ş. Thai Union Group Viet Nam Dairy Products Joint Stock Company BONDUELLE SAS Carlsberg Group Coca-Cola Hungary Diageo Emmi FrieslandCampina Frigoglass Heineken N.V. Nespresso Nestlé Rémy Cointreau Unilever N.V.</p>	<p>32</p>

	Vion Coca-Cola FEMSA Brown-Forman Corporation Bunge Coca-Cola Enterprises Compass Group USA General Mills Molson Coors Brewing Company Nestle USA PepsiCo	
Forest and Paper Products	New Forests Company Asia Pulp&Paper Indonesia (APP Indonesia) Yfy Inc. BillerudKorsnäs DS Smith SAP Labs	6
Healthcare Products	CCM DUOPHARMA Dainippon Sumitomo Pharma ConvaTec F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd Merck Germany Novartis Pfizer Austria Sanofi Sonova Vygon (UK) Ltd Amgen Inc. BD (Becton Dickinson and Company) GOJO Integrated DNA Technologies Johnson & Johnson Merck & Co., Inc. Pfizer	17
Healthcare Services	Cigna	1
Household and Personal Products	Daikin Industries Godrej Consumer Products Egetapper Henkel L'Oréal France Nobia RB Avon Products International Flavors and Fragrances (IFF)	9
Logistics	Hyundai Glovis DSV PostNL UPS Brambles	5
Media	Lagardère	3

	RELX Group Wolters Kluwer	
Metals Products	POSCO ArcelorMittal ArcelorMittal Poland Elkem ASA SKF Group	5
Mining	MMG Rio Tinto Dundee Precious Metals Eldorado Gold Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Kinross Gold Corporation Lucara Diamond Corp New Gold Newmont Mining Corporation Teranga Gold BHP Sandfire Resources NL	12
Non-profit / Services	Al -Najat Charity	1
Public Agency	Auditor General of South Africa United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	2
Real Estate	CapitaLand City Developments Limited (CDL) EcoWorld International Fraser's Centrepoint Limited (FCL) Hang Lung Mitsubishi Estate Sime Darby Property Arcadis N.V. Wallenstam Prologis Stockland	11
Retailers	President Chain Store Corporation Ahold Delhaize Aspiag Service Srl Carrefour Groupe Clas Ohlson Coop GrandVision ICA Inditex Kesko Corporation Kingfisher Plantasjen Stockmann Target Tiffany & Co. VF Corporation	16

Technology Hardware	Advanced Semiconductor Engineering (ASE) Delta Electronics Huawei Konica Minolta Group LG Display NEC Corporation Powertech Technology Inc. (PTI) Sdi Corporation SPIL Sumitomo Electric Industries Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (TSMC) United Microelectronics Corporation (UMC) Axis Communications Avnet Cisco Systems, Inc. Flex Intel Corporation Lexmark	18
Telecommunications	Digi.com NTT Data SK Telecom Telekomunikasi Indonesia Vodafone Turkey Wistron NeWeb Corporation (WNC) BT Group Magyar Telekom Telia Company Qualcomm Telstra	11
Textiles and Apparel	Toray Industries Inc Desso Holding B.V. Hemtex Puma	4
Tobacco	British American Tobacco (Holdings)	1
Tourism and Leisure	LUX* Resorts & Hotels Mandarin Oriental International Limited Novomatic UEFA Caesars Entertainment AccorHotels Australia	6
Toys	Hasbro Inc.	1
Other	AngloGold Ashanti DIPPED PRODUCTS PLC FUJI XEROX SINGAPORE PTE LTD Hannstar Komatsu Mitsui & Co. Şişecam Glass Packaging SK Hynix	32

	SM Prime Holdings, Inc. Tokio Marine Holdings Ton Yi Industrial Camfil Fenix Outdoor IBSA Kendrion N.V. KONE Corporation KPMG Romania NIBE Industrier AB Nolato SAP SE WPP ZEISS Group Daniel J. Edelman Companies Equinix Fluor International Paper Nielsen Pearson Workday Xylem Ampcor Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd	
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Appendix D – Combined Sectors

Sector	Companies	Total
Raw Materials (Agriculture and Mining)	Felda Global Ventures Holdings Berhad Jain Irrigation Systems Kencana Agri Limited Netafim Olam International Limited Cargill Aqua Nutrition Agrium Monsanto MMG Rio Tinto Dundee Precious Metals Eldorado Gold Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Kinross Gold Corporation Lucara Diamond Corp New Gold Newmont Mining Corporation Teranga Gold BHP Sandfire Resources NL	20
Transportation and Logistics (Automotive, Aviation, Logistics)	Honda Motor Co., Ltd Hyundai Motor Company Ad Plastik Group FCA FIAT CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILES (FCA) Valeo Volvo Group Ford Motor Company General Motors Company China Airlines (CAL) Eva Air Thai Airways International Public Company Limited NSK Hyundai Glovis DSV PostNL UPS Brambles	18
Chemicals	Bridgestone DyStar Group GPIC Indorama Ventures Public Company Limited Lcy Chemical Corp. NGK Insulators Arkema	15

	<p>HEXPOL SOLVAY s.a. Syngenta Braskem DuPont Eastman Chemical Company Nexeo Solutions Orica</p>	
Conglomerates	<p>CIC HOLDINGS Crescent Enterprises Hayleys PLC Tech Mahindra Leonardo Pirelli Siemens Valmet 3M General Electric (GE)</p>	10
Construction & Construction Materials	<p>Odebrecht Angola Hyundai Engineering LIXIL Group POSCO Engineering & Construction Co., Ltd. UEM Group Berhad GEK TERNA Heijmans Ramboll Group A/S Salini Impregilo Bechtel Diab ROCKWOOL Benelux Tarmac Grupo Argos Owens Corning</p>	15
Energy & Energy Utilities	<p>OANDO PLC Inpex JX Holdings LG International Eni S.P.A. Gasum Lukoil Lundin Petroleum OK-Q8 OMV TOTAL Enel Chile S.A. ISA Vermilion Energy Inc. Oil Search Ltd Woodside Petroleum</p>	20

	IHI Enel TenneT PPL Corporation	
Equipment & Metals Products	Doosan Infracore Fujitsu Sysmex ABB Management Services Ltd. Amer Sports Metso Outotec Prysmian Group POSCO ArcelorMittal ArcelorMittal Poland Elkem ASA SKF Group Stanley Black and Decker (moved from Consumer Durables)	14
Financial Services	FBN Holdings ZENITH BANK PLC Arab Bank Axis Bank Bank Audi Bank Leumi China Development Financial Holding Corporation (CDIBH) China Life CTBC Holding Fransabank Fubon Financial Garanti Bank Mirae Asset Daewoo Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group National Bank of Kuwait SIAM COMMERCIAL BANK Sumitomo Trust and Banking Yuanta Group Aberdeen Asset Management Allianz SE CaixaBank Commerzbank Credit Suisse Eurobank EYGS LLP Generali Group NN Group Partners Group PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Luxembourg Solidium Oy Talanx	47

	<p> UBS BMO Financial Group Citigroup Comerica Bank McGraw Hill Financial MetLife MetLife, Inc. Northern Trust Scotiabank State Street Corporation Sun Life Financial TD Bank Financial Group Visa, Inc. Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ) National Australia Bank (NAB) Westpac Banking Corporation </p>	
Food and Beverage Products	<p> Ajinomoto Carlsberg Malaysia FRASER & NEAVE HOLDINGS BHD Fraser and Neave Limited Heineken Vietnam Brewery Mitr Phol Group Nestle Malaysia Paşabahçe Cam Sanayii ve Ticareti A.Ş. Thai Union Group Viet Nam Dairy Products Joint Stock Company BONDUELLE SAS Carlsberg Group Coca-Cola Hungary Diageo Emmi FrieslandCampina Frigoglass Heineken N.V. Nespresso Nestlé Rémy Cointreau Unilever N.V. Vion Coca-Cola FEMSA Brown-Forman Corporation Bunge Coca-Cola Enterprises Compass Group USA General Mills Molson Coors Brewing Company Nestle USA PepsiCo </p>	32

Healthcare Products & Services	CCM DUOPHARMA Dainippon Sumitomo Pharma ConvaTec F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd Merck Germany Novartis Pfizer Austria Sanofi Sonova Vygon (UK) Ltd Amgen Inc. BD (Becton Dickinson and Company) GOJO Integrated DNA Technologies Johnson & Johnson Merck & Co., Inc. Pfizer Cigna	18
Products (Household and Personal Products, Forest and Paper Products, Textiles and Apparel, Toys)	Daikin Industries Godrej Consumer Products Egetæpper Henkel L'Oréal France Nobia RB Avon Products International Flavors and Fragrances (IFF) Shiseido (moved individually from Consumer Durables) New Forests Company Asia Pulp&Paper Indonesia (APP Indonesia) Yfy Inc. BillerudKorsnäs DS Smith SAP Labs Toray Industries Inc Desso Holding B.V. Hemtex Puma Hasbro Inc.	21
Real Estate	CapitaLand City Developments Limited (CDL) EcoWorld International Fraser's Centrepoint Limited (FCL) Hang Lung Mitsubishi Estate Sime Darby Property Arcadis N.V. Wallenstam Prologis	11

	Stockland	
Retailers & Commercial Services	President Chain Store Corporation Ahold Delhaize Aspiag Service Srl Carrefour Groupe Clas Ohlson Coop GrandVision ICA Inditex Kesko Corporation Kingfisher Plantasjen Stockmann Target Tiffany & Co. VF Corporation Infosys Limited Deloitte LLP DNV GL Grupo EULEN PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Finland Royal HaskoningDHV Accenture CSC (Computer Sciences Corporation) ManpowerGroup Weber Shandwick	26
Technology Hardware & Computers	Advanced Semiconductor Engineering (ASE) Delta Electronics Huawei Konica Minolta Group LG Display NEC Corporation Powertech Technology Inc. (PTI) Sdi Corporation SPIL Sumitomo Electric Industries Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (TSMC) United Microelectronics Corporation (UMC) Axis Communications Avnet Cisco Systems, Inc. Flex Intel Corporation Lexmark Philips (moved from Consumer Durables) Acer Compal Inventec	26

	MediaTek (MTK) Mindtree Sonda HP - Hewlett-Packard	
Telecommunications & Media	Digi.com NTT Data SK Telecom Telekomunikasi Indonesia Vodafone Turkey Wistron NeWeb Corporation (WNC) BT Group Magyar Telekom Telia Company Qualcomm Telstra Lagardère RELX Group Wolters Kluwer	14
Other (Non-profit / services, Public Agency, Tourism and Leisure)	AngloGold Ashanti DIPPED PRODUCTS PLC FUJI XEROX SINGAPORE PTE LTD Hannstar Komatsu Mitsui & Co. Şişecam Glass Packaging SK Hynix SM Prime Holdings, Inc. Tokio Marine Holdings Ton Yi Industrial Camfil Fenix Outdoor IBSA Kendrion N.V. KONE Corporation KPMG Romania NIBE Industrier AB Nolato SAP SE WPP ZEISS Group Daniel J. Edelman Companies Equinix Fluor International Paper Nielsen Pearson Workday Xylem Amcor	41

	Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd Al-Najat Charity Auditor General of South Africa United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) LUX* Resorts & Hotels Mandarin Oriental International Limited Novomatic UEFA Caesars Entertainment AccorHotels Australia	
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