BIG BUSINESS AND GRAND CHALLENGES:
HOW MULTINATIONALS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE

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Abstract

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Big Business and Grand Challenges: How Multinationals Can Contribute to Peace

The business for peace scholarship has interdisciplinary roots – from peace and conflict studies, international law, and political science – and maintains that businesses decrease the likelihood for war (negative peace) and contribute to societal harmony and development (positive peace). On the one hand, the field supports this through generalist theory that prioritizes businesses' role in economic growth and trade. On the other hand, it is host to many disparate observations on how businesses can have piecemeal peace impacts, including conducting track-two diplomacy, multinationals (MNEs) employing local workers instead of relying on expatriates, et cetera. Where the first type of theory is too broad to inform concrete peace-enhancing practices for businesses and policy makers, the second has led to unconnected micro-theoretical insights that are also specific to their particular contexts – generated mainly in post-conflict and active war contexts – thereby limiting their usefulness. This thesis adopts a complementary management perspective, moving the field away from both generalist and micro-theoretical approaches towards mid-range theory that can more adequately inspire businesses to contribute to peace, and policy makers to effectively facilitate this. To do so, peace is conceptualised as a grand challenge and placed in its framework, where business can contribute to or jeopardise peace, sourced from the homonymous literature. The application of this framework to the study of peace is developed in the literature review chapter, which first unpacks the rich interdisciplinary roots of the field, the state-of-the-art of the research, and its caveats and limitations. The subsequent empirical chapter applies this framework to how MNEs in Türkiye perceive peace and their peace contributions. This previously unstudied setting is highly relevant, as Türkiye is located between Europe, the Middle East, and the Caucasus, is proximate to countries in war, and is a rising peacebuilding actor in international relations. Under Türkiye's distinctive unique conditions, MNEs can be expected to be sensitive to how they affect peace, whilst having the stability to consciously construct it. Specifically, this thesis demonstrates that whilst negative peace primarily remains under the purview of government, positive peace can and is indeed impacted by MNEs. A flexible pattern matching analysis of 33 expert elite interviews and secondary data identifies that business can contribute to peace through its multilevel daily actions: *individual* (leadership), *organisational* (human resource management, corporate political activity, and philanthropy), and *multilateral* (partnerships with other businesses, universities, and the United Nations). Moreover, this study found that the industry sector of the business to be an important consideration. These insights have important implications for future research whilst simultaneously being highly relevant for policymakers and multinationals and makes a case for a more structured and balanced MNE approach to what may arguably be the grandest challenge of our time: peace.

Keywords: Business for peace, grand challenges, war, multinationals (MNEs).

1 Chapter One: Introduction

"Diplomats, civil society activists, teachers, journalists, artists, and entrepreneurs; the old and the young; men and women: we all have a responsibility for peace."

– Kofi Annan (1938-2018)

Peace ranks as one of the highest and important goals among governments, supranational, and international organisations. The United Nations Charter's first goal is *"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war"* (United Nations, 2024a). Similarly, the first explicit aim of the European Union is to promote peace (European Union, 2024). Other notable organisations explicitly working to promote peace include the African Union (AU, 2024), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN, 2024), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS, 2024), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, 2024), Organization of American States (OAS, 2024), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, 2024), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC, 2024), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF, 2024).

While peace remains primarily the responsibility of governments and government-affiliated or sponsored organisations, there is a growing trend to involve and rely on business in peace and society-related matters. This reflects in an increasing attentiveness to the broader societal role that businesses play beyond their economic function. This covers matters such as Corporate Social Responsibility (Surroca et al., 2010), socially responsible investments (Revelli and Viviani, 2015), and Environmental Social Governance (Crace and Gehman, 2022). It also relates to the role of business in addressing grand challenges and UN Sustainable Development Goals (George et al., 2016; Brammer et al., 2019; Hamann et al., 2020; Sinkovics et al., 2024; George et al., 2024).

On this previous point, and regarding their potential peace-impact, Miklian (2019, p. 569) commented that: *"the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have opened an unprecedented door for business participation in global peace and development"* (also see Macht et al., 2020). With its Global Compact (UNGC, 2023a), the UN explicitly relies on business, and even organizes regular *Business for Peace (B4P)* conferences, a voluntary initiative to promote sustainability partnerships among companies. The first of these took place in Istanbul, Türkiye, bringing businesses and government officials to discuss the role of the private sector in peacebuilding (UNPRME, 2014; UNGC, 2023b). These have had an

impact on the business community, and at the 2016 Dubai conference, Nona Hefny of PepsiCo, for instance, stated that for businesses: *"it's no longer about what we can do, but how much we can do"* (Miklian, 2019, p. 585).

Other organizations have also made notable endeavours to involve businesses in peace and spread the notion that they have a role to play. For instance, the aim of the 28th European Business Ethics Network in 2015 was to discuss research on the role of business in peace and conflict, and later the academic articles from this conference were published as a thematic symposium in the *Journal of Business Ethics* (Aßländer and Gössling, 2017). More recently, OECD's Istanbul Centre brought together global stakeholders, including Turkish businesses, to discuss policy and practical implications of their 'Peace for Food' initiative (Business at OECD, 2023).

With this pivotal leap there has come ample scholarly attention and a new academic literature: business and peace or business for peace (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Katsos and Forrer, 2022). Despite generally positive and optimistic perspective of the role that business might play in peace (e.g. Fort and Schipani, 2003), a few critical opinions have also emerged. For example, regarding conflict or post-conflict zones, Ford (2015) asked if it was an acceptable role for firms to take over the traditional role of government while simultaneously still being regulated by government. His concern was how such responsibilities and power are balanced. Furthermore, it was asserted that it is an emerging field of scholarly study with fewer answers than questions (Ford, 2015; Katsos and Forrer, 2022). This theme was echoed by other notable scholars. For instance, Oetzel et al. (2009) noted that the broad business and peace field predominantly relies on untestable theories, whereas Katsos and AlKafaji (2019) and Katsos and Forrer (2022) posited that the scarce empirical work that exists in the field tends to be anecdotal, and highly contextualized. Moreover, there is no clear, agreed upon objective and widely used definition of peace both in other social sciences and in management studies (Galtung, 1969; Richmond, 2008; Oetzel et al., 2009; Oetzel and Miklian, 2017; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020; Millar, 2021; Melin et al., 2023).

This thesis contributes to the burgeoning field of business for peace and aims to address some of its definitional unclarities. In addition, it provides a first step to formalizing this scholarship's study of peace to be more rigorously testable and comparable over different contexts, as well as reflecting on some of the practical concerns that accompany a

growing role for business, specifically multinational enterprises (MNEs), in peace-related matters. It does so through the novel application of the grand challenges framework, pioneered by George et al. (2016), to the study of business for peace. This serves as a sensitizing instrument, broadening the scope of our understanding on this matter, and simultaneously imposing rigour. This approach is used to steer clear of grand theory (Merton, 1948; Khan, 2023), for instance the general notion that capitalism and trade drive peace, which is innately untestable. Similarly, this study moves away from haphazard, incidental, and highly contextual observations on the business – peace relationship that limit the relevance of some of the existing business for peace literature (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019; Katsos and Forrer, 2022).

In this introductory Chapter, relevant background for this thesis is delineated. In what follows, I provide the necessary background to the business for peace field. This includes a brief past overview of the concept of peace. It then demonstrates the origins of the field and problem identification. Further, I summarise the theoretical impact and scholarship contribution. This Chapter ends with outlining the structure of this doctoral thesis.

1.1 Background: peace from Plato to the United Nations

There is a long history of societal and scholarly attention to peace and its associated themes. Although not their primary focus, classical philosophers as early as Plato and Aristotle considered peace through related concepts such as justice, its administration, and ethics (Ostwald, 1996; Page, 2024). In the 5th century, Aurelius Augustinus (Saint Augustine), distinguished between a state of peace on the one hand, and the absence of good on the other – the latter not necessarily meaning a state of war (Zwitter and Hoelzl, 2014). This interest in peace also characterized the renaissance, with Erasmus of Rotterdam famously lamenting that *"war is sweet to the inexperienced"* and holding that it should only be pursued as a last resort and against aggression (Dallmayr, 2006). At the start of Europe's age of enlightenment Thomas Hobbes wrote his magnum opus, *Leviathan*. In it, Hobbes maintained that humanity has a predisposition towards war and, hence, against peace (Thivet, 2008). Around the same time (as also noted by Page, 2024), Spinoza (1670, p. 314) offered a definition that resonates strongly with contemporary views as well as with

Aurelius Augustinus' work, namely that *"peace is not mere absence of war but is a virtue that springs from force of character"* (also see Bauer, 2021).

Many more highly regarded scholars contributed to the discourse on peace between the age of enlightenment and contemporary times: from Locke and Rousseau (Warner, 2022), Kant and Hegel (Mertens, 1995), to Montesquieu, Paine, Adam Smith, Richard Cobden, and John Stuart Mill (Gartzke, 1998; Gartzke, 2007). Although it goes beyond the purview of this thesis to give a full overview, it is important to note that the contemporary discourse on peace borrows much from these foundational scholars' work, specifically on the role of democracy, capitalism, and trade. Similarly to what Kant espouses in his essay *Perpetual Peace*, much of the current literature continues to implicitly or explicitly recognise that democracy and market forces facilitate economic development, therefore peace (Gartzke, 2007; Fort and Schipani, 2002; Fort and Schipani, 2003; Fort and Schipani, 2007). Democracy is thought to hinder the incidence of conflict through prohibitive cultural and institutional structures (Maoz and Russett, 1993). Furthermore, democracies tend to intensively trade with one another, and the disruption of this trade is highly undesirable (Gartzke, 1998).

With the establishment of the field of peace and conflict studies in the 1960s by the Norwegian pioneer of peace research, Johan Galtung, the notion of 'positive' and 'negative' peace emerged as a prominent concept (Galtung, 1959; Galtung, 1969; Boulding, 1977; Tilahun, 2015). This is not entirely new, and as previously noted its roots can already be found in, for instance, Aurelius Augustinus' and Spinoza's work (Zwitter and Hoelzl, 2014; Bauer, 2021). However, it was Galtung (1969) who popularized this terminology, viewing negative peace as the absence of direct or physical violence, and war. Contrariwise, he broadly defined positive peace as *"the social harmony between human beings"* (Galtung, 1981, p. 195), which was also viewed as the *"prevalence of justice, harmony and equality"* (Tilahun, 2015, p. 251). Both scholars and international organisations provide an apt analogy from the field of medicine to illustrate this definitional importance (Russett, 2016, p. 73; Caglayan, 2024; World Health Organisation, 1948; World Health Organisation, 2024). As healthcare is about more than only preventing death, the study of peace is more than the mere absence of war. Whereas much of healthcare concerns itself with enabling healthier lives, the study of peace concern itself with enabling more equitable, just, and harmonious societies.

The study of peace has benefited greatly from the aforementioned scholars; however, those achievements cannot be viewed separately from the practical efforts, particularly post-1945 attempts, to build peace. The creation of the United Nations after the Second World War and its continued functioning is one notable example. The primary purpose of the UN is the maintenance of international peace and security, and one of its main six organs takes the lead in executing this task: Security Council facilitates peaceful resolution of disputes and can enforce measures to restore global peace through international military action, economic sanctions, and deployment of peacekeeping missions to support countries to transition from conflict to peace (United Nations, 2024a).

It is important to highlight the differences between various terms that often get intertwined when referring to peace. The boundaries between peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding have often been blurred (United Nations, 2023a; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). The first two are typically used to address efforts to end a war or conflict in progress (Salton, 2024). For instance, UN peacekeeping missions in various post-conflict zones (for e.g. Sierra-Leone) that are often temporary and tend to end once the initial goals have been achieved. On the contrary, peacebuilding is a long-term process of creating conditions for a lasting peace and does not have to necessarily occur in a conflict zone (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019, p. 44). The concept of 'peacebuilding', according to the United Nations Peacekeeping Fund, was coined and popularised by the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and it involves a series of actions that are likely to improve and maintain peace (Sucuoğlu and Sazak, 2016; Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Moreover, while peacebuilding is not synonymous with peace itself, this concept forms an important part of the overall idea of peace.

Finally, a definition of peace requires consideration of the context (Richmond, 2008; Ledbetter, 2016; Campbell and Jankowitz, 2024). In other words, if there is a war, peace might first mean a focus on the end of all violence and unbearable human suffering (Ginty, 2014). Contrariwise, once the immediate threat of war is absent, peace then might denote enjoyment of the right to private and family life and human well-being (McGregor, 2003), as well as access to decent housing, fulfilling employment, efficient healthcare and so on.

1.2 Is peace the business of 'business'?

Since the establishment of the United Nations, businesses were invited to participate in the maintenance of global peace and have become instrumental in the UN mission – a partnership that has flourished and expanded during the past decades (Alger, 2007; Miklian et al., 2016; Miklian, 2019). Moreover, other organisations have done similarly. For instance, The Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum was created to promote responsible business practices to achieve the UN Global Compact goals, promote peace and economic stability (Golden, 2020). According to Spreitzer (2007), even the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) became involved with their sponsorships of initiatives dedicated to business schools advancing peace (see also Bisoux 2019; Bisoux, 2023). Founded in 1916 as a not-for-profit corporation, it has been the world leader in establishing and maintaining business school accreditation standards (AACSB, 2022). Along with these organisations, some notable think-tanks such as the United States Institute for Peace, the Institute for Economics and Peace, and the Hague Centre for Global Justice have made recommendations on how businesses can promote peaceful societies (Forrer and Katsos, 2015).

Despite the UN push and efforts from different global institutions, some remain doubtful about the idea of businesses playing a role in facilitating peace. As various business and peace scholars have said that most managers are not convinced that peace is the 'business of business' (Ford, 2015; Oetzel and Miklian, 2017). For instance, there are doubts about the appropriateness of businesses undertaking what has been perceived as an exclusively governmental function, while simultaneously still being under government supervision (Ford, 2015). Miklian (2019, p. 593) echoed this scepticism, commenting that *"firms—with few exceptions—will enthusiastically support peace and development initiatives as long as their commitments are nonbinding, and institutions promise not regulate the societal impacts of their operations"*.

However, perhaps partially as a consequence of the increasing prevalence of conflict around the world, management researchers, practitioners and other commentators increasingly have an interest in what role in peace businesses can play (Oetzel et al., 2009; Forrer and Katsos, 2015; Diehl, 2016, Cumming, 2022; Melin et al., 2023). This interest is most apparent in the business and peace, or business for peace scholarship. Although it is

growing in size, it is still small in scale and not well-established in the mainstream management area.

Nonetheless, the business for peace field itself is rife with disagreements on the role that businesses play in peace (Katsos, 2020). It notably suffers from a lack of testable theories and definitional ambiguity, casting doubt on businesses' peace impact (Ford, 2015; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019; Joseph et al., 2021). International legal scholars have even questioned whether businesses can be legitimate peace actors (Voulgaris, 2021; Aparac, 2024), although many business and management scholars maintain that they can (Joseph et al., 2023).

On the latter point, much of the field's foundational assertions are associated with a bigger idea that capitalism and trade are a force for good (Brown, 1966; Austin, 1966; Fort and Schipani 2003; Fort and Schipani, 2007) which is innately untestable since it's a grand theory (Merton, 1948; Khan, 2023). Moreover, it is not always clear what peace is in relation to business (Spreitzer, 2007). This deficiency is one of the reasons for various challenging points in the field. In addition, the scholarship suffers from incidental, contextual examples, and anecdotal evidence of how business and peace relate (Ford, 2015; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019; Katsos and Forrer, 2022). To elaborate, business for peace claims that companies are able to contribute to peace through various activities such as employing diverse teams, mediating a conflict, generating wealth, providing employment and so on (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015).

As it has already been indicated, business for peace is a young, emerging, and undertheorized area of research, it is also interdisciplinary, deriving some of its ideas from political science, peace and conflict studies, international law, anthropology, development studies and many more (Galtung, 1969; Fort and Schipani, 2001; Bray, 2009; Gartzke, 2007; Richmond, 2008; Richmond, 2015; Mousseau, 2019; Melin et al., 2024). There is some general support for the notion that the activities of profit-seeking organizations serve to reduce the likelihood of warfare between and within nation states since such situations may disrupt trade (Gartzke, 2007). It is argued that firms do not have much to gain in hostile settings (Melin et al., 2023). In short, war appears to be bad for business.

However, world history has plenty of examples how countries went to war with each other despite the presence of previously pacific relations or economic interconnectedness (Oetzel et al., 2009; Melin et al., 2023). A notable argument which was raised by Oetzel et al.

(2009) and Fort and Schipani (2007), referring to anthropology studies, is that although most trade happens in the absence of war, this does not mean that the presence of trade prevents wars, as was the case in both world wars. In addition, while businesses can potentially make contributions to peace, Fort and Schipani (2007, p. 364) have made the point that such efforts of businesses may generate disapproval if perceived as unfair or inconsiderate.

Such sentiments are echoed by various social science scholars (e.g., Gowa and Kicks, 2015; Miklian, 2019; Schuller and Maldonado, 2016; Miller and Liu, 2023). This critical view of capitalism and peace argues that although MNEs create jobs and generate other benefits to the society they are also simultaneously culpable for the unequal distribution of resources and environmental issues, are potentially involved with human rights violations, and may even promote and justify conflicts (Oetzel et al., 2009). A frequently raised issue is the exploitation of natural resources by large MNEs in fragile countries not resulting in substantial and distributed local economic development and potentially even damaging the environment (Howard-Grenville et al., 2014; Schouten and Miklian, 2020; Booth et al., 2023). Regarding human rights violations there is the example of Chiquita facing substantial fines from the U.S. Justice Department over suspected involvement with criminal activities in Colombia (Oetzel et al., 2009; Oetzel and Miklian, 2017). Even cinema, which is predominantly business-driven, can through its cultural reach, play a notable role in perpetuating or justifying existing conflicts (Roberts, 2024). In other words, these scholars raise the potential that businesses cause a reduction and disruption of peace (Katsos, 2020).

This controversy does not mean there has not been progress in the business for peace scholarship. In more than two decades that business for peace scholars have considered these potentially complex relationships, there have been ample theoretical assertions on how business may contribute or jeopardise peace (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2009; Fort, 2009; Oetzel and Getz, 2012; Forrer and Katsos, 2015; Kolk and Lenfant, 2016; Rettberg, 2016; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015; Melin et al., 2023). Empirical investigations include the experience of both multinationals and small and medium size businesses (SMEs) in post-conflict and war zones. Studies have covered the contexts of Cyprus (Katsos and Forrer, 2014); Iraq (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019); Lebanon (Joseph et al., 2021); Colombia (Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020); and South Africa (Cechvala and Ganson, 2024). There is also some quantitative research in the field with a

focus on the minimal impact of peace agreements on MNEs (Albino-Pimentel et al., 2021), MNE responses to violent conflict (Oetzel and Getz, 2012) and MNE approach to peacebuilding through HRM framework (Reade et al., 2019). Notwithstanding, scholars in the field call for more qualitative research on country specific case studies as findings from post-conflict and war zones might not be applicable to other research contexts (Katsos and Forrer, 2014; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019).

Despite these developments in the field, there is still a lack of structured and coherent management framework about how businesses can help or hinder peace (Ford, 2015; Ganson et al., 2022). Intriguingly, there has been a dearth of research on how firms perceive their role in this respect outside of countries experiencing conflict (Katsos and Forrer, 2014). However, if business has such a role, they might fulfil it in relatively peaceful contexts as well – and nowhere will this be more important than in a country near existing conflicts and wars such as Türkiye. The latter is the empirical context for this research. The decision to interview managers from MNEs reflected the assertion that MNE participation in grand challenges is widely appreciated amongst academic debates (Kourula et al., 2017). This thesis intends to move this field from grand and micro-theory towards mid-range theory (Merton, 1948; Deszczyński and Beręsewicz, 2021). This means clarifying the business and peace relations, facilitating knowledge to assist international organisations, such as UN, to better target their peace endeavours when involving businesses to participate. As will be discussed in subsequent section, this thesis promises to have a distinct theorical and practical impact.

Returning to this Chapter's opening quote from the former General-Secretary of the United Nations and a co-recipient of the Nobel Prize in Peace in 2001, Kofi Annan, the purpose of this thesis is to develop elegant knowledge on how peace can be understood and built. Contributing to peace might have become the responsibility of everyone, including MNEs and their leaders and managers. Furthermore, this study touches on questions such as: What are the goals and purposes of business? Does the profit-pursuing primary motive of business make it a legitimate organisation for peace? Has peace become 'the business' of big business? Though these are not the formal research questions that this thesis asks (which are presented in section 1.3), they are some of the fundamental questions that it engages with.

1.3 Scholarship contribution and practical impact

This thesis, titled *'Big Business and Grand Challenges: How Multinationals Can Contribute to Peace',* investigates the following research questions: what is known in the extant literature about how multinationals can contribute to peace and what caveats exist? How do managers perceive the connection between business and peace in Türkiye?

There are two main avenues of research pursued. First a literature review of prior work on business for peace is undertaken to establish and identify progress in this scholarship and specify the contours of the thesis. In particular, this review is directed at asking how scholars have delineated peace. The review aims to bring together the disparate and often anecdotal points of view that exist in business for peace (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019) and provide new avenues of research that allow for careful and comparative consideration of how business and peace relate. Specifically, the business for peace literature is reviewed and then placed into the grand challenges framework developed by George et al. (2016). In other words, I apply a coherent theoretical lens in this thesis – something that business for peace has been lacking. As I explain in respective Chapters Two and Four, this approach has the potential to make the study of peace less contextually sensitive, more connected to related scholarships and accessible specifically to business and management scholars. It moves the goalpost away from the current literature's focus on grand (general ideas) and micro-theory towards a testable mid-range theory (Merton, 1948; Higgins and Shirley, 2000; Dumay, 2012; Brown, 2013; Khan, 2023).

Second is the application of the suggested research approach (grand challenges framework by George et al., 2016) in a previously unstudied context, namely that of Türkiye. This country holds an important geographical position between Europe, the Middle East, and the Caucasus, and is proximate to countries in war (Sazak and Woods, 2017), making it more likely that businesses operate with cognizance of their peace impact. Moreover, Türkiye has positioned itself as a mediator in regional and global conflict resolution and implemented peacebuilding efforts in Africa and Asia which have been viewed as successful by many (Aras, 2009; Altunisik and Çuhadar, 2010; Sazak and Woods, 2017; Özerdem, 2019; İpek, 2021). Since it is also a new context in which business and peace are studied, it, by itself, also allows for the identification of novel insights that are applied to the conceptual and theoretical framework developed in the next Chapters of this thesis.

In terms of practice, this thesis has the potential to inform and assist the activities of governments and international organisations, such as the UN, and enable them to successfully involve businesses in peacebuilding. For instance, the empirical research undertaken in Türkiye (Chapter Three) illuminates the contrasting attitudes, goals and aspirations of MNEs located in different sectors towards the contribution to peace (Chapter Four and Five). In essence, this study hints at different ways in which businesses can be leveraged to participation in the grand challenge of peace, and concretely informs what their potential contributions could be (Chapter Five).

At the same time, this thesis also generates information that is relevant for MNEs and their management teams. Increasingly, businesses experience demand to be more socially responsible and address a variety of issues among which are matters of peace and war. For businesses, especially MNEs, it is simply not enough to make a profit as has been underlined in previous studies and such discourse frequently appear in scholarly works, popular media, and policy debates (Wickert et al., 2021; Roberts, 2024; European Commission, 2024a). Moreover, there is increasing practical challenges for MNE leaders to develop and enhance skills to effectively manage teams in the light of heightened socio-political tensions (Cooke et al., 2024; McGlauflin and Burleigh, 2024). Notwithstanding, it is important to remember that in the studied context of this thesis, MNEs do not have an intuitive and clear link to all peace related matters. For example, negative peace which is the lack of war largely remains under the government power (see Chapter Four and Five). To summarise, this thesis intends to make a case for a more balanced and practical approach for business as a potential peacebuilder through its daily *multilevel actions*, generate important suggestions for future research whilst simultaneously being highly relevant for policymakers and multinationals.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured in five chapters. Chapter One outlined background on the concept of peace, a justification of this research, the contribution to knowledge and thesis objectives. Chapter Two is dedicated to the literature review on business for peace. The narrative literature review starts with overview and roots of the topic in three social science disciplines: international law, peace and conflict studies, political science and international

relations. Then the business for peace literature is reviewed and the state-of-the-art literature on three distinct directions regarding how business relates to peace – positive, negative, and ambiguous – is summarised together with the literature's gaps and challenges. Next, the consequential research agenda is delineated, particularly the association with the nuanced approach of business for peace as a grand challenge. Chapter Three covers the methodology: the justifications for the Turkish context, ethical and practical considerations, research sample, data collection and analysis choices are outlined. Chapter Four is devoted for research findings from the semi-structured interviews and secondary data. In Chapter Five, the theoretical implications of this study are presented alongside the implications for management and policymakers. In addition, the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are outlined. Finally, at the end of the document, there is a bibliography and there are 6 appendixes: methodology of the literature review, the participant consent form, the participant information sheet, interview protocol, anonymised list of annual reports and post-interview feedback.

2 Chapter Two: Literature review

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter focuses on the business for peace literature as well as its origins. In what follows, these origins are described first, and the literature review begins with describing how the study of peace has permeated disciplines such as international law, peace and conflict studies, political science and international relations. The literature review then considers the insights from the business for peace field, which build on but deviate from the aforementioned fields, and its gaps and caveats. This review ends with a new research agenda connecting business for peace to the grand challenges literature, thereby hoping to contribute to solving the literature's shortcomings and opening up new avenues of research.

2.2 Rationale, approach and intended scholarly contribution

Given the extensive use of peace and related concepts across different literatures, it remains a challenge to summarize the state of business and peace research. To start, the definition of peace is not always a clear one and tends to evolve over time (Richmond, 2008). Moreover, according to Oetzel and Miklian (2017) research on conflict tends to get more funding than research on peace, hence, it may be the case that most of this scholarly effort has focused on discerning the impact of conflict and war. This is especially true of business for peace literature that also investigates how businesses are affected by and can affect the presence or absence of conflict (Haufler, 2009; Katsos and Forrer, 2014; Ford, 2015; Melin, 2016; Katsos and Forrer, 2022; Melin et al., 2023). Much less research tends to be focused on how businesses relate to the promoting or contributing to peace (Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). Nonetheless, there is increasing attention for this matter and the field remains an important area of emergent scholarship, characterised through a clear ideological bias (Ford, 2015) and many generalised potential actions that

business can take in order to construct peace (e.g., Fort and Schipani, 2007; Ford, 2015; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020; Ganson et al., 2022; Gallo et al., 2023; Cechvala and Ganson, 2024). With these new studies comes the need to both identify the state-of-the-art of the field and uncover research gaps and opportunities.

It is important to stress that this Chapter suggests that the business for peace literature would benefit from moving away from grand, untestable theory on the one hand, and contextualized micro-insights on the other. By unpacking the assertions on how business, specifically multinational enterprises can impact peace, this narrative literature review facilitates a better understanding of the subject matter and outlines a future research agenda to move the field towards mid-range theory (Khan, 2023). This proposed approach (grand challenges framework) directly relates to Chapter Four of this thesis, where it is executed empirically. It develops the novel application of an organizing frame where peace is a grand challenge that is to be tackled by galvanizing support among many different partners, including business.

In short, the purpose of this literature review is threefold: to summarize the roots and extant business for peace literature, to identify gaps in the literature, and to establish a research agenda. To achieve the above goals, a narrative literature review methodology was used. Strategies such as online database searching, and backward and forward citation analysis (checking the reference lists of key papers) were employed in order to limit the risk of excluding relevant studies. Narrative reviews have been claimed to be useful when the field is interdisciplinary since they can lend theoretical ideas by connecting multiple fields of research (Breslin and Gatrell, 2023), whereas systematic reviews are best applied to a more established and distinct field of study. Additional reasoning for the type of review performed, keywords and interpretation strategy of the review can be found in the Appendix 1.

2.3 Unpacking the interdisciplinary roots

First, as this is a multidisciplinary field, it is important to stress that it is impossible to review *the* literature on business and peace. Instead, there are multiple social sciences literatures covering this topic. To fully understand the current state of the discourse, it is worthwhile to understand its roots. There are three main identifiable research strands preceding business and peace: international law, peace and conflict studies and political

science and international relations. Next sections will outline a brief overview of concepts such as peace, conflict, and war in these respective fields and their (lack of) focus on the role of business in impacting peace.

2.3.1 International law

First, business for peace has links to international law literature. Both Timothy Fort and Cindy Schipani are lawyers with Juris of Doctor degrees (professional qualification to practice law in the United States), and their paper on the role of business fostering peace that is argued to have established the field was published in the *American Business Law Journal* (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2009; Abramov, 2009; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019; Katsos, 2020; Katsos and Forrer, 2022). Their previous work on the role of corporation in fostering sustainable peace was published in *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* (Fort and Schipani, 2002). Moreover, peace is governed by a set of rules governing international relations that have been codified into international law rules and customs, for e.g. the United Nations Charter (Wright, 1957; Head, 1993; International Law Commission, 2024). Therefore, both war and peace have legal definitions that are subject to interpretation (Greenwood, 1987; Allott, 1999). Hence the unpacking of important concepts starts with this literature.

The field of international law dates back to ancient times since wars and signing of peace treaties have been present throughout history (von Elbe, 1939). Interestingly, the development of what is now considered modern international law traces back to 400 years ago (Head, 1993; Peace Palace Library, 2024). How the field conceptualises war and peace can be viewed from two historical timeframes: before and after 1945 (Greenwood, 1987). After the Second World War, the United Nations, the international organisation whose purpose is to maintain global peace and security and prevent devastation of war, came into existence (Head, 1993; United Nations, 2023b).

According to Greenwood (1987), there were few declarations of war in the aftermath of 1945, despite the ongoing wars and hostilities around the world post-Second World War – instead they were termed as 'armed conflict'. Peace in contemporary international law is defined as absence of aggression, violence of use of threat that is against the United Nations Charter and *"reaffirmation in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of*

nations large and small" (Carey and Sims, 2020; United Nations, 2024a). War, on the other hand, is not a term that is explained in the UN Charter, which coincides with the argument of Greenwood (1987) about the shift in framing the concept as conflict. Instead, the UN Charter and most scholars refer to *"threats to and breaches of peace, acts of aggression, international disputes"* (Roscini, 2007; United Nations Charter, 2024a).

Before the UN, the international system of checks and balances was less formalised, and more opportunities for countries to start wars or otherwise infringe on other national sovereignties (Greenwood, 1987; Head, 1993). Much of the UN's activities since its establishment are aimed at reducing such aggression, wars, and disputes. Hence, with the existence of UN, countries might have become more limited in their opportunity space and subject to increased international oversight. The United Nations (2023b) has six primary bodies: the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice, and Secretariat. Out of these, Security Council has the primary responsibility to maintain global peace, while the International Court of Justice, the only UN organ with seats outside the US (The Hague, the Netherlands), adjudicates disputes between nations (see for example, *Ukraine v. Russian Federation*, 2024).

This reflects the core role of international law in helping to sustain peace and regulating conflict and war. However, the lack of a so-called global government leaves many questions as to how peace can be maintained, with some scholars arguing that despite its positive influence, the UN has failed to produce an adequately regulated system of global affairs and that it still allows for the pursuit of war (Patterson, 2008). On this latter matter, it has been noted that the goal of international law as a field and a profession is largely the establishment of peace between countries and the protection of basic human rights (Lauterpacht, 1952; Bailliet, 2017). Therefore, the modern meaning of peace is widely regarded not just as absence of conflict, aggression, and threat of war, but also connects the importance of human dignity to it (Carey and Sims, 2020).

Moreover, countries and their respective governments became increasingly interested not only in human rights but also collective military security since the last century (Ebrahim, 2010). In this regard, the UN has used the services of private military and security companies in its peacekeeping missions (to end immediate violence and war), which according to some scholars, have not been perceived as successful (Patterson, 2008; Maogoto and Sheehy; 2009; Østensen, 2013). A notable challenge in this area is the lack of

transparency and ambiguity of responsibility of the conduct of such for-profit private companies when they perform actions relating to public good such as peace (White and MacLeod, 2008; Maogoto and Sheehy, 2009; Aparac, 2024). Moreover, Jenkins and Plowden (2006) argued that many decades of external attempts to build potential peace and stability in various regions of the world must perhaps prompt both scholars and practitioners that it is a difficult task for governments themselves, not to mention companies.

Amongst the international law literature, business is considered as a private sector organization or profit-seeking economic non-state actor (Gerson, 2001). Non-state actors are specified as a broad cohort including multinational corporations or non-governmental organisations, which also might take a role in influencing over matters of peace. Nevertheless, it is posited that the single greatest legitimate enforcing entity of national and international laws (potentially peace) remains with a sovereign government (Alvarez, 2011). It is also worth noting that international law mostly recognises states and international organisations as its subjects and has only recently started looking at non-state actors as being capable of impacting and participating in its system (Voulgaris, 2021).

Overall, this field recognises the role of business in co-creating and shaping decisions on matters of peace and war. In the international law scholarship, big business is viewed as a possible partner in resolving global challenges yet also a potential profiteer in conflict and war (Fort and Schipani, 2002; Fort and Schipani, 2003; Patterson, 2008; Østensen, 2013; Voulgaris, 2021; Aparac, 2024). Finally, international law is a field that is connected to and often has conceptual dialogues with other social sciences, such as peace and conflict studies, political science and international relations.

2.3.2 Peace and conflict studies

Peace research emerged as a separate scientific field in the last century (Schmid, 1968) but also has ancient roots. It was in 1917 that a Norwegian peace organization petitioned the Parliament of the Kingdom of Norway for the creation of a university chair in 'peace science', however it did not take place (Fetscher, 2013, p. 70 cited in Gleditsch et al., 2014). Galtung, who is widely regarded as the father of peace and conflict studies and was the founder of the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and the *Journal of Peace Research* called for the establishment of peace institutes in Norway and internationally during 1950s (Boulding, 1977).

Fort and Schipani (2007) referred to a study published in the Journal of Peace Research titled *'Peaceful Societies: An Introduction'* where it was posited that peaceful groups tend to have a great deal of social interaction, common decision-making and practicing non-violent resolution of conflicts which foster having a voice at the workplace (Fabbro, 1978). While Fort and Schipani (2007) did not outline the concepts of peace and war, it was Oetzel et al. (2009) who brought the important definitions from Galtung, who coined the terms 'positive peace' and 'negative peace' (Galtung, 1969; Galtung, 1981).

Galtung (1969) posited that peace can be regarded as the absence of violence and war, which he regarded as 'negative peace', and it is broadly used in various fields. According to his assertions, violence can be personal and structural, actual and potential, intended and unintended, and take place with objects and without (Galtung, 1969). Positive peace, on the other hand, can be complimentary to social justice and reconciliation according to Galtungian notion (Galtung, 1959; Galtung, 1969). Despite its complexity and richness in definition, positive peace has widely been incorporated as part of the overall peace concept (Schmid, 1968). Despite its less preferred status by most social scientists, positive peace is not a new idea since its roots might be traced to the Greek philosophers, who characterized *"peace as the greatest good"* (Bönisch, 1981, p. 165). The concept of positive peace has since evolved and became associated with harmony between individuals, presence of rule of law, institutions that promote fair and just societies, respect for human dignity and rights, access to equal opportunities (Galtung, 1969; Galtung, 1981; Galtung and Fischer, 2013; Mulimbi and Dryden-Peterson, 2018; Millar, 2021; Council of Europe, 2024).

Both notions of peace have been subject of substantive interdisciplinary debates. Psychologists, for example, refer to 'positive peace' as the creation of just economic and social institutions in a society that can enable humans to contribute positively to life in their communities (Cohrs et al., 2013). Business and peace scholars mostly refer to 'negative peace' as their existing empirical research has focused increasingly on post-conflict and war zones, however they assert welcoming a more diverse understanding of peace, such as 'positive peace' (Oetzel et al., 2009; Forrer and Katsos; 2014).

Peace has been subject to scholarly criticism as utopian, idealistic, vague, and unattainable goal (Millar, 2021). This assertion is often shared by political science and international relations scholars (Richmond, 2008; Richmond, 2014). However, international legal scholars do not see an issue with defining or achieving peace, but with the actors who

are likely to impact attainment of such a goal (Patterson, 2008). Nevertheless, it has been argued that defining peace is so complex that it has so many connections to other broad phenomena, for instance social progress (Bönisch, 1981). Many decades later, the complexities seem to persist. As Miller (2021) noted, the challenges for peace and conflict studies in the 21st century remain vast: from changes in digital innovation, population shifts, the impact of global dynamics on local conflicts, and a need for novel dialogues.

It is only recently that peace and conflict studies scholars have started paying attention to the impact of economy and the role of business in relation to peace (Costalli et al., 2017; de Groot et al., 2022; Jung, 2024). According to a more recent empirical study by de Groot et al., (2022), the world would have been about 12% wealthier if there were no violent conflicts since 1970. The same study demonstrated that "*the disadvantage of conflict is comparable to other 'public bads' such as pandemics, diseases or climate issues, and that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the world might be enhanced in multiple manners – 'making peace is clearly one of them'*"(de Groot et al., 2022, p. 272).

2.3.3 Political science and international relations

Oetzel et al. (2009) signalled how business for peace is connected to the field of political science. Among few of the journals in political science they referred to is in *Political Studies* on the past and future of peace and conflict research, authored by Rogers and Ramsbotham (1999). As it has already been alluded, peace research became a separate field only after the Second World War, despite having ancient origins (Rogers and Ramsbotham, 1999). International relations, which emerged as a field after the First World War (Rosenberg, 2016), while primarily focused on understanding the dynamics of relations between countries, is inevitably concerned with theorising about causes of war and conditions of peace (Levy, 1998). Much before then, matters of peace and war were part of the political science literature as they bring some of the richest and diverse insights on these concepts (Levy, 1998; Gowa and Hicks, 2015; Koubi, 2019). International relations and political science explore power and politics in various contexts and nowadays are considered as one broader subject field, for instance, as university degrees (Rosenberg, 2016).

War and peace are obviously interconnected (Richmond, 2007). There are diverse and contested definitions of peace, conflict, and war in political science. It can often

interchangeably be used with conflict and dispute, or violence, or armed conflict (see earlier section 2.3.2; Greenwood, 1987). Wright (1957) defined conflict as the process that can spread across time by differing degrees of dispute and tension and which might be resolved peacefully, or continue and escalate into violence. According to Crawford (2016), war is a tool of military power in order to achieve a political aim and is decided by elite decision-makers across political institutions, military and non-military organisations. This perhaps signals that war is the extreme edge, while its lesser forms are conflict, tension, or dispute.

As has already been alluded in earlier sections, the UN brought a new era for matters of peace and conflict. At the same time, the aftermath of the Second World War has not only witnessed the terminology shift for 'armed conflict' instead of 'war' (Greenwood, 1987), it has also seen the growth of multinational corporations (Vogel, 1987) and UN institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (Moran, 1978). The latter is a financial agency of the United Nations also founded in 1945 and has three major missions: *"encouraging expansions of trade, discouraging policies which may harm prosperity and furthering international monetary cooperation"* (IMF, 2023a). The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was also established in late 1940s to manage trade relations between countries in a post-war period with a goal to limit government intervention in the decisions of private firms (Haus, 1991). The World Trade Organization, an entity that has cooperative arrangements with the UN yet is not a part of it, replaced GATT in 1995, and facilitates regulation of state behaviour through providing dispute resolution and settlement avenue (Pelc, 2010). More recently, WTO expanded its authority to cover trade in services and intellectual property (WTO, 2023). In essence, the United Nations and its affiliated agencies promote the notion of peace through multilateralism, free trade and economic growth, ideas that have a long history (Chapter One; see section 1.1; Guinness, 1944; Mollaian, 2019).

The beginning of the UN era has inevitably attracted scholarly debates from political scientists and international relations researchers. One of the leading scholars in the field defines peace as freedom from war and disturbance as it entered the English language in twelfth century (Richmond, 2007). According to Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013), contemporary peacebuilding encompasses multiple interconnected actors such as local and global elites, international organisations, NGOs, donors, businesses and so on. Therefore, there is a complex conclusion that the long-term peace is a challenging concept, and cannot

be theorised, nor methodologically tested, hence the meaning of peace in each context varies and is developed by multiple local and international actors (Richmond, 2008). International relations scholars have furthermore suggested that states rarely, if ever, transform their relationships after a conflict and while some grudgingly sign an agreement, others opt for compensations and economic help as proof of peace, which can involve private sector participation (Bray, 2009; Suh and Chun, 2022).

Political scientists echo this argument, and acknowledge the capacity of business, particularly multinational corporations to influence policy and global policy agendas (Vogel, 1987; Moran, 1978; van Apeldoorn and de Graaff, 2017). In this regard, it was widely assumed that corporations from Western countries should be taking the lead. This is changing, with the system of international affairs welcoming new players from different regions. For instance, Turkish multinationals are increasingly becoming part of Türkiye's foreign policy to shift to positive peacebuilding efforts in countries near and far (Köse, 2013; Sazak and Woods, 2017; Özerdem, 2019; Levorato and Donelli, 2024).

2.3.4 Concluding thoughts

The extent to which 'peace' received academic scholarly attention across various disciplines demonstrate that is a broad, complex concept, thereby putting much of the focus on war (Diehl, 2016; Gleditsch et al., 2014; Suh and Chun, 2022). However, it has been argued that there are limitations to defining peace as simply a lack of war in the form of negative peace (Galtung, 1969) and real-world cases have demonstrated how winners of the Nobel Peace Prize have increasingly been those recognized for their contributions to 'positive peace' (Diehl, 2016). Finally, there is a rich and broad interdisciplinary scholarship encompassing a diverse type of focus on various practical aspects of peace: from peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace negotiations and mediation to conflict prevention and resolution. Moreover, war and military studies, security and strategic studies, policy research are other broad specialised fields that were not part of the review but may have important insights into this topic.

Table 1. Interdisciplinary roots of business for peace

	Peace	Conflict/War	The role of business
International law	The goal of the profession and the field is creating peace (Lauterpacht, 1952; Bailliet, 2017); recognition of human dignity (Carey and Sims, 2020)	Pre-1945 and post-1945 view of conflict and war (Greenwood, 1987); post-1945 terminology is predominantly 'armed conflict' instead of war (UN Charter, 2024a)	Sovereign states as primary peace actors (von Elbe, 1939; Jenkins and Plowden, 2006); MNEs can be both a partner in tackling challenges and a profiteer in conflict (Fort and Schipani, 2002; Aparac, 2024)
Peace and conflict studies	*Negative peace* as lack of war (Galtung, 1969); *positive peace* as conditions for social harmony (Galtung, 1969; Bönisch, 1981; Diehl, 2016)	Different types of violence: personal and structural, actual and potential, intended and unintended (Galtung, 1969)	Minimal attention to business; recent research on wealth and conflict (de Groot et al., 2022)
Political science and international relations	Freedom from war and disturbance, context-specific (Richmond, 2008)	Conflict as dispute that can end with peace or with violence (Wright, 1957); or as a military tool (Crawford, 2016)	The growth of MNEs (Vogel, 1987) and IMF, WTO, other UN agencies (Moran, 1978); MNEs can impact policy agendas (van Apeldoorn and de Graaff, 2017)

In conclusion, the roots of the concepts of 'peace', 'conflict', 'war' and their (lack of) relation to business from three social science disciplines were briefly assessed (Table 1). They have added valuable insights into our understanding of the topic: peace and conflict studies have extended our knowledge on the topic by developing the definition of peace to distinguish between negative peace and positive peace (Galtung, 1969), however the role of business in peacebuilding in this field occupies a rather marginal position. Political science is perhaps the oldest amongst them, providing a diverse and multifaceted understanding of peace, and specifying the importance of multinationals as an independent and influential actor within the system of international relations (Bray, 2009; Richmond, 2015; Busemeyer and Thelen, 2020). International legal scholars highlight a rather different dilemma: that

business can both be a partner in resolving global challenges, yet potentially escalate conflict and profit from lack of peace (Voulgaris, 2021; Aparac, 2024). Across these social sciences, the debate on the evolving concepts of peace remains relevant and urgent. As Richmond (2007, p. 270) commented that *"an interdisciplinary renegotiation of multiple concepts of peace is necessary."*

2.4 Management sciences

The 21st century has witnessed the emergence of nascent business and (for) peace. It is firmly situated within the broader fields of business and management studies and has roots arising from the aforementioned discourses – with many of the business for peace researchers having law, political science, peace and conflict studies backgrounds (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Katsos and Forrer, 2015; Oetzel et al., 2009; Melin, 2016; Miklian, 2019). It is important to note that although Galtung (1969) continues to have an impact on the broad study of peace, including the business for peace field, he did not explicitly consider the role of business.

Although the emergence of business for peace scholarship in the business and management sciences in a recognisable form is recent, it has echoes in scholarly debates that occurred as early as the 1960s. The inaugural issue of the *Columbia Journal of World Business* suggested that business is an unrivalled force for peace in the world (Brown, 1966). That same year, the tenth president of the Coca-Cola company, Paul Austin (1966) claimed that the integrated exchange of goods and services, for example, the attempts to integrate European markets generates prosperity, thus world peace (Austin, 1966). This sentiment has since frequently been reiterated (see Chapter One; Birchfield et al., 2017), and one of the core motivations for integrating many of the European countries in the European Union has been to avoid war and promote peace (European Union, 2024).

It was not until late 2000s that Fort and Schipani (2007) established four fundamental ways through which business can impact peace: economic development, multicultural teams, unofficial diplomacy, and rule of law. Their paper became a critical foundation in the business for peace field (see Forrer and Katsos, 2015, Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos and Forrer, 2022). Subsequent studies have expanded the idea that business may possess a profound impact on the conditions that have influence over peace and conflict

(Fort, 2007; Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2009; Lavine, 2009a; 2009b; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015; Katsos and Forrer, 2022; Melin et al., 2023).

A related difficulty faced by business for peace scholars is that peace is a complex concept and challenging to define and measure as a goal and so evaluate outcomes. Social scientists have generally centred less research on how to promote peace than on violence and conflict due to the latter receiving more funding (Oetzel and Miklian, 2017). Perhaps as a consequence, peace is not well conceptualised due to receiving insufficient investment. Relating to this, it becomes crucial to note that peace is an ongoing historical practice and understanding more of everyday peace across different contexts is important (Richmond, 2007). Therefore, peace remains a complex and relevant phenomenon on its own in many social science fields (Richmond, 2008) and in relation to business (Oetzel et al., 2009).

This a pitfall for the development of the field and calls to be more precise about business impacts on peacebuilding will likely remain (Ford, 2015). The literature tends to use the terms 'peace' and other adjacent, related terms interchangeably, and popularly defines peace as absence of war and conflict, however there is agreement to include positive peace too (Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos and Forrer, 2014; Milliken et al., 2015; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). The notion of peace also encompasses positive peace, which are functioning institutions, presence of culture of dialogue, social harmony, and access to basic human rights and equal opportunities, however this concept continuously evolves (Galtung, 1969; McGregor, 2003; Council of Europe, 2024). However, while this has been acknowledged, it has not been widely embraced yet. The challenge with defining peace as lack of war is too simplistic. For instance, healthcare is not merely about escapable loss of life, but also concerns with the goal of promoting physical and emotional well-being through prevention of diseases and facilitation of good health (Caglayan, 2024; World Health Organisation, 1948; World Health Organisation, 2024). It is therefore important to address this deficiency in the business for peace scholarship that prevents a cohesive and systematic understanding of the role that business plays in the cultivation of peace. In other words, incorporation of both meanings of peace is essential.

The contemporary rising significance of the business for peace field is connected to the increased prevalence of conflict around the world (Oetzel et al., 2009; Ford, 2015; Forrer and Katsos, 2015; Cumming, 2022; Melin et al., 2023). The 2022 Russo-Ukrainian war has brought the academic question on the impact of business in war zones into management

scholarly prominence and a much wider public and policy debate (Cumming, 2022; Aguinis et al., 2022; Melin et al., 2023; Ó Laoghaire, 2024). Nevertheless, the breadth of existing empirical work appears largely scattered and dislocated from a mainstream management domain. Moreover, according to Katsos and AlKafaji (2019) the business and peace scholarship tends to be mostly theoretical and contain anecdotal evidence not directly connected to the contribution to peace by business.

Nonetheless, the empirical research that exists in the field provides some interesting insights. A decade ago, Katsos and Forrer (2014) conducted the first ever qualitative study in Cyprus – a country that has experienced conflict. The first ever qualitative study of business-peace dynamics in a context of active violence involved the undertaking of semi-structured interviews with managers in Iraq – a war-torn country for decades (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). These studies have signalled calls for more country specific qualitative research as findings from post-conflict and war zones are not applicable to other research contexts. There is also some quantitative research in the field with focus on MNEs. They cover why firms respond to violent conflict (Oetzel and Getz, 2012), how MNEs can adopt peacebuilding as a strategic objective within HRM framework (Reade et al., 2019) and the minimal impact of peace agreements on MNEs (Albino-Pimentel et al., 2021). Moreover, a different study in the periphery topic and without using the business for peace terminology, conducted twenty interviews with political actors involved in the peacebuilding process in Myanmar and Burma and analysed their perceptions of interaction of MNEs (Hermes and Lehto, 2021).

Qualitative studies with focus on small and medium size businesses (SMEs) and their impact on peace has been conducted in Lebanon, Colombia, and South Africa (Joseph et al., 2021; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020; Gallo et al., 2023; Cechvala and Ganson, 2024). These works have revealed how businesses practice and understand peacebuilding, whether perceived or real (Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020); peace can be a goal for SMEs if the economic needs are first met (Joseph et al., 2021); how ex-combatant entrepreneurs can help the advancement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace (Gallo et al., 2023), and the interdependence of business action with the intentions and actions of others (Cechvala and Ganson, 2024).

These empirical studies notwithstanding, the bulk of business and peace research remains mostly a theoretical endeavour. The special Issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics*

on business and peace (Fort, 2009) had 19 articles relating to peace, business and wider themes. It was guest edited by Timothy Fort who is also a co-author of the very first seminal theoretical paper that is believed to have created the field (Fort and Schipani, 2007). Furthermore, *Academy of Management Perspectives* also had a special issue (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015) with six articles on business for peace and its relating themes such as corporate diplomacy and political corporate social responsibility. Finally, *Business Horizons* had a special issue with 12 papers themed 'Business for Peace' also guest edited by Timothy Fort (Fort, 2016). A year later, another special issue in the *Journal of Business Ethics* was titled *Business Ethics, Peace and Environmental Issues* but rather covered periphery topics in relation to peace (see Chapter One; Aßländer and Gössling, 2017). More recent theoretical and conceptual scholarship on business and peace have attempted the following. Katsos and Forrer (2022) constructed a framework on how business fights violence; Melin et al. (2023) analysed the causes of war and its implications for international business scholars.

Following this brief introductory overview of the field, the next two sections will outline a more detailed appreciation of scholarly attempts to position the positive, negative, and ambiguous role of MNEs in peacebuilding, and how some of the identified themes are linked to management domains such as leadership and human resource management.

2.5 Business as a peacebuilder

The business for peace literature has outlined a number of MNE actions that have been interpreted as supporting peace. They include, but are not limited to, creating jobs, employing diverse teams, supporting the rule of law in host country, conducting conflict risk assessment, acting as a conflict mediator between governments, facilitating cross-cultural dialogue and fostering a sense of belonging (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2009; Fort, 2015; Banks, 2016; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019; Ganson et al., 2022). These actions might promote economic development, which is likely to mitigate incentives to resort to conflict and war (Katsos and Forrer, 2014; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). However, this scholarship is often unclear about whether business involvement in reducing the causes for conflict might foster conditions for lasting peace.

In a conceptual study that is argued to have established the field of business and peace, Fort and Schipani (2007) offered real-world examples of businesses contributing to

peace through certain business practices mostly in non-Western countries. To start, they suggested that companies' economic contributions create jobs and other means of wealth creation. They cited an example of how Motorola 'brought peace' to Malaysia by employing local people and creating jobs; building high-tech manufacturing plant; and thereby fostering local technological know-how. Finally, it is suggested that hiring local managers, and not expatriates, facilitates peace through the transfer of managerial skills. Fort and Schipani (2007) claimed that by creating a sense of belonging for their employees, business might foster genuine communities which ultimately benefitted everyone.

Interestingly, 50 years later, another Coca-Cola manager supported this idea by referring to how Coca-Cola contributed to the general well-being and security of citizens in more than 200 countries (describing the case of India and Pakistan) through providing jobs: the company employed approximately 750,000 people worldwide, creating widespread local opportunities thereby contributing to stability and peace (Banks, 2016; see also Austin, 1966; section 2.4). This is perhaps one of the prime and early arguments in the field that business promotes economic development through job creation, which according to Forrer and Katsos (2015) is the most important and most effective mechanism of violence mitigation multinationals can participate in.

While they do not specifically posit the importance of leadership, this train of thought has been reflected in the writings of other management scholars, specifically that business operations themselves could enhance peace by adopting specific management practices, such as enhancing employee voice within the company (Milliken et al., 2015). This, in turn, might have positive impacts in their non-work lives since employees are provided with a sense of safety and belonging to a community.

Indeed, firms' everyday business actions can either lead or detract from peace (Ganson et al., 2022; Gallo et al., 2023; Cechvala and Ganson, 2024). Such daily business practices are directed and executed by management teams, therefore the effectiveness of a specific leadership style they employ is likely to play a role in peace and conflict. The limited landscape of findings on how companies contribute to peace in an active war zone demonstrates that by creating trust between different ethnic groups, firms create peace unintentionally (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019).

In explaining why business leaders focus on issues of peace, Rettberg (2016) argued that there are three reasons for that. First, leaders most often need a stable and predictable

environment to pursue business profits; second, leaders believe that social change is good and finally, peacebuilding actions might be motivated by corporate goal to make more profit. Overall, it is apparent to assume that leaders matter in relation to peace because they create and sustain organization strategy, cultures, and practices (Spreitzer, 2007; Ledbetter, 2016; Rettberg, 2016; Reade et al., 2019; Javidan et al., 2023).

Connected to leadership, another business action that is likely to influence peace and conflict is human resources as it involves different aspects of employing workers, and the creation of multicultural teams as was posited by Fort and Schipani (2007). Business and peace scholars have acknowledged that human resource management can contribute to social harmony and migration which in turn may impact peace (Reade et al., 2019; Forrer and Katsos, 2015). *"Corporate culture and operations are peacebuilding when they model nonviolence"* (Fort 2015; Forrer and Fort 2016 cited in Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019, p. 44), however it remains vague which specific forms it takes and how it is embedded into an MNE's organisational structure.

Namely, companies provide opportunities for different individuals to work together towards a common purpose which is at times is obvious, and sometimes more obscure. According to Fort and Schipani (2007), a successful example of diverse team implementation was in the Northern Ireland where a company hiring from two religious groups in fifty-fifty ratio which is also referred by Oetzel et al. (2009, p. 352) who wrote that *"in Northern Ireland, the Future Ways program hosted by the University of Ulster, for instance, intentionally hired half Catholics and half Protestants to provide them with the experience of working together with that otherwise hated 'other'."* The business practice of having diverse teams of workers, whose cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, etc. vary mirrors the importance of managers impacting peace daily on a team level, therefore, also an organisational level too (Spreitzer, 2007). Human resource management is therefore an important contributor to potential peace (Banks, 2016). These arguments were re-enforced through the interpretation reached by Ganson et al. (2022, p. 33), who concluded business impact peacebuilding not through remarkable intentions to mediate a conflict but rather through the daily actions as an employer, investor, and so on. Ganson et al. (2022) further argued that it is exactly such research that looks into the daily actions of businesses is missing in the field.

Other actions that business for peace literature does not explicitly cover (yet can be interpreted as) is that companies engage in order to pursue profits and interact with different stakeholders such as society and local government is through philanthropy and corporate political activity. They may often set up foundations that conduct social projects and donate money to noble causes (Rettberg, 2016; Ganson et al., 2022), and interact with government institutions to ensure regulatory compliance (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Ford, 2015; Forrer, 2009). On this latter point, Fort and Schipani (2007) argued the importance of non-official and less formal ways of maintaining relations with governments and other stakeholders known as track-two diplomacy. This may also involve mediating tensions between different sides. Since corporate political activity is viewed as a business attempt to impact government policies in a way that's beneficial to the company success (Hillman and Hitt, 1999), it can be reasonably asserted that track-two (unofficial) diplomacy conducted by businesses belongs to their CPA activities.

In relation to philanthropic projects that often take the form of social impact projects, Banks (2016), the-then Vice President of Coca-Cola, gave examples of how Coca-Cola invested in youth through scholarship schemes and training programs in regions with high or unstable unemployment, and projects aimed at preserving water. In the context of peace, water is perhaps one of the most important resources and there is a small yet growing emerging field of water for peace (Krampe, 2017; Dell'angelo et al., 2018; Dirioz, 2023).

More recently, how business addresses matter of peace through ending their operations in a war zone as a regularised response to war is increasingly discussed among researchers (Mol et al., 2023; Ó Laoghaire, 2024). MNEs exiting war zones – are they being peacebuilders in doing so? The potential exact motives behind such actions may still be unclear. Despite the most noble of intents, businesses working to impact peace through their activities will require *"clear guidelines, indicators of success, and tested 'how-to' instruction if the prospect of business and peace is to be realised"* (Katsos and Forrer, 2014, p. 158). Rigorous country-case studies provide an obvious avenue through which to develop such understanding (Katsos and Forrer, 2014). To sum up, while still heavily relying on micro-theory from Fort and Schipani (2007) and Oetzel et al. (2009), the state of business for peace field has some pressing matters and far more questions than answers (Ford, 2015; Forrer and Katsos, 2014; Katsos and Forrer, 2022).

2.6 Is big business a competent agent for peace?

One of the chief questions that the field has is whether big business can actually contribute to peace. Many social science scholars have questioned whether businesses have any role in contributing to peace (Suh and Chun, 2022; Alvarez, 2011; Aparac, 2024), whilst many business for peace scholars maintain that business has a clear role in this endeavour (Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019; Gallo et al., 2023; Cumming, 2022; Melin et al., 2023; Cechvala and Ganson, 2024). However, it remains a field that suffers from lack of testable theories and definitional ambiguity, since it is still unclear how such impacts can be achieved so that to produce positive outcomes on peace (Joseph et al., 2023). Given that most empirical work in the field is dedicated to SMEs and entrepreneurship (Joseph et al., 2021; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020; Gallo et al., 2023; Cechvala and Ganson, 2024), it may signal uncertain assertions whether big business can be a competent actor in peacebuilding.

Business for peace scholarship is rife with controversy (Ford, 2015; Katsos, 2020). Based on the assumption that business might be an influential engine for economic progress and development and thus a potential peacebuilding actor, criticism of the field was also acknowledged in Fort and Schipani's (2007) seminal paper. They noted that companies are also capable of planting the seeds of tension if they are perceived as being unfair and inconsiderate to cultural and political differences (Fort and Schipani, 2007). For instance, Oetzel et al. (2009) provided ample of historical examples (Robins, 2007, Thomas, 1996 and Wheeler et al., 2002 cited in Oetzel et al., 2009) that include but are not limited to the British East India Company's role in the expansion of the British Empire; the British South Africa Company's acquisition of diamond mines in Africa to further state and business interests; Shell's complicity with human rights abuses and violence towards local government and people, and related to the company's Nigerian subsidiary.

Within some of the scholarship, discussion is often delineated through a reluctance to differentiate business and the private sector since there is a tremendous diversity and variety that private sector actors have in terms of industry, size, financing, ownership and sector (Ford, 2015). This thought is supported by additional arguments that the private sector is obviously more expansive than solely Western multinationals; and incorporates, for instance, Global North and South firms, national and transnational enterprises, various kinds

of public-private organisations, representative associations, and SMEs (Schouten and Miklian, 2020). From large banks to influential trading houses, these entities will incorporate institutions and actors with a variety of motives for shaping how business engages with issues of peace or conflict, which may not always be straightforward on what business should do or avoid doing if it is to be a peacebuilder (Ford, 2015). Therefore, understanding the host government, the firm structure, sector, and nationality remain crucial in analysing business-peace dynamics (Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020).

Such views about how firms' aspirations and actions towards peace might be ambiguous or questionable (Spreitzer, 2007; Forrer and Katsos, 2015) may partly be due to the perceptions of peace as an endeavour of sovereign governments instead of private companies no matter how big or small (Oetzel et al., 2009; Oetzel and Miklian, 2017). It could also be related to the fact that the primary motive and purpose of business is to make profit and not make peace (Ledbetter, 2016). In addition, Ford (2015) critiqued that even when MNEs can become partners of peace, the appropriateness of such a position where they are both supporting government whilst being regulated by them raises doubts about their intentions to build peace. What it means is that such vague spheres can create complexity for the particularly perplexing, often political, process of peacebuilding. Stemming from this, another explanation could be the reluctance of senior business leaders to refer to their behaviour as being related to peace which scholars have noted that this seems to derive from an unwillingness by business to take sides, or to be perceived of as taking sides, in a violent conflict or tension (Fort, 2009; Forrer and Katsos 2015; Oetzel and Miklian, 2017; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019).

However, this is changing, and businesses are becoming more and more involved in social, environmental, and political topics. Multinationals both from Western and non-Western countries are viewed as engines of growth, employment, huge investments and even partners in peacebuilding (Köse, 2013; Sazak and Woods, 2017; Leonidou et al., 2024). MNEs are realising that they need to do more than focusing on profit to keep the relevance of their brands, goods, and services (Ready et al., 2008). In addition, their involvement in addressing social issues is increasingly taking more formal ways. For instance, many companies are currently releasing annual non-financial reports with focus on Environmental, Social and Governance and Sustainable Development Goals. Such reports are also expected by regulators and government authorities, for example, EU mandates

large companies to release a comprehensive sustainability report starting in 2025 as per Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (European Commission, 2024a) which will supersede the existing regulatory framework that required businesses to report on their environmental and social activities, human rights, anti-corruption, and risks relating to them.

Subsequent critical observation follows from the lack of conceptual clarity on which specific management approaches and business practices help or hinder peace, and what conditions need to exist for these practices to have their aspired impact (Forrer and Katsos, 2015). Whether a claimed peace impact has any effect on the quality or quantity of peace; and whether people working in business have the right to take credit for such progress (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015). The assertions by Fort and Schipani (2007) suggested that any action of a company to undertake ethical business is peace-positive, however more recent research claimed that empirical evidence struggles to prove that business has a positive impact on conflict resolution or prevention (Ganson et al., 2022). Again, there is usage of interchangeable terms such as conflict resolution that are similar and connected to peace.

Finally, even when MNEs are able to genuinely contribute to it, they can also be perceived as or doing the opposite. Peace-washing has been identified as a notable problem when assessing the participation of MNEs in peacebuilding (Miklian et al., 2016). Like green-washing (Santos et al., 2023), peace-washing is viewed as business creating and extensively communicating an illusion of peace impact and not actual one (Abramov, 2009; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020; House of Commons, 2023). In other words, potential discrepancies between the rhetoric and real actions of multinational enterprises might provoke some doubt about the intention of business to actually do more for society than its primary motive of pursuing profit.

As Katsos (2020, p. 225) commented that *"the field does not assume all business enhances peace. Instead, it is concerned with those businesses which, through their activities as private sector actors and members of their communities, bolster factors that lead to peace and undermine factors that lead to conflict"*. Moreover, it appears that business plays a unique role in comparison to other public institutions in a peace endeavour (Katsos and Forrer, 2014). Scholars on all sides of the debate on business and peace recognise the importance of businesses being aware of the potential and actual peace impacts in their

daily operations (Ganson et al., 2022). However, little empirical research has been directed to this matter.

The business interest in engaging with peace activities is often more genuine and compelling than critical scholars acknowledge, but the conditions and context for such engagements need to be much more narrowly defined and assessed (Ganson et al., 2022). In addition, there is recognition amongst business for peace scholars that integration of business for peace scholarship into the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) literature is not a solution and require a more mainstream management research agenda (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). As Miklian et al. (2016, p. 8) agreed with such a sentiment highlighting that embedding peacebuilding actions into business environment can be complex. Whilst business can reasonably promote peace in war and post-conflict zones with modest impact, little is known about the variety of challenges faced by companies of different sizes, home country origins and industries, hence the field remains on a delicate footing (Katsos and Forrer, 2014; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019; Katsos and Forrer, 2022).

2.7 Business for peace: the grand challenge of our time?

To address some of the ambiguities and resolve a portion of the challenges that business for peace presents, this section thus will summarise the key issues of this literature in depth and subsequently suggest for a need of a nuanced view on the field, that is based on the grand challenges framework of George et al. (2016). As it will be demonstrated, this framework offers a way forward for this field. The existing business for peace literature landscape has been founded mostly on the early work of Fort and Schipani (2007) and Oetzel et al. (2009) who provided initial theorizing and assertions as to how businesses might enhance peace. This thesis, however, aims to advance the field beyond its continued reliance on the early work of Fort and Schipani (2007) and Oetzel et al. (2009) and solve some of outstanding issues of this literature. This is necessary because reflecting on more recent advances in this field, Katsos and Forrer (2022, p. 166) noted that the business for peace scholarship has less answers than questions.

To explicate that there are more questions than answers in this field, as has been demonstrated, there are three distinct perspectives on how business and peace relate: one that proposes that businesses build peaceful societies through various generalised actions,

another that holds the opposite view, and a final one that suggests that, on average the effect is even questionable and ambiguous. As has similarly been demonstrated there is fragmentary empirical evidence supporting these perspectives, raising the question of what can be justified, under which conditions and whether these contrasting perspectives can be reconciled. This section provides a first attempt to do the latter, starting with an analysis elucidating where their differences originate and suggesting a way forwards in this important yet disconnected realm of research. This thesis argues that a complementary management perspective could contribute to a better understanding of the emerging field of business for peace, particularly when there is a conceptualisation of how business helps or hinders peace as a related grand challenge phenomenon as there are few challenges greater than peace in a world perplexed by rising conflict and wars.

Three main issues can be identified in the literature, namely that most research builds micro-theory and is unperturbed by real-world context, second that the few existing empirical studies on MNEs and peace have not provided generalizable knowledge, and third that the field established itself and continued to develop based on ideological assumptions focusing mainly on positive impacts by business.

Regarding the first point, the seminal work that served as a leading guidance for business for peace scholars is a purely theoretical study with some case examples (Fort and Schipani, 2007). As has already been noted, the field is mostly theoretical, emphasizing arguments and counter-arguments on about how business might help or hinder peace (Forrer, 2009; Getz and Oetzel, 2009; Haufler, 2015; Banks, 2016; Forrer and Fort, 2016; Melin, 2016). These papers have built micro-range theory. Stemming from this, there are following identifiable challenges in the field: majority of the research does not seem to clearly define the concept of peace (Cechvala and Ganson, 2024), assumes war or post-conflict context, and does not consider the role of state or government (Ford, 2015).

Within this field, peace is the absence of violence, however conflict is not always overtly violent; that's why understanding the full complement of definitions for peace and conflict supports richer and more robust conceptualisations addressing business and peace (Forrer and Katsos, 2014). Given that violent conflict may include *"war, revolution, rebellion, insurgency, and sustained campaigns of violence or terrorism"* (Oetzel and Getz, 2012, p. 168), it remains a challenge of the field to clarify and agree upon the most basic concepts. Moreover, much of the assertions in the field tend to assume the role of business in a war,

conflict, or post-conflict space, as Ford (2015, p. 453) commented that "*all scholars are forced at some level to use convenient labels such as conflict-prone or post-conflict, even while acknowledging that countries and areas will seldom fit neatly into any conflict type"* (Ford, 2015, p. 453).

Perhaps due to above assumptions on the impact of business in war and post-conflict zones, there is lack of functioning government, therefore contemporary approaches in this scholarship do not tend to examine the concept of the state or even situate it within the business and peace debate (Ford, 2015). The field also neglected to consider the importance of support from government, without which even the most effective and enthusiastic foreign MNE would struggle to create peace (Ford, 2015; Ganson et al., 2022). Therefore, it can be concluded that the applicable avenues for the legitimate and structured involvement of companies in peace-building processes are underdeveloped. These offer fresh research agendas for subsequent scholarship.

The second source of contention in the field has been that existing empirical studies published in business and management journals have not transcended their research context (Forrer and Katsos, 2014; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). For instance, Katsos and AlKafaji (2019, pp. 45-46) was a grounded-theory approach and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with individuals who were actively engaged in or with the private sector and other international agencies in Iraq. The study made a core contribution to the business and peace field in terms of their argument that 'capacity building' and 'local engagement' were missing in the business and peace framework by Oetzel et al. (2009) which are practices through which business promotes peace. Here, capacity building is defined as training programs focused on teambuilding and covering conflict resolution elements, while local engagement is viewed as employment and training of local staff. However, again there were core problems with wider applicability and transferability and those issues were largely avoided in the discussion of these findings. Indeed, the authors acknowledged this deficiency, through noting that the findings might not be generalisable beyond study's context (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). Another paper adding contextual insights employed a combination of group and one-on-one semi-structured interviews, sometimes with the same interviewees – government and business officials, peace negotiators, educators and community leaders in Cyprus (Katsos and Forrer, 2014, p. 164). This research added to the field that whilst business can contribute to promoting peace, their significance is rather

limited (in the context of Cyprus). It is further argued that despite the mostly genuine intentions, different organisations interested in peace (including companies) will require specific guidelines (Katsos and Forrer, 2014).

Extending Fort and Schipani (2007), the result of these papers is that they provided in-depth and detailed understandings of how businesses in these particular countries build perceptions and actualities of peace. However, their shortcomings lay in that they do not provide any guidance as to how businesses should operate to build peace in other contexts. One could for instance wonder if lessons from Cyprus also extend to a similar context. Or whether the paper on Iraq has any bearing to what businesses are able to do to propagate peace in Afghanistan or Syria. It is important to note that the methodologies, while all qualitative in nature, differed widely. To illustrate this observation, Katsos and AlKafaji (2019) employed a grounded-theory approach with forty-five semi-structured interviews, while Katsos and Forrer's (2014) based their findings on thirty interviews: group and one-to-one (half of them were conducted by students at George Washington University).

The third criticism has been centred around that the field mostly preoccupies itself with the ideological assumptive outcome of how business contributes to peace instead of actual measured outcomes (Forrer and Katsos, 2015; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). In other words, this field appears to be driven by an externally oriented desire to convince business to adopt a certain mentality by taking up a more substantive social and economic role, according to Ford (2015, p. 459) who commented that many business and management scholars might have been discouraged from becoming involved in the debate about business and peace due to the ideological character of this literature. Katsos (2020) agreed with this positing that there is disproportionate emphasis on the positive impacts that companies might have on peace and have largely overlooked scholarship that demonstrates the circumstances in which business and the private sector typically have negative impacts on peace. There is acknowledgement in the field that greater effort needs to be applied to structure ordered knowledge on pillars of both peace and conflict that business may impact or be impacted by (Ford, 2015; Ganson et al., 2022; Melin et al., 2023). This means that there is a need to unpack what scholars mean by potential peace outcomes in a structured manner (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015).

Overall, business for peace research generated a wide range of contextualised insights that have not developed definitive answers to overarching question of how business

and peace are related, and how MNEs can potentially contribute to peace. This can be traced back to the aforementioned shortcomings of the scholarly field and, therefore, a new approach is warranted. In recent years, there has been an influx of grand challenges research (Howard-Grenville et al., 2014; Hamann et al., 2020; Ika and Munro, 2022) and methodological approaches to address them (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). This equally emerging management field offers a fresh and novel perspective for business for peace. Indeed, there may be few challenges greater than peace. The grand challenges approach offers a structured and systematic context within which to relate business and peace relate. It also moves the business for peace towards the development of a clearly delineated theoretical contribution.

2.8 Grand challenges as a framework for business for peace

As has been identified in the above, there are critical challenges with business for peace – mainly its reliance on micro-theories and need for structured knowledge without ideological assumptions (Ford, 2015), as showcased by its continued dependence on Fort and Schipani (2007) and Oetzel et al. (2009). If the literature is to provide more definitive answers on how business can contribute to peace, it is important that it moves towards reliance on mid-range theory (for example, specific theoretical frameworks building on the notion of grand challenges; Khan, 2023), such as is standard in management science. Like business for peace scholars, grand challenges scholars refer to the interdisciplinary nature of the field and take insights and inspiration from the international relations discipline by arguing that digital technologies are posing a threat to the fabric of communities which, if mismanaged, can exacerbate and undermine peace, democracy, and social stability (Gümüsay et al., 2020). Moreover, as Cumming (2022, p. 1663) posited that the war between Russia and Ukraine calls for more attention in management scholarship to study Grand Challenges and suggest potential solutions to resolve them.

Business and management scholars increasingly started paying attention to grand challenges due to a development of diverse set of issues that span across national borders over the last few decades, such as climate change, pandemics, and various global disruptions (George et al., 2016; Eisenhardt et al., 2016; Buckley et al., 2017, Brammer et al., 2019; Sinkovics et al., 2023; Horner et al., 2024; Carton et al., 2024). There have been

multiple scholarly attempts to define grand challenges. George et al. (2016, p. 1881) suggested the definition from Grand Challenges Canada (2011), which describe grand challenges as *"specific critical barrier(s) that, if removed, would help solve an important societal problem with a high likelihood of global impact through widespread implementation".* Furthermore, both George et al. (2016) and other grand challenges scholars (Brammer et al., 2019) refer to the roots of the grand challenge concept in the field of mathematics, specifically the mathematician Hilbert's list of 23 unresolved problems that inspired the wider adoption of the term (Grand Challenges Canada, 2011).

Other definitions of the term are that grand challenges belong to both local and regional puzzles that span across the entire global community. Once recognised and accepted, they give rise to coordinated and complex activities to tackle them, which Ika and Munro (2022, p. 602) refer to as grand challenge projects. The second definition of grand challenges is named slightly differently – as grand social challenges which is primarily a set of complex global socio-environmental problems that are likely to have negative impact on huge populations and entire planet, for e.g. pandemics, migration, climate change (Voegtlin et al., 2022). Finally, Ferraro et al. (2015) argued that grand challenges are complex and uncertain, very often difficult to forecast and take new shapes or forms whilst being tackled. Their complexity can be characterised through the necessity of involving many actors. Moreover, possible solutions might create mixed or even deteriorating outcomes for the core problem or other challenges.

Amongst those recognised and accepted grand challenges, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are at the centre of global debates (George et al., 2016; Sinkovics et al., 2023). The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are regarded as an urgent call for action for all countries to work together in a global partnership (United Nations, 2024b; see Table 2). According to George et al. (2016), many SDGs have a straightforward connection to management scholarship, such as decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), however, much of the research done within grand challenges are related to ending poverty (SDG 1), gender equality (SDG 5) and good health for the global population (SDG 3). Importantly for this research, the advancement of peace falls well within the scope of the UN SDGs, the Goal 16 is to which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies and build effective and accountable institutions (George et al., 2016; Gallo et al., 2023). Not

all SDGs are related to peace, however most of them can be interpreted in terms of facilitating peaceful societies (Table 2).

Table 2. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) 17 Goals

Source: United Nations (2024b)

Furthermore, a more recent work by Gallo et al. (2023, p. 2) has implicitly introduced the importance of an understudied UN Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Institutions – to the business for peace field and its relevance to managerial actions, and posited that few to none studies directly address SDG 16 as they focus mainly on public-private partnerships to achieve various SDG targets and not on how a firm's everyday business activities can lead to peace. Overall, SDG16 often remains neglected: less than 1% of firms that joined the UN Global Compact explicitly tackle SDG 16 in their sustainability strategy (Reade et al., 2019). In one of the journals of Academy of International Business – *AIB Insights* – that publish shorter articles designed both for researchers and practitioners, it is further mentioned that addressing the grand challenge of war and the SDG16 are often seen as out of the purview of businesses (Gallo et al., 2023, Ghauri, 2021 cited in Melin et al., 2023, p. 4).

The issues that pertain to grand challenges are ambitious (George et al., 2016; Buckley et al., 2017), complex by their nature (Eisenhardt et al., 2016; Kwakkel and Pruyt, 2015; Jarzabkowski et al., 2019) and may stretch across many disciplines, stakeholders and

sectors (Ferraro et al., 2015; Eisenhardt et al., 2016; United Nations, 2015). Therefore, grand challenges are not likely to be managed and resolved by any sole organisation or discipline (Brammer et al., 2019). While focused on their multinational characteristics (Buckley et al., 2017), others suggested they are mostly embedded in local communities (George et al., 2016). Nonetheless, even when grand challenges are seemingly local issues at heart, or localized manifestations of broader problems, they remain grand and complex problems spanning boundaries and requiring multilateral global action (George et al., 2024).

Brammer et al. (2019, p. 519) identified three different strands of the grand challenges research such as policy papers, empirical works and conceptual and theoretical articles. In the empirical research, grand challenges draw special attention to the prospective function of MNEs in both enabling and mitigating those problems (Montiel et al., 2021). Multinational enterprises can especially be seen as either capable of resolving global challenges (Ghauri et al., 2021) or drivers of conflict and social inequalities (Kourula et al., 2017; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020). However, MNEs might also improve living standards through providing employment to local populations (George et al., 2016).

As a result, multinational firms are expected to undertake the role of positive and impactful organizational actors, actively defending common goods such as maintenance of the social peace and order (Scherer et al., 2014) and facilitating access to public goods (Boddewyn and Doh, 2011). Here, public, or collective goods is defined as *"those commodities, functions, and services that provide positive externalities such as health, education, communication, transportation, water, electricity, and whose supply can be assured by public agencies and/or private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations"* (Boddewyn and Doh, 2011, p. 347).

Within these collective and public goods, perhaps the most scholarly and public attention has focused on climate change and the associated challenge to energy-intensive activities and development models (Howard-Grenville et al., 2014; George et al., 2016). There have been further calls for incentives and institutional mechanisms to maximize the positive outcomes by firms and mitigate the negative impacts (Oetzel and Doh, 2009; Gande et al., 2020). However, as a relatively new management field, the study of grand challenges has a potentially wide future research agenda (George et al., 2016). For example, under what conditions, and for which types of grand challenges, are businesses inclined to prioritise a potential contribution? Moreover, what will be the extent of cooperation

between MNEs with other public actors to resolve grand challenges? Will they approach it seriously or merely as an advertising event? How might they balance duties to society and other stakeholders, and their for-profit *raison d'être* in the face of a grand challenge such as peace?

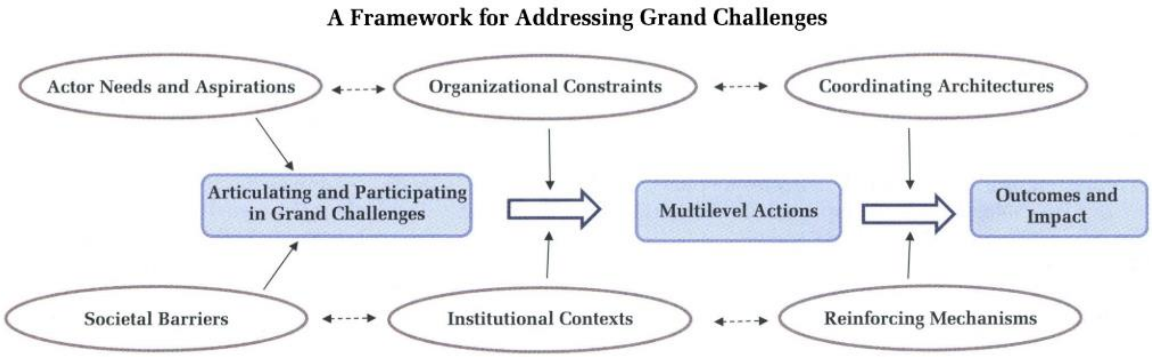
On this note, some grand challenges scholars have raised concerns by positing that since the SDGs are intended to be achieved by governments at the national level rather than at the firm level, it is unknown how international business research can contribute to them (Montiel et al., 2021, p. 1000). However, it has been strongly acknowledged that grand challenges (including UN SDGs) cannot be achieved by one entity and tackling them requires multilateral action of public-private partnerships in coordinated fashion with the inclusion of businesses (George et al., 2024).

2.9 The application of grand challenges framework on business for peace

To solve some of the aforementioned issues of the literature, this section will demonstrate the application of a grand challenges framework by George et al. (2016) to business for peace. It not only serves to sensitize business for peace to its place in a broader management literature but alleviates the core issue of its almost absolute reliance on micro theory, and subsequently move it towards mid-range theory (Khan, 2023). In other words, knowledge development is a dynamic process in every discipline (Higgins and Shirley, 2000). As has been posited earlier, business for peace field constitutes of mostly micro-range theory, i.e. a set of working tentative hypotheses or propositions (Higgins and Shirley, 2000), in this case a generalised list of potential actions of how business impacts peace (Fort and Schipani, 2007) which are based on ideas from grand theory (Brown, 2013), i.e. economic growth and trade diminish the probability of war (Oetzel et al., 2009; see also Chapter One). There are also issues with grand (general) or meta theories, which are untestable, unfalsifiable, and highly abstract (Dumay, 2012; Brown, 2013). While mid-range theory is a combination of a better balance between tentative propositions and general ideas of explaining everything (Merton, 1948). Mid-range or middle-range theories, therefore, offer actions and outcomes, and suggest rationalisation and reasonable clarity to the studied phenomenon (Deszczyński and Beręsewicz, 2021). Hence, business for peace assertions,

when placed into the grand challenges framework, will likely move towards mid-range theory, elevating the field to more maturity and clear constructs.

Figure 3. Framework for addressing grand challenges



Source: George et al., 2016, p. 1888

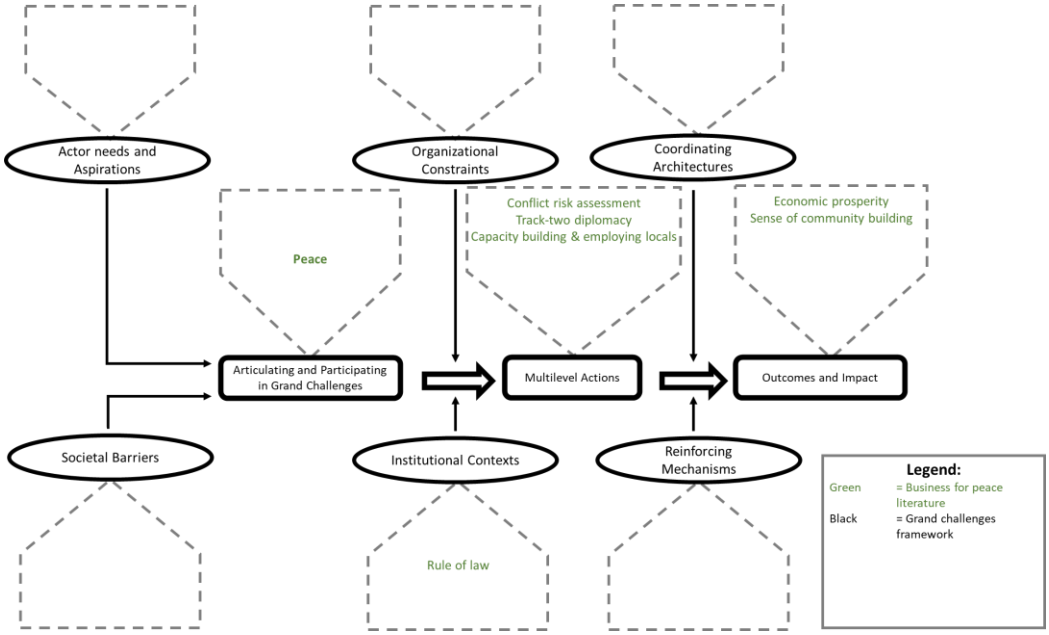
The framework in the above (Figure 3) was developed in a scholarly article by George et al. (2016) which was published in the *Academy of Management Journal*. First and foremost, actors (MNEs, SMEs, other organisations) need to decide about *articulating and participating* in a specific grand challenge and which one to take part in. Engagement, vocalisation, and recognition of grand challenges is a prerequisite for potential success in their solution. Once they decide to articulate and participate in a given grand challenge, they are affected by *actor needs and aspirations* on the one hand, and *societal barriers* on the other. For instance, some type of actors may be invested in the grand challenge of climate change, i.e. the American clothing retailer Patagonia is well known for its sustainability efforts (Rattalino, 2018). Then, *organisational constraints* and *institutional contexts* are likely to enable, allow, and restrict businesses in their endeavours to tackle grand challenges. These two pillars would then affect the *multilevel actions* that organisations undertake to resolve grand challenges. Such actions inevitably will have *outcomes and impact*, therefore *coordinating architectures* and *reinforcing mechanisms* would shape the outcomes of any participation in a grand challenge.

This framework can become host to insights from the business for peace literature, which are mostly (as previously argued) at the micro-theoretical level. Oetzel et al. (2009) showcases the state-of-the-art on business and peace introduced in 2009. Their scholarly work was the starting point of a business for peace framework as the original suggestions on how business promotes peace by Fort and Schipani (2007) did not outline a specific framework. Further it was empirically tested in Iraq by Katsos and AlKafaji (2019) who

extended it to incorporate business practices such as capacity building and local engagement, however they also did not outline a specific framework. The first qualitative study in a post-conflict country suggested a framework on how specific business practices contribute to peace, however it was only applicable for Cyprus and contained specific examples relating to that country (see Katsos and Forrer, 2014, p. 159). Hence, Oetzel et al.'s (2009) scheme is used, although additions outlined by Katsos and AlKafaji (2019) research are incorporated in the framework suggested in this thesis (see Figure 4).

The Figure 4 captures how the grand challenges framework devised by George et al. (2016) can aid in elevating and developing the business for peace field. In addition, the study of grand challenges might also benefit from this embeddedness in terms of developing academic frameworks and the conceptual robustness of this scholarship.

Figure 4. The business for peace literature through the grand challenges lens



Source: George et al. 2016; Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019

In terms of connecting business for peace to grand challenges (see Figure 4), it can be argued that Katsos and AlKafaji's (2019) findings relating to employing locals and capacity building (development trainings to enhance dialogue among workers), Fort and Schipani (2007) assertions on track-two diplomacy, Oetzel et al. (2009) conflict risk assessment are multilevel actions within George et al.'s (2016) framework on addressing grand challenges. Furthermore, if businesses are to enhance or be impacted by the rule of law in the host country (Fort and Schipani, 2007), they could be interpreted as institutional contexts within the grand challenges. Outcomes of multilevel business actions such as track-two diplomacy

and employing locals can potentially create an impact in the form of economic prosperity and sense of community and belonging, thereby potentially increasing the societal resilience towards the disruptions of peace.

Importantly, the use of George et al.'s (2016) grand challenges framework introduces the much-needed mid-range theory to the business for peace field. To explicate, business and peace studies have, as has been demonstrated, mostly been inductive. The result has been studies that uncover highly specific contextualised knowledge but contribute little to constructing a broader systematic framework about how business and peace relate. There are working propositions on how the particular business practices that have been studied may or may not impact peace in a particular context (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). In other words, while testable in other contexts, they do not contribute much to a broader mid-range theory on how business and peace relate. In this sense, the literature on grand challenges might be instrumental in the pursuit of establishing a more structured framework for the emerging business for peace field. It then becomes a good route through which to comprehensively, and in a structured manner, show how peace is pursued, potentially built, or hindered by businesses.

This research agenda has explored and identified how business for peace might be embedded within a much wider grand challenges framework. A peace function or impact can be undertaken through daily business activities (Ganson et al., 2022) however, it is important to highlight that not necessarily all business actions have a peace-component. The suggested research approach might also be interpreted in terms of re-enforcing calls by grand challenges scholars as well, namely Carton et al. (2024, p. 412), who urged future research on grand challenges to relate more closely to the interdisciplinary work on business and society that does not use the terminology of grand challenges, however, may have an obvious link to such challenges. This thesis might also, therefore, be perceived as a response to this request, in terms of extending existing grand challenges research through the development of innovative frameworks and novel insights which are not primarily located within the grand challenges literature or terminology, but which are obviously relevant to an important grand challenge: peace.

2.10 Summary

This narrative literature review summarized the roots of and the current state-of-the-art of the business for peace scholarship. As has been noted, the field has interdisciplinary roots from other social sciences, namely political science, international law, and peace and conflict studies. Many of the leading scholars in this field are lawyers and political scientists (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Forrer, 2009; Fort, 2009; Fort, 2016; Abramov, 2009; Katsos and Forrer, 2014; Katsos and Forrer, 2022; Ford, 2015; Miklian et al., 2016; Ganson and M'cleod, 2019; Miklian, 2019; Ganson et al., 2022; Melin et al., 2023). The main findings of this review on how business can potentially contribute to peace are through their practices such as employing locals and creation of multicultural teams; facilitating sense of community, capacity development and training; practicing track-two diplomacy; supporting rule of law (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019).

Although the business for peace scholarship is a host to detailed insights into how business and peace relate, this review uncovered a number of notable issues that limit its reach and usefulness. First and foremost, there is a lack of a coherent and universally shared definition on peace across both management field (Katsos and Forrer, 2022) and other social sciences (Richmond, 2008; Millar, 2021). Second, related to the first issue, the role of peace has traditionally been viewed as being secured by sovereign governments and not business (Ford, 2015). Third, while the scholarship has an abundance of micro-theoretical assertions (Fort and Schipani, 2007, Oetzel et al., 2009) applied in post-conflict and war zones (Katsos and Forrer, 2014; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019), it lacks mid-range, structured framework on how business and peace may relate.

In addition to unpacking these problems, the literature review has suggested ways to address them, thereby providing ways to move the scholarship forward and generate more academically rigorous, and practically relevant insights. On the first problem, the lack of a clear peace definition, this review suggests adopting a more comprehensive notion of peace (positive peace) and this being embedded in everyday actions by MNEs. In other words, this literature review uncovered there might be a richer definition of peace other than 'lack of war' that would be welcomed (Oetzel et al., 2009). This means that the notion of positive peace such as conditions for social harmony, access to equal opportunities, culture of dialogue should be embraced (see Chapter One; section 2.3; Council of Europe, 2024).

In addition, and related to the previous point, a reason that much remains unknown on business and peace is that the latter has, by and far, been traditionally viewed as being secured by a sovereign government (Fowler and Bunck, 1996; Bray, 2009; Ford, 2015). In addition, the scholarship has not given much consideration to the role of the sovereign government due to micro-contextualised focus on war and post-conflict country focus. However, as the review has shown, MNEs have quickly and steadily become important partners in resolving various social challenges (including peace), a role that strengthened upon the invitation from the United Nations to join them in making the world a more peaceful place for all (Chapter One; see section 1.2; Miklian, 2019). Therefore, it becomes clear that businesses and their leaders have a potential peace role to play. They are important actors in many aspects of society, economy, and everyday life for millions of people around the world (Milliken et al., 2015), and sometime their wealth supersedes the wealth of some countries (Dingwerth and Eckl, 2022).

Furthermore, the scholarship has an abundance of micro-theory, for e.g. that business impacts peace favourably through conducting track-two diplomacy and creation of diverse teams, and lacks mid-range and testable notions on how business and peace relate (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Forrer and Katsos, 2014). To address these, the grand challenges framework (Figure 4) by George et al. (2016) published in the *Academy of Management Journal* was adopted. This framework facilitates a structured and ordered investigation of complex challenges, specifically peace (Figure 4).

By suggesting taking the grand challenges approach to how business and peace relate, it does not attempt to impose a complete research agenda on the field. As such, this does not mean that all business for peace scholars should adopt a grand challenge framework as a panacea for the objections and gaps in the field. There is still room for more contained, micro-theoretical exercises. However, it would be useful to place business for peace into a larger management framework to generate ordered knowledge in the scholarship. Moreover, as Carton et al. (2024) asserted in their scholarly work titled '*How Not to Turn the Grand Challenges Literature Into a Tower of Babel?'* about the importance of bringing disparate bodies of research into grand challenges that does not use such terminology, this thesis can also be interpreted as a potential attempt to answer the calls in the field of grand challenges too.

Noting the above, this review is not without its limitations. First of all, this literature review has used three databases, and it is possible that interesting perspectives on the topic published elsewhere have been omitted. The review also did not incorporate books that have been published within the business for peace scholarship. The few instances where books have been referenced reflect contrasting research culture amongst other academic disciplines, for instance political science and international relations.

Second, although this literature review has given ample attention to the multidisciplinary nature of the field, potential directions to understand the links of other social sciences to business and peace remain. Anthropology, history, military and war studies, psychology and linguistics also can relate to a multifaceted understanding of peace, war, and business. The decision to limit initial multidisciplinary discussion to political science, international law, and peace and conflict studies reflects the very first early roots of the scholarship being embedded in those three fields.

Third, this literature review did not extend the scope of the search to include terms such as state building, institutional reform, justice, non-violence, stability, although arguably these might bear strong commonalities with and are at the periphery of the concept of peace. This decision was made in part for pragmatic reason, that the overview of items to be evaluated would have been so vast as to not be manageable, as well as for theoretical reasons, since including those terms would have moved the review outside of its intended scope.

As this review did not consider the grey literature, future studies could incorporate knowledge outside academic domain and provide insights into the practitioner use of business for peace. This is important as the field's emergence mostly can be attributed to the calls by international organisations to involve business as a peace actor (see Chapter One; Miklian, 2019). Other social sciences might have valuable insights, as peace relates to so many of them. For instance, looking at the concepts of business and peace in anthropology and communication studies is an opportunity for future research to consider broadening the scope of multidisciplinary approach engaged with business for peace debates. Finally, there is scope for future studies to incorporate periphery yet potentially relevant themes such as justice, within the context of studying business and peace. These will generate richer and comprehensive accounts on how the grand challenge of peace is

best tackled and enrich our scholarly understanding of how businesses can potentially contribute to the maintenance of peaceful societies, and eventually a more peaceful world.

Reflecting on the aforementioned limitations and further directions is an important task for future management research, which is facing intensifying pressures to produce societally useful and impactful scholarship (Wickert et al., 2021). It is my hope that this review encourages both business for peace and grand challenges scholars to align in their goals to elevate the management scholarship and inform novel research directions. Whereas most previous work in the emerging field of business for peace has not systematically applied a coherent theoretical lens, this review and thesis attempt to make study of peace more rigorous through the grand challenges framework developed by George et al. (2016) and in turn, connect it to related scholarship and allow two emerging management literatures to speak to one another.

This research approach (grand challenges) is applied to Türkiye, a previously neglected context, and an ideal location to study business and peace. Türkiye has and continues to conduct peacebuilding efforts in Africa and Asia which were perceived as fruitful, and thus increasingly positions itself as a conflict mediator in international relations (Altunisik and Çuhadar, 2010; Özerdem, 2019; Butler, 2024). Moreover, it is a key strategic partner to the EU on climate, security, and economy (European Commission, 2024b) and is proximate to countries at war (Sazak and Woods, 2017), hence increasing the probability that businesses operate with awareness of their peace impact.

3 Chapter Three: Methodology

"All we are saying is give peace a chance."

– John Lennon (1940-1980)

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to illustrate the reasoning behind the methodological choices of this research and highlight its limitations. The study employs qualitative methodology. The qualitative research methodology, research strategy and sample justifications are discussed. Ethical considerations are reflected upon. As this research involved one field trip to Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye in April 2022, the grounds for this specific context will be addressed. The interviews were conducted between March 2022 and January 2023, and annual reports of the interviewed entities are from 2021-2022. The rationale behind the selection of flexible pattern matching analysis for the collected interviews with company managers and representatives from the Chambers of Commerce, and annual organisational reports will be explained. Towards the end of this Chapter, the concluding summary is outlined.

3.2 Research philosophy and strategy

This research has interpretivist undertones which means it *"requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action"* (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). Furthermore, scholars have stressed that interpretivism is particularly useful for the purpose of addressing grand challenges (Edmondson and McManus, 2007; Eisenhardt et al., 2016). In other words, such qualitative approach can be effective in research areas where there is a limited theoretical base with complex concepts that lack straightforward solutions. Nevertheless, as was noted in the first qualitative study on business and peace by Katsos and Forrer (2014), there are barriers to conducting quantitative, larger scale measurements of how business impact peace due to the absence of qualitative data. There is, therefore, a need for more qualitative research in this field (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). Interviewing elite participants reflected widespread practice across management scholarship (Solarino and Aguinis, 2021). Collecting both primary (interviews) and secondary data (annual reports) has an advantage of integrating different sources of data, thereby improving credibility and mitigating bias. As such, data sources are triangulated for the purpose of a comprehensive

understanding of phenomena and maintaining validity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Fusch and Ness, 2015). This thesis also recognises that academics are a profession researching another profession, which is management, thus the emphasis on making a theoretical contribution clearly relevant to, and with respect for, its application (Corley and Gioia, 2011).

3.3 The Turkish context

This research focuses on the potential peace impacts by MNEs active in Türkiye, which is a country close to war zones. Here, businesses may be simultaneously aware of the importance of peace due to the proximity to nearby conflict, yet also detached from such awareness since they are likely to be far enough from war. This study examines, therefore, the important role of studying country contexts that are not necessarily involved in an international armed conflict or war but are geographically close. Through acquiring and evaluating insights from such a context, the current research covers a notable gap in the contemporary business for peace literature. If businesses actually make substantive contributions to peace, this geographic context should perhaps reflect such activity.

Türkiye is a transcontinental country surrounded by three seas: Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea and Aegean Sea. It borders Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq and Syria (Arik, 2020). The Black Sea connects Türkiye to Southeastern Europe and Russia, whilst Istanbul is a regional air hub which is a four-hour flight radius to capital cities in Western and Central Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa (Norton Rose Fulbright and Pekin Bayar Mizrahi, 2023).

According to the World Bank (2024), the Republic of Türkiye is considered an upper middle-income country. It is a member of the G20, which is an intergovernmental forum composed of countries that have the largest economies on the planet (19 countries and the European Union), but it is not a part of G7 – a group consisting of the world's largest advanced economies and liberal democracies (IMF, 2023a). It is largely a free-market economy and is one of the largest economies in Europe, the Middle East and Norther Africa region (Norton Rose Fulbright and Pekin Bayar Mizrahi, 2023). Türkiye is part of EU Customs and Council of Europe, yet remains an EU-candidate (European Commission, 2024b). Türkiye is one of the top global touristic destinations (Okumus et al., 2012). It is also a leading

television content exporter that make Türkiye aware of its strong soft power and cultural diplomacy (Özerdem, 2019). Türkiye is also a secular country with a majority Muslim population (Coskun and Akdere, 2017) and joined North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in 1952 alongside Greece (NATO, 2022).

However, whilst the country is a NATO member and a close European ally, it has also played a significant role as a regional power, for instance after the collapse of the Soviet Union Turkish foreign policy focused on extending its influence in Central Asia (Fidan, 2010). Since the start of the 21st century, the country has extended its influence in the Middle East (Dalacoura, 2021), Overall, Türkiye has facilitated numerous negotiations between conflicting parties, carefully choreographed its peacebuilding policies in Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Myanmar, Cameroon (Aras, 2009; Altunisik and Çuhadar, 2010; Sucuoğlu and Sazak, 2016; İpek, 2021; Tokdemir, 2022; Levorato and Donelli, 2024). The country has, however, been subjected to some criticism regarding its mediator role in the Russia-Ukraine war (Butler, 2024). The Turkish context is, therefore, an intellectually fascinating choice.

The decision to set the study in Türkiye reflected multiple considerations. First, as mentioned earlier, it is located between important economic routes and the crossroads of Europe and Asia, East and West, sharing borders with various countries, including those currently experiencing war and instability. The Turkish approach to peacebuilding is connected to and informed by the country's historical experiences of insecurity and warfare at its borders (Sazak and Woods, 2017). A legacy that implies, perhaps, that dilemmas and opportunities relevant to the academic association between business and peace should be clearly appreciated by firms located in the country.

Referring to what has been mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, various high-profile organisations are pushing the notion that businesses can help build peace (see Chapter One). One of such organisations, Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP), a think-thank headquartered in Sydney, Australia, releases annual reports such as Global Peace Index which is developed by evaluating countries' spending on military expenditure, their ongoing conflict and measure of societal safety and security. One of such annual reports in 2022 identified the Republic of Türkiye *"to be the least peaceful country in the region for 15th year"* (IEP, 2022, p. 18). This research thus creates a second reason to select the study

context in Türkiye, to consider attitudes towards business and peace, within a country that isn't defined as particularly peaceful by some (IEP, 2022; Müftüler-Bac, 1998; Butler, 2024).

Third, despite the above, the Turkish engagement in international peace issues in different parts of the world elevates the country's status as a rising power and peacebuilding actor in international relations (Sucuoğlu and Sazak, 2016; Köse, 2013; Kocadal, 2019; Levorato and Donelli, 2024). Such proactive role might have been impacted, in part, by the famous phrase of the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who said *'peace at home, peace in the world'*, and this has been used to frame the country's international engagement in peacebuilding (Sazak and Woods, 2017, p. 94). According to Köse (2014), Türkiye has advantages as it has a historical past of being an important player in the region.

The world's most developed countries (great powers) usually opt for a military intervention-based peacebuilding approach under the United Nations auspices, while rising powers like Türkiye have embraced a peacebuilding strategy that places less emphasis on military intervention and more on improving the socio-economic dynamics to stop future conflicts from reoccurring (İpek, 2021, p. 171). Much of such efforts are likely to remain shielded from the public eye due to the conflict resolution or peace negotiations matters being undisclosed until the final agreement has been reached (Köse, 2013). Despite that, the Turkish efforts in conflict resolution and global peace matters have been received positively both among the Turkish public and in the wider region (Köse, 2013; Özerdem, 2019). Moreover, it has been argued by Özerdem (2019) who is convinced that Türkiye has a distinctive chance to offer feasible substitutes for traditional conflict responses that possess deficiencies. In other words, Türkiye appears to have been creating their own peacebuilding approach. As Aras (2009, p. 41) commented that, *"Turkey's attempts to broker peace in the Middle East exemplify the fact that the involvement of the so-called peripheral actors in peace-building is likely to contribute to the creation of a new consciousness of peace and problem solving at the regional level, which could pave way for the emergence of regional solutions to regional problems."*

Finally, Türkiye reflects the economic importance of the country and the specific site of the interviews – Istanbul. It is the largest city in the Turkish Republic, the world's 15th biggest transcontinental city and a renowned economic, cultural, touristic and historical hub with the headquarters of many Turkish and foreign multinational companies (OECD, 2008).

Moreover, Istanbul has been a location where different actors from the region can gather and express themselves to a broader audience; and a city that hosts regional peace talks (Köse, 2013; Altunisik and Cuhadar, 2010; Butler, 2024). For instance, in July 2022, Istanbul hosted the negotiation of the Black Sea grain initiative between the United Nations, Russia and Türkiye which would facilitate one of the world's breadbaskets, Ukraine, to transport grain via the Bosphorus (Wintour, 2023). In summary, Türkiye, and specifically Istanbul, were identified as an ideal location to for the empirical element of this study. Through elevating our understanding of business-peace dynamics in such a setting, both theory and practice can be better informed about how big business can perform a core societal role of tackling grand challenges in more meaningful and structured ways.

3.4 Ethical and practical considerations

A research ethics application was submitted to the University of Liverpool's Management School Ethics Committee in November 2021 after two months of preparing the application material. The Committee reviewed the application December 2021 and requested revisions and the provision of more information to justify the number (30) of interviews. The Committee approved the research field trip to Istanbul, Türkiye together with the participant consent form (Appendix 2), participant information sheet (Appendix 3), and interview protocol (Appendix 4) in January 2022. Following that, potential participants and gatekeepers were contacted over e-mail with invitations for the semi-structured interviews. In relation to the field trip, travel safety was an obvious consideration as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2022) advised against travel to certain parts of Türkiye such as the southern borders with Iraq. However, this did not apply to Istanbul, which was classified as a safe destination. A designation that aligns with its status as an important tourist destination and business centre (OECD, 2008). As a result, the field trip risk assessment by the University of Liverpool Management School's Health and Safety Team was granted in March 2022.

The notion of informed consent is essential in terms of ethical considerations for research interviews; this idea serves as to safeguard respondent from personal or professional damage accruing as a consequence of participation in the research project. In particular, if research subject is concerned about their comments or their use, they have the right to withdraw that material from the project. Therefore, respondents must be given

sufficient information to decisions regarding their participation decisions (Yin, 2011 cited in Husband, 2020, p. 3). Some of the interviewees requested a pre-interview telephone or video conversation to understand the research project and establish familiarity. Once a participant agreed to be interviewed, they were given a consent form and participant information sheet. Before the interview, participants were reminded about their right to withdrawal at any point and that the data remained anonymous. Consent forms were signed either in-person or digitally, then scanned and sent back to the researcher. These documents were saved in the University of Liverpool's drive.

Flying to and from Istanbul was not an issue itself, since its airport is a big hub for transcontinental flights. However, there were certain challenges encountered during the research field trip. Given that Istanbul is the world's 15th largest city, with more than 15 million inhabitants (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2022), navigating across the city was not straightforward. Such transportation problems have long been identified as a normal obstacle that those embarking on a field trip must overcome (Morse, 2019). Regarding Istanbul, this difficulty was exacerbated by the fact that there was no popular taxi service (Uber, Lyft) available in Istanbul at the time of the field trip. Uber only started operating in three Turkish cities in 2023. The researcher, therefore, used local BiTaksi app and Istanbul public transport card for buses, trams and underground. However, using local taxis required intermediate levels of the Turkish language, which, fortunately, was possessed by the researcher. The researcher decided to stay at a hotel, found in Booking.com which was located within a close geographic proximity to most of the business districts. However, offices of the organisations were located throughout Istanbul. The interviews were scheduled for, and conducted within, official working hours, which were specified as 08:30 to 17:30. Moreover, scheduling the visit in April 2022 meant that the interviews were held during the holy month of Ramadan, a timescale clash that made travel across the city take longer as the amount of traffic was higher across the whole working day.

Moreover, the researcher has previously visited Istanbul during her undergraduate studies. The first academic conference that the researcher took part in was held at Maltepe University in Istanbul, Türkiye in April 2015, where she presented a paper titled '*Intercultural communication and diplomacy as tools of maintaining peace and security'*. This trip was the researcher's third visit to Türkiye, but her first as a PhD researcher. The

geography and culture of the research setting was moderately familiar to the researcher, who is Kazakh by birth. Turkish and Kazakh cultures are similar in many ways (Aydin, 2004).

The researcher was also acutely sensitive to cultural differences and the importance of being tactful and diplomatic in her use of language. In particular, she made herself aware of any relevant external circumstances that might affect participant availability for e.g. due to Ramadan (Hasan et al., 2021). To recruit participants, the researcher first contacted several former colleagues in her professional network and reached out to various chamber of commerce officials. Next the snowballing technique was deployed (Goldstein, 2002; Noy, 2008), each interviewee was asked to recommend colleagues who could offer additional insights. Other past studies that employed elite interviewing have incorporated reflections on the crucial presence of personal connections (Mikecz, 2012; Morse, 2019). In order to limit the sampling bias which might occur as a consequence of using the snowballing technique, the researcher actively pursued different participant genders and experience level to provide as broad a perspective as necessary.

Researcher bias can be an important consideration during the data collection process. The participants and the researcher are parts of different social worlds and backgrounds. The participants were a mix of Turkish and foreign individuals residing in Istanbul, while the researcher is a Kazakh living in the UK. Therefore, it is possible that the researcher might have been viewed as an outsider (Van Mol et al., 2016). Although previously the researcher had worked in the industry for several years which facilitated an insider outlook in terms of sustaining a professional network in the field and maintaining limited (weak) connections (Rajkumar et al., 2022). Such ties proved to be useful in participants' trust towards the researcher (Kim and Fernandez, 2023). In other words, the researcher stroked sufficient balance between being considered as insider and outsider to the participants.

Finally, the primary data collection ended in January 2023 and thus the researcher did not have to address challenge and ethical dilemmas of data collection during the devastating Türkiye-Syria earthquakes, which occurred in February 2023.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

The sample selected for this study consisted of senior managers in MNEs and representative of Chambers of Commerce based in Türkiye (see Table 5). Participant inclusion criteria were as follows. First, the organisation needed to have a presence in the Turkish market and be categorised as either an MNE or an organisation involved with facilitating international businesses' operations such as Chambers of Commerce. The latter ensured that pertinent information on businesses that they may not directly be aware of themselves or may be reluctant to share (e.g., sensitive information, or matters that they would like to keep out of the public purview) is included in this study. Second, individuals within these organisations were selected on the basis of having senior managerial functions and titles, for instance senior manager, head of communications, regulatory, risk, operations, government affairs; company board member; country director; vice-president; for the chamber of commerce – manager, president, chairman. In other words, these individuals were selected of the basis of possessing relevant professional expertise and insights that help guide this study's understanding of business and peace.

In addition, the researcher had many informal conversations with local professionals during networking events she attended in Istanbul. For instance, the event on April 6th, 2022, on energy transition and climate change organised by law firms Cetinkaya and Clyde and Co (CBC Law Firm, 2022). Those generated some fascinating and rather eccentric comments, perhaps reflective of wider cultural and social attitudes. For instance, one of the individuals said: *"Peace? There is no peace in Istanbul with its 20 million population"* and another individual told me *"You should act like you don't see, you don't hear anything when in Istanbul".*

Table 5. Anonymised list of participants

No.	Industry/Type	Organisation home	For profit?
1	Accounting	USA	Yes
2	Accounting	USA	Yes
3	Automotive	Germany	Yes
4	Automotive	Germany	Yes
5	Automotive	Türkiye	Yes
6	Chamber of Commerce #1		No
7	Chamber of Commerce #2		No

8	Chamber of Commerce #3		No
9	Chamber of Commerce #4		No
10	Chamber of Commerce #5		No
11	Chamber of Commerce #6		No
12	Chamber of Commerce #7		No
13	Chemicals	USA	Yes
14	Chemicals	USA	Yes
15	Energy	Germany	Yes
16	Energy	The Netherlands	Yes
17	Entertainment	USA	Yes
18	Finance	Germany	Yes
19	Finance	Germany	Yes
20	Home Appliances	Türkiye	Yes
21	Manufacturing	Liechtenstein	Yes
22	Manufacturing	The Netherlands	Yes
23	Manufacturing	Türkiye	Yes
24	Marketing	USA	Yes
25	Pharmaceuticals	Türkiye	Yes
26	Professional Services	UK	Yes
27	Professional Services	UK	Yes
28	Professional Services	UK	Yes
29	Professional Services	UK	Yes
30	Professional Services	USA	Yes
31	Technology	Switzerland	Yes
32	Technology	Türkiye	Yes
33	Technology	USA	Yes

This research involved a total 33 interviews. Interviews are a well-established primary data collection source due to their structured and coherent style, and they allow for detailed investigation of the phenomenon (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Rubin and Rubin, 2011). According to Fielding and Thomas (2016), during semi-structured interviews, the interviewer asks the same major questions each time, but is free to change the order and search for more information in their own words. To recruit more participants, this study used a snowballing technique, when a researcher contacts respondents using contact details

supplied by other participants, which is the most prevalent sampling technique in qualitative research (Noy, 2008, p. 329). According to Noy (2008) snowball technique is effectively used to access elites.

Interviewing senior managers and country directors can be considered as interviewing elite informants. There are multiple definitions available for who exactly is an 'elite informant'. Broadly, this term refers to a person or a group of persons that have expert knowledge and considerable professional prestige (Harvey, 2011). Solarino and Aguinis (2021, p. 649) posited that conducting interviews with business elite informants is important because those individuals possess authority over the decision-making of the company and referred to *"Kincaid and Bright (1957) who interviewed high-ranking executives in 37 large business organizations, to understand how company headquarters affected the operations of their subsidiaries and why production was concentrated primarily in a few companies during war''*. In other words, elite interviewing can be a useful methodology for researching business and peace.

The length of the interviews was approximately one hour and were conducted in English language. The interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participant, transcribed, and coded thematically with a flexible pattern-matching approach. The participants were from industries such as finance, technology, entertainment, general manufacturing and professional services. During the transcription of the interviews, as well as data analysis and write-up, the interviewees were presented so that individual respondents could not be identified from their comments, for instance individuals were referenced through designations such as *country director of a German MNE.* The interviews were held in-person (17 interviews) and online over Zoom (16 interviews). Elite participants generally show appreciation towards the flexibility of a remote interview (Stephens, 2007). The face-to-face interviews took place at conference venues and company premises in business districts of Istanbul such as Sisli, Levent and Maslak. Despite that the social science literature provides various studies on elite informants, there is lack of research on understanding elite informants in non-Western settings (Morse, 2019).

In addition, there are some challenges identified in interviewing elites which have been outlined in qualitative literature (Welch et al., 2002; Stephens, 2007; Solarino and Aguinuis, 2021). One of the main challenges identified in the literature on elites was access and balancing the power dynamic (Morse, 2019), although Ostrander (1995) noted that elite

participants tend to be familiar with their impact, thus they understand that their thoughts are important and affect the lives of others. Therefore, elites can also elevate their existing prestige by taking part in a research project (Morse, 2019).

It is crucial to acknowledge that due to various reasons, some interviewees might be reluctant to give honest answers to, at least, some of the more sensitive questions (Kincaid and Bright, 1957; Morse, 2019; Solarino and Aguinis, 2021). Therefore, to undertake research that involves elites, building trust and reliability is important (Thomas, 1993; Mikecz, 2012). In this regard, it has been argued that elite interviewees are more likely to trust foreign researchers than local ones due to the cultural distance (Welch et al., 2002). As such, the researcher's background meant that she was, perhaps, ideally situated to undertake these interviews. The fact that her background has some commonalities with the Turkish culture heightened her sense of cultural and social awareness and so capacity to ask probing questions without causing offence. Nevertheless, status as a foreign national and her degree of obvious detachment from the Turkish scene gave her advantages as an interviewer, when compared with a local. Overall, she possessed a good balance between being perceived familiar and foreign (Van Mol et al., 2016; Rajkumar et al., 2022).

In their study of business activities to promote peace in Cyprus (the first qualitative research in the field), Katsos and Forrer (2014, p. 158) noted that understanding why and how businesses foster peace is likely to generate rich data for specific country-contexts which may allow for comparison of similarities and differences. Moreover, the empirical focus on MNEs has primarily focused on Western multinationals (Sim, 2013; Morse, 2019).

Another crucial element of collecting qualitative data in the form of interviews is the quantity, when it is evident that collecting further data does not reveal any new information which is a process described as having reached theoretical saturation (Fusch and Ness, 2015; Foley et al., 2021). The term theoretical saturation is derived from grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Theoretical saturation is seen as an important methodological part of qualitative research (Saunders et al., 2018). Thinking about how many interviews are enough for theoretical saturation varies from discipline to discipline and between scholarly communities. However, in any social science that uses qualitative research methods, saturation is an important concept for judging the adequacy of purposive sample size. The significance of sample cannot be understated as data gathered from elite informants, who have networks, influence, and impact on their firms' operations, whilst challenging to

access, draws on considerable expertise. The quantity of participants should, therefore, not been interpreted as diminishing the contribution of this data collection process or its overall validity. The data saturation started reaching after twenty interviews, however the researched used another available avenue (using secondary data) to ensure that the saturation is achieved.

Data triangulation is an effective way to ensure data saturation and increase the accuracy and reliability of the research findings the use of multiple methodological resources (Merriam, 1995; Denzin, 2009; Fusch and Ness, 2015; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Creswell and Poth, 2018). The data triangulation especially benefits qualitative research that employs elite interviews as it complements the primary data and facilitates a better understanding of the situation that is studied, specifically for topics that can be perceived as sensitive (Vanner and Kimani, 2017). Therefore, it was important to increase the reliability of the interviews with another source of information. This was achieved through secondary data, i.e. accessing reports from the websites of the interviewed organisations, which were researched in order to establish wider context (Appendix 5). The reports investigated for this thesis were published in 2021 and 2022, with two exceptions for Chambers of Commerce (2018 and 2020) as their latest reports were not available. During the data organisation phase of the study, there was also the issue that company reports were often aspirational documents, so the researcher had to be acutely aware that the firm might state what is aspires to achieve rather than how it is actually operating. For instance, a company might claim that it aims to increase the use of renewable energy but has yet to implement this agenda (Booth et al., 2023).

Data coding is a crucial part of data analysis procedure (Bryman, 2012). In order to interpret the rich and complex responses from semi-structured elite interviews and company reports, both sources of data were pattern matched in a flexible way. Pattern matching is a valuable tool for qualitative research which allows for the comparison of empirical data with theoretically derived patterns, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings (Bouncken et al. 2021). According to Sinkovics (2018), while pattern matching has its origins in quantitative research, it can be adapted effectively for qualitative contexts, and can contribute to bridging theoretical propositions with empirical data, making it a useful tool for theory-building and theory-testing.

Following from this, a thematic coding was used (King, 2004). Thematic analysis approaches can be used *"with data sets of varying sizes and can be applied to a wide range of research topics and it can be used from a number of theoretical perspectives"* (King and Brooks, 2018, p. 220). This type of analysis has also been suggested as helpful during the interpretation of rich data involving texts such as interviews or reports (Nowell et al., 2017). Similar strategies have been routinely deployed in past studies in this field (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019), reflective of the fact that such approaches generate an important lens through which construct the thematic analysis strategy.

Furthermore, thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that can be applied across a wide range of epistemologies and research questions in terms of identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis facilitates the identification of themes and meanings within a context (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Scholars have highlighted the importance of using relevant word-processing software for coding (Stanley and Temple, 1995). This research utilised the combination of traditional methods such as sticky notes with the NVivo software which have been argued to offer excellent data management for the analysis and subsequent write-up process (Maher et al., 2018).

For the data analysis, the interview transcripts and company reports were uploaded into NVivo and were read several times to understand their contents. Afterwards, first codes were made that were later grouped into larger themes. As King (2004) explains, a code in qualitative research is an identification linked to a text or an excerpt of an interview that relates that is considered as vital information by the researcher. Codes were made that captured the perception of MNE managers in Türkiye about the role of businesses as peacebuilders, or more precisely: a) the range of MNE actions that are likely to impact peace; b) the potential outcome for positive, negative and ambiguous peace impact of such actions. After this first step of detailed coding, commonalities between codes and points of difference were teased out into specific themes that were later put into overarching categories. An example includes the theme of MNEs employing locals, which was then placed into the category of human resource management practices. This reflects the hierarchical thematic coding that can be very useful to cluster multiple distinct themes into broader higher-order concepts (King, 2004). Ultimately, these identified themes were placed onto the grand challenges framework (George et al., 2016) developed in Chapter Two. The

latter was used as a sensitizing instrument. This means that the observations of the interviewees on business and peace were unaffected by the substantive and theoretical insights of the grand challenges field. As different constructs and themes emerged from the analysis, the researcher attempted to challenge them and think of other possible illustrations (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Re-reading, revisiting research questions and analysis also contributed to the rigour of the process. Upon choosing the relevant quotes, each theme has undergone thorough analysis. The coding process was conducted by the researcher and later moderated by the supervisory team for the independent analysis.

3.6 Summary

This Chapter discussed the rationale behind the methodological choices of this research. The appropriateness of qualitative approach, the choices of MNEs in the Turkish context and collection of primary and secondary data were discussed. The decisions that lead to the data analysis have been demonstrated. There are some limitations to this study. First, as mentioned earlier, the interviews were conducted in English language. While English is a language that is widely understood at elite levels in Türkiye since the times of Ottoman Empire (Arik, 2020), it is possible that not everyone in the target participant pool could understand English on a level that is required for an interview of a research project. Second, it is possible that there is social desirability bias in terms of how questions are answered during the interviews (Morse, 2019; Solarino and Aguinis, 2021). Third, there is little guidance in the existing business for peace literature about navigating such study in a context that's close to conflict and war zones. As already has been said in earlier sections, this is the first qualitative study exploring business practices within a country that is not at but is proximate to war. The collected primary (33 semi-structured interviews) and secondary (20 company reports) data will be analysed in the next Chapter and place the research findings into the grand challenges framework developed by George et al. (2016).

4 Chapter Four: Research findings

"Peace is not mere absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice."

— Spinoza (1632-1677)

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter analyses the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with high-level MNE managers in Türkiye (see section 4.2) and corroborates their findings through the use of secondary sources, such as non-financial annual and ESG reports (see section 4.3). In relation to the former, it is important to note that interviews were also conducted with individuals in business-adjacent semi-public organisations, such as Chambers of Commerce, to obtain a more complete overview of how business and peace interconnect. The use of secondary sources is similarly important, as there is the potential for interviews to omit key information on the business-peace relationship (as interviewees may be unfamiliar with or reluctant to discuss certain company actions). This effect might also be compared with how an exclusive use of secondary sources would risk generating a partial understanding of the core themes.

The grand challenges framework (see Chapter Two; Figure 3 and 4) was used as a sensitizing instrument to develop and order knowledge about how business and peace relate in the Turkish context. In what follows, each section constitutes an element of this framework, except for the first section, which establishes the general link between business and peace. In summary (see section 4.4), this Chapter furthers our knowledge on relation between business and peace by placing business for peace as a grand challenge.

4.2 Negative peace, positive peace, and business?

To start, it is important to establish that business practitioners recognise the mostly academic and theory led associations between business and peace, and to understand the broad nature and characteristics of those connections. A sizeable portion of the interviewees (26 out of 33) explicitly identified a link between general business activities and peace, which is broadly understood as the state of harmonious and equitable coexistence that covers both the absence of violence and injustice as well as the general well-being and society's sustainable development. Whereas the former reflects the

literature's negative peace concept, the latter concerns positive peace (see also Chapter One and Two).

With regard to an emphasis on negative or positive peace, managers most frequently focused on both and elaborated on how their employers' activities impacted and were impacted by the presence or lack of peace. Concerning negative peace, one interviewee observed that his business refused to operate in a country that it deemed responsible for starting a violent conflict, thereby exerting pressure against such actions (emphasis added):

> *"I think multinational companies play a very important role in peace. I am saying this because almost all multinational companies that I know have ethics and values in place which underline, for instance, human rights, democracy and democratic values. And it was truly observable in the current events unfolding in Russia.* ***My firm has a network that ceased its operations in the Russian Federation three weeks ago, right after the invasion of Ukraine started. I think that's mainly attributable to the core values that applies to a lot of multinational companies****."*
> *— Partner, UK MNE, professional services*

Furthermore, as noted above, some managers highlighted the role that business plays in fostering positive peace. Several interviewees identified effects stated through organisational practices, for example the construction and development of diverse work teams. In extension, an interviewee expounded on the importance of the norms that businesses carry and transfer to the general public. S/he, for instance, stated that (emphasis added):

> ***"I'm a true believer that business has a role to play in peacebuilding in many ways, and one of which is I'm observing day to day actually. At the moment, for example, that the entertainment industry and films and series, they bring cultures closer to each other.*** *People start learning about different cultures, and there are a number of surveys that prove that watching a specific show from a country makes people more interested in learning the culture, learning about that country.* ***So I think this cultural closeness is one place that business has a role to play...I'm sure that business has a role to play in strengthening the peace in the given location, both via its practices, also by bringing people together..."***
> *– Country Director, US MNE, entertainment*

While both managerial views on positive and negative peace corroborate that business and peace have a relationship that needs to be investigated, some interviewees were more critical about the relevance of this scholarship and doubtful about its practical application. Some managers maintained that there was no such link and that whilst

businesses in general, including MNEs, might not typically be in favour of the absence of negative peace (in the form of violence, war, etc.), they had no real power to prevent or end conflicts. The following interview quote is indicative of this stance:

> *"But all of us think about the Ukraine and Russia war right now.* ***I believe the business community might not be in favour of such kind of conflicts. However, when unexpected developments, such as a new war, arise then the business community has very little impact in protecting or contributing to peace.*** *It has an impact, but I'm more a believer in that companies are established for maximising their profits and business has a very small impact on peace."*
> *— Board member, UK MNE, professional services #2*

Furthermore, the interviews performed with partners close to MNEs uncovered a more nuanced view. As outside observers of businesses, and without immediately related interests, they were able to identify (and communicate without damaging their own interests) that businesses might act opportunistically in conflicts with varied peace impacts. This activity might, for instance, involve engaging with the war economy. In particular, business might exploit the emergence of distinctive wartime markets, for example through provision of security services or the manufacture of servicing of weapons (White and MacLeod, 2008; Ebrahim, 2010; LaBelle, 2023). One representative of a Chamber of Commerce believed that:

> *"****So in the end, it is always an economic interest that leads the war and there are thousands of business leaders involved in this****, including also some are opportunistic. Also, Swiss bankers were very opportunistic during the Second World War, happily accepting different types of resources, gold doesn't smell…"*
> *— Chamber of Commerce #2*

Whilst already mentioned above, it is important to stress that businesses, both wittingly and unwittingly, affect peace. Continuing the previous examples, the business (and its networks) which ceased operations in a country that it deemed responsible for starting a war might have taken the decision due to different motives, one of them clearly connecting to taking a public stance on peace (Financial Times, 2022; OECD, 2022; Mol et al., 2023; Melin et al., 2023). Alternatively, the role of the entertainment and film industry in bringing disparate cultures together might be interpreted as affecting peace. This activity facilitates dialogue, understanding and tolerance that might sow the seeds of peace (UNESCO, 2021;

Fort and Haugh, 2020). Peace might, therefore, emerge tangentially as a positive, probably unintended, consequence of daily business actions.

These insights connect to broader observation shared amongst respondents that traditionally, the focus of businesses was almost exclusively to strengthen stakeholder value and profit, but such assumptions are now being challenged and approaches are changing (Cumming, 2022; Leonidou et al., 2024). To quote a United States Supreme Court opinion: "*while it is certainly true that a central objective of for-profit corporations is to make money, modern corporate law does not require for-profit corporations to pursue profit at the expense of everything else, and many do not do that"* (Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., 2014). There is currently increasing public pressure on businesses to address societal needs both in theory and practice (Wickert et al., 2021; Ledbetter, 2016; Gallo et al., 2023 European Commission, 2024a). In short, business goals might now more frequently and directly include peacebuilding; as another Chamber of Commerce manager noted:

> *"**Well, I think, the relationship between business and peace, I think is going to be more and more discussed, especially amongst business and political leaders in the coming years** because currently the state of the world economy is in a very complex situation, there are many ongoing and frozen conflicts around the world. **The economic model that we are pursuing since many years, the consumer and shareholder capitalism model, is not working as it used to be**, a new kind of approach of capitalism is needed… even in our daily lives, in every aspect of our lives, businesses can touch upon us. It's very interesting and the relationship between those two terms {business and daily life/wider social issues etc) is getting more important each day. And **there are many big challenges that are ahead of us such as to have a better 21st century**, the relationship between the two terms needs to be studied more because big challenges are ahead despite the pandemic being gone… **But also, climate crisis, geopolitical issues, the rise of digitalization altogether can be studied in the frame of the relationship between business and peace**, I think it's going to be a more interesting topic in the coming years."*
>
> *— Chamber of Commerce #5*

Businesses are playing an increasing role in matters of peace and war, and other societal challenges. This reflects their evolving place within wider society and mounting pressure for companies to increase their engagement with local communities beyond a classic no harm stance (Miklian et al., 2016; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019; Bisoux, 2019). Overall, there is a reasonable link between business and peace. The majority of interviewees observed a substantive association through tackling negative peace in limited manner and

fostering positive peace in a proactive fashion, although some were more critical and perceived an ambiguous relationship or struggled to specify any clear association. Peace outcomes might result from purposeful business action or unintentional impacts. In other words, the studied context of Türkiye is host to distinct and opposing views of how business and peace relate, overlapping and adding to those covered by the extant literature (see Chapter Two). It is, therefore, important to disentangle this complex matrix of relations; hence the grand challenges framework, that was developed in Chapter Two, is employed to achieve this goal. This framework enables an investigation into how peacebuilding spans businesses' own needs and the opportunities and constraints created by external factors. It also facilitates understanding about how such factors might subsequently influence the different levels and types of concrete and discernible multilevel peacebuilding actions. Ultimately, there is potential for different results of such actions – positive, negative, and ambiguous.

4.2.1 Articulating and participating in grand challenges

Peace

As the above analysis indicates, there is public pressure for businesses to address societal needs, although which of many social challenges are prioritised by specific businesses might primarily reflect the personal preferences of the senior management. In this study, the articulation of, and participation in, building peace is central, although the framework applied might also be deployed to understand other core challenges or distinct elements of peace, such as the distribution of wealth, the climate crisis or gender (in)equality.

4.2.2 Actor needs and aspirations

First and foremost, businesses aim to make profits, and this profit-based motive might mean that they do not actively participate in peacebuilding (or any other grand challenge). In addition, there were a plethora of dilemmas regarding the possibility of mixed motives that MNEs might pursue if they decide to tackle a particular grand challenge.

Profit

The first view holds that a pure profit maximisation focus means that businesses, including MNEs, can create tensions in their endeavour to address grand challenges as a consequence of competing priorities over which specific grand challenge to resolve. As Ledbetter (2016, p. 241) observed about the scepticism towards business intention to pursue peace: *"many will point to the profit motive as a concern that gives rise to suspicion when it comes to associating business with actions that advance peace"*.

For instance, endeavours to minimise the exploitation of natural resources in African countries might negatively impact local employment opportunities and reinforce conditions for poverty amongst the community (George et al., 2016). Similarly, if an IT company gave priority to developing high-tech products for consumers in developed countries, rather innovations designed to advance food supply in developing economies, peace might deteriorate through widening inequalities or social unrest. This, in turn, might also exacerbate existing grand challenges such as global warming and climate change. In extreme cases, businesses might be in favour of the absence of negative peace; if the violent conflict creates sufficient market opportunities. This view was articulated during the interviews. For instance, one participant commented that it:

> *"**Depends on the industry and depends on the business model that companies are following**. So if you are like an oil business, how can you contribute to the world peace? Like, OK, you can take care of your people, employees, and people inside the circle might be quite comfortable. What is the result? Or, for example, in Africa, there are millions and millions of people/children dying from hunger, but within a couple of metres across you can feed those people. So that's the reason why I am more on this second option that those businesses focus on profits and hence have a small impact on peace. **Some businesses have better impact, but some businesses do not and may benefit from lack of peace. For example, the defence business, they are selling high technology, mass destruction, bombs. How can we say that they contribute to peace**?"*
> *– Board Member, UK MNE, professional services*

Furthermore, some managers held a belief that both human nature and firms are self-interested, hence individuals (including managers and leaders) and organisations are driven largely by their personal ambitions and aspirations. A manager from German MNE said that interpersonal conflict is human, and business is not capable of sustaining peace in the form of social harmony, between people who work together. As regards war, s/he

suggested that business had, at most, a marginal role. This interviewee, therefore, commented that:

> *"**There has never been in history that there is no war**. I wish it could be the other way around, but of course it is not. **It's the related to human nature, mainly.** I think this is not mainly related to the business, this is related to human nature because we are always seeking for self-interests. **This is, according to our nature, so nations have self-interest, business has self-interest.** In every company, so of course there is office politics. So because there are rumours and there are always different personalities and there are always conflicts. And it is human. There is always some conflict. So I don't believe that business can affect or can sustain or can provide such peace around."*
> *– Manager, German MNE #2, finance*

A participant from an accounting firm also reflected on human nature, observing that*:*

> *"Countries prefer to have business with the countries that they have the same ideas like, for example, European Union is likely to have business between each other because they have the same ideas, but now it's become very different. But then it all goes to the human nature to have a relation to business for somebody whom you know."*
> *VP, US MNE, Accounting*

The second view is counterposed and instead holds that businesses, and MNEs especially, are engines of growth and prosperity through their employment and value generation, as well as through their various activities as investors and government partners. They might improve the standard of living directly through innovations that improve society's overall well-being. Sometimes through the juxtaposition of the profit incentives with more social applications, for instance new medical products. Furthermore, businesses also increase tax generation and collaborate with government to improve its services and thereby, the functioning of the public sector with its various amenities and general services – from education to healthcare and technology (Micheli et al., 2012). In short, business operations form the wealth basis of society and so can sometimes support government services. In other words, they can generate favourable, substantial peace impacts precisely because they are profit oriented. Therefore, multinationals might be able to contribute favourably to peacebuilding and other grand challenges. This perspective was expressed by the managing director of a German MNE:

> *"**I do not agree that businesses are only profit oriented, yes, profit oriented, but we should not forget this is mutual**. And that means this is*

always win-win. Of course, when a company decides to invest in a country to increase its business activities, this company should always think of getting profit. No one would decide to invest in a country where they would have a negative profit. ***But that is the concept of business. But by doing so, the country is also getting profit****. This is a win-win idea. So I don't believe it."*
– Managing Director, German MNE, automotive industry

For this individual, the act of investing in a particular country could be equated with the facilitation of peace and that this effect held even if the country had an authoritarian government, precisely because foreign investment was interpreted as increasing national prosperity and therefore addresses potential economic determinants of conflict. Although business is not neither the main nor the only actor with the capacity to generate peaceful outcomes.

"So ***that's why even if business is a profit oriented, it also contributes to peace because the more you make investment in a country, the more you enhance your business activities in the country, the more chance you have to increase peace in the country****. Because even if a dictator would be glad to welcome more investments in his country, and that could be even the kind of reason for increasing peace rather than getting worse. So I believe business has really a good and positive impact on peace.* ***But of course, business alone could not keep this peace in the country****."*
– Managing Director, German MNE, automotive industry

Social pressure on business is a long-established phenomenon (Pacheco and Dean, 2015) and companies, especially MNEs, are increasingly expected to fulfil roles in society beyond their economic function of generating profit for their shareholders. The attitudes and values prevalent amongst society as whole, proximate local communities and their customers often have profound impacts on their strategy, marketing, and subsequent profitability. For instance, one interviewee mentioned that whilst profit maximization was critical to firms, there have been recent developments, such as those relating to global warming and geopolitical tensions, that have pushed firms to adopt broader goals relating to sustainability and peace. This interviewee observed that businesses might become an important partner in realising the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This individual argued that this ethical and social orientation was compatible with the daily business goals of profit maximization.

"I think the sustainability and also diversity, which is also included in the broader term of sustainability, is getting more and more important, from climate to social impacts. And I am proud of say that my current

organisation is a sustainability leader in its own sector in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index. ***We are putting sustainability at the heart of our business strategies.*** *It's part of all the decisions that we are taking and* ***we have started this journey almost 15 years ago...we didn't start to do this only for big profits, but to sustain the profits,*** *I think it is getting vital and all of the business should take actions and to shape their strategies according to Sustainable Development Goals."*
– Assistant Manager, Turkish MNE, home appliances

(In) Stability

Noting the previous discussion on profit as actor (MNE) aspiration, interviewees raised the importance of political, economic, and social stability for business and, in particular, for foreign investment. Although it was recognised that some firms might benefit from instability, businesses are generally attracted towards stable countries and prioritise actions that can improve such stability and, as a consequence, the quality of the wider business environment. As an employee of a US company observed:

"I think for any investment decision, ***stability and peace is the first basic thing that companies are looking into*** *and having that much instability in the region that impacts Türkiye financially, from a humanitarian point of view, from internal politics point of view, and is a big problem for the business to adjust."*
– Country Director, US MNE, entertainment

Stability appears to be especially important, for instance, for sectors such as film and music, dependent on capacity of customers to engage in leisure expenditure, thrive in stable and peaceful contexts (DeBauche, 2023). This perspective was highlighted by two managers from different sectors who observed that:

*"****Business leaders wish to have a predictable and peaceful environment, where income levels are increasing and people are able to purchase things.*** *Companies are serious about this topic, but you can always ask them 'how serious' they are about it."*
– Country Director, Swiss MNE, technology

*"****For long term investments like energy and oil investments, all the business people from every country would seek stability and peace.*** *So where there is a war, there will be no means or long term business investments. So oil and energy investments could be like that.* ***Car and manufacturing need peaceful environment. Also, cultural, I would say, entertainment industries, not only need peace, but they also facilitate peace in terms of that, you have to bring people from the other countries, cultural events and big cultural events are also a presentation,***

I would say, to other people about local population and its culture. For example, if you have prejudices about another country, it sort of reflects in your music, theatre, and film."
– Director, Turkish MNE, pharmaceuticals

Even though the above participant claims that culture and film industries facilitate peace, it has also been argued that, despite all the effort and noble sentiments, cinema may not have succeeded as a peace ambassador, and in the last hundred years has even been used for the purposes 'boosting war effort' and 'justifying military action' (Koppes and Black, 1990; Hamilton and Chojenta, 2024; Roberts, 2024). The same interviewee also referenced the benefits of instability for war related industries, in particular the surge in demand for weapons. Arguing that the potential for conflict might actually encourage investment in instable territories, and thereby might create negative consequences (Pinto and Zhu, 2022).

"War related industries and weapon producing companies, I assume, they project their investments in, according to the territory or countries, where such wars could happen more frequently than anywhere else, and they concentrate on invest on those territories."
– Director, Turkish MNE, pharmaceuticals

The sentiment implies that most often, stability of the economy, as well as the socio-political environment, is vital for most businesses, and hence they might have a strong incentive to safeguard peace.

"I spent around five years in different countries for projects, for different projects, and three of that five years was in Africa. But there were some challenges. For instance, the biggest challenge for me was the security there, ***because a mining business is an expensive business. So that's why we needed good security****."*
– Country Manager, Dutch MNE, energy

The opposite is, however, logically appropriate for those businesses that stand to accrue increased profits from a conflict (Pinto and Zhu, 2022). Scepticism was also expressed about the extent to which most businesses really sought to promote peace. The following three quotes re-enforced the perspective that certain industries (private military companies, defence; construction) may be more likely to profit from instability than others and asserted that there are diverse historical examples when businesses profited from the absence of peace (Ebrahim, 2010; Østensen, 2013; Butler, 2024; Aparac, 2024).

*"**Maybe construction companies benefit from war because everything is destroyed, so they need to rebuild. It's a new business for them**."*
– Country Director, Dutch MNE, energy

*"The defence industry itself is definitely a major influence to have regularly wars so that a new weapons and new supply is created that also all the weapons are used in battle so that they can be replaced. **So war creates demand for the defence industry**. **War helps to get hold of natural resources, oil wells and gas fields and other matters.** So what do you think it was welfare to the start first Iraq war? Not at all. It was about securing the energy supply."*
– Chamber of Commerce #2

*"This is not company view, but a personal view. **Global companies require peace to conduct their business unless the business is in defence industry. That's clear that profit is the purpose of business**."*
– Country Director, Swiss MNE, technology

The latter interviewee noted that proximity to, but not involvement in, a conflict could benefit business. Whilst, neighbours of Türkiye experienced conflict, there weren't any significant negative impacts on firms located in Türkiye, certainly in relation to his sector, which covered robotics, heavy electrical equipment, and automation technology. Furthermore, according to him, reconstruction after the end of the conflict could generate substantive business opportunities across various industries.

To sum up, whilst most MNEs, depending on their industry and potentially other factors, require a stable environment within which to operate, some businesses will thrive within an instable context. These findings imply that profit and (in)stability play a vital role for companies when articulating and participating in the grand challenge of peacebuilding. The profit-based motive of businesses might mean that they abstain from actively participating in peacebuilding (or any other grand challenge). However, participants asserted that business activity on its own has the capacity to substantially contribute to peace through improving the functioning of wider society, whether or not they purposefully or passively engage with grand challenges.

4.2.3 Societal barriers

Societal (and spatial) barriers might also affect the relations between business and peace. This can occur as a consequence of the geographical location of firms or the distribution of natural resources. In addition, business is affected by the broader societal context.

Geographical location

Some participants claimed that the geographical location of a country where the MNE was based played an important role in whether they were capable of contributing to peace. For instance, one manager noted that:

> *"…due to geography Türkiye is one of the places where people think a lot about politics and its impact on business and society.* ***Managers and senior level leaders in Türkiye may be more involved in this topic than in other countries due to geography****."*
> *– Manager, Liechtenstein MNE, manufacturing*

A country manager from a German MNE in the automotive industry also asserted that geographical location was critical; further arguing that, for his company, the level of (in)stability in Türkiye had negative impacts. He commented that:

> *"****It's (Türkiye) in a very critical geopolitical location, which means when there is something political instability*** *or economic instability, of course, our business is in fact influenced mostly in a negative way."*
> *– Country Manager, German MNE, automotive*

Furthermore, another participant highlighted the importance of appraising the suitability for business of a country in terms of the proximate countries. For example, connectivity between neighbouring states as well as the stability and prosperity of those bordering countries, factors which affect market opportunities and profitability. Countries in close proximity were also inclined to influence each other, for example in relation to social and political institutions and agendas as well as cultural and or consumer preferences. This interviewee observed that:

> *"****You cannot consider a country just by itself. You have to consider its surroundings. So Türkiye has eight land borders, and many sea borders****.…Normally, countries have like one or two borders or two or five borders, but we've got almost ten borders, maybe too many borders, including the sea borders. Not all of the countries are stable and most of them are relying on each other.* ***Türkiye cannot be compared to the very secure, stable countries just like Switzerland or Finland or Norway.*** *People, especially I see the younger generation complain about arguments about why we are not like that. This is not like that. You are not like that because of your geographical situation."*
> *– VP, US MNE, accounting*

This participant linked the priorities that countries set for themselves with the type of neighbours they possess, citing the example of Organization of the Black Sea Economic

Cooperation (2024). This regional organisation was established in 1994 in Istanbul and focuses on multilateral economic initiatives aimed at peace and prosperity, consisting of 13 member countries (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Türkiye, and Ukraine). According to this interviewee, relationships with neighbouring countries are crucial, as together those countries can co-build peace, and mutual prosperity. He commented:

> *"…imagine that you live in neighbourhoods, most of your neighbours are not secure enough so that you're getting into your home, you don't feel yourself secure.* ***So it's good to have neighbours to support each other's security and business. Through this way, they can increase their wealth together, and if they understand that, they will start acting together. Or improve their commerce together, then peace together****. That was the reason they set up the Black Sea trade community."*
> *– VP, US MNE, accounting*

This interviewee further explained that, due to the geographical location, it is crucial to understand those proximate countries to grasp the impact of wider social issues, such as immigration, on business and wider society in Türkiye. It was emphasised that there are few states in the world where a wealthy nation is surrounded by non-wealthy nations.

> *"And if there's any instability in one country you can see here by geography automatically, the people of that society would like to shift to the nearby country, where they think they can secure their families and they can earn more income to protect the future, the immigration brings a lot of dynamics that are changing the country.* ***If you look at the world, you cannot find a wealthy nation surrounded by non-wealthy nations, so geography is a key factor****."*
> *– VP, US MNE, accounting*

Natural resources distribution

Access to natural resources can long been recognised as an import goal in armed conflicts and there is a widely debated conviction that ever since humans existed, they aimed to secure their own safety and security by combating others, thus as humans organised themselves into groups, the need for war became inevitable (von Elbe, 1939; Wright, 1957). More than a quarter of the interviewees (9 out of 33) raised the challenge derived from natural resource distribution. As a Chamber of Commerce representative observed:

> *"So I think you can always go back in history where economic interests were somehow fuelling politicians and the political system to conduct*

wars. History is full of that. You can see when because very often again, you have when it's about war and about economics, war is economics. ***War is about resources. War is about mobilizing resources for war and also then getting control over resources****."*
– Chamber of Commerce #2

This person further posited that the main source of conflicts were about resources and geographical locations:

"Trade plays an important role here in these matters of negotiation because as ***Russia is a very dominant player within the provision of non-renewable resources and energy, it plays a vital role in the energy supply, both for Europe and also for Türkiye. So for that reason, business or trade is very relevant and is definitely something that always needs to be taken into consideration*** *when you are trying to negotiate…But at the same time, with all of these territorial matters, you always have associated positive trade relationships and they have to be somehow part of the future plan also for peacekeeping. Because in the end, it always boils down when we are thinking about conflicts.* ***The main source of conflicts is about resources and geopolitical geographical locations, because that's the major driver of why you have the problem.*** *Between Russia and Ukraine, because it's so vital for Russia to ensure that this country is not drifting too much into the Western hemisphere because then it is less and more and losing strategic grip on the territory that Ukraine represents."*
– Chamber of Commerce #2

Such sentiments were shared by two other MNE counterparts. Managers from a pharmaceutical company and account firm argued that:

*"****So if we define war as military activity to gain more resources,*** *and these resources will be, of course, utilized by government and business people of the winning country. So if peace will not result in that business will acquire all the resources they dream, then they will not act against the war.* ***If the war continues, more weapons will be used and more weapons will be sold. So it's also kind of evidence that why stop the war? Because the war is the only, the ultimate appropriate situation that you gain more money because there is no war, you cannot sell well.*** *So all the weapons producing countries, actually theoretically businessmen would not be very upset about the wars in the world, I would say."*
– Director, Turkish MNE, pharmaceuticals

*"****Access to resources in different parts of the world is basically creating the wars*** *and most of the conflict in the world."*
– VP, US MNE, accounting

While the above viewpoints were related to connecting a lack of peace to the defence industry, a manager from a German MNE referred to the energy sector

as the potential contributor to global conflicts. This individual explicitly argued that energy sources often undermined peace through stimulating political and social unrest and, ultimately, wars over access to those resources, and commented that:

> *"I'm just thinking about the conflicts around Türkiye and, for example, energy sector, oil and gas companies. So who would like to invest, for example, the natural gas pipelines in North Syria has a direct influence on conflicting groups or the oil resources in Iraq? And so these are more or less related to the energy sources, as you know**. I would say some of these energy sectors are a focus point of these conflicts**."*
> *– Manager, German MNE, automotive*

Another interviewee from a German MNE extended those arguments. This manager mentioned that it is not just energy supplies that increases tension, but also other resources that are deemed valuable such as gold and similar precious metals:

> *"For example, as I said, when it comes to national reserves, it doesn't have to be energy. I don't know, **maybe also gold or other materials. So I think this could be an example where really conflicts can escalate**."*
> *– Country Manager, German MNE, energy*

A participant from the film and entertainment industry voiced a view that firms which take sides in a war or conflict situations might exacerbate the escalation of the conflict (see Roberts, 2024). Whilst businesses are expected to choose a stance on a particular political or social issue, they also might become part of the core problem:

> *"I think there are occasions. For example, let's take the case of the Eastern Mediterranean, and companies being included in the drilling processes of Cyprus, for example southern Cyprus. That was an interesting case to observe from Türkiye's point of view, and it was increasing the tension. **And yet those companies were taking a stance on one side of this issue, which might have led into increased tensions and even an armed conflict, actually**. And I think that that's a very interesting case, that some businesses, they don't hesitate still to be a part of that drilling process in East Mediterranean."*
> *– Country Director, US MNE, entertainment*

Furthermore, a board member from a British MNE highlighted that access to clean water and air pollution as natural resources distribution issue. It was further voiced by this individual that profit maximisation may well be a reason for this challenge, however resolving that challenge is not possible without a coordinated local and international collaboration (George et al., 2016). Access to water is gaining increasing academic and policy attention, also specifically in relation to peace (Dell'angelo et al., 2018; Dirioz, 2023).

*"**As we speak, there are millions and millions of people who don't have access to the clean water. The oceans are getting polluted daily, the air we inhale is also getting more polluted day by day, and it's not sustainable.**.. So we are a consuming resources in our world, like those resources are endless…I think the primary reason is the economic system, greed over maximizing the purpose that has to do with it. And I think that there must be a regulatory body that regulates the behaviour of the organizations and a new culture, like businesses have to make an impact that matters from a peace perspective, will add value and contribute to the world but it's a collective effort that needs to be planned on a higher level**."***

– Board Member, UK MNE, professional services

*"…when it comes back to **this whole subject of peace and business**, because if we protect the planet, we'll have peace. **If we're not fighting over water resources and other things, then we will have peace**."*

– Chamber of Commerce #3

Ultimately, there was a call for renewed shift in vision about the social impact of multinational companies as these two participants have voiced. Such responses seemed to suggest that peace objectives required a shift in the vision and focus of MNEs towards embracing a more genuine commitment to social matters and accepting greater regulation of their activities. This was re-enforced by another interviewee, who stressed the urgency of natural resource and environmental problems. S/he noted that:

*"…**We need to decrease our carbon footprint and we need to increase the emission removal processes with like forestation, decreasing the deforestation**, et cetera, and all the business leaders and all the companies worldwide, I think in the whole supply chain, they need to define their actions and roadmaps to meet these targets**. I think this will also bring peace to the whole world by preserving our resources."***

– Assistant Manager, Turkish MNE, home appliances

In summary, geographical location and distribution of natural resources affect whether and how MNEs choose to address the grand challenge of peace.

4.2.4 Organisational constraints

The pursuit of grand challenges by individual company managers might be constrained through internal organizational factors. This theme is such institutional restrictions have been referenced by scholars. For instance, George et al. (2016, p. 1889) observed that elucidated this issue according: *"…several organizational constraints arise,*

including coordination costs among stakeholders, goal and incentive conflicts within the management team, information asymmetry, and transaction costs between partner firms in a collaborative effort."

Unethical practices

In other words, various internal procedures and practices might prevent businesses from participating in the rectification of a grand challenge. Almost half of those interviewed individuals (14 out of 33) perceived unethical practices, such as discrimination in the hiring process, the unequal distribution of company resources and the absence of a participative leadership (see section 4.2.6), to have generated unfavourable peace outcomes. Such managerial behaviour often causing unfair outcomes to a significant part of workforce (Rettberg, 2016; Mergen and Ozbilgin, 2021).

More specifically, firms often may experience challenge in finding the right balance between multiple goals. It might be unlikely that a company will actively want to detract from peace in its public expressions (due to universally accepted moral and legal understanding that peace is a desired state of living for all people), but it is likely that it will attach a higher priority to other goals such as business growth and profitability which would almost certainly be a more important priority than facilitating peace. As a country director for a finance MNE outlined:

> *"**I don't think that you will find any person who will say, I don't support peace; but saying and doing different things, for example, sometimes. And also there's a conflict of interests. I'm a banker. I think we know what we are doing. For example, we are financing energy companies**. There is a small county on the border to Georgia. It's one of the rare places with special nature, and they are now trying to do mining, which is killing nature. But there was one project where the company came to us and we had to finance it. But you know, we have to take care of nature. **But on the other hand, I am supporting a company who is, you know, digging into the nature, into the ground and putting some chemicals into the ground. And most probably there will be no more trees there. And is it peaceful? Sometimes it is very difficult**."*
>
> *– Country Director, German MNE, finance*

When firms prioritise their own goals at the expense of higher-level objectives connected to grand challenges, such as addressing climate change or peace, they can jeopardize their reputation and might also engage in activity that could lead to a scandal

and charges of corporate misconduct. Furthermore, firms might try to increase profitability by overstating their commitment to grand challenge-related goals. This reaction might be seen as a reputational strategy to encourage sales by consumers with an acute social or environmental conscience. One approach is to manipulate data to exaggerate environmental sustainability claims. This approach was attempted by Volkswagen in relation to their diesel cars, a deceit that caused significant reputational damage (BBC News, 2024).

Such company misconduct can inspire wider social and political action and have wide-ranging implications for a diverse range of companies and sectors. This theme was further addressed by an interviewee, who mentioned the Dieselgate (Volkswagen) scandal, whereby emissions from diesel engines were higher than previously reported, which led the European Union to adopt stricter vehicle testing procedures. S/he observed both the manner in which the EU was forced to respond to the public criticism of the contemporary procedures following the scandal and also the negative impact on US-EU relations. This individual noted that in response to emission levels that 'were reported wrongly', the EU implemented new procedures to impose 'restrictions on emissions', a legislative and policy agenda that increased tensions between the US and the EU.

> *"**I think any tension that arise from a company actually the main root cause is something different**. That is political, I guess. **For instance, I remembered the Diesel gate scandal that increased tension between the US and the EU**. So EU has to make some restriction on the automotive emissions, and this has increased attention. **Actually, this is in the emission levels are reported wrongly, or they are accused of doing so**. So this increased tension, but it may be another political tension that has previously arose caused this issue."*
> *– Assistant Manager, Turkish MNE, home appliances*

The Volkswagen cases raises the phenomenon of greenwashing (Bothello et al., 2023), which reflects making false claims to have implemented effective measures to tackle climate change. One respondent claimed that approach represented a frequent strategy amongst defence and pharmaceutical companies, which often struggle with their image (Fiott, 2014; Lalor et al., 2019). This person noted that:

> *"**Honestly speaking, I don't like defence and pharmaceuticals and energy businesses and social responsibility projects that they are running. I'm not convinced that they're candid and that they are really contributing.***

*It's more like polishing the brand and **concealing the damage that they are doing to the world**."*
– Board Member, UK MNE, professional services

Furthermore, another potential unethical practice that was voiced by the interviewees is a corporate political activity tactic (see section 4.2.6. on corporate political activity). Specifically, the movement of personnel between government and business, which is an important channel of influence for companies and governments, allowing both sides to affect the thinking and actions of the other (Etzion and Davis, 2008). Such scenarios might allow firms to leverage the expertise and social connections of former government officials (Lester et al., 2008) thereby sometimes be accused of potential conflict of interest. A manager from a German MNE gave an example of such scenario, observing that:

"But maybe we can talk about Gerhard Schröder. This is the former chancellor of Germany. And right now, as far as I know, he is a consultant of Gazprom."
– Manager, German MNE, finance

Stated attempts to address grand challenges might, therefore, not reflect genuine motivations, lack clear implementation strategies or goals, and so reflect greenwashing (Bothello et al., 2023). This argument might also be interpreted through 'peace-washing', in terms of business creating and extensively communicating an illusion of promoting peace (Abramov, 2009; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020; House of Commons, 2023; Chapter Two). This has become a notable problem when assessing the participation of MNEs in peacebuilding (Miklian et al., 2016).

4.2.5 Institutional contexts

How institutional response to grand challenges is also affected through their distinctive contexts and characteristics, for example in terms of the enthusiasm of individuals for engaging with such goals. Such institutional contexts *"reflect issues such as stability and intent of governments, societal norms and taboos, regulatory environment and rule of law, social activism in public life, and organizational engagement with public problems"* (George et. al., 2016, p. 1889). Obviously, such factors widely across localities and regions.

Rule of law and MNE host-home country institutions

Multinational companies' strategies also reflect the governance and regulatory context of both home and host countries. There is a long tradition in the international business literature of exploring the relationship between MNEs and home and host country governments (Oetzel and Getz, 2012). Interactions between MNEs and host country governments have spawned this literature. In particular, the importance of having a solid legal framework and the institutions to implement those rules was cited as a crucial consideration for business, according to the participants. This theme was reflected in response of the representative of one of the Chambers of Commerce who said that the facilitation of overseas investment and sustainable growth, business requires the rule of law and peace in combination:

> *"You also need the rule of law in the country to become or make your business stronger and in order to attract foreign investment, foreign money and educated foreign workers and so on.* ***And you need rule of law and peace both together****."*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #6*

Another interviewee from a different Chamber of Commerce argued that the interaction between business and government tends to define what companies are in(capable) of doing and calls for more inclusivity in this relationship:

> *"I've learned a lot since I've been in this position about how companies, business and politics come together. And some of it surprised me, some disappointed me. But I suppose in the main, it's a concept that works****. But it does rely on the government's policy to determine what you can and cannot do****…business has to be at the core of its business knowledge, business experience.* ***It can't be left to politicians. I'm not saying they shouldn't be involved, but it should be inclusive.****"*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #3*

Finally, whilst multinationals might not have a substantive role in big countries like Türkiye, they nevertheless have capacity to act as institution of private governance, contributing to debates and ventures relating to human rights, diversity, gender equality and so on. Sometimes, MNEs exit countries where the political climate is no longer favourable or the host country is involved in a violent conflict, as was the case of Ukraine-Russia. This perspective was shared by the partner in UK firm who commented that:

> *"My firm has a network that ceased its operations in the Russian Federation three weeks ago, right after the invasion of Ukraine started, I*

think that's mainly attributable to the core values of the opportunities and that applies to a lot of multinational companies. ***In that sense, I think there is a link, a bridge between big multinational companies and the politics of the countries they are operating in****. So what I mean is that the multinational companies don't play a very major role in large countries like Türkiye, in smaller countries, they can, a country like I mean, Türkiye is the 16th largest economy, 16th most populous country, second largest army in NATO also is a big regional player.* ***So in a country like this no major company can play a very big role, but they contribute to peace in the sense that they are advocates of human right, and core values like diversity, gender diversity, women empowerment, all sorts of values which really contribute to the peace in the countries they are operating in****. Türkiye is no exception to that."*
– Partner, UK MNE, professional services #1

In summary, the findings imply that participating in the grand challenge of peacebuilding might also be linked to the institutional context (host country environment).

4.2.6 Multilevel actions

The analysis of study findings might be developed and interpreted through what scholars have termed as the 'level' of the action. As George et al (2016; p. 1889) observed *"actors operate at multiple levels—at the individual level (e.g., person, group), community level (e.g., village or city), country or regional level (e.g., Syria or Middle East), and the multilateral level (e.g., UN, European Union, Gulf Cooperation Council)".* This categorization matters because interventions at these contrasting levels by MNEs might vary markedly in their impacts on peace.

Leadership

More than a quarter of the participants (9 out of 33) stressed the importance of leadership style (Kelly and MacDonald, 2019; Spreitzer, 2007) in contributing or not contributing to solidarity and peace or, indeed, worsening the peace context. In particular, how MNE leaders act and interact with their subordinates directs the attention to the vital role of the leadership style of their management teams (Spreitzer, 2007; Ledbetter, 2016; Rettberg, 2016; Reade et al., 2019; Javidan et al., 2023). Some interviewees mentioned the need for more participative and servant leadership with a focus on empathy and active listening in relation to fostering peace. Whilst others reflected on the negative impact of

transactional leadership in relation to the broad business and peace theme. For instance, one interviewee observed that:

> *"I think lack of empathy or insisting on the personal/selfish requirements triggers a debate, a discussion, a conflict between people or countries (when they prioritise their own needs)."*
> *– CCO, US MNE, technology*

This sentiment was shared by two managers from Turkish and German MNEs, noting the importance of managerial action on peace and conflict, and understanding the internal and external environment that impact the company. They noted that:

> *"…the management, especially, I believe, is very important how they behave. All the teams that they're managing. And it affects their behaviour with their family, with their friends and everything…**Managers, I believe, should listen actively to even the objecting ideas and to see the creativity.... the way the managers of these big businesses lead has an impact**...."*
> *– Manager, Turkish MNE, technology*

> *"I think of that you have to create rules, and the good and positive business atmosphere. **To have open ears and be a conflict moderator. To know your business partners, employees, stakeholders and the society. And this is the task of the management.**"*
> *– Manager, German MNE, automotive*

Several interviewees mentioned the capacity of business leaders to diminish or amplify grand challenges. While business leaders may not create tensions, they certainly are capable of diminishing or amplifying existing ones. This effect might reflect short-term ambitions and or long-term strategy, a theme that, for instance, was addressed by a marketing executive from a US MNE, who observed that:

> *"**I don't think we can create tension from scratch as business leaders, but we can absolutely fuel that tension**. **As business leaders, we can definitely make things worse if we're not careful with our language, with our decision making, with our strategies,** with our roadmaps, so on and so forth… I think is one of the concepts is I am influenced by being a servant leader, growth mindset and inclusive practices."*
> *– Head of Marketing, US MNE, marketing*

HRM

Hiring practices

Human resources management (HRM) covers recruitment, selection, training and development of talent, performance appraisal and dismissal of employees. It is an important organisational practice of any business success (Devanna et al., 1981). A minority of interviewees (6 out of 33), whilst recognising that diverse working teams might increase intra-communal understanding and so facilitate peace, expressed also a concern about some of the hiring practices that might be implemented to achieve such objectives. The challenges were that if such hiring practices were perceived as discriminatory, intra-communal tensions both within the company and, perhaps, wider society might be exacerbated, thus generating a negative impact on peace. This viewpoint was echoed by a respondent from the accounting sector, who criticised scenarios when government regulation limits business capacity to employ people, regardless of their citizenship or nationality. S/he observed that:

> *"**I agree with that any business leader who brings together to work people from different backgrounds contributes to the peace because it decreases the tension and people can understand each other better when they have colleagues from different countries. It's also correct that any business leader can discriminate in hiring process.** We can say, in some countries they're not accepting any other nationals, only their local nationals to work and that contributes to less understanding between people of the world, therefore to more potential conflict."*
> *– AVP, US MNE, accounting*

Similarly, another manager mentioned that MNEs might create recruitment problems for local firms through attracting the best talent who noted that:

> *"The risk if you go to countries of the third world, and build something there, their locals don't have the same possibilities like that. This makes some problems for the local companies. **Another example, Tesla is coming to Germany in Berlin**, making a huge investment and trying to hire the best guys for the e-mobility cars, **in the moment they are hiring and then taking the best guys from other companies. This means there is a deficit in other companies, and this is not very ethical and creates more tension. You create artificial problems for the local companies.**"*
> *– Manager, Turkish MNE, automotive*

Furthermore, another manager expressed a view that whenever a certain group is preferred over the other, it creates tension and sense of unfairness, thus asserting that hiring practices managers employ can impact the work environment.

> *"When you have some specific nationalities, people may think if they did not get promotion because they are from certain backgrounds."*

– Manager, Liechtenstein MNE, manufacturing

Employing locals

This analysis directs attention towards a core aspect of the human resource management – the employment of local labour (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). Almost half of the participants (16 out of 33) agreed that overall, the practice of employing local by MNEs has a favourable peace impact. Those individuals adopted a perspective that emphasised the capacity of such local strategies to generate multiplier effects on the local economy and therefore creating potential prosperity for the local community, and hence can be viewed as fostering peace.

This perspective was represented by a country director from the chemicals industry, who highlighted positive impacts derived from foreign direct investment (FDI). When MNEs hire employees from local communities, they develop widening career opportunities and possibly reduce the risk of armed conflict emerging as a consequence of economic deprivation. Intergroup dialogue also implicitly embedded through local employees working alongside those from other countries, typically the MNE's home country. S/he commented that:

"There are many examples, ***any FDI a company makes is enhancement of peace, at the end of the day you invest money and time in another country****, you need to understand people in that environment, anything that happens there impacts you, and something which cannot be ignored.* ***Many multinationals invest in other countries, that's how they grow, they provide employment, careers that local people need…"***
– Country Director, US MNE, chemicals

This perspective was further anchored in the perception of a country director from a German multinational who implied that employing local people was a core mechanism through which MNEs could promote economic prosperity. S/he observed that:

*"****I think this is a good example of what the companies can do****. The companies, of course, in which countries they are active, they can at least help or* ***contribute to the economic development of the country, we are the employment of the people in the country****."*
– Country Director, German MNE, automotive industry

A partner at a UK MNE went further and claimed that multinational enterprises might be characterised as resembling United Nations consuls in their capacity to operate as ambassadors for peace. For instance, employing individuals from different backgrounds,

whether they were hired for an entry-level job or an executive role, might have benefits in terms of mutual understanding and cross-cultural dialogue. S/he commented that:

> *"I think I have a very strong argument there. I mean, in my humble opinion, of course,* ***I think the most significant benefits that businesses can bring is that they employ people from different nations*** *and countries and their headquarters, their executive levels and managements and boards of directors most of the time also includes people from various countries (…)* ***I think in a way MNEs can become United Nations consuls in a sense****."*
> *– Partner, UK MNE, professional services*

Cross-cultural management

Another *multilevel action* that MNEs might impact is facilitating and managing cross-cultural dialogue (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2010). The majority of the interviewees (26 out of 33) agreed by bringing people together for professional and social purposes business increases mutual understanding between different cultures and ways of communicating. For instance, cross-cultural communication has been considered critical in a business crisis (Segal, 2023). Exchanging information and ideas with different cultural groups at work establishing a better context for easing intra-group tensions, should they arise, and, therefore, favourably impacts peace. None of the interviewees raised the view that cross-cultural dialogue could have a negative impact.

> *"Business communication would help to bring both parties closer together in a positive sense, understanding each other better and trade and investment and opportunities for people to have interaction with each other and to communicate.* ***And as long as you are communicating, this somehow contributes to a better climate and a better atmosphere between the parties. So that's the positive point of view****."*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #2*

Furthermore, MNEs might contribute to peace through intercultural dialogue via their core business of employing people, as well as selling their goods and services. For instance, a Vice President from a US MNE commented how the COVID-19 pandemic changed the remote working and reshaped the need for professional relocation. Similarly, through selling their products globally or, at least, across a wide range of countries, MNEs are facilitating the emergence of a globalised convergence of consumer preferences. Once consumer preferences converge, lifestyles also converge, and potentially divisive cultural differences diminish, according to this interviewee who observed that:

"Let me start from this last period of the pandemic, people are rediscovering working remotely. It was always in our life but in a limited way. Now it is becoming like a commodity and is becoming a general demand. After the Second World War, we had a huge migration, people see what's going on in the different part of the world. They see the shortage of resources and if they are not happy in their environment, they try to move and if they cannot do that, and they try to sell their services for international markets from where they are based. ***Culture, music, arts and politics are all shaped by events taking place in the world****. For example, people here might have an emotional relationship with ideas and culture from other countries and this dynamic is likely to change the world."*
– VP, US MNE, accounting

"I totally agree that as people work together, communicate more and they try to understand each other more, you will appreciate intercultural understanding more. Otherwise, when you categorize people and divide them, that creates conflicts and otherness."
– Partner, UK MNE, professional services

This perspective was enhanced by a US MNE director, which brings management practices to the last identified theme – diversity and inclusion practices. S/he observed that:

*"****People start learning about different cultures, and there are a number of surveys that prove that watching a specific show from a country makes people more interested in learning the culture, learning about that country.*** *So I think this cultural closeness is one piece that business has a role to play.* ***And likewise, on the hiring processes, I think the diversity inclusion processes of companies has a role to play*** *in bringing different cultures together, making people learn to live together."*
– Country Director, US MNE, entertainment

Diversity and Inclusion Practices

Public, private and third sector organizations are increasingly concerned with the representation and inclusion of minorities and other disadvantaged groups (Davies, 2022; Global Gender Gap Report, 2023; Sari, 2023). This has created pressure for companies to have specific effective diversity and inclusion regulations and practices. More than a quarter of the participants (10 out of 33) shared a view that diversity and inclusions policies had a significant peace contribution make. As a manager from a Liechtenstein based MNE observed:

*"****Diversity and inclusion policies****, culture, global companies have all these in place,* ***therefore contribute to peace****."*
– Manager, Liechtenstein MNE, manufacturing

Additionally, the lack of diversity and representation in top management teams was identified as a challenge. The view was expressed by the country manager of a German MNE, which was aligned with the existing management literature on diverse top management and high organisational performance (Díaz-Fernández et al., 2020). That interviewee commented that:

> *"**They should really act internationally, which means, for example, from my own company, I noticed the management, especially the top management, is mostly from Germany.** I would like to see in the future that a Turkish guy could be the CEO of the company. That would show that everybody who has really good skills could really get to this level so that this equity, this justice should really be applicable in global companies, **because global companies act like countries**."*
> *– Country Manager, German MNE, automotive #1*

This issue of branding was also incorporated within this theme. In particular, a chamber of commerce representative observed that branding could operate to drive inclusion initiatives to bring diverse groups of people together. This individual noted the potency of Coca-Cola in this respect, sentiments that resonate through the academic literature on business for peace (Banks, 2016). Specifically, this participant observed that:

> *"**Because brands and products do bring people together. And if you look at Coca-Cola's advertising around the Coca-Cola brand, it's all about inclusivity** and, you're probably too young to remember some of them, I think that was iconic."*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #3*

The main topic of these diversity and inclusion discussions was gender diversity, which was striking as the majority of the participants were male. Nonetheless, it was recognised the importance of women's economic empowerment and gender equality in relation to peaceful societies (Gizelis, 2009). For instance, some organisations were reflecting governmental agendas to promote more women to top management positions to align with the UN's Women, Peace and Security agenda adopted by the UN Security Council at the start of the century (U.S. Department of State, 2024). As a Chamber of Commerce representative observed:

> *"**I think the diversity and inclusion engagements, like women executives having more roles higher in the companies or disabled people having more workforce share or other minority groups having more possibilities.** It even brings more parts of the population into these values to be accepted."*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #4*

The assertion that more women should be part of top-level decision-making processes, including issues of peace is gaining more policy attention (Gizelis, 2009; U.S. Department of State, 2024; United Nations Women, 2024). However, a successful transition towards prioritising gender equality is disruptive and requires a (organisational) culture change; a proposition mentioned by a manager of an American MNE, who noted that:

> *"A business decision to stand by something like that has a huge impact in a country's broader cultural conversation.* ***But any conversation like that, you know, a business leader's decision to not speak at a panel when only men are there, that speaks volumes right, to gender, from a gender equality perspective. I'm making that stance and saying that, you know, everyone has a place at this table, so why are we having only men?*** *That question is huge. My examples, obviously are going to be towards what I do day to day, right, like it's going to be more about diversity, more about inclusion and more about giving a voice to everyone and so forth. In my view,* ***I think that is at the heart of the peace conversation, giving everyone a voice at the table is the first step to peace****."*
> *– Head of Marketing, US MNE, marketing*

It is through businesses' internal cultures that they affect broader society. MNEs especially can have hundreds, if not thousands of people as part of their global workforce, thereby having impact on people's behaviour and on facilitating inclusivity, especially for employees from under-represented groups (Reade et al., 2019). This perspective was adopted by a board member of a UK MNE, who commented:

> *"****I would argue that, in our economic ecosystem, the organizations have wider impact on the behaviour of people****. You do have a direct impact on the culture and on the environment that you are creating. And those organizations are large entities that hire thousands and thousands of people who are rooted in the same environment.* ***So you are exposing people to the same culture****.* ***So efforts from the diversity perspective, gender equality perspective and having a fair and equal work environment and opportunity make an impact****."*
> *– Board Member, UK MNE, professional services*

Similar perspectives were expressed by an interviewee from a Turkish MNE, who addressed the potential contribution that the diversity and inclusion agenda might deliver in relation to global sustainability, observing that:

> *"****I think business has an important impact to bring people together with different cultures. So diversity, inclusion and equality is important.*** *From a people perspective, and we have only one planet."*
> *– Assistant Manager, Turkish MNE, home appliances*

In summary, four types of practices that are under the purview of management teams have been identified as influencing peace. First, a *multilevel action* on individual level – managers' leadership style was identified as having relevance to peace contributions of MNEs. More than a quarter of the interviewed individuals stressed the importance of having an inclusive and participative leadership style. Second, *multilevel action* on organisational level – human resource management (talent acquisition, retention, hiring, dismissal, appraisal, etc.) practices were specified as crucial for peace. As was described by different managers from various industries, few participants outlined discriminatory practices in the hiring process as an obstacle for building peace. Third, MNEs were specified as contributing to peace through creating a platform for cross-cultural management for global workforces comprised from diverse backgrounds. Finally, diversity and inclusion practices were specified as advantageous in the facilitation of peace.

Corporate philanthropy

Corporate philanthropy is one of the oldest forms of corporate social behaviour to spend some of the company profits for community projects (Mescon and Tilson, 1987). Corporate philanthropy might, therefore, be interpreted through a broad range of social projects and non-reciprocal giving aimed at demonstrating the commitment of companies to making the world a better place (Porter and Kramer, 2002; Gautier and Pache, 2015). Interestingly for the Turkish context, privately funded philanthropic developments have been part of the country's peacebuilding efforts, especially abroad, and has focused on the construction of buildings and infrastructure, as well as the funding of educational scholarships and social projects (Sazak and Woods, 2017). The theme of corporate philanthropy was mentioned by eleven of the participants in this research project. For example, a manager from a German MNE observed that:

> *"We are investing in some factories, so that they contribute to the development of the country. And as I told you plus* ***some social activities like some donations, some other activities just to show the country that we are here for the development of the country and also for the peace of the country,*** *regardless of race, regardless of religion, regardless of anything that should be in the mutual interest and the target of big companies and such kind of activities, I think is important. That's why mostly in big companies have a dedicated department, or personnel who*

are in charge of this kind of governance, governmental affairs or relationships as well. So I believe this is really important."
– Country Manager, German MNE, automotive

The above argument was enhanced another manager from a (different) German MNE who clearly associated philanthropic endeavours with peaceful outcomes, in Türkiye and around the world. This individual referred to Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, who launched the initiative Grand Challenges in Global Health in 2003 that aims *"to ensure that everyone receives the full benefit of scientific progress"* (Global Grand Challenges, 2024). This interviewee observed that:

*"**Well, the first thing that came to my mind, it's from Netflix documentary about Bill Gates**. But for example, after the Microsoft giant, after he left the Microsoft management, **he is investing for, for example, water supplies in Africa or even vaccination opportunities he's creating for these countries. So and this is a positive impact,** I would say, **in Türkiye, for example, there are, of course, some governmental supports in some cities in east parts, Gazientep and Kayseri**, and not just the business men, but this is a business approach. So there is government which is supporting some business investments in these parts of Türkiye and it also as a kind of a regional effect, to be honest, **because when you build, for example, a cement plant in eastern Türkiye and kind of creates a job opportunity in this part, but also creates a kind of an investment opportunities in surrounding regions**. So, for example, there are lots of companies investing in Syria and then when the peace will be established there will be positive impacts from these kinds of investments."*
– Regional Manager, German MNE, automotive

To continue on this theme, despite having no clear academic definition (Wan et al., 2023), Environmental, Social and Governance initiatives are currently receiving much practitioner and policy attention (Crace and Gehman, 2022; OECD, 2024). According to a board member from a UK MNE, governments were putting pressure to companies to engage in social responsibility with regard to the environment. Specifically, s/he observed that:

"For example, I value environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives that we are experiencing nowadays…and are forcing organizations to be environmentally responsible."
– Board member, UK MNE, professional services

A partner from the same MNE cited the example of Koç Holding's philanthropic activities, such as educational support to young people in the form of granting scholarships to study abroad and funding environmental projects. One of

the richest self-made individuals in Türkiye, Vehbi Koç, formed the Koç Holding, which is currently the only Turkish firm on the Fortune Global 500 list and is managed by the third generation of the Koç family (Koç Holding, 2023). This MNE partner observed that:

> *"**For example, Koç Holding of Türkiye, they make a lot of contributions to the society.** They do more environmental projects, friendly schools through the educational activities. **There are initiatives that fund master's degrees for students so they can go abroad and have some international exposure and come back and bring the culture and knowledge from there to Türkiye**."*
>
> *– Partner, UK MNE, professional services*

This sentiment is also shared by a leader in the technology sector, who posited that improving the educational levels of the population through corporate philanthropy projects was essential and could be linked to economic prosperity and might also be interpreted as a core tool of Turkish peacebuilding efforts in the region (Sazak and Woods, 2017). This individual emphasized, however, that the main reason corporate philanthropy projects are initiated by MNEs was that they primarily served the public relations ambitions of MNEs. Goals to make the world a better place through corporate philanthropy often emerge as a consequence of MNE focus on reputational goals, although both ultimately forming part of a virtuous cycle that benefits the wider society as well, according to this manager who observed that:

> *"In many of the other underdeveloped countries, their economic prosperity is a challenge, number one priority in my point of view is the skills gap or education for the people. I think this is why is educational social responsibility projects are so popular. **First, they serve PR, second, they help the welfare of the country and or the business. So I believe any of the sustainability education gaps that the business initiate helps the world to get better.** And it helps with their PR which helps with their business. It's like a vicious cycle."*
>
> *– CCO, US MNE, technology*

Philanthropy programs and projects can cover multiple themes, from education to the environment, and which type of projects is prioritised will likely be context specific and related to market and societal expectations. Nonetheless, all such endeavours established favourable image for MNEs. As a manager form a Liechtenstein MNE observed:

"Companies that have social responsibility programs, for example animal shelters campaigns, running sustainability programs; ***this creates an idea how business impacting human lives.****"*
– Manager, Liechtenstein MNE, manufacturing

Others reflection of contributions derived from how MNEs marketed their products and developed brands, which create deep emotional bonds and connections between individuals. This interviewee shared optimism towards contemporary company sustainability and ESG initiatives. Rather interestingly, s/he attributed successful implementing of such endeavours to depend on businesses:

"…where you see that increasing because of sustainability, environment, the ESG, all these issues that the world is facing in terms of climate change and where you see companies driving these sustainability programs ***because governments there are only writing about it, they're not really engaged. They're relying on business both to drive the agenda and drive the narrative and also provide funding****."*
– Chamber of Commerce #3

In summary, participants believed that whilst corporate philanthropic projects and sustainability programs were primarily or even completely initiated for self-interested reasons, they simultaneously created positive social outcomes. These actions are undertaken within the context the political environment and regulatory framework of the host country.

Corporate political activity

MNEs interact with a wide range of stakeholders, including government. Businesses are subject to different laws, regulatory filings and are often part of interest and lobby groups (Forrer, 2009). More than half of the interviewees (19 out of 33) described the importance of the political decisions on the daily business actions and the capability of companies to tackle wider social challenges.

"In Türkiye for example, relations with other countries, if business flourishes between sides, then tensions gets less. ***Business feeds politics and all other dimensions that serve peace and other things****."*
– Country Director, US MNE, chemicals

As has been mentioned throughout this thesis, MNEs are increasingly facing different pressures to address grand challenges and contribute to wider social matters. Past decades have seen calls for businesses to appoint Chief Sustainability Officers (CSOs) by the-

then Prince of Wales, the current King of the United Kingdom, Charles III, at the World Economic Forum in Davos (Golden, 2020), and by major professional services firms (Ernst and Young, 2021; Deloitte, 2021). The evolving role of CSOs have also been discussed in business journals (Farri et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024).

Business has also been specified as sometimes having a significant diplomatic role, for instance in terms of calming tense relations between countries. This sentiment was shared by a senior Chamber of Commerce leader, who commented that:

> *"**Some business leaders even have a larger role than diplomats themselves;** Business leaders who have mutual interests have played a huge role, you know, **calming the situation and doing the mediator role, doing the facilitator role between the two countries**, state officials, so that is why business leaders, especially in bilateral economic relations, have a huge role to play (…) I used to work at …, you can even see how the government officials approach to some business leaders to have their opinions before going on those official visits. They are consulting with them **because some business leaders sometimes understand the business culture of that country better than diplomats**. Business leaders who have millions, billions of trade with these countries and actually live in those countries, **have sometimes a great role to play in times of conflict**."*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #5*

Others spoke about the role of business in facilitating dialogue when relations between countries had become strained and supporting the amicable resolution of disagreements. For instance, one interviewee from the finance sector noted how business tried to repair relations from a real-world scenario:

> *"...**there was a big tension between Germany and Türkiye**...and then the relations were really closed and frozen, which is understandable... So accordingly, we all, I mean, you know, like **Siemens or Bosch, which are very important companies for Germany**, of course for Türkiye because they are also big employers here. **They were doing a good job by trying to calm down**."*
> *— Manager, German MNE, finance*

Alternatively, another chronicled how business was caught amongst in this social, political, and diplomatic crossfire, and should not be taking a side.

> *"…during these tensions between Germany and Türkiye, the head of purchasing of the company has not officially, but unofficially; how can I say, informed his employees not to travel to Türkiye. So this was a kind of unofficial, a travel ban to Türkiye at the time. So this is actually not a good behaviour to show as a company representative, **even if two countries at that time are in a tension situation because, as I said, companies or***

organizations or corporations should not be political *because we have nothing to do with political, we are just concentrating on the businesses."*
— Country Manager, German MNE, automotive #1

It was recognised that government rules and regulations influenced every aspect of organisational structure, from employment practices to data privacy, with technology governance as a prime concern. Participants as interpreted the technological advances generated through business as promoting peace through the economic and social benefits they delivered to the local communities. Government regulation of technology, therefore, affected how business might deliver peaceful outcomes. This idea was expressed a board member of a UK MNE, who commented that:

"I will say technology is changing the behaviour and life standard of millions and millions of people. ***Communicating in the same platform, access to information makes life a better place****. I like Apple, I would say, and I think it has a positive impact on the communities. Of course, we need to have money to buy this, but it is unjust and unequal from that perspective. This iPhone makes the world very accessible and approachable for people to communicate with each other.* ***So I would say Apple is a good example. From a local perspective, I would say Koc Group is a good example. They are making contributions to the socially aware business environment.*** *It is a family business and contributes to the country and across borders."*
– Board Member, UK MNE, professional services #2

Moreover, another interviewee posited that future of technology is connected to political alliances:

"So it's all about ***future technology****. It's all about advancing engineering. If you're in these sectors where you can add value through your own experience, know how that's ahead of what's in another country. And that's the way you have leverage in order to win and show business but also enhance your political relationship."*
– Chamber of Commerce #3

Similar sentiments were shared by the chief operations officer of a big tech company, who observed that:

"Many of the things are digital now, right? ***And even many of the wars are actually cyber wars, digital wars.*** *So technology companies that are avoiding or curing the cyber-attacks are serving the peace actually, many for example, I've heard that the Ukrainian government has been hacked many times in the last couple of weeks or months. But the IT people or the IT companies working with the Ukrainian government were able to prevent that and the government is able to function up and running under all of the*

circumstances which positively helps the economy as well as keeping the data secure. You know, that ties everything now at the country level, at the personal level, business level."
– CCO, US MNE, technology

This participant further highlighted that data was at the core of every *multilevel action* aspect – individual, organisational and country level. It was further voiced that cyber-attacks can escalate existing conflict and give rise to deeper tensions. A core functions of business in promoting or preserving peace was, therefore, the ability of technology companies to prevent cyber-attacks, which have been deployed to escalate existing conflicts and as an alternative-proxy for military conflict. This was directly addressed by the manager from a US MNE, who observed that:

*"**Data is at the core of everything. So to be able to protect the data at country, business or personal level, it really helps maintain the peace.** Can you imagine if Russia or any other government is able to hack Ukraine and got many of the confidential data that the country has. Can you imagine the dimensions of the current war? It may escalate rapidly or exponentially."*
– CCO, US MNE, technology

In particular, some participants appeared to interpret MNEs' engagement through track-two diplomacy, in terms of informal and unofficial dialogue and constructing relationships between businesses and governments (Fort and Schipani, 2007). The interviews highlighted assertions by Fort and Schipani (2007) and Oetzel et al. (2009) – scholarly work that founded the business for peace field – that such endeavour is a potential practice through which companies could plausibly contribute to peace. For instance, a partner from a UK MNE commented that the positive role of MNEs in the Turkish context, albeit with limitations:

*"So in a country like Türkiye, I think that is clearly observable that these **businesses**, the presence of multinational companies contributes to calming down of tensions. Although, they **obviously cannot cut a deal or take a decision or bring a solution, crystal clear solutions to the table**."*
– Partner, UK MNE, professional services #1

Another high-level individual from a different Chamber of Commerce expressed a contrasting point of view on unofficial involvement in the diplomatic conduct by businesses,

arguing that businesspeople should do business and diplomats should stay away from such activity.

> *"And then you get scholars writing things about something that they never even experienced;* ***the same with diplomats who try to be businesspeople, diplomats, they're good at being diplomatic but not good at doing business****."*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #3*

To summarise, the interview findings indicated that the *multilevel actions* that MNEs pursue, have, to some degree, a potential peace impact. This can take place through leadership, HRM, corporate philanthropy, CPA. For instance, inclusive leadership style was recognised as an important recipe for potential peace. HRM practices such as hiring processes, cross-cultural management and diversity and inclusion practices were also considered as capable of influencing peace outcomes. In addition, when companies may encounter themselves as being involved in diplomatic fall-outs that are not necessarily caused by business, MNEs understand their role in potentially calming the tensions between countries through unofficial mediation processes.

4.2.7 Coordinating architectures

Coordination architectures are likely to be an issue when addressing grand challenges due to the multi-stakeholder, multilevel functioning of grand challenges as there might be many actors implementing and bearing the cost of those agendas (George et al., 2016).

Partnerships with multiple actors

Businesses, particularly MNEs, tend to foster partnerships with various entities to solidify their broader commitment to grand challenges and thus fostering peace. For instance, the leading diamond company De Beers Group has partnered with the United Nations Women since 2017 to empower female entrepreneurs in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa (De Beers Group, 2024). Contrariwise, it has been recently noted that *"the management literature is relatively underinvested in examining the plurality of public–private structures and how these collaborations could be useful tools to address common-good problems"* (George et al., 2024, p. 34). Each interviewee from the seven Chambers of

Commerce shared an opinion that when big business engages with other organisations, it is likely to increase the peace contribution that they can make. As one respondent observed:

> *"I've learned a lot since I've been in this position about how companies, business and politics come together. And some of it surprised me, some disappointed me. But I suppose in the main, it's a concept that works* ***. But it does rely on the government's policy to determine what you can and cannot do****…We are in a position, I think, business has to be at the core of its business knowledge, business experience.* ***It can't be left to politicians. I'm not saying they shouldn't be involved, but it should be inclusive.****"*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #3*

The sentiment relating to the inclusivity of various actors, when dealing with challenges, was also endorsed by another participant from a chamber of commerce, who commented that:

> *"****Every business in the private sector, large corporates, SMEs, every type of business is part of every aspect of our lives****. So that is why, unlike the majority of the crises that we've experienced in last centuries, the new challenges that we are facing such as geopolitical tensions around the world, climate crisis, technology disruption****….these big challenges… will have to be dealt with the inclusion of the businesses****. It will be not possible for only government officials to solve everything to create peace and stuff, we are not in Westphalia agreement period."*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #5*

Similar interpretations were echoed by another two interviewees, who emphasised the capacity of such partnerships to facilitate dialogue amongst business, government, and associated organisations; communication which could assist in the de-escalation of potential conflicts and, therefore, contribute to peace. One individual noted that:

> *"As a Chamber of Commerce, we are, for example, very much supporting and lobbying for the idea of an upgrade or expansion of the customs union between Türkiye and the EU, and as* ***we believe that intensifying trade leads to more investments on both sides****. This would also help to bring both parties closer together in a positive sense, understanding each other better and encourage trade and investment."*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #2*

Similarly, a manager from the energy sector observed that:

> *"****… I think if you have discussions with partners and whom you can address at different levels****, it could also be business leaders who may have, maybe, close ties, links to the administration, to the government. I think this definitely is at least a plus in preventing escalation of conflicts."*

– Country Manager, German MNE, energy

Those observations helped to re-enforce assertions from other social scientists (Richmond, 2008; Sucuoğlu and Sazak, 2016), who interpreted peacebuilding as a complex, multi-dimensional activity of predominantly political nature that cannot be undertaken by any single actor alone. Therefore, MNE partnerships with others is an indispensable tool to tackle grand challenges (Sinkovics et al., 2021).

4.2.8 Reinforcing mechanisms

According to George et al. (2016, p. 1890) reinforcing mechanisms were *"structural (e.g. poverty), natural (e.g. earthquakes) and social mechanisms (e.g. immigrant crises)"*. In addition, international rifts and tensions sometimes prevent, perhaps as a consequence of international regulations or laws, firms in a particular country from participating in global grand challenges.

Social mechanisms

The importance of such reinforcing mechanisms, immigration, crises and sanctions were mentioned by several interviewees. For instance, a participant from an accountancy MNE noted positive impacts from immigration, for example, in terms of cross-cultural dialogue and the evolution of a workforce with a growth enhancing mixture of skillsets. However, this individual also specified potentially negative effects observing that:

"People are coming for example, from Syria, Iraq, or other countries where there are conflicts. Firstly, they're creating pressure on the labour market, the number one pressure is on the social infrastructure."
— AVP, US MNE, accounting

This person further expands their argument by saying that whether immigration can bring positive outcomes depends on how successfully it is managed.

"Immigration can be both good and bad. Manage it well, that's a great advantage. You can interact with them. You can learn a lot. You could have maybe different skills and then you are going to have rich workforce. But if you are doing it uncontrollably and if you let the nation to fix their problems among each other, and if you are not going to have a good screen check with the people and they bring all their problems to here,

then your society will be very uncomfortable. This is if you take a look at the vast Roman Empire just like that because of the uncontrolled immigration."
— AVP, US MNE, accounting

This sentiment was echoed by two representatives from the Chamber of Commerce who believed that the Turkish context was quite unique and unprecedented due to Türkiye hosting the largest refugee population globally (Sazan and Woods, 2017; European Commission, 2024b). They both observed that:

"There are massive social impacts to the Turkish. They are not on the economy, but more to the Turkish society because ***there are between four and five million Syrian refugees in Türkiye*** *which are hosted by, and this is an action the Turkish people, the Turkish government,* ***this is unseen in the world to have such a huge number of refugees for such a long time****."*
— Chamber of Commerce #1

*"****Obviously, the impact of that war, of course, is a very devastating effect*** *for those businesses operating in those countries. And like in Syrian crisis, for example, this is happening right now, the Ukrainian crisis. But on the other hand, years ago when refugee crisis has begun, currently there are more than four million Syrian refugees in Türkiye.* ***That has had mixed impact to Turkish businesses****."*
— Chamber of Commerce #5

International disruptions

The capacity of MNEs to affect peace also reflects the consequences of significant global disruptions, including natural catastrophes, pandemics, sanctions, crises, and conflicts. In other words, the deterioration of a previously peaceful environment strains the capacity of MNEs to achieve both profit-maximisation and societal goals. Several high-level individuals from both MNEs and Chambers of Commerce specified the capacity of tense international relations to disrupt the activities of MNEs. The relevance of this theme was re-enforced through the deterioration of relationships between many of the key players in global politics and trade during the last few years, which has created much uncertainty for MNEs operating worldwide (KPMG, 2022; Deloitte, 2022; IMF, 2023b; Javidan et al., 2023).

*"****the Russia and Ukraine war and together with the tension between US and Russia*** *now we understand that when there is attention like that, trade is impacted. So the supply chain is the most important risk from a global trade perspective now.* ***And when the necessary materials are not supplied from Ukraine or Russia, look at oil, look at grain, look at other***

raw materials, then all the countries are impacted a lot. *From a global trade perspective, from a risk perspective of the supply chain aspect, it is very critical and where Türkiye plays the role is important because of Türkiye's geopolitical situation."*
– Partner, US MNE, professional services

However, s/he also asserted that whether such geopolitical disruptions become a challenge or opportunity is dependent on the location of firms and their capacity to adjust to new realities. Furthermore, s/he signalled that MNEs handling the current global disruptions from a base in Türkiye's might have accrued locational advantageous over rivals situated elsewhere. For instance, this interviewee further noted that:

*"…**if Türkiye plays it right, and then it may even be an advantage for Türkiye** to get out of this situation as an opportunity level, so if we can enable our economy or our manufacturing or our other manufacturing potentials from a global trade perspective, then we can be even more powerful. We may say we cannot say thanks to this war, but no, I can't think for a word. **But some problems are the indicators of some opportunities for certain players**."*
– Partner, US MNE, professional services

Next, another source of disruptions can be cyber wars. In an ever increasingly digital world and acceleration of technology in many aspects of the business, attacks and tensions are likely to take place in online platforms. This global vulnerability focused attention on the importance of cyber security and the role of technology companies in facilitating peace (Shandler and Canetti, 2024). Therefore, the role and impact of tech firms in our societies becomes paramount. For instance, a respondent from the technology sector commented that:

*"Cybersecurity, when everything is digital, the attacks are digital, and the data is keeping the countries and the business and everyone alive or survive. **So that's where technology companies' investments of billions of dollars into the cybersecurity area are keeping the people, the companies, the countries safe.**"*
– CCO, US MNE, technology

Another potential disruptions are related to sanctions, which is understood as a set of political and legal tools aimed at correcting a wrong behavior of countries that threaten international peace and security (Meyer et al., 2023). Sanctions might be imposed on assets, individuals, countries, and sectors of economy, and thus can be a source of disruptions for MNEs. Whether MNEs follow

sanctions introduced by governments or international organizations can be interpreted as a determinant of their peace contribution. Such sentiments were reflected by a Chamber of Commerce representative, who observed that:

> *"There is another thing about the sanctions, when there is a sanction introduced for a country, for example, U.S. sanctions introduced for Russia,* ***that by keeping those sanctions rules, companies are actually supporting the peace****."*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #4*

According to this person, nowadays businesses are facing challenges on multiple fronts, from pandemic to legal changes concerning privacy and employment, to sanctions and compliance.

> *"****The pandemic impacted a lot****, challenges of logistics, moving products between the countries;* ***also from legal perspective – employment practices and data privacy related concerns*** *were impacting business. One example might be in terms of selling products that there are sanctioned countries due to these conflicts –* ***sanctions*** *for e.g. Iran, it is a compliance restriction for many years."*
> *– Manager, Liechtenstein MNE, manufacturing*

Similarly, MNEs are acutely aware of how the specific geo-political context of their host country can affect sanctions regimes. This argument was re-enforced by a country manager from a German MNE who discussed about Türkiye's current attitude towards sanctions on Russia (European Parliament, 2022; Akmenek et al., 2023).

> *"Türkiye so far did not put any sanctions on Russia, so it's sort of balancing it…****On the one hand, of course, condemning it and to some extent also certain actions like locking down the Bosphorus and Dardanelles for four warships. On the other hand, on the economic side, because Türkiye depends not only on energy but also on wheat and also on tourism from Russia and Ukraine,*** *by the way, it has so far not adopted this way and refrained from putting any kind of sanctions on Russia. And this may change, of course. I mean, if it changes, then it could have some impact on us, but it's really hard to foresee this."*
> *– Country Manager, German MNE, energy*

Continuing on the specific Turkish context, a chamber of commerce representative commented about the implications for Türkiye reflected the importance of the sector for the national economy. Noting, therefore, negligible impact on the Turkish economy of the use of steel for military purposes. S/he observed that:

"There have been certain industries where sanctions have been put. So the major issue that had occurred here in Türkiye, which caused tensions between the US, is for the NATO and specifically the US is the purchase of certain defence machinery or defence products from Russia. So there have been sanctions, for example, on steel, on Türkiye, and those have been done. But is this a minor sector of the Turkish economy..."
– Chamber of Commerce #1

A topic that is increasingly receiving attention in research, practice and policy concerns is the exit of MNEs from countries due to war, and subsequent sanctions (OECD, 2022; Financial Times, 2022; Melin et al., 2023; Mol et al., 2023). In relation to this theme, another country manager noted the dislocation caused through brand attachment (Shimul, 2022) and the sudden inability of consumers to continue to purchase favourite products. S/he observed that:

"Some companies just disappeared from Russia. So that's why the people are not happy because of that. ***Like, say, McDonald's is gone and people who like McDonald's are not happy because they left due to war/sanctions****."*
– Country Manager, Dutch MNE, energy

According to a partner from US MNE, the future of peace is connected to the governance of new technologies and disruptions that they can create for all sectors:

*"****Maybe from a future perspective, technology, we need to talk about technology*** *when we're talking about the business and therefore especially the technological developments, digitalisation of many different sectors, and I mean, I will not go into the details of the big data, AI, etc. At the end of the day, technology is definitely a big game changer for all the businesses, for all the sectors, industries that we are living in and be that on retail, be that and consumer products, be that in agriculture. So* ***technology is a big game changer for all industries, and we keep on saying that AI and robotics will replace the human factors in business. So what will the big population in the world be doing from an employment perspective then? I tie this to peace****."*
– Partner, US MNE, professional services

4.2.9 Outcomes and impact

Success measurements of outcomes and impact can be varying across grand challenges which tend to depend on how they were articulated in the first instance and that the outcomes can be contingent upon political process (George et al., 2016). *"Societal resilience to disasters and wars, organizational innovation and implementation of practices*

to address components and milestones toward a GC, as well as behavioural and societal change are all plausible outcomes" (George et al. 2016, p. 1890).

Economic prosperity

Economic prosperity that businesses partake and enhance can therefore be articulated as outcome. The majority of the interviewees (26 out of 33) expressed a stance that the presence of trade and economic relations have an ambiguous impact on peace. Theoretical works in the business for peace space argued that history is full of examples when previously trading countries or neighbours that had close economic ties have started a war with each other (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2009). On the other hand, existing empirical research findings in the context of a war zone by Katsos and AlKafaji (2019) made assertions economic development to be one of the most effective violence reduction tools and potentially peace contributions.

Moreover, it was also recognised that economic issues (inflation, inequality, high levels of unemployment) have the potential to undermine social stability and create armed conflict. For instance, the Director of a Turkish MNE made a recognisable connection between economic difficulties and war, commenting that:

> *"You should also understand the economic problems, for example, which you can see* ***economic problems are most important, also causes for going to war at times****. So business is very vital to understand."*
> *– Director, Turkish MNE, pharmaceuticals*

Most of the interviewed people shared a common sentiment that while business is a potential peace builder, it is limited in its capacity to create peace on its own.

> *"But maybe there are actually quite a few German companies in Türkiye. When you think of it, I mean, it's the number used to be between six and seven thousand German companies being present in Türkiye, with their own businesses. I think both sides profit from this, of course.* ***And I think the more there are ties between both countries also on the business side, I think it leads to mutual understanding. And in my opinion, it's one building block of peace.****"*
> *– Country Manager, German MNE, energy*

While this participant believed that economic ties facilitated better mutual understanding and closer trade relations, such effects were not a panacea for a peaceful world. The perspectives generated through this study clearly acknowledged that MNEs

alone are not capable of preventing any violent conflict or war. Nevertheless, they could assist in constraining the escalation of tensions and deterioration of diplomatic and political issues, together with allies in government.

> *"Establishing common both wealth, but also a bit more peaceful environment.* ***I'm not saying it will prevent any conflict or also escalation of conflict****, but I think if you have discussions with partners and whom you can address at different levels, it could also be business leaders who may have maybe close ties, links to the administration, to the government. I think this definitely is at least a plus in preventing escalation of conflicts.* ***But as I said, it's not sufficient, as we have seen just recently with the invasion in Ukraine****."*
> *– Country Manager, German MNE, energy*

Another participant shared an outlook on the important role of MNEs. They may not be able to replace governments, however they might become an influential contributor to a resolution and settlement of disputes and tensions:

> *"So in a country like Türkiye, I think that is clearly observable that these businesses,* ***the presence of multinational companies contributes to the calming down of tensions. Although, they obviously cannot cut a deal or take a decision or bring a solution, crystal clear solutions to the table.****"*
> *– Partner, UK MNE, professional services #1*

According to another interviewee, international trade and business players are potentially vital contributors to peace, however they do not have the panacea for a conflict-free world. This participant argued that, despite the presence and depth of trade and economic relations, countries in the past have gone to and in the present continue to resort to wars, noting that:

> *"So we have dealt with this topic of the correlation between peace and doing business or trade or investment. We have done this and that the question is it casual or based on a business relationship, or is it a relationship that is just a statistical correlation that, however, doesn't prove that it really contributes to peace…And as long as you are communicating, this was somehow contribute to a better climate and a better atmosphere between the parties…and when I'm looking at the current conflict, does the trade in natural resources between Russia and the rest of the world prevented Russia to invade Ukraine?"*
> *– Chamber of Commerce #2*

To sum up, the current research findings in the Turkish context discovered that the effectiveness of economic prosperity (that MNEs co-create) as a complete recipe for peace is rather mixed.

Sense of community (building)

Most interviewed managers (28 out of 33) posited that business facilitates community building, as it brings diverse group of people together (Fort and Schipani, 2007, Oetzel et al., 2009). This can take place through activities such as human resource management, corporate philanthropy, corporate political activity, partnerships with other actors and so on. Therefore, when MNEs bring together people from various backgrounds into the same professional or social environment, they are likely to enhance the sense of community among the individuals and hence contribute to peace, according to the participants. Two managers from US MNEs posited that the biggest peace impact that business can have is via its employment and inclusive practices:

> *"…in my opinion that's the biggest door opener for peace when it comes to business and community relations, be it from an employment perspective, be it from serving others perspective and also being a servant leader, I think is one of the concepts is I am influenced by being a servant leader, growth mindset and inclusive practices."*
> *– US MNE, marketing*

> *"My team was diverse in previous company,* ***people come together as they forget about their backgrounds, people try to work together and understand one another****. It dissolves confrontational feelings and creates* ***collaborative cooperative environment for business, and a sense of community and that's what business does and has to do****."*
> *– US MNE, chemicals*

A similar sentiment was voiced by a manager from a Turkish multinational who said that business has a favourable peace contribution to make through facilitating community building and creating a globally connected environment for people to work in:

> *"****I believe business has a positive impact on peace, on community building, especially when you are working in an international organization*** *and you are coming together with different nationalities, so you are much getting to know their culture, how they live."*
> *– Turkish MNE, home appliances*

To sum up, this theme was found to have only favourable impacts on peace. As such, a sense of community and belonging in a workplace are likely to facilitate harmony between individuals, which in turn can contribute to societal resilience to threats of peace.

4.3 Corroborating insights from secondary data

The expert interviews with top managers discussed in the preceding section give clear indications of whether businesses had a peace impact – and what forms this impact took. However, there are a number of weaknesses associated with relying solely on such information. First, there is a social desirability bias in terms of how questions are answered (Morse, 2019; Solarino and Aguinis, 2021). Interviewees might, for instance, falsely assert that their business has a peace impact as it is socially desirable for this to be true. Second, the interview data was potentially open to misinterpretation by the researcher. More generally, the interviews were merely one source of information and on their own lacked validation, for instance through relevant documentation.

To strengthen the credibility of interview-based findings, two alternative strategies were implemented. First, for five companies the interviews were done twice with different managers. These supplementary interviews revealed no contradictory insights and, instead, corroborated the main findings. Second, this study relied on secondary data sources to triangulate the research findings, and potentially allow for the generation of additional insights to add to the overall understanding of the business-peace relationship.

The secondary document analysis focused on publicly available reports with a publication date within or very close to the primary data collection period of this thesis, and that pertained to the companies interviewed. The reports investigated for this thesis were published in 2021 and 2022, with two exceptions for Chambers of Commerce (2018 and 2020) as their latest reports were not available. These were thematically coded, as is shown in Appendix 5, to investigate whether businesses affected peace and peacebuilding. A clear caveat here is that social desirability, again, factors in with these reports being primarily produced by the businesses themselves. They are unlikely to contain critical reflections or information that could damage the value for shareholders or other stakeholders. Those documents, therefore, offer an insight into positive externalities generated by the firm (i.e., peace impacts) and the importance businesses attach to peace. However, it is unrealistic to expect negative peace effects to be recorded – an assumption that was validated in the analysis of this documentation that is presented further below.

In total, twenty anonymized reports pertaining to the interviewed businesses were found. Businesses report on many topics that relate to peace, from partnerships with

government and universities, to leadership and addressing global challenges through employee engagement. The first section to follow below unpacks the corroborating evidence for findings from the main analysis and is followed by another section that presents additional insights on business and peace that emerged in the studied documentation.

4.3.1 Corroborating evidence

Peace

As we can observe from the annual reports, multinational companies usually do not tend to directly declare their stance on peace related matters nor actively seem to participate in peacebuilding, however that is slowly changing and taking a new form. This can be observed through two directions. First, many of the reports had explicit comments on how their business and or industry was impacted by the Russia-Ukraine war (some used the word 'conflict', others 'events in Ukraine'), and the measures they have taken to minimise the consequential disruption and provide humanitarian aid to those affected. For instance, one MNE report mentioned that their organisation no longer operated in Russia and recorded the donations made to NGOs in the region that offered support to Ukrainians (Professional Services UK MNE Annual Report, 2022). Second, almost all the reports dedicated a section to addressing global societal challenges (including peaceful societies) and specifically, how the companies were addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, their activities in the previous year and what the organization aspired to accomplish in the future (Manufacturing (Liechtenstein) Sustainability Report 2022; Home Appliances (Türkiye) Annual Report 2021; Professional Services (UK) Annual Report 2022; Technology (Türkiye) Annual Report 2021; Technology (USA) ESG Report 2022; Energy (Germany) Annual Report 2022; Chamber of Commerce #4 Annual Report 2018; Chemicals (USA) ESG Report 2021).

Profit

Each of the reports mentioned substantive visions and ambitions for their organisations by outlining targets for business growth which confirmed the interview findings about the profit-oriented nature of business. In addition, many of the company documents reported a record growth in their revenues. Furthermore, Chambers of

Commerce reports mentioned the goal of improving relationships between business and other organizations (Chamber of Commerce #3 Annual Report, 2021-2022).

Geographical location and natural resources distribution

While this theme was sparingly addressed within the secondary data, some reports covered this theme is considerable depth. However, few reports addressed the challenges and opportunities that the proximate natural resources, and geographical location impacted on their organisation (the exceptions were the Technology, Swiss MNE Annual Report, 2022; Chamber of Commerce #3 Annual Report, 2021-2022). For instance, the Swiss MNE expressed in their annual report how they were preserving resources and identifying their use of restricted and hazardous substances such as mercury compounds found in batteries and lamps, titanium trioxide in electrical products.

Leadership

Almost all of the reports commenced with introducing their organisations' executive leadership team and/or a message from their CEO on past achievements, present opportunities and future challenges. Some challenges were specific (global peace with reference to Ukraine) whilst others were generic (environment). Some reports mentioned the importance of leadership trainings that employees and managers had undergone (Technology Türkiye Annual Report, 2021), and others outlined the work that dedicated leadership centres have conducted (Automotive Germany Sustainability Report, 2022). There was a shared understanding amongst the reports that good leaders ensure workplace safety, improve employee well-being, advocate for a diverse and inclusive professional community and ensure the effective delivery of philanthropic and social impact projects.

Human Resource Management

The reports contained a major theme which was 'women in top management' or 'women in leadership' (Technology (Türkiye) Annual Report 2021; Home Appliances (Türkiye) Sustainability Report 2021; Marketing (USA) ESG Report 2021; Technology/Defense (Switzerland) Sustainability Report 2022; Entertainment (USA) ESG

Report 2021; Chemicals (USA) ESG Report 2021; Manufacturing (Liechtenstein) Sustainability Report 2022).

This theme corroborated the interview findings, since managers recurrently expressed, that female leadership could contribute to a better, more sustainable and equitable world. Some company reports expressed ambitions to increase the share of women in top management roles by a certain percentage (Automotive (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022), while others reported the success of achieving the required percentage target of female representation on their board of directors (Marketing (USA) ESG Report, 2021, Finance (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022).

Diversity and inclusion were mentioned in each of those annual reports and company documents, thereby confirming the interview findings on this theme. This captured how companies implemented and continued the work of incorporating diversity and inclusion standards into their hiring process (Chemicals (USA) ESG Report, 2021; Entertainment (USA) ESG Report, 2021; Professional Services (UK) Annual Report, 2022; Finance (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022; Technology (USA) ESG Report 2022). Furthermore, some reports mentioned commitments to hiring more women and ethnic minorities in their global talent recruitment. Interestingly, some companies appointed a Chief Diversity Officer, whilst others established Inclusion Councils led by a Chief Inclusive Officer. Moreover, some companies mentioned that their UK branches published information about the Gender Pay Gap, as mandated by UK legislation since 2017 (Abudy et al., 2023).

The reports also focused on workplace safety, especially those from technology, automobile and construction companies, reflecting the concerns of those sectors (respectively) with preventing loss of life; and ensuring the security of personal data. Overall, the majority of those reports highlighted the significance of workplace health and safety (Automotive (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022; Technology/Defence (Switzerland) Sustainability Report 2022; Finance (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022; Marketing (USA) ESG Report, 2022; Chemicals (USA) ESG Report 2021; Manufacturing (Liechtenstein) Sustainability Report 2022). The reports often incorporated statistical datasets regarding how occupational safety risks were addressed and comparisons from the previous year. In relation to data protection, there was a widespread and consistent shared vision about the significance of protecting business information and sustaining IT security.

With a clear connection to the occupational health and safety regimes, some reports highlighted the importance of employee well-being. Many of those reports discussed the evolving nature of the social stigma surrounding mental health and emotional well-being, as well as how their company sought to tackle such problems. Mental health support initiatives ranged from online therapy appointments to stress-relief apps and crisis helplines that employees could utilise (Marketing (USA) ESG Report, 2022; Home Appliances (Türkiye) Sustainability Report 2021; Finance (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022; Manufacturing (Liechtenstein) Sustainability Report 2022).

Most reports covered the theme of employee well-being through linkage with the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown effect on the workforce (Finance (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022; Manufacturing (Liechtenstein) Sustainability Report 2022). In addition, company reports discussed their use of part-time and flexible working arrangements. Some companies reported how they communicated their mental health initiatives, and the importance of the issue, through dedicated sessions in the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Some of those reports also specified their delivery of corporate health management programs based on the framework guidelines of the Luxembourg Declaration on Workplace Health Promotion in the European Union 1997.

Corporate philanthropy

Most of the reports mentioned supplied information about philanthropic endeavours, particularly to supporting community organizations or, more specifically, social impact projects. For instance, company reports described pro bono work relating to building schools, donating large sums of money to charities and NGOs, and helping young people to develop and practice non-violent communication skills (Marketing (USA) ESG Report, 2022; Home Appliances (Türkiye) Sustainability Report 2021; Entertainment (USA) ESG Report, 2021; Chemicals (USA) ESG Report, 2021; Professional Services (UK) Annual Report, 2022). Furthermore, several companies had established their own charitable foundations which were dedicated to such noble social causes (Marketing (USA) ESG Report, 2022; Technology (USA) ESG Report 2022; Professional Services (UK) Annual Report 2022). Companies also outlined about their financial contribution to local natural disaster organisations, for example to address the flooding in South-East Asia (2021), earthquakes in Southern Türkiye

and Syria (2022), and ongoing commitment to support refugees (Finance (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022; Professional Services (UK) Annual Report 2022; Technology (USA) ESG Report 2022). Many of the social impact projects facilitated enhanced understanding between people of contrasting backgrounds and, thus, re-enforced the interview data about the capacity of business to accomplish effective cross-cultural dialogue.

Corporate Political Activity

Another theme mentioned that confirmed interview findings was a term close to corporate political activity – *advocacy* – some company reports incorporated information about their representative activities, an exhaustive list of lobbying and industry association memberships, and their role in nurturing strategic relationships with elected government leaders (Automotive (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022; Energy (Germany) Annual Report 2022; Chemicals (USA) ESG Report, 2021; Entertainment (USA) ESG Report, 2021; Marketing (USA) ESG Report 2022; Professional Services (UK) Annual Report, 2022; Finance (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022; Technology (USA) ESG Report 2022).

Partnerships with multiple actors

The theme of partnerships, which was stressed by many of the interviewees, was prevalent and consistent across the ESG and annual reports. In addition, it was connected to many business actions outlined in earlier sections (diversity and inclusion, philanthropic and social impact projects). There was a clear sentiment shared amongst businesses across a wide range of sectors that forging partnerships with other actors was crucial. Partnerships, with other businesses, government, universities, the UN, NGOs, were chronicled and signalled as an important tool for companies to achieve their commercial and non-commercial goals (such as addressing grand challenges). Referring to the previous theme on philanthropy, businesses often collaborated and with universities and NGOs to contribute to social impact projects. Initiatives, for instance, aimed at enhancing partnerships with the United Nations and addressing diversity and employee well-being programs (Chemicals (USA) ESG Report, 2021; Marketing (USA) ESG Report, 2022; Manufacturing (Liechtenstein) Sustainability Report 2022). Companies also recorded participation in the UN COP (Conference of the Parties)), attendance at conferences and membership in various international alliances such as World Economic Forum's different divisions and the UN's

Women Empowerment Principles and Global Compact. In addition, some reports mentioned EU Horizons Framework programs and future of work initiatives. Understandably, the reports often referred to standards from the international organisations such as OECD, UN, EU, ILO guidelines.

International disruptions

The reports covered a wide range of global disruptions that might impact business operations negatively and yet also create opportunities. This emphasis again corroborated the interview data. One theme that was only sparsely addressed through the primary debate was the business response to climate change. However, this issue received substantive coverage through these reports, many of which commenced with coverage of environmental and climate related topics. Climate training, in terms of increasing a shared understanding of these issues, emerged as the most frequent element of this theme (Automotive (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022; Manufacturing (The Netherlands) Annual Report, 2021). Some company reports mentioned the goal of becoming climate-neutral by 2030 which coincides with the target date of completion for the UN SDG agenda, which are considered with, but are not limited to, grand challenges.

Interview data also covered business actions in response to the challenge of supplying clean water; an issue which was also discussed in some of these reports (Home Appliances (Türkiye) Sustainability Report 2021; Technology (USA) ESG Report 2022). For instance, a public-private initiative founded with the objective of recruiting executive leaders for the water management challenge was mentioned – UN CEO Water Mandate (Professional Services (UK) Annual Report 2022; Home Appliances (Türkiye) Sustainability Report 2021; Chemicals (USA) ESG Report, 2021; Entertainment (USA) ESG Report 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown measures throughout the globe were identified as slowing business growth and impacting on what businesses can do to address societal challenges (Chamber of Commerce #4 Annual Report, 2018, Chamber of Commerce #3 Annual Report, 2021-2022; Marketing (USA) ESG Report 2022). Furthermore, geopolitical tensions between countries and the risk of natural disasters (earthquakes and hurricanes) were mentioned as a growing concern for the future of business and its capability to accomplish its goals (Professional Services (UK) Annual Report, 2022).

Whilst many reports explicitly mentioned the impact of Ukraine war, there was also a coverage of the U.S. military's departure from Afghanistan and the support provided to the veterans by a company (Chemicals (USA) ESG Report, 2021). As has been mentioned at the start of this section on secondary data, many reports published by the MNEs contained explicit remarks on the Ukraine war. Ultimately, each of these reports shared a concern about the substantive risks of violence, conflict, and other significant disruptions, which often negatively impact business.

Economic prosperity and community building

Some companies reported measurements of a specific number of people achieving economic empowerment, defined in terms of gaining financial strength, retaining, or improving formal employment (Chemicals (USA) ESG Report, 2021). Although many did not explicitly outline economic prosperity as a sole business achievement; this theme might be interpreted through, for example, discussions about recruitment, community investment programs that benefit local societies and successful outcomes of various partnerships.

Community building emerged as a recurrent and significant theme in most reports, albeit conceptualised publications with multiple definitions. The company reports also often outlined the crucial significance of giving their employees a sense of belonging through a diverse set of internal networking groups and leadership development programs. Externally, businesses made donations to charities and non-governmental organisations that supported different social causes, thereby attempting to improve wider society.

4.3.2 Other insights

Unethical practices

There was a range of other themes that were not present in the reports. Notable exception was a report that mentioned one unethical practice and how it was tackled (Home Appliances (Türkiye) Sustainability Report 2021). In most of the reports, there was a shared vision amongst businesses that their contribution to a better world was also manifested through status as ethical and ethically compliant organisation. In particular, there was significant coverage of compliance in relation to the so called 'conflict minerals' (tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold) minerals, which are used in the production of jewellery, electronic products and home appliances and often, that extracted in high-risk conflict zones around the world. The United Nations' guidelines and the latest 2021 European Union

law – the Conflict Minerals Regulation (European Commission, 2024c) restrict the use of those minerals, and many company reports reassured their commitment to not purchase these essential raw materials from high-risk conflict zones (Home Appliances Home Appliances (Türkiye) Sustainability Report 2021; Manufacturing (Liechtenstein) Sustainability Report 2022; Technology (USA) ESG Report 2022; Technology (Türkiye) Annual Report 2021; Marketing (USA) ESG Report 2022).

Social Mechanisms

The migration theme was not explicitly addressed, although might be interpreted as being implicitly referenced, mostly through discussions surrounding refugee support and human resources management.

Rule of law and MNE host-home country rules

The reports contained no material on the rule of law, albeit some companies mentioned the importance of meeting the legislative requirements for purchasing products through suppliers (Automotive (Germany) Sustainability Report, 2022). Few reports covered the importance of abiding by existing laws such as UK Modern Slavery Act (Entertainment (USA) ESG Report, 2021).

Finally, is also important to note that almost half of these reports mentioned that this was their second or third, sometimes even first non-financial report. This observation indicates of these MNEs have only recently begun incorporating tackling grand challenges within most of the annual reports that were issued on behalf of the entire organisation, not just the Turkish branch. This wider geographic scope thus limits, to some extent, their utility for collaborating data collected in one country – Türkiye. The utility of these reports might also be questioned in respect of accuracy, given the obvious public relations orientation of any such documentation (Chapter Three). Nevertheless, these reports did help to clarify many responses (themes) from the interviews.

4.4 Concluding summary

Overall, the findings from the interviews and the secondary data give a broad overview of how businesses contribute or detract from peace in the Turkish context. This was placed in the grand challenges framework, which is summarized in Figure 6. In this

figure, the items mentioned in green color are solely found in the literature (and thus are not corroborated by the interviews or the secondary data), the items in blue are novel themes identified in primary and secondary data analysis, while the grey items were specified in the interviews alone. The items in black are the categories of the grand challenges framework. Finally, the items in purple concern the overlap of this study's findings with the business for peace literature.

To start, peace is considered as a grand challenge goal for MNEs. It is important to acknowledge that businesses have their own *needs and aspirations* such as profit seeking motive and preferences for (in)stability (see sections 4.2.1-4.2.2). Following that, multinationals are likely to face *societal barriers* in the form of geographical location and the distribution of natural resources (see section 4.2.3). During the course of addressing grand challenges through *multilevel actions*, MNEs should take into account *organizational constraints* (unethical practices, for e.g. peacewashing) and *institutional contexts* (rule of law, MNE host-home country rules). These concepts and themes have not been previously addressed in the literature, with the exception of the rule of law, which was a central context for some empirical studies, for example regarding Iraq and Columbia (Katsos and Forrer, 2014; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020).

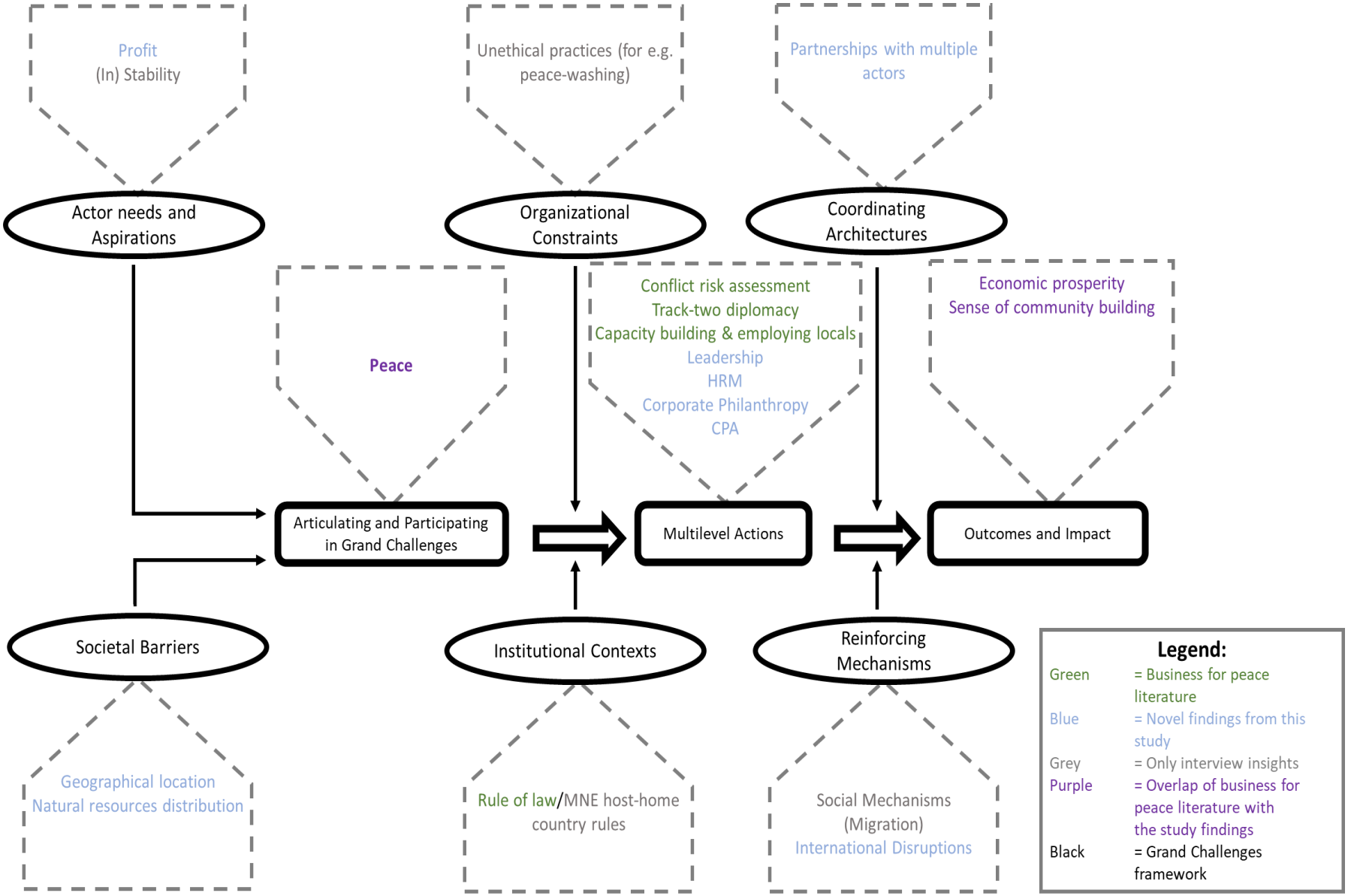
Furthermore, the multilevel actions revealed in the studied context of Türkiye are as follows: leadership, human resource management, corporate philanthropy and corporate political activity (see section 4.2.6). The insights from the literature that were corroborated also relate to a multilevel action – employing locals. This topic was categorized under the human resource management theme in the framework. Crucially, the insights from the literature that were not corroborated relate to *multilevel actions* regarding conflict risk assessment; track-two diplomacy; and capacity building. Conflict risk assessment was not found in the context of Türkiye. This absence might reflect the specific geographical context of the country, and its relative stability compared to war-torn countries which have been the primary focus of the limited empirical landscape of the business for peace literature (Katsos and Forrer, 2014; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020). Track-two diplomacy and capacity building might also be interpreted as integral to armed conflict – an interpretation that could explain their absence from this empirical context.

In addition, this study identified themes that were absent from the literature. For instance, *coordinating architectures* (partnerships with multiple actors) and *reinforcing*

mechanisms (social mechanisms and international disruptions). Some themes were found in the interviews but not in the secondary data. For instance, unethical practices and migration. This result might be due to the tendency of publicly available company reports to not contain information that can harm their business or put it under a negative spotlight. To sum up, the outcomes and impact of MNE actions are likely to facilitate economic prosperity and sense of community building, which reflected assertions from the existing literature.

In conclusion, the findings of this research indicate that business alone is not capable to tackle negative peace and initiating and ending a war remains function of a sovereign government. Nonetheless, a lack of negative peace can be in the interest of certain types of businesses that may profit from the presence of armed conflicts. However, most businesses have a clearer potential contribute to (positive) peace through their daily business actions, for e.g. as employers. These resonate with the quote of Spinoza at the start of this Chapter – "*that peace is not [mere] absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice".*

Figure 6. The grand challenge of peace


Profit
(In) Stability
Unethical practices (for e.g. peace-washing)
Partnerships with multiple actors
Actor needs and Aspirations
Organizational Constraints
Coordinating Architectures
Peace
Conflict risk assessment
Track-two diplomacy
Capacity building & employing locals
Leadership
HRM
Corporate Philanthropy
CPA
Economic prosperity
Sense of community building
Articulating and Participating in Grand Challenges
Multilevel Actions
Outcomes and Impact
Societal Barriers
Institutional Contexts
Reinforcing Mechanisms
Geographical location
Natural resources distribution
Rule of law/MNE host-home country rules
Social Mechanisms (Migration)
International Disruptions
Legend:
Green = Business for peace literature
Blue = Novel findings from this study
Grey = Only interview insights
Purple = Overlap of business for peace literature with the study findings
Black = Grand Challenges framework

5 Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

"Establishing lasting peace is the work of education;
all politics can do is keep us out of war."
— Maria Montessori (1870-1952)

This thesis has deepened and expanded our knowledge on the relation between business and peace by clarifying and summarizing the current state of the debate and exposing its blind spots and caveats (Chapter Two). Moreover, it has ordered and extended this scholarship by placing it within a systematic grand challenges framework that was subsequently applied in the context of Türkiye and generated novel knowledge about how businesses might impact peace (Chapters Three and Four). Thereby, this thesis connects business for peace and grand challenges scholarships, specifically in terms of shifting the orientation of the former away from piecemeal micro contributions, through association with a much wider coherent theoretical and conceptual framework by George et al. (2016).

This concluding Chapter discusses the main observations and theoretical implications of the literature review (Chapter Two), methodology (Chapter Three) and empirical results (Chapter Four). Following these, the practical implications are discussed. This Chapter ends with an overview of the limitations of this study, as well as the possibilities for future research.

5.1 The business for peace debate

Chapter One and Two established that there is a broader discussion on whether business and peace are connected and, if such an association is recognised, what form this connection takes. While scholars from the field of international law and political science suggest somewhat negative links to peace from 'the private sector' and big business (Ebrahim, 2010; Ganson and M'cleod, 2019; Aparac, 2024), business for peace researchers predominantly propose a positive link (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Banks, 2016; Forrer and Katsos, 2015; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019).

Moreover, Chapter One and Two unpacked that the business for peace scholarship champions, at least in part, the general idea that business contributes to economic growth, which in turn is positively correlated with peace (Fort and Schipani, 2002). To solidify this general assumption, this scholarship relies on, and continues to build on many micro-

theoretical illustrations, or indeed extended anecdotes, regarding favourable peace impacts derived from business activity (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019; Katsos, 2020; Katsos and Forrer, 2022; Cechvala and Ganson, 2024). This scholarship highlights, for instance, that businesses contribute to the rule of law by bringing their practices from their home countries (or other locations) to host countries, building a sense of community by employing diverse teams, and engaging in unofficial two-track diplomacy where they mediate peaceful relations between, for instance, other firms and government (Fort and Schipani, 2007). Businesses are also thought to contribute to peace by implementing conflict risk assessment (Oetzel et al., 2009). In addition, studies in the business for peace field have connected entrepreneurship to peace and have pointed out the minimal impact of peace agreements on foreign direct investment (Joseph et al., 2021; Albino-Pimental et al., 2021).

Importantly, regarding the conceptualization of what peace is, it was demonstrated that most scholarly work in the business for peace field has utilised the 'negative peace' notion due to its quantifiable nature (Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). However, as has also previously been noted by other scholars, the field would benefit from more comprehensive definitions of peace since lack of war and violence is rather narrow in focus (Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos and Forrer, 2022). The majority of peace research in other social science fields has also primarily focused on negative peace themes such as the termination of war and transition from war (Bailliet, 2017; Aparac, 2024). This leaves the question of how business can contribute to social harmony and general well-being of the society i.e., 'positive peace', markedly less well-studied.

In short, the business for peace scholarship suffers from its reliance on untestable and unactionable general theories on the one hand, and micro-theory that has led to fragmentary and merely illustrative insights on the other as well as a narrow conceptualization of what peace entails and how businesses factor in. Instead of focusing on whether business is, in general, good, or bad influence on peace or generating further micro-theory, this thesis has sought to construct mid-range theory and unpack the possible forms of peace contributions of MNEs through *multilevel actions* that take place on different levels: *individual*, *organisational*, and *multilateral* (see Figure 8). Positive peace is considered in conjunction with negative peace. The impact from business is placed in a systematic framework from the adjacent and similarly nascent grand challenges literature. Specifically, the grand challenges framework established by George et al. (2016) was used.

In addition to enabling mid-range theory building and sensitizing higher-level empirical observations, it has the added benefit of making the study of business and peace more structured and accessible to other fields – something that the scholarship has struggled with (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). This approach also simultaneously connects business and peace to many mainstream management domains such as leadership, HRM and corporate political activity thus helping to bring the gap between the business for peace literature and core management studies research.

In addition to sourcing promising toolkits (Figure 6, 7 and 8), converging business for peace to the grand challenges literature is promising in its own regard. The last ten or so years have seen an increase in academic research on climate change and gender inequality (Howard-Grenville et al., 2014; Joshi et al., 2015), public-private partnerships, decent work and economic growth, and many more relating to public goods (Berrone et al., 2016; Gray et al., 2022; Leonidou et al., 2024; Horner et al., 2024; George et al., 2024; Sinkovics et al., 2024). These phenomena have intuitive peace impacts, and the business for peace scholarship can benefit by connecting more closely to grand challenges, increasing its academic and practical relevance. George et al. (2016, p. 1890) noted that their *"framework provides an architecture to situate a rather complex, global and multilevel challenge."*

5.2 Big business and grand challenges

Whereas Chapter Two conceptually developed an approach to studying the peace – business relationship by considering the former a grand challenge and using the framework developed by George et al. (2016), Chapter Three and Four concern its empirical application. MNEs are studied in the Turkish context, given their sensitivity to peace-related issues (see Chapters One, Two and Three). The sensitizing grand challenges lens through which insights were developed using expert elite interviews emphasizes the interaction between business actions and peace (Figure 6).

This research which was conducted in the Turkish context which is the first empirical study in a non-war zone that is near existing wars (to the author's knowledge), and it enriches the scarcity of the business for peace literature that mostly concerns with post-conflict and war-torn contexts. The participants of this research, who live and work in Istanbul – a cultural, historical, economic hub, a prominent Turkish city and the world's

biggest 15th transcontinental city (OECD, 2008) – shared their perceptions on business and peace, how companies were addressing societal matters, and which potential business activities have footprints on peace and harmony between countries and among people. In summary, the interviewed managers held the following views: MNE capacity to impact peace is linked to their sector, multinationals have limited role to influence negative peace, and the outcomes of the *multilevel actions* of businesses and their leaders have the potential for varying impacts on peace.

There is growing social pressure for firms to become active in addressing global challenges (Sinkovics et al., 2023). Precisely which one is prioritized by a company might reflect factors such as their location, their industry, an ingrained specific organizational culture or even the personal preferences of senior management. This element is a paramount to understand and analyse before considering whether a company can have a potential peace impact and what forms it might take.

The empirical findings in Chapter Four suggest that due to the profit-oriented nature of businesses, MNEs might be able help or hinder peace (see Chapter Four), which is in line with more recent business for peace scholarship assertions (Cechvala and Ganson, 2024). The findings of this research conducted in Türkiye discovered that whilst businesses can contribute to peace, they are also capable of doing the opposite (see section 4.2.2; Fort and Schipani, 2007; Ford, 2015; Oetzel and Miklian, 2017; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020; Joseph et al., 2023). The findings presented in this thesis implied, therefore, that whilst MNEs might generate some solutions relevant to grand challenges, they also possessed the capacity to exacerbate grand challenges which also reflects assertions in research on challenges (Kourula et al., 2017; Ghauri et al., 2021; Dörrenbächer et al., 2024).

According to George et al.'s (2016) grand challenges framework, actors have *needs* and *aspirations* (Figure 4; see also later Figure 8). It has been established that businesses, first and foremost are driven by their *aspirations* to pursue profitability for their stakeholders. However, when indeed deciding to address and contribute to tackling grand challenges, MNEs are likely to be impacted by their own *needs* (Chapter Four, see section 4.2.2). In this study, managers expressed that whether companies wish to engage with the grand challenge of peace in Türkiye is linked to their sector and specific aspirations of the MNE leaders. Pursuing profit and requiring stability to do so needs an evaluation of whether businesses from a particular sector would thrive in a peaceful or conflict environment since

it was concluded that certain industries can benefit from the latter (see later section 5.2.1; Figure 7).

This research illuminated that when MNEs do engage in grand challenges, they can face *barriers* in the context of geographical location and distribution of natural resources. In other words, for the context of Türkiye, nearby bordering countries that are experiencing war is an important consideration for MNEs located there (Sazak and Woods, 2017; Chapter Four, see section 4.2.3). In addition, distribution and subsequently potential mismanagement of natural resources such as water, oil and gold were identified as valuable elements to understand business and peace.

Furthermore, companies might face *constraints* and challenges when deciding how to address matters of societal importance such as peace. For instance, funding and costs, prioritisation of different goals. In doing so, this sometimes even include unethical practices (Chapter Four, see section 4.2.4). The interviewed managers posited that such unethical practices range from discrimination in the hiring process to the absence of a participative leadership, thereby disrupting the potential harmony among individuals. Consequently, the findings suggested that unethical practices can create scandals and damage the MNE reputation. For instance, sometimes stated attempts to address the grand challenge of climate change might not reflect genuine motivations, lack clear implementation strategies, and turn out to be greenwashing (Bothello et al., 2023). This can be also linked to 'peace-washing', a relatively novel and unutilised management term compared to greenwashing (Miklian et al., 2016; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020; House of Commons, 2023; Chapter Two and Four). When assessing the potential success and participation of MNEs in peacebuilding, this is likely to become a notable issue.

Then, MNEs' actions towards grand challenges are impacted by *institutional context* that reflect norms, regulatory environments, and the rule of law (George et al., 2016). While the study found minor revelations on this component (Chapter Four, see section 4.2.5), managers nevertheless asserted that such factors help to determine whether the relevant businesses are located within a stable and predictable *institutional context* and are thus crucial in affecting how MNEs daily *multilevel actions*. This concludes the implications of the first components of MNE contributions to the grand challenge of peace before acknowledging the role of business in negative and positive peace (see Figure 8).

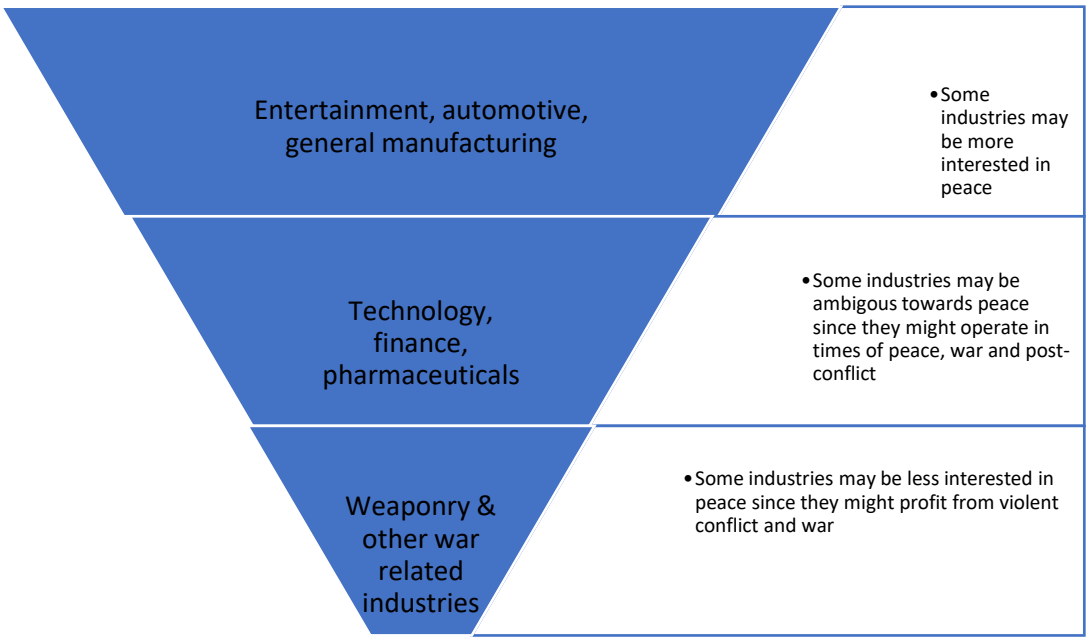
5.2.1 Negative peace and MNEs

The findings of this study highlight the previously unpopular notion that whilst businesses generally aspire to operate in stable and peaceful environments, they might also profit from conflict and war which has links to their industry (see section 4.2.2; see Figure 7; Oetzel et al., 2009; Mayer, 2009). As has been noted, this outcome suggests that taking into account industries where business operates in appears to be an important consideration (see Figure 7). The interviewed managers posited that companies selling weaponry of mass destruction were less likely to be negatively influenced by conflict and war and, therefore, might be less interested in peace building. Interestingly, businesses in pharmaceuticals, finance and technology are not likely to be concerned with matters of peace since they may be able effectively operate and in times of peace, war, and post-conflict. The findings illuminated that MNEs situated within the entertainment, automotive, general manufacturing industries required a stable and peaceful environment to be able to do their business and hence are likely to have more interest in peace.

Moreover, the study shows that whilst businesses can be viewed as potential peace building organisations, they alone cannot prevent or end violent conflict and wars (see Chapter Four; section 4.2.9; Oetzel et al., 2009). Yet there can occasionally be the opportunity for businesses to engage in tackling negative peace activities, for instance facilitating conflict resolution. However, negative peace, in terms of the absence of war, is overwhelmingly under the chief function and purview of sovereign governments. In particular, there was a clear association between the sector of the business and the potential peace contribution (see Figure 7). Hence, understanding *raison d'être* of businesses and conditions required for their primary motive of profit maximization is a significant analysis prior to examining whether and why MNEs might participate in peacebuilding. This assertion is perhaps best summarised in comments made by a participant from a UK MNE, who noted that peace contributions of businesses are linked to their sector:

> *"Depends on the industry and on the business model that companies are following...Some businesses have better impact, but some businesses do not and may benefit from a lack of peace. For example, the defence business, they are selling high technology, mass destruction, bombs. How can we say that they contribute to peace?"*
>
> – *UK MNE, professional services*

Figure 7. Sector-specific interest in peace



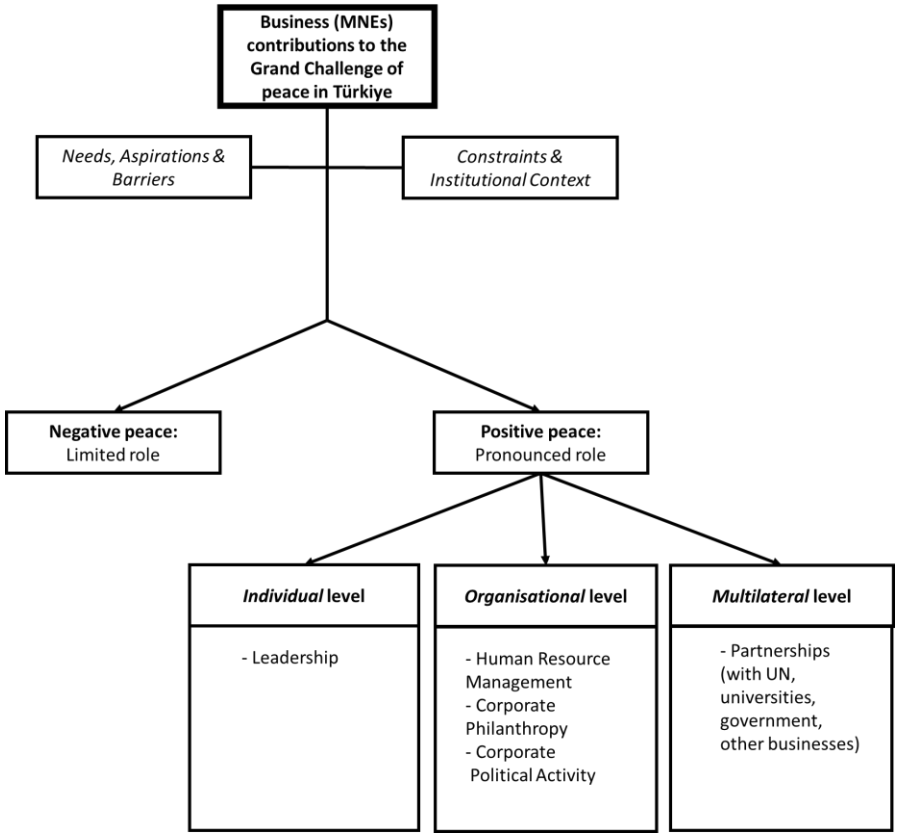
In summary, the observations from the data collected for this thesis have revealed that businesses have a limited influence on negative peace (see Chapter Four; Figure 7 and 6). There is, however, only indirect, second-hand evidence of this conclusion. It is for obvious reasons that businesses and their leaders do not openly talk about how they themselves may be negatively affecting peace – but such insights were nonetheless sourced from business leaders who recognized this impulse in other firms in certain sectors. This highly restrictive role for MNEs can also be corroborated through historical narratives and contemporary observation – there is minimal evidence of, for instance, MNEs having any significant capacity to end armed conflict, even following a decision to exit and end operations in a war zone (Ó Laoghaire, 2024). This study has concluded that negative peace primarily remains within the authority of governments, not private companies. This pushes back on the assumption that business is typically a force for peace, which is implicit in the business for peace literature.

However, this finding does not indicate that businesses cannot be part of peace-building (see section 4.2.6-4.2.7; Chapter Four; Figure 8). When it comes to positive peace (see Chapter One and Two), the study outcomes demonstrate (Chapter Four) that there are several avenues through which business can potentially impact peace via their daily business activities.

5.2.2 Positive peace and MNEs

This thesis specified a potential peace contribution by MNEs to be intertwined with their daily business actions on *individual* (leadership), *organisational* (HRM, CPA, philanthropy) and *multilateral* (partnerships with other actors) levels (Figure 8). The Figure 8 is a simplification of the grand challenge of peace framework (Figure 7) from Chapter Four aimed at summarizing potential avenues for peace impacts of MNEs in the studied context of Türkiye and the levels at which peace-building practices occur.

Figure 8. Business (MNEs) contributions to the grand challenge of peace in Türkiye



Business contributions to the grand challenge of peace in Türkiye have an internal and external component. In other words, what business can do to promote positive peace occurs through recurrent business actions on different levels. Such categorization of levels matters because interventions at these contrasting levels by MNEs might vary markedly in their impacts on peace. This has not previously been considered systematically in the business for peace literature which has predominantly argued a wide range of generalised actions conducted by firms without identifying their belonging in an organisational structure (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2009; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). This is an important finding that adds to the business for peace scholarship,

as it clarifies the role that MNEs can play in negative and positive peace. Especially regarding the latter, MNEs might generate a substantive effect through their daily activities.

The findings of this research identified several multi-level actions that multinationals may engage in to support peacebuilding which have been neglected by existing scholarship. For instance, inclusive leadership, non-discriminatory hiring practices, supporting women to reach top positions and partnering with governments and the UN. Moreover, this thesis has categorised such business actions more systematically – something that the past literature refrained from doing. This was done, for instance, by grouping these concepts into leadership, human resource management, corporate philanthropy and corporate political activity classifications. Such categorization elevates the field's conceptual clarity and allows for building structured knowledge on how business and peace relate.

With regard to *multilevel actions* on *individual* level peace impact, the leadership style of management teams was discovered to be quite impactful since managers and leaders influence the careers and their well-being of their subordinate workforce (Spreitzer, 2007; Ledbetter, 2016). It was found that there is a need for more participative and inclusive leadership with a focus on empathy and active listening in relation to fostering peace (Chapter Four; section 4.2.6). For instance, outside of the studied context, there has been recent news about the mandatory mental health training program for Goldman Sachs' managers with the title of vice president or higher, which will equip them with knowledge on best practice responses to different workplace scenarios, such as helping employees manage anxiety over global conflicts (McGlauflin and Burleigh, 2024). This approach might be interpreted as being mirrored in the latest academic research on grand challenges as Cooke et al. (2024, p. 771) argued that "*many avenues of research are emerging nowadays, including managing people in the context of heightened geopolitical tensions"*. The leadership literature has received very little attention from business for peace scholars, hence the findings of this study could facilitate a dialogue between them.

Concerning *organisational* level, three business activities have been identified to impact peace, namely human resource management, corporate philanthropy, and corporate political activity. The present inquiry revealed rich empirical insights about the interconnectedness of such business processes with peace. This implies an empirical acknowledgement of the importance of human resource management in contributing to

social harmony, indeed as it has previously been signalled that has impact on HRM and vice versa (Reade et al., 2019; Forrer and Katsos, 2015).

To start with HRM, practices such as hiring practices, particularly employing locals; cross-cultural management; and diversity and inclusion policies were found as being capable of having positive, negative, and even ambiguous consequences for peace. Following from the above analysis, this study discovered that facilitation of cross-cultural dialogue and employing locals has capacity to create positive (favourable) impacts on peace which is similar to the assertions in the existing research (see Chapter Four, sections 4.2.6; 4.3.1; Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2009). There can be other possible practices, but there is a good case that these deserve a particular attention.

Notably, it was found that having more women in top management positions and investing into women's issues enhance possible peace positive outcomes (see section 4.2.6; 4.3.1; Banks, 2016). Findings from this thesis additionally imply that the internal culture of companies and their consequential peace agendas impact on wider society (see section 4.2; Brown and Cole, 2016). Indeed, companies have capacity to influence peace internally (for example through enhancing employee well-being, career progression, health, and safety, see sections 4.2.6; 4.3.1; Bishara and Schipani, 2009). There is, however, a challenge to enshrine sustainable practices in hiring processes and implementing policies on diversity (ensuring the presence of underrepresented groups). Indeed, the existing literature posits that it is not always clear which precise business and management practices promote peace or the circumstances under which those practices will have their desired influence (Forrer and Katsos, 2014).

In addition to other *organisational* level MNE actions, it is a widely implemented practice for large corporations to have a dedicated government affairs or related public relations teams (Moss et al., 2012). It was discovered that when business builds relationships with government representatives, they are likely to approach it strategically. Corporate political activity is not a term that managers and company reports used, and instead their wording of choice was 'diplomacy', 'partnerships with government or politicians', or 'advocacy', the latter is understood as nurturing strategic relations with government (see section 4.3.1). This finding corroborates the existing business for peace research that posited the importance of track-two diplomacy activity for business for peace, however, this study puts it into a broader categorisation of corporate political activity.

Nevertheless, the potential outcome of such activity might create ambiguous peace impacts.

Furthermore, the way companies implement philanthropic projects emerged as having consequences for peace. As one of the traditional forms of corporate social behaviour (Mescon and Tilson, 1987), the study findings revealed that building schools, educating youth to avoid violence and environmental protection projects could potentially contribute to peace (see section 4.2.6; 4.3.1). Those findings have partially supported existing claims of the wider business for peace literature (Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020) which might reflect the studied context of Türkiye, a country that has relatively stable institutions compared to some of its neighbours, a NATO member since 1952 and is considered to be a long-term Western ally (see Chapter Three, section 3.3).

Subsequent business action on *multilateral* level reflects MNE partnerships with other actors. This activity is often connected to their philanthropic endeavours or innovation collaborations with other businesses, universities, charities, governmental agencies, and the United Nations (see sections 4.2.7; 4.3.1). These partnerships can be costly and challenging (George et al., 2016), however when they occur, they are likely to encompass themes such as conflict mediation, education, trade dialogue, philanthropic and social responsibility initiatives and so on. Nevertheless, such partnerships can also facilitate the burden of the costs of addressing grand challenges. Overall, such *multilevel actions* on *individual*, *organisational* and *multilateral* levels are likely to overlap with each other. They could be aligned towards the successful attainment of grand challenges but also jeopardise the process.

Moreover, MNEs' actions can be impacted by *reinforcing mechanisms* such as international disruptions such as pandemics, migration, sanctions (Reade et al., 2019; Cooke et al., 2024). Moreover, this research also opens a broader perspective on the role of economic sanctions that can have serious implications for daily business actions and processes (Cooke et al., 2024). The findings indicate that by implementing sanctions, MNEs may be supporting peace (Chapter Four, see section 4.2.8), and hence this study also connects with research about the effect of sanctions on MNEs (Meyer et al., 2023).

Concerning *outcomes* of MNES' multilevel actions, the findings of this research discovered that economic prosperity might have a rather ambiguous impact on peace (see Chapter Four; section 4.2.9), contrary to its general acceptance as a mostly positive impact

in the business for peace scholarship due to its ideological nature (Ford, 2015; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). Another discovered *outcome* of MNE actions when addressing the grand challenge of peace is the facilitation of sense of community (building) which was found to have only positive impacts (Oetzel et al., 2009; Chapter Four, see section 4.2.9). Both economic prosperity and sense of community and belonging can potentially strengthen the societal resilience towards the disruptions of peace.

The approach outlined in this discussion requires a slight departure from previous business for peace research and facilitates a balanced framework to the study of business and peace, thus, contribute to emerging scholarship that challenges overoptimistic interpretations of the literature (Ganson et al., 2022; Cechvala and Ganson, 2024). Finally, the findings of this research contribute to the calls in the business for peace literature to enrich the meaning of peace beyond the simplistic lack of war (Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019). The study findings assert that peace is not merely an absence of conflict and war, but also conditions for societal harmony and sustainable development. The latter, in part, includes intercultural dialogue, diverse and inclusive workplace, and access to equal opportunities, and continuously evolves (Chapter Two; Galtung, 1969, Tilahun, 2015; Richmond, 2015; Ganson et al., 2022).

To conclude, these findings revealed that context matters, and that different businesses will prioritise their goals and motives according to various factors such as their own *needs*, *aspirations* and *barriers*, as well as *constraints* and *institutional context* (Figure 7 and 8). Moreover, MNEs can contribute to peace through their daily business actions on *individual*, *organisationa*l and *multilateral* levels (Figure 8). Business can, therefore, facilitate positive peace in terms of enhancing conditions for sustainable social harmony. This was reflected in an insightful answer from one interviewee, who gave a substantive answer to the central research issue of this thesis – how peace contributions are perceived by businesses. S/he observed that:

> *"People start learning about different cultures, and there are a number of surveys that prove that watching a specific show from a country makes people more interested in learning the culture, learning about that country.* ***So I think this cultural closeness is one piece that business has a role to play. And likewise, on the hiring processes, I think the diversity inclusion processes of companies shas a role to play in bringing different cultures together, making people learn to live together. I think this is a basis for building peace*** *and also that the international trade perspective, I*

think we have observed it lately many occasions. And in international relations, it's getting more and more to be in tension with the countries where you have seen trade relations with. So I'm sure that ***business has a role to play in strengthening the peace in the given location, both via its practices, also a way of bringing cultures together****."*
– US MNE, entertainment

5.3 Peace in the grand challenges field

There has been scarce communication between grand challenges and business for peace literatures despite overlaps in their topical focus. Two arguable exceptions in business for peace space were the work on entrepreneurship and UN SDG Goal 16 by Gallo et al. (2023) and implications of war on business by Melin et al. (2023), however these studies did not attempt to frame peace as a grand societal challenge and thereby did not explicitly bridge the two fields. Another notable exception was in international business research by Kolk et al. (2017) who posited that peace has not received attention despite being enshrined in the Goal 16. In other words, very few studies in the management literature directly address peace. Moreover, the grand challenges literature has also under-invested in the study of peace; this thesis, therefore, offers a remedy for that deficiency through inviting the grand challenge scholars to research peace as a grand societal challenge in the organisational and managerial context.

The grand challenges literature can benefit from connecting to business for peace. Although the former literature has studied many different societal challenges, it has surprisingly paid very little attention to peace (Kolk et al., 2017; Gallo et al., 2023). The benefits from doing so are straightforward, and this promises to generate actionable, practically relevant insights. For instance, like many of the other grand challenges, peace is also framed in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as peace and justice (see, for example, Table 2; Chapter Two; George et al., 2016; Brammer et al., 2019; Dörrenbächer et al., 2024; Baumann et al., 2024). The UN SDGs are a structured categorization of the urgent challenges the global community is encountering, and hence create vital avenues through which to develop business and management scholarship (Buckley et al., 2017; Nielsen et al., 2023; George et al., 2024).

While peace is recognised as one of the grand challenges, it can have direct and indirect links to other grand challenges (Kolk et al., 2017). For example, poverty alleviation,

access to education and safe water, etc. While superficially and instinctively it might appear that such diverse themes have little in common, the grand challenges concept demonstrates the flaws in such assumptions (Ferraro et al., 2015). Furthermore, as Chapter Two highlighted, grand challenges are highly complex and have wide-ranging global effects; potential solutions, therefore, requiring multiple organisations to coordinate actions (Ferraro et al., 2015; George et al., 2016; Wright and Nyberg, 2017; Howard-Grenville et al., 2019; George et al., 2024). In summary, they require governments to work together with other organisations, for instance business. This collaborative agenda has been appreciated through recent the grand challenges literature which recognises requirements for more concerted collaborative partnerships between private and public organisations to solve societal challenges ranging from poverty to biodiversity that were once regarded as under the government purview (George et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, contemporary SDGs might not reflect the new emerging modern challenges, as Ferraro et al. (2015, p. 364) commented that *"grand challenges are evaluative, cutting across jurisdictional boundaries, implicating multiple criteria of worth, and revealing new concerns even as they are being tackled."* Hence there are simultaneous challenges of dealing with novel issues such as possible risks that stem from technology: fake news and privacy matters which attracted calls for the acknowledgement of additional SDGs beyond those recognised within the existing UNSDG framework (Baumann et al., 2024). Such developments might, however, signal the potential enlargement of the grand challenges onto new peace relevant themes, for e.g. nexus between conflict and climate change (Koubi, 2019), peace and artificial intelligence (Hunter et al., 2023; Panic and Arthur, 2024).

As it has already been mentioned, MNEs are affected by their *needs* and *aspirations*. Their utmost need is to create shareholder value, hence maximizing profit is a priority for them. Nevertheless, as the findings of this research have shown, MNEs participate in contributing to peace through various daily business actions. This activity reflects requirements to sustain their profits but also claim to impact in areas such as diversity, societal well-being, environmental sustainability, and global prosperity.

The relationship between business and peace is certainly a topic of immeasurable complexity, however putting peace as a grand challenge that businesses might contribute or jeopardize provides a route through which to enrich grand challenges scholarship too.

For the field to become mature, it is important to avoid isolation from other fields and enhance the exchange of interdisciplinary ideas (Buckley et al., 2017; Aguinis and Gabriel, 2022). The approach outlined in this thesis – peace as a grand challenge – could, therefore, be interpreted as essential not only to advance business for peace scholarship, but also to generate a broader cross-disciplinary impact. Moreover, this approach has much to offer by way of opening up serious theoretical discourse where the peace role of corporations is observable and interpreted in a more structured manner.

Instead of continuing to portray businesses as capable of mostly favourable peace impact, this research gives rise to business for peace as a grand challenge for MNEs, which have the capability to generate positive, negative, and ambiguous impact on peace. This approach facilitates the convergence of two thriving management literatures enabling them to speak to each other. Additionally, it must be noted that both business for peace and grand challenges are often identified as fields of management science in their infancy. Through theorizing peace as a grand challenge that business has a potential to undertake through daily multilevel actions, this study also contributes to the grand challenges scholarship.

This research, therefore, fills the gaps in a previously disconnected and disjointed area by making business for peace more accessible to business and management scholarship. To sum up, this thesis also answers the calls by grand challenges scholars, namely Carton et al. (2024), who urged future grand challenges research to connect and build on past research that does not necessarily use the terminology of grand challenges but relate to an important challenge.

5.4 Peace as a core element in the social sciences

Waging peace is perhaps one of the greatest issues facing diplomats, politicians, business managers and researchers in various fields. There is a famously stated phrase by the father of the peace and conflict studies – Johan Galtung – who said that *"there are 'tasks for everybody' in the pursuit of peace and that includes both positive and negative peace"* (Galtung, 1980, p. 396 cited in Alger, 2007). Due to its historically evolving and self-propagating basis, research into peace has long existed within other research fields outside the academic discipline of management. Diverse arrays of social scientists have attempted

to the investigation of peace, from legal scholars to political scientists and many others. The findings of the current research unravelled important implications beyond business for peace and grand challenges literatures. Specifically, the findings have implications for other social sciences domains such as international law, peace and conflict studies, and political science.

In particular, international law is mostly concerned with formal governance of international relations and establishment of peace (Greenwood, 1987; Bailliet, 2017; United Nations, 2023b). According to Bailliet (2017), peace is the fundamental value that international law exists to serve. Both international law and political science could benefit from a richer understanding of business-peace nexus. Specifically, instead of continuing to portray business as private sector actor that is separate from the international peacebuilding architecture, it should be recognised that whilst negative peace primarily remains a function of government, positive peace might be influenced by MNEs of various sectors (see Figure 8, section 5.2; Chapter Four). Furthermore, peace and conflict studies could incorporate the findings in relation to the role of business leadership for peace, as the usual emphasis of peace research is on the leadership of governments, not companies (Spreitzer, 2007).

To summarize, peace remains a central element in many social sciences. In order to encourage the evolution of the study of peace across various disciplines, there needs to be closer communication between diverse social science scholars. In the words of Millar (2021, p. 650), this scholarly evolution required "*a level of humility, openness, reflexivity and self-critique".*

5.5 Practical implications

In addition to being one of the most critical policy objectives, maintaining peace continues to inspire not only theoretical discussions within research, but also practical challenges for the potential peacebuilders. The current study provides scope for learning about the perceived peace contributions of MNEs and so generates a distinctive perspective for the systematic analysis of business for peace.

As this thesis has established, in relation to negative peace, most MNEs have a limited role (see Chapter Four; Figure 7 and 8). The findings of the current research imply that

business practitioners perceive the notion of peace as absence of war to be largely under the purview of government. Some exceptions asserted in the wider social sciences literature would be private military corporations in war zones (Mayer, 2009; Ebrahim, 2010; Østensen, 2013). However, when it comes to positive peace, this thesis highlighted that governments should include firms in the process. The challenge for them is to incorporate peace-impacting practices in existing strategies. Just as was the case of all these other matters on broader societal challenges, it could be expected that under the pressure of governments and international organisations, and potentially broader society, businesses are likely to play a larger peace role in the future. Contrariwise, in present times, organisations are increasingly expected to address their stance on peace matters (Frenkel, 2023).

To address the grand challenge of peace adequately, the toolkits specified (Figure 6 and 8) and the central distinction between *multilevel actions* is pivotal in terms of appreciating these findings which have important management implications, i.e. avenues managers can deploy to produce potential positive peace outcomes. As it was observed from both primary and secondary data, managers and businesses did not tend to view peace as a primary goal for business (see section 4.2; 4.3; Oetzel and Miklian, 2017), however there is a trend towards increased attention – a growing interest in this topic both in science and practice (see section 4.2; Spreitzer, 2007; Melin et al., 2023).

Policymakers should be looking to develop these toolkits further and improve their existing practices. For instance, the findings of this research could assist governmental agencies and international organisations in implementing more effective and inclusive policies aimed at the participation of MNEs in peacebuilding. For instance, policymakers could benefit from Figure 7 that outlines sector-specific interest in peace by MNEs. Hence, it could assist them in involving companies only in specific sectors that may have more interest in peace. One of the main findings of the current research was that understanding the sectors within which specific business operate appears to be an important consideration (see Chapter Four). As this thesis highlighted, companies that provide weaponry are less likely to be negatively influenced by conflict and war and, therefore, might be less interested in peace overall. On the contrary, MNEs located within the entertainment, automotive, and general manufacturing industries require a peaceful environment to be able to do their business. Policymakers could, therefore, be selective when inviting MNEs to projects relating to peace. Interestingly, the position of MNEs within certain sectors is

nuanced and sometimes contradictory. For instance, multinationals located within the finance sector might benefit from armed conflict through securing contracts to re-build in the post-conflict context, however, they require a stable context to operate, especially given the significant fixed infrastructure they need to function. Hence, MNEs in specific sectors are well placed to exploit business opportunities without being impacted negatively by the lack of peace (Butler, 2024). These are realities that can affect their attitudes towards at least some aspects of peacebuilding, putting into question whether it is in their interest to contribute at all – a perspective that policy makers should take into account as well.

In addition, returning to the opening quote of this Chapter, it was Maria Montessori who famously said that *"establishing lasting peace is the work of education".* As such, business and management schools can utilise the insights generated by this thesis for academic modules on business and peace. An existing example of the existence and relevance of such educations courses is the Executive MBA module 'Business and Peace' at a Dutch university since 2022 (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2024). As one of the leaders of this MBA module shared on LinkedIn, this module was created *"to help participants of Executive MBA to navigate this critical topic*" (Khapova, 2023). Another example is a program at a leading European business school (HEC Paris, 2023). In 2023, the school launched two modules on how business can impact peace and development, specifically 18-hour electives for students in its Master in Management (MiM) program (Bisoux, 2023). Moreover, *"peace will surely be more than just a concept they learn in class"* (Shinn, 2017). This, indeed, will inform future policy makers and business leaders to take the topic of peace and their own role to play in it seriously. As George et al. (2016, p. 1893) observed: *"As educators, we have a responsibility in social inclusion, retraining of skills, and the focusing of our efforts on not just the cream of the crop, educational initiatives could then embrace different pedagogical initiatives"*.

In accordance with the aforementioned arguments, it is important to recognise that management teams need new skills and competencies to effectively lead the global workforce in the context of increasing socio-political tensions and disruptions to peace (Javidan et al., 2023; Belhoste and Dimitrova, 2023; Cooke et al., 2024; McGlauflin and Burleigh, 2024). This thesis can, therefore, be interpreted within a context of explicit calls for the improvement and development of managerial skillsets relevant to the navigation of contemporary challenges, particularly the ones connected to peace. In short, the

geopolitical expertise of business leaders needs to be enhanced (Belhoste and Dimitrova, 2023; Cooke et al., 2024). This implies that insights from this study's findings could be deployed to enhance leadership development programs, for e.g. those that are designed as part of leadership training for managers and leaders.

5.6 Limitations and avenues for future research

While the above sections discussed the potential peace impacts of multinationals and the applicability of this research, an opposite perspective deserves attention as well. There could be many other different avenues and ways through which MNEs can contribute to peace that the current study did not discover. This research was conducted with a sample size of 33 individuals, and the scope of the research was limited to the Turkish context, in particular, to Istanbul. Hence, they are innately contextually specific. Future research could investigate further into the Turkish context, especially studying businesses that are located in other parts of the country. In this regard, further research into conflict-proximate countries might be beneficial to the field – especially when placed in the framework developed in this thesis.

Moreover, a comparison of the perceptions of company managers in the least and most peaceful countries could be meaningful for further studies. It could increase insights into expanded views of managers' perceptions and company practices in relation to peace. Scholarly work on business for peace should further look beyond countries in war zones or post-conflict states (Katsos and Forrer, 2014). Therefore, future scholarship should consider studying both peaceful and conflict-proximate contexts. A similar suggestion has been voiced in relation to understanding climate-conflict relationship (Koubi, 2019).

There are still many challenges that can accompany MNEs playing a part in peace, and these deserve further exploration. For instance, other business practices such as marketing and lobbying, and their potential peace impact require academic attention. This can assist in understanding one of the main messages of this thesis, namely that daily business actions in relation to peace are rarely trivial yet often significant.

Moreover, peace historically has not been static and quantifiable, but rather dynamic and shaped by increasing ambiguity and intertwined in a complex web of perceptions, politics, and power (Richmond, 2008; Millar, 2021). When attempting to

measure peace, it has very often been the presence of conflicts and war that were measured (Oetzel et al., 2009). However, peace is a rich concept. The meaning of peace is context specific and continuously evolves according to most social science scholars (Richmond, 2008; Oetzel et al., 2009; Ledbetter, 2016; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020). The concrete definition of peace may be like the definition of charisma in leadership (Antonakis et al., 2016), difficult to define but we know it when we see it. Consequently, future research could also consider questions such as: Given the persisting societal challenges, should the concept of peace be reconceptualised? Should the leadership on peacebuilding be left entirely to governments and international organisations or co-shared with MNEs? What determines successful and unsuccessful peace contributions by MNEs? These are complex questions but one that future scholars should not disregard.

To corroborate this thesis, future research could use a larger sample size for the interviews and be extended to certain type of businesses, in specific sectors (see Figure 7). Criticisms can be made concerning the problem of how to link the multifaceted dimension of peace to businesses of different type and industries. As it was observed, some MNEs may have ambiguous stance on peace since they might be unaffected by the lack of it. Other questions that further research can investigate is whether family businesses and social enterprises can be different from traditional MNEs in potentially contributing to peace. Further research should also investigate the partnerships of MNEs with small and medium sized businesses and involve insights from non-managerial employees too. Small and medium sized companies might be better connected to a local community hence possess unique insights about the desired forms of peace contributions (Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020; Joseph et al., 2021). This leads to a rich research agenda that future management and other social science scholars can look into.

In summary, these conclusions can be part of a continuing conversation of the novel approach – business for peace as grand challenge – thereby allowing two emerging management literatures to have a dialogue and enrich both fields. It should be emphasised that the research directions for the future and suggestions are indicative, rather than exhaustive, to spark more interest in elevating the business for peace. To sum up, while it can be challenging to study business and peace, no attempt is insignificant even if there are modest impacts (Katsos and Forrer, 2014). Nonetheless, future research should continue contributing to the business for peace debate through empirical evidence, as the risk to a

peaceful world remains (Melin et al., 2023), while unpacking the role of big business in addressing or exacerbating grand challenges is likely to increase (Baumann et al., 2024).

5.7 Concluding remarks

This thesis does not argue that MNEs are necessarily good or bad for peace, but rather highlights that their role as a potential peacebuilder is a complex and multifaceted one. In particular, it is established that approaching peace as a grand challenge has the capacity to enhance the theoretical and empirical understanding of the business for peace field on how peace and business relate. At the same time, this common framework and language helps other management domains, including the grand challenges literature itself, to connect to the invaluable insights of the business for peace literature. The approach developed in this thesis has the potential to assist governments, international organisations, and multinationals themselves in approaching peace and its related topics.

Furthermore, whilst there were already fragmentary insights on multinationals might enhance peace in active conflict zones (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019) and post-conflict countries (Katsos and Forrer, 2014), this thesis is (to the author's knowledge) the first to empirically investigate a conflict proximate setting. This has uncovered perceptions of peace that managers have in such contexts, which have shown themselves to be in part a confirmation of earlier research findings and have also revealed novel insights. This is, at least in part, due to the cognisance of peace among multinationals in such a setting. In other words, while not in conflict they are aware of threats to peace while not currently facing war, or having faced war recently.

Through the novel application of the grand challenges framework to business for peace and its novel empirical setting, the current study has extended this point of view by underlining that while big businesses have limited role in preventing or ending wars (negative peace), they are nevertheless capable of influencing conditions for social harmony and sustainable development (positive peace). They affect this mostly through their daily business activities and other practices (Ganson et al., 2022). The conclusions of this research demonstrate unique insights into potential peace impacts that multinationals can contribute through *multilevel actions* on *individual* (leadership), *organisational* (human resource management, corporate political activity and philanthropy) and *multilateral* levels

(partnerships with other businesses, universities and the United Nations) which are affected by factors such as MNE *aspirations* and *needs*, *barriers* on the one hand, and *constraints* and *institutional context* on the other (see Figure 7 and 8; section 5.2).

The balanced and structured approach undertaken in this study suggests a shift of the scholarly focus away from both proving or disproving the general point that business is a force for peace and from building piecemeal, purely context-specific, micro-theoretical insights. Instead, it suggests applying a more rigorous, consistent, potentially testable, and comparable framework in future studies that brings the field towards midrange theory. This shift also directs researchers to more seriously address under which conditions businesses with different goals and aspirations can contribute to, or potentially detract from peace. How can they address this grand challenge, and how can their efforts be bundled to have real peace impacts? This study has started to unravel this complex but important contextuality, using a systematic and abductive approach.

To sum up, this thesis has uncovered the multi-faceted nature of peacebuilding endeavours by MNEs. As grand challenges continue to emerge and intensify, including that of peace, it becomes increasingly important to understand how different actors can be mobilized to pursue societal good. This thesis has made the case that, indeed, big business has a role to play in peace and has uncovered how this occurs in the specific context of Türkiye. However, its ultimate aim is much grander: enabling the building of a better, brighter, and more peaceful world for all.

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Appendix 1 Methodology of the literature review

Narrative approach

Jones and Gatrell (2014, p. 257) have defined the narrative literature review as a procedure that starts with a few academic papers and books that guide to understand a specific topic. However, while acknowledging the above, another work advocates an alternative conceptualisation of a narrative review, specifically that it is not just summarising the researcher's views on the contemporary state of knowledge in a specific field, but more about analysis which used techniques from narrative research (Hakala et al., 2020, p. 11). Narrative reviews have been claimed to be useful when the field is interdisciplinary since they can lend theoretical ideas by connecting multiple fields of research (Breslin and Gatrell, 2023), whereas systematic reviews are best applied to a more established and distinct field of study. Similarly, as Snyder (2019) has argued, narrative approaches are more relevant when the topic spans across different disciplines, and many high-ranking, leading management journals continue to publish narrative reviews (Jones and Gatrell, 2014).

This review is situated at the intersection of international law, peace and conflict studies, political science and international relations, as well as the smaller burgeoning business for peace scholarship within the management studies. This study is, therefore, focused on broader insights about the roots of business and peace relate as well as reflecting the narrower business for peace research field. Both are useful for investigating how businesses promote and build peace, with the latter adding unique insights and forming the foundation of this thesis. It is practically impossible to review all the relevant literatures completely as peace is a subject studied across many disciplines such as anthropology, development studies and so on. To build a rich understanding of state-of-the-art scholarship on this topic, it is, therefore important to understand its most prominent roots. Solely reviewing the narrow business for peace literature, without regard to the diverse complementary perspectives from other disciplines such as peace and conflict studies and international law, would result in a narrow framing of the subject matter. A narrative review, therefore, reflects this interdisciplinary orientation.

The narrative approach is a suitable methodology for two further reasons. First, in order to avoid omitting important past research and how an area of study arrived to its

current state of affairs, it is important to comprehend the field's history (Lorbiecki and Jack 2000). It may sometimes be the case that current problems stem from a disconnection from past insights, or that there exist fruitful new avenues of research closely aligned with (since forgotten) previous research. This approach is therefore better suited to provide a satisfactory overview of past research (Hodgkinson and Ford, 2014). It also allows for closer dialogue between related ideas, such as has recently been the case in the narrative review of Mergen and Ozbilgin (2021), who connected management and leadership scholarship to generate a new approach to understanding the emerging social challenge connected to toxic leaders in firms.

Second, the extant business for peace literature is highly context specific and unfocused in terms of the definition of peace and topical focus on how businesses can contribute to or promote peace. This is underlined by the field's many calls (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Ford, 2015; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015; Oetzel et al., 2009; Katsos, 2020; Katsos and Forrer, 2022) for more structured investigation of the relations between business and peace. In this divergent and scattered literature, which as previously noted spans across many different fields, undertaking a systematic review would be problematic. Systematic literature reviews are best suited to established, mature literatures with uniform terminology and distinct topical focal points. In such a situation, it would be possible to generate a comprehensive account of which types of interventions, for instance those undertaken by businesses, have particular outcomes on for e.g., ending wars. As this is not possible in business for peace given its developing nature, it was therefore decided to perform a narrative review as this allows for a more wide-ranging scope (Bryman, 2012).

In a narrative review, the researcher pursues various fields of enquiry as the literature search is expanded, increasing the reading, and understanding of a field through keyword searches, use of seminal papers and a snowballing approach (Greenhalgh et al., 2005; Hopkinson and Blois, 2014; Fan et al., 2022). The concomitant broad scope of the review also facilitates the generation of significant insights about this research agenda be developed. Two distinct qualitative search strategies were used. The first provides a broad, interdisciplinary overview of how business and peace relate, and uncovers the roots of the burgeoning business for peace literature. Subsequently, the business for peace literature was further investigated to identify clues to positive, negative, and ambiguous peace impacts generated by businesses.

Search strategy: interdisciplinary overview on business for peace

To avoid missing pertinent studies, it is useful to search more than two databases (Siddaway et al., 2019). Hence, JSTOR, SCOPUS and Google Scholar were used to find relevant papers, as they provide a sophisticated search engine that enables access to a wide range of searchable journals and allows for snowballing (Hall et al., 2021). This strategy especially assisted the first part of the review, i.e. the broader, interdisciplinary literature overview of the roots of the business for peace field. The use of these databases was consistent with past research (Joseph et al., 2023). Although a keyword search was used to ensure no core works were missed, the review of the broader literature commenced with a snowball approach. Specifically, the foundational business for peace papers by Fort and Schipani (2007) and Oetzel et al. (2009) were used as a starting point. Those two papers are broadly recognized to have established the business for peace field (Katsos and AlKafaji, 2019) and are still among the most highly cited. As they explicitly build on insights from a variety of disciplines such as political science and peace and conflict studies, they can inform on the roots of the business for peace field. During the search process, there was close communication between the researcher and her two supervisors to ensure important papers were not disregarded.

The keywords used were as follows: business AND peace, business for peace OR B4P. Furthermore, social science disciplines often refer to business as ‘private sector’ or ‘corporation’, and therefore such terms were also incorporated in the following manner: corporation AND peace, private sector AND peace. Articles were selected based on their relevance for business and peace. The search results were scanned for articles with titles and abstracts that included words such as business, private sector, corporation, peace, conflict, and war. Hits where the full study could be accessed were subsequently considered. The search was finalized in March 2023 and revisited in May 2024. Overall, there were 105 papers with six articles added in the second search; 55 articles were from other disciplines and 50 articles were from business and management journals.

Search strategy: overview of business for peace

The second search, namely regarding the business for peace literature, broadly followed the same strategy. However, there was an increased reliance on search terms, and on forward citations (instead of backwards citations such as in the previous search strategy).

In this exercise the utilized keywords again were: business AND peace, business for peace OR B4P, multinationals AND peace. Again, this included synonyms for business, and if terms denoting the private sector or corporation were in the title or abstract, such papers were also reviewed. Studies that were published in any language apart from English were excluded. Books, despite typically being subjected to light-touch peer review, were incorporated in the search to understand the interdisciplinary roots of the business for peace field. This reflects the fact that in some subject areas, for instance international relations and political science, books from elite publishers, in particular, have a high research status. They are, for instance, recognized among UK universities who submit such work into the Reference Excellence Framework (REF) – the UK's system for assessing research excellence (Donovan, 2009). There was no exclusion or limit regarding the date of publication.

Interpretation strategy

For both searches, relevant papers were reviewed in detail. Papers were categorised according to their key contribution, the methodology used, theoretical perspectives, examples of how business helps or hinders peace and definitions and ideas of peace, conflict, war, and business. Articles were imported to EndNote and were read and reread. In the interpretation of the literature, the author started with the general idea that business, like any other organisation, might produce different intended and unintended consequences on peace as outcomes of their (in)actions.

Although, the notion of peace as absence of war and conflict (i.e. negative peace) is commonly used across disciplines, it must be noted that the definition of peace is quite varied and evolving (Richmond, 2008; Ledbetter, 2016; Miklian and Medina Bickel, 2020). The business for peace scholarship tends not to clearly construct boundaries between how businesses relate to matters of peace, and the terms used are diverse: from peacebuilding, peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace negotiations, to conflict prevention and resolution, dispute settlement, mediation, etc. In addition to this definitional challenge, another main problem was the absence of a structured management framework to develop the burgeoning field of business for peace and elevate scholarly knowledge on important business-peace dynamics. Finally, the primary purpose of the literature review and analysis of the extant literatures was to uncover how business and peace have been theoretically,

conceptually, and empirically approached to date. How this relates to matters such as their core contributions, assertions on how business might contribute to peace, and the methodologies used was given careful consideration.

The review commences with unpacking the roots of business for peace from other social science disciplines such as international law, and peace and conflict studies, political science and international relations. It then considers on the narrow business for peace literature, before finally presenting a nuanced approach – a research agenda that solves some of the identified issues and gaps of the field. This literature review attempts to emphasize the need for a theoretically founded and organized research agenda that would create a much-required new angle (grand challenges) to frame the business for peace research.

Appendix 2 Participant consent form

Participant consent form

Version number and date: V3, 21.12.2021

Research ethics approval number: 10399

Title of the research project: Business and Peace

Name of the researcher: Diana Madibekova (PhD Candidate); Dr Andrew Smith (Primary Supervisor); Dr Michael Cole (Secondary Supervisor)

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated […….] for the above study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that taking part in the study involves semi-structured interviews that will be audio-recorded. ☐
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected. In addition, I understand that I am free to decline to answer any particular question or questions. I also understand that I can withdraw up to 2 weeks after the interview to be fully removed from the study. After this time data will be collated so the removal of individual responses will not be possible. ☐
4. I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Liverpool until it is [**fully anonymised**] and then deposited in the university approved mdrive storage for sharing and use by other authorised researchers to support other research in the future. ☐
5. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Participant name	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature

Open data and data sharing

I understand that the information I provide will be held securely at the University of Liverpool until it is [**fully anonymised**] and then deposited in the university approved ☐

mdrive storage for sharing and use by other authorised researchers to support other research in the future.

I understand that other authorised researchers may use my words in publications, reports, webpages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. ☐

I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or where I live, will not be shared beyond the study team. ☐

Audio / video recordings

I understand and agree that my participation will be [**audio recorded**] and I am aware of and consent to your use of these recordings for the following purposes: writing academic papers, reports and PhD thesis. ☐

Risk to participants

I understand that taking part in the study has covid-19 transmission as a potential risk and I agree to inform the researcher in the event of a positive test prior or post the interview. ☐

Affording participants the opportunity to receive a copy of the report

The information you have submitted will be published as a report/academic paper/thesis; please indicate whether you would like to receive a copy ☐

Confidentiality of the data

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my fully anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. ☐

Disclosure of criminal activity

I understand that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded and won't be released without my consent unless required by law. I understand that if I disclose information which raises considerations over the safety of myself or the public, the researcher may be legally required to disclose my confidential information to the relevant authorities. ☐

Use of quotes and fully identifiable information

I agree that my information can be quoted in research outputs such as academic papers, reports and PhD thesis. ☐

I would like my name used and I understand and agree that what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs so that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognised. ☐

I agree that my real name can be used for quotes. ☐

Re-contacting participants for the purpose of inviting them to take part in future studies

I agree to being contacted at a later date and invited to take part in future studies. I understand that I am only agreeing to receive information and I am under no obligation to take part in any future studies. If you decide not to consent to being contacted in the future it will not have any influence on your involvement in this particular research study. ☐

Appendix 3 Participant information sheet

Participant information sheet

1. **Business and Peace**
2. **Version Number V3 – 21.12.2021**
3. **Invitation Paragraph**

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask us if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Thank you for reading this.

4. **What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose is to improve the understanding of the relationship between business and peace. The existing literature (Fort and Schipani, 2007; Oetzel et al., 2010; Forrer and Katsos, 2015) is unclear about what exactly it is that firms do that results in peace. Is it that they create symbolism through their activities of shaping public discussion on climate change, equality and human rights? Is it that they bring people of different nationalities into cross-cultural teams or employ diverse managerial staff? Is it the creation of cross-border economic interdependency that makes countries more unwilling to go to war? Is it something else? The field of business and peace is a new, emerging one as it only recently has attracted increased scholarly attention and there have been very few qualitative empirical research conducted so far. Therefore, the research is guided by the following questions:

1) How can we better understand the connection between business and peace?

2) How do managers in multinational firms operating near conflict zones think about the relationship between business and peace?

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5. **Why have I been chosen to take part?**

You are invited to participate in this study because of your experience and expertise in this area would provide us with very valuable insights.

6. Do I have to take part?

The participation is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw their participation at any time, without explanation, and without incurring a disadvantage. Please note down your participant number (which is on the Consent Form) and provide this to the lead researcher if you seek to withdraw from the study at a later date. You can withdraw up to 2 weeks after the interview to be fully removed from the study. After this time data will be collated so the removal of individual responses will not be possible.

7. What will happen if I take part?

You will be asked a number of questions regarding your experience and thoughts regarding how businesses contribute or can do so to promoting peaceful societies. The face to face/Zoom interview (comply with COVID-19 regulations) will take place in a safe environment at a time that is convenient to you. Ideally, we would like to audio record your responses (and will require your consent for this), so the location should be in a fairly quiet area such as the conference/meeting room in the company office. The interview should take around one hour in total to complete.

8. How will my data be used?

*The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of "advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit." Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University's research. The [Principal Investigator / Supervisor] acts as the Data Processor for this study, and any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to [**Principal Investigator / Supervisor contact details**]. Further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below*".

How will my data be collected?	Audio-recordings in case of face-to-face interviews and Zoom interviews
How will my data be stored?	Online, university approved database - OneDrive
How long will my data be stored for?	According to guidelines, 5 years
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	*All electronic data will be stored securely on a password-protected Mdrive.* Your consent information will be kept separately from your responses in order to minimise risk.
Will my data be anonymised?	Yes
How will my data be used?	For PhD Thesis and Academic papers
Who will have access to my data?	PhD Researcher and Supervisory Team

Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	No
How will my data be destroyed?	According to established procedures

Transferring data outside the EU

No personal data will be transferred outside EU. The participants' names will be anonymised and informed consent is sought prior to recruiting interviewees.

9. Expenses and / or payments

The participation in this project is free and has no remuneration.

10. Are there any risks in taking part?

It is not expected that there are any disadvantages or risks to you during the study. The study does not imply any known potential disadvantages, except that the respondents will have to think through their present situation in the pandemic.

11. Are there any benefits in taking part?

By sharing your experiences with us, you will be helping to improve management academics' understanding of the relationship between business and peace.

12. What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of this study may be summarised in published articles, reports and presentations. Quotes or key findings will always be made anonymous in any formal outputs unless we have your prior and explicit written permission to attribute them to you by name. Information may also be kept for future research in related area to save your time from being asked the same questions again.

13. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

Agreeing to participate in this project does not oblige you to remain in the study nor have any further obligation to this study. If, at any stage, you no longer want to be part of the study, please inform the researcher Diana Madibekova, Diana.Madibekova@liverpool.ac.uk You should note that your data may be used in the production of formal research outputs (e.g. journal articles, conference papers, theses and reports) prior to your withdrawal and so you are advised to contact the research team at the earliest opportunity should you wish to withdraw from the study. On specific request we will destroy all your identifiable answers, but we will need to use the data collected prior to your withdrawal, and to maintain our records of your consenting participation.

14. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

"If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting the researcher and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office at ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make. The University strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113."

15. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

Diana Madibekova, PhD Candidate, University of Liverpool Management School	Diana.Madibekova@liverpool.ac.uk
Dr Andrew Smith, Senior Lecturer in International Business, University of Liverpool Management School	adasmith@liverpool.ac.uk
Dr Michael Cole, Senior Lecturer in Work, Organisation and Management, University of Liverpool Management School	mscole@liverpool.ac.uk

Appendix 4 Interview protocol

The semi-structured interviews were approximately an hour long and questions that were being asked are along the lines of the following:

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. During your time in your current organisation, how has the business environment in Turkey changed?
3. This country [Turkey – spelling of the country name as of January 2022 which was changed to Türkiye in May 2022] is surrounded by politically unstable countries for e.g. the wars in Iraq and Syria. How does that conflict impact your industry and your role?
4. How have the conflicts going on in nearby countries affected your firm? How have tensions between countries such the USA and Russia impacted your company and its operations in Turkey?
5. How do you understand peace?
6. In B4P research, there is a view that the level of conflict and violence companies in a country face is something that is entirely out of the control of business. There is another view that says that businesses can do things to influence the overall level of conflict and violence in their environment, such as bringing individuals from warring groups together. Which of these views seems most plausible to you?
7. Can you think of an example of something that businesses or business leaders have done that has made conflict between nations and other groups less tense and doing something to contribute to peace?
8. Can you think of an example of something that businesses or business leaders have done that has made conflict between nations and other groups worse?
9. When you think about the impact of conflict on business, are there any books, ideas, or theories that influence how you think about the business-peace relations?
10. Which industries or sectors of business have a higher likelihood of contributing positively to peace, planet and prosperity and which ones have lesser in your view?
11. Any final remarks/your views on business and peace in general

Appendix 5 Anonymised list of annual reports

No.	Document name	Main themes
1	Chemicals (USA) ESG Report 2021	• Climate • Health and safety • Diversity and Inclusion • Community • Philanthropic projects • Addressing global challenges through employee engagement • Helping women succeed • Teaching youth to avoid conflict • Partnering with multiple actors
2	Chemicals (USA) Annual Report 2022	• Board diversity • Health and safety • Market risk • International disruptions (pandemic, conflict, sanctions)
3	Entertainment (USA) ESG Report 2021	• Climate • Diverse workforce • Women in management • Philanthropic projects • Partnering with multiple actors • Data privacy
4	Entertainment (USA) Annual Report 2021	• Market risk • Health and safety • Data privacy
5	Automotive (Germany) Sustainability Report 2022	• Climate • Diversity and inclusion • Health and safety • Women in top management • Sustainability • Social challenges
6	Manufacturing (The Netherlands) Annual Report 2021	• Global warming • Global challenges • Greener future
7	Finance (Germany) Sustainability Report 2022	• Sustainability • Stakeholder dialogue (partnerships) • Data protection • Climate • Diversity and inclusion • Philanthropic and political engagement
8	Finance (Germany) Risk Report 2022	• Reputational risk • Market risk • Leadership culture • Sustainable business model

		• Global crises (pandemic, war)
9	Chamber of Commerce #4 Report 2018	• Partnering with business, government, NGOs, universities • Women in leadership • Sustainability
10	Chamber of Commerce #3 Report 2020	• Global crises (pandemic) • Geographical area • Organisational processes • People management • Leadership
11	Chamber of Commerce #3 Annual Report 2021-2022	• Better future • Partnerships • Labour mobility • Global crises (pandemic, war) • Employee well-being
12	Home Appliances (Türkiye) ESG Report 2021	• Climate • Workforce and diversity • Community relations
13	Manufacturing (Türkiye) Sustainability Report 2021	• UN SDGs • Global partnerships • Community development • Employee well-being • Environment (climate, water) • Women in leadership
14	Marketing (USA) ESG Report 2021	• Social inclusion • People management • Data privacy • Philanthropic projects • Women in management • Community engagement • Partnering with multiple actors (universities) • UN SDGs
15	Technology (Switzerland) Sustainability Report 2022	• Natural resources • Climate • Social progress • Community engagement • UN SDGs • Societal challenges • Partnerships • Philanthropic projects • Women in senior management

16	Energy (Germany) Annual Report 2022	• Climate • Sustainability • Global crises (war) • Societal challenges • Data privacy • UN SDGs • Philanthropic projects • Partnerships
17	Technology (Türkiye) Annual Report 2021	• Market risk • Climate • Diversity and people • UN SDGs • Community investment programs • Women in leadership
18	Technology (USA) ESG Report 2022	• Responsible technology • Climate (water) • Community development • Diversity and inclusion • Partnerships with UN and universities • Societal challenges • Data privacy
19	Manufacturing (Liechtenstein) Sustainability Report 2022	• Environment • Health and safety • Philanthropic projects • UN SDGs • Partnerships with UN, universities and business • People management • Global disruptions (pandemic, conflict, sanctions)
20	Professional Services (UK) Annual Report 2022	• Societal challenges • Environment • Community investment • Inclusive workplace • UN SDGs • Partnerships with UN, universities, and business • Data privacy • Global disruptions (pandemic, conflict, sanctions, natural disasters)

Appendix 6 Post-interview feedback

"So I think there will be a lot of follow up that is coming from you, starting from yours. But I think it's a very interesting area of work and I would be more than happy to see how it evolves. And if anything comes to my mind, I'd really love to get to know you and I'd definitely share anything that might be insightful for your study going forward."

– US MNE, entertainment

"I think you're doing a great job. I really would like to congratulate you on picking up this topic, and you made me think about this more in depth. And my question and answer that I would look into your research would be which one comes first: peace or the business?"

– Chamber of Commerce #4

"I have never thought about this before in my life, thank you for bringing this question to me. I mean, this idea of how business is affecting teams and everything because this says never came to my mind and once I saw your mail and read about your documents. I thought, yes. Business has an effect on peace."

– Turkish MNE, technology

"One thing you made me aware is that from now on, I'm going to look at everything from a peace perspective as well, which is great. I am really looking forward to seeing the results of this research because I firmly believe that businesses can change our culture in general because they have a good reach and influence. So the way we approach things within our companies, within our decision making processes, our strategies can impact the world at large, but I love the topic and I really, truly believe that we can make an impact and we do make an impact; but will it go all the way to world peace? It's a little more complicated."

– US MNE, marketing