A Critical Appraisal of Stakeholders' Views about the Role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Achieving Sustainable Development: The Case of Sierra Leone

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DEDICATION

I am dedicating this work to my Mum & late Dad

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ABSTRACT

The key aim of this study was to critically examine stakeholders' perceptions about how multinational corporations (MNCs) in Sierra Leone can use Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to contribute to sustainable development and in so doing address the ideals of sustainable development goals (SDGs). This thesis focuses on Socfin Agricultural Company Ltd. (SL), Addax Bioenergy and Goldtree (agricultural) as well as Sierra Rutile Ltd. and Koidu Holdings (mining), which are the largest MNCs operating in Sierra Leone. These two sectors are the largest in Sierra Leone and constitute the bulk of the country's GDP. Also, given the huge presence of these MNCs in Sierra Leone, they are considered to contribute to sustainable development and CSR. Additionally, in comparison to other developing countries, there is paucity of research in Sierra Leone addressing the relationship between CSR and sustainable development. Accordingly, this research examines CSR practices and initiatives of MNCs in Sierra Leone with the aim to critically determine if their CSR practices and initiatives as well as comparable projects are advancing the principles of sustainable development and corporate responsibility. In order to answer this study's research questions, interviews and focus group data was gathered from internal and external stakeholders including documentary data for triangulation. Documentary data was sourced from four main organisations including Oxfam, Christian Aid (CA), The Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL), and Human Rights Watch (HRW). Specifically, thematic textual analysis (TAA) was used in the analysis.

In this study, combination of legitimacy, stakeholder and triple-bottom-line theories are used within an interpretive, qualitative research method to contribute new insights into how CSR can be used to achieve the ideals of sustainable development. This study therefore demonstrates the centrality of normative CSR as opposed to the strategic approach for legitimate CSR practice that will impact on win-win principle. The findings of this study demonstrate that although MNCs in Sierra Leone make efforts towards sustainable development through CSR, however as empirically shown, these efforts are not effective given the ''business case'' and strategic orientation of CSR initiatives and engagement platforms, which undermine the win-win

approach aimed at encouraging firms to be normative in their operation as well as socially and environmentally responsible and make profit.

This thesis thus concludes that in order to arrive at win-win approach, MNCs have to engage in more result-oriented, genuine approaches for sustainable development and for MNCs to continually have social licence to operate in a complex, challenging business environment in Sierra Leone. In sum, the thesis shows that CSR programmes and policies initiated and/or supported by MNCs are appropriated to further the interest of economically powerful stakeholders – shareholders – at the detriment of less economically powerful stakeholders – particularly the local communities in Sierra Leone.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abbreviations

APC –All peoples Congress

CC – Corporate Citizenship

CS – Corporate Sustainability

CSP -Corporate Social Performance

CSR –Corporate Social Responsibility

DACDF –Diamond Area Community Development Fund

DIFD –Department for International Development

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

DSP – Dominant Social Paradigm

EVD- Ebola Virus Disease

FDI –Foreign Direct Investment

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development

KPCS – Kimberley Process Certification Scheme

LT –Legitimacy Theory

MDG –Millennium Development Goal

MNCs –Multinational Corporations

MNEs –Multinational Enterprises

NGOs –Non-Governmental Organizations

NRS – National Recovery Strategy

PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

QDAS – Qualitative Data Analysis Software

ROI –Return on Investment

RUF – Revolutionary United Front

SDG- Sustainable Development Goals

SLEITI –Sierra Leone Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative

SLIEPA –Sierra Leone Investment and Export Production Agency

ST –Stakeholder Theory

SSRM –Sustainable Stakeholder Relationship Model

TNEs –Transnational Enterprises

TBLT –Triple-Bottom Line Theory

TTA –Thematic Textual Analysis

UN –United Nations

UNDP –United Nations Development Programme

WBCSD –World Business Council for Sustainable Development

WCED –World Commission on Environment and Development

Chapter One
Introduction

1.1: Research overview and background

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is considered as obligation of organisations to the environment and society beyond what the law stipulates (Crowther & Aras, 2008; Crane & Matten, 2010; Visser, 2006; Carroll, 1979, 1991). It also refers to an organisation's commitment to practise social and environmental sustainability so as to be good corporate citizen in the environment, which it operates (Banerjee, 2008). CSR is often used by firms to court legitimacy (Deegan, 2017), increase level of trust (Belal, 2008), decrease stakeholders' criticisms (Amaeshi, Adi, Ogbechie, & Amao, 2006), manage reputation (Ferguson, Aguiar, & Fearfull, 2016), and increase ‘‘social licence’’ to operate (Ferguson et al., 2016; Higgins & Walker, 2012). For decades, companies have engaged in CSR, yet one question that persists is the impact of CSR initiatives on the people and their environment (Idemudia, 2010; Amaeshi et al, 2006; Ite, 2004) as well as the impact of their operation on sustainable development (Crowther, Seifi & Wond, 2019). Specifically, CSR remains a problematic issue in developing countries (Agbiboa, 2012).

Despite attempts made globally to encourage corporations to engage in CSR (KPMG, 2017), research shows that the processes through which organisations engage in CSR are undermined by managerial ideology and orientation, which elicit stakeholders' criticism (Frynas, 2005, 2009). Therefore, stakeholders (NGOs, the governments, the media and communities) argue that managerial orientation is largely responsible for apparent lack of social responsibility (Okoye, 2009), accountability (Siltaoja, 2009), transparency (Agbiboa, 2012), legitimacy (Deegan, 2017) and neglect of stakeholder engagement (Belal, 2008). Additionally, although approaches to CSR vary, some organisations engage in CSR as a means to advance shareholders' interest, increase profit and strategically position their business; while some engage in CSR initiatives out of a sense of moral obligation to the environment and society. Given that CSR is a voluntary activity, organisations tend not to be transparent, accountable and responsible in their CSR activities (Crane & Matten, 2010). This situation is more complex in developing countries, such as Sierra Leone (Porto, 2010), where there are weak institutions (Kolk & Lenfant, 2013; Maconachie, 2008, 2009), ‘‘resource curse’’ issue (Obi, 2010; Karl, 1997), poor governance regime (Frynas, 2005) and leadership problems (Angus-Leppan, Metcalf & Benn, 2010), which negatively impact sustainable development.

However, studies have indicated that CSR should be conceived from the developing countries’ perspective as an instrument for sustainable development (2014, Richey & Ponte, 2014; Okoye, 2009) and a win-win approach for business and society (Williams & Preston, 2018). Although an ‘‘essentially contested’’ concept (Okoye, 2009), scholars (Emeseh & Songi, 2014; Crowther & Aras, 2008) maintain that CSR can contribute to sustainable development as well as reduce and/or eradicate poverty particularly in developing countries (KPMG, 2017; United Nations, 2002; United Nations Sustainable Development, 1992). For example, Zwetsloot (2003) argues that CSR appears to be a leading principle for business innovation aimed at reinventing organisational practices that can impact positively on profit, environment and the people. Accordingly, Desjardins (2000) posits that CSR is a fundamental issue in business responsibility and sustainability. International organisations such as the World Bank, United Nations and developmental agencies including Department for International Development (DFID, 2019), consider CSR as an idea that the private sector including businesses can utilise in tackling poverty and underdevelopment and to contribute to sustainable development (Visser, 2013, 2006).

Sustainability explains the ability to maintain various processes and systems in a social, environmental and economic manner over time (Crowther et al., 2019; Elkington, 1997). Although sustainability originated in natural resource economics, it has gained traction as well as currency in relation to social equality and sustainable development (Bebbington & Unerman, 2018). Some organisations and economists do not subscribe to the notion of CSR, because it implies an obligation to future generations and society beyond those contained in the obligatory legal requirements of business (Crowther & Aras, 2008). Nonetheless, most businesses including multinational corporations (MNCs) now embrace the concept of CSR and engage in CSR initiatives (Aras & Crowther, 2009). These initiatives focus on CSR and sustainability largely in relation to moral obligation, and offer insight into ethical notions relevant to environmental and economic sustainability, social equity and sustainable development.

Sustainable development (sustainability) began with the Brundtland Report that was published in 1987, and named *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development, WCED, 1987). At its core are interdependence and multilateralism of nations in the search for a sustainable development path. Consequently, the debate regarding Africa's future, rise and sustainable development have been taken seriously recently following the publication of *Our Common Interest* (Commission for Africa, 2005), the report of the Commission for Africa. Also, in 2010 a sequel of this report, *Still Our Common Interest*, was launched to precipitate effort by African leaders to expedite actions concertedly to convert unparalleled economic opportunities in Africa into healing social wounds, protecting the environment, advancing national development and for the foremost part advancing sustainable development on the continent.

In addition, the challenges for CSR in developing countries are further shaped by the creation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 and subsequently Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which resonate with ‘‘a world with less poverty, hunger and disease, greater survival prospects for mothers and infants, better educated children, equal opportunities for women, and a healthier environment’’ (United Nations, 2006, p. 3). MDGs have been replaced by SDGs, the focus of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which were adopted by the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. These goals extend the work started by the MDGs that propelled a global campaign from 2000-2015 aimed at eradicating poverty in its various dimensions. However, while the MDGs essentially applied to developing countries, the SDGs apply to all UN member states universally; they are also considered to be more ambitious and comprehensive in orientation than the MDGs (KPMG, 2017). Given their power and influence, it is expected that MNCs can play a big role in actualising the ideals of SDGs.

1.2: MNCS, CSR and Sustainable Development

MNCs, which are also called transnational enterprises (TNEs), multinational enterprises (MNEs), or worldwide enterprises are corporate organisations that own or control production of goods and/or services in at least one country other than their home country (Mclean & McMillan, 2009). Zerk (2006) stated that a firm or group of firms should be regarded as a multinational corporation if they derive 25% or more of their total revenue from out-of-home-country activities and operations. Although MNCs contribute to economic development in developing countries (Zerk, 2006), scholars (Chan & Ross, 2003; Tonelson, 2002) argue that they gain more by internationalising their operations. This explains the rationale for ‘‘the race to the bottom’’ (Tonelson, 2002). As organisations that benefit hugely from their operations in host countries through governments’ grant of lower tax and labour cost to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as tax exemptions in certain instance, MNCs have an important role to play in sustainable development through CSR (Crowther & Aras, 2008).

Accordingly, Visser (2013) argues that MNCs can be instrumental in driving economic growth, reducing poverty and creating jobs, advancing prosperity and raising employment standard by paying higher wages than local businesses do. Additionally, they can contribute to national development by transferring knowledge, technology and advanced skills to build or improve social infrastructures, raise living standards and accelerate the pace of sustainable development. Although the presence of MNCs helps in sustainable development, their activities are questionable given weak institutional and governance regimes in developing countries (Zerk, 2006). Recent scholarship has emphasised the impact of institutional environment on practices of CSR by MNCs including industry-specific circumstances, organisation’s home country pressure, and their relationship with key stakeholders (Aguinis & Glavas, 2010; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

These issues make contributions of MNCs to sustainable development less credible. This study also argues that CSR approaches and initiatives are embedded in and framed by wider social realities and institutions, for example, corruption, political and governance systems and weak regulations (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Idemudia, 2010), which undermine normative CSR practice. Thus, institutional understanding of CSR practice by MNCs suggests that corporations do not fully comply with regulatory frameworks operative in countries they operate or that they do not legitimately engage in CSR (Deegan, 2017). Specifically, Akiwumi (2014, p. 774) in his study on Sierra Leone contends that although MNCs make effort to abide by mining laws and regulations, ‘‘their operations contribute to the erosion of indigenous cultures … exploit natural resources … and violate the subsidiarity principle of sustainable development when they exclude communities from participating in development projects that affect them''.

CSR is generally considered as corporate response to stakeholder claims (Belal, 2008). As firms with multiple stakeholders, the perspectives of key stakeholders including local communities are crucial to their survival and legitimacy (Freeman, 1984). Nevertheless, extant literature underscores the instrumental dimension to CSR as it relates to whether organisations including MNCs successfully engage in CSR. MNCs are naturally exposed to diverse stakeholders as they internationalise their operations as well as extensive stakeholder claims and criticism (Margolis & Walsh, 2001). Coordinated and well executed CSR can be a critical strategic initiative for MNCs in host countries. Furthermore, CSR initiatives should reflect the values and goals enshrined in SDGs following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the context of Sierra Leone, in a bid to salvage the ailing economy, the government has made effort to advance sustainable development ideals and CSR by introducing *Agenda for Change* as well as incorporating the principles of SDGs (Jackson, 2015; Akiwumi, 2014), however, failure of government agencies to adequately monitor, for instance forest reserve and mining sector, is attributable to the present challenges bordering on lack of sustainable development.

Increasingly, attention has been drawn to the destructive consequences of unsustainable practices by MNCs from governments, policymakers, researchers, and international actors, regarding various facets of the activities of businesses to overcome the challenges of resources scarcities, mitigate environmental risks and to promote sustainable development (Crowther & Aras, 2008). Since CSR represents core values and aspirations that delineate the commitment of an organisation to economy, society, and the environment that sustain its operations, its wider scope can be integrated into a sustainable development framework and agenda (KPMG, 2017). According to Visser (2013) it is not about the volume of economic initiative undertaken by a MNC, what is important is how such initiative positively impacts the people, economy, and environment. Thus, CSR seems to further social causes and public goods beyond mere strategic, profit-making orientation of business (World Business Council for Sustainable Development [WBCSD], 1992; Crowther et al., 2019).

However, CSR is a subjective and debatable notion, because societal needs affect the norms, values, and corporate principles attached to CSR practices, in way that the notion of development has received disparate perspectives. The supply side argument proposes social responsibility of business to society; while the demand side advocates the increased desire for sustainable, safe, and socially responsible contributions of business to society (Idemudia, 2010). These two opposing values are revealed in the contextualisation and conceptualisation of CSR (Idemudia, 2008); the ideal that managers should act in the best interest of shareholders, as agents contractually under the obligation to maximise wealth (Jensen, 2002; Friedman, 1962); and lack of clarification on how firms should act in a socially responsible manner with regard to changing societal values, including increasingly complex business milieus (Margolis & Walsh, 2001).

1.3: Statement of the problem

Despite huge natural and human endowments, Sierra Leone is plagued by CSR dilemma (Porto, 2010); this situation is not unrelated to the presence of MNCs in the country, which furthers underdevelopment and socio-environmental problems (Maconachie, 2009; Christian Aid, 2013). The presence of MNCs in the global economy equation has triggered and sustained the proliferation of social, economic and environmental problems in development countries such as Sierra Leone (Datzberger, 2014). Guided by this proposition, Deegan (2008) argues persuasively that it is crucially important to understand capitalism and MNCs' presence in the world – particularly in developing countries – for deeper knowledge of the premise of underdevelopment. This reason partly explains stakeholder pressures for businesses to rethink their roles in society (Frynas, 2005). Accordingly, Raman & Lipschutz (2010) contend that although the process of globalisation has also triggered opportunities for the MNCs from the global south as FDI has increased from mere 5.2 per cent in 1990 to 14.2 per cent in 2006; it however remains ''to be seen whether these … MNCs with their poor record of CSR would modify their behaviour'' (p. 5-6). Thus, the present study argues that considering how stakeholders' view can shape this understanding will be helpful in contributing to knowledge on CSR and sustainable development literature as well as role of business in society.

1.4: Research rationale

Despite the attempts above to ensure more accountability, transparency and responsible practice by MNCs, it has been variously reported that Sierra Leone faces one of the worst forms of CSR dilemma in Africa (Porto, 2010; Maconachie, 2008, 2009; United States Department of State, 2011; Datzberger, 2014; Christian Aid, 2013). Given the seemingly failure of various initiatives and agencies by Sierra Leone government such as the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, SLEITI Sierra Leone Extractive Industries Transparency (SLEITI) and The Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF), this thesis contends that seeking stakeholders' views on this matter can advance sustainable development in Sierra Leone. This is because stakeholders' views and opinions are critical element in framing business policies for sustainability and sustainable development. Stakeholders are also part of an organisation's core elements that shape its direction, operation and legitimacy (Deegan, 2017).

Although recently, literature on CSR in Africa has widened in theoretical scope and depth (Idemudia, 2010), it is still essentially in its incipient stage (Visser, 2006). For instance, Gokulsing (2011) and Ragodoo (2009) have widened scholarship on CSR in Africa by interrogating CSR practices in Mauritius; Kolk & Lafent (2013) have also explored this phenomenon in the context of conflict in Central Africa. In a similar vein, Idemudia (2010) and Ite (2004) have all investigated CSR from the Nigerian context. In South Africa some studies have been done to enrich scholarship on CSR (Visser, 2013). Consequently, Visser (2006) argued that there is need to increase the dimensions of CSR scholarship in Africa. Thus, CSR scholarship in Africa is a critical aspect of scholarly enquiry, ''driven by the legacy of colonialism…, the human needs of the continent in the face of widespread poverty, and the trend towards improved social responsibility by multinationals in a globalising economy'' (Visser, 2006, p. 18). This is also vital for sustainable development in Sierra Leone given the seemingly failure of recent efforts to galvanise better corporate governance and accountability in the country (Maconachie, 2008).

Therefore, in Amaeshi's (2010, p. 44) view, this is ''where CSR complements the exiting public and informal government configurations, and thus creates a better chance that both the public and private government modes will compensate for each other's weakness in governance of corporate externalities''. The idea of using CSR for sustainable development by MNCs is not a new practice in Africa (Idemudia, 2010). Noyoo (2010) demonstrated how an Anglo-American company as early as 1929 was (socially) responsible for ''providing housing and hygiene for its employees in Zambia but with racial bias'' (Qtd in Idemudia, 2014, p. 422). Similarly, Honke (2012) pointed out the nexus between the paternalistic dynamics of corporate-stakeholder intervention programmes engaged by mining firms in the colonial era and the post-colonial dispensation within the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In Sierra Leone, FDI and similar transnational business enterprises have been established as rather a way of continuing the process of colonial hegemony, domination and exploitation in Africa and Sierra Leone in particular (Idemudia, 2014). Some scholars in Africa (Visser, 2006, 2013; Idemudia, 2010; Ite, 2004) have commented that CSR is merely a strategic instrument by companies to advance their profit-maximisation agenda including bettering their organisational reputation rather than a genuine commitment towards sustainable development and sustainability.

As noted by Crowther & Aras (2008, p. 41) ''of the three principles of CSR'' including transparency and accountability, sustainability is concerned with impacts that action that humans take at the present time can affect the options available in the future (Purvis, Mao & Robinson, 2018; KPMG, 2017). This is why sustainability has become a common issue for business and society (Purvis et al., 2018). Although every business organisation mentions CSR and claims that it engages in CSR for sustainable development, however, this is not so as these claims can be mere rhetoric, green-washing or strategic tool by organisations. Nonetheless, although the relationship between business and society has been subjected to much debate, evidence still suggests that good and ethical organisation make a positive contribution to the environment and society (Siltaoja, 2009). Therefore, CSR should not just be used to further MNCs' economic and strategic interests; but a method of reconceptualising the role of business in society by factoring in Elkington's (1997) ''triple bottom line'' approach for sustainable development. This business model considers inseparable relationship between the economic, environmental and social in business venturing for sustainable development (Crowther & Aras, 2008). Accordingly, this much desired CSR approach should be propelled not just by ideological and strategic rationality as well as the fact that companies can be powerful forces for social transformation, but by normative culture and responsible social investing that can advance prosperity on the African continent. This CSR philosophy is not only important for better corporate-stakeholder relations but for poverty reduction and/or eradication and sustainable development (Blowfield & Murray, 2011; Ite, 2004).

1.5: Significance of study

With a population of about six million people, Sierra Leone has been described as a small country in West Africa that most of its people live below the poverty line (Maconachie, 2009; Datzberger, 2014). The country mainly depends on subsistence agriculture and gold mining, while the manufacturing sector mainly focuses on processing raw materials and light manufacturing for domestic consumption (Akiwumi, 2014). Sierra Leone's natural resources include gold, diamond, bauxite, chromite, titanium ore and iron ore. Diamond mining generates about half of the country's total export. Also, the country's economy is hugely reliant on international aids for development and for provision of social goods. In 2006, 343.4 million US dollars was received by the country as foreign aids. CSR is not mainstreamed in the nation's business practice, corporate governance and corporate responsibility. As Porto (2010, p. 350) notes, ‘‘the principal arena for discussing CSR in Sierra Leone is in academic circles ... governments have been characterised by corruption, mismanagement and inefficiency, only perpetuating the poor governance practices of their predecessors’’.

The preceding insights make Sierra Leone a resource-dependency nation and tormented by ‘‘resource curse’’ (Auty, 1993), a situation where a country is plagued by its natural resources such as diamond and bauxite. Resource curse theory (Karl, 1997), which is also referred to as ‘‘paradox of plenty’’ is central to eleven years of civil war in Sierra Leone as well as other governance and leadership issues in the country. According to Christian Aid (2013) Sierra Leone is at the moment struggling to rebuild after over a decade of civil war that triggered ‘‘blood diamonds’’, which is ‘‘rooted in inequitable distribution and irrational exploitation of resources. … the country still ranks near the bottom of the United Nation's Human Development Index, with high levels of poverty and food insecurity’’ (p. 5). Thus, Sierra Leone is still in the shadow of underdevelopment. Also, since 2009, it has been indicated that approximately more than one fifth of Sierra Leone's arable land has been leased to mostly MNCs for industrial-scale agriculture and gold/diamond mining. While land deals slightly impact positively on economic survival of the local communities, most CSR initiatives are not strengthening the economic capacity and autonomy of affected communities (Maconachie, 2009). While attempts are made by MNCs in Sierra Leone such as Addax Bioenergy, Socfin Agricultural Company Ltd. (SL), Sierra Rutile Ltd, Koidu Holdings and Goldtree amongst others to be socially and environmentally responsible, stakeholders have routinely accused them of not genuinely engaging in CSR, as these CSR initiatives do not compensate for social and environmental challenges Sierra Leoneans face as a consequence of their operation in the country (Maconachie, 2008; Datzberger, 2014). Thus, this thesis maintains that CSR should be used to address social, economic and environmental challenges people face for sustainable development (Newell, 2002; Idemudia, 2010). The present study is a critical exploration of stakeholders' view of how MNCs in Sierra Leone can use CSR to better the living condition of the people particularly when government retreats (Frynas, 2009) and realise to realise the ideals of SDGs (Behringer & Szegedi, 2016; Crowether & Aras, 2008).

1.6: Research aim and scope

The key aim of this research is to critically explore stakeholders' views about the role of CSR in achieving sustainable development in Sierra Leone. Research method adopted is qualitative, exploratory research based on interpretivism. The study triangulates interviews, focus group and documentary data for its empirical analysis. Applying an interpretivist approach to knowledge (Saunders, Lewis & Thornton, 2009), the aim is to understand how MNCs can contribute to sustainable development through their CSR initiatives from the perspectives of stakeholders, whose views and interpretation of the relationship between CSR and sustainable development will be valuable to socially construct knowledge on the phenomena (Saunders et al., 2009; Silverman, 2006). This process will help to understand how the stakeholders make sense of CSR and sustainable development; and how this relates to how they make sense of CSR initiatives adopted by MNCs.

In analysing data, thematic textual analysis (TTA) is utilised by paying keen attention to thematic resonances in data and how they relate to the theoretical approaches adopted in the study. The research thesis addresses a number of gaps in prior literature that are identified in subsequent chapters. In summary, these research gaps include the following:

- The relationship between business and society from both policy and research perspectives has been a recognised notion. However, there remains paucity of empirical research specifically from the developing countries’ perspective that sheds light on this phenomenon as seen from the perspective of stakeholders.

- Although there is a body of research acknowledging the role of business in society as well as the roles MNCs can play in sustainable development through CSR. However, there is no known work to the best of the knowledge of the researcher on how MNCs can contribute to sustainable development through CSR in Sierra Leone.

- Concerted actions and policies by governments, agencies and international organisations about CSR and sustainable development are essentially policy-oriented and espouse how sustainable development (specifically SDGs) can be achieved through CSR. However, research evidence shows that there is little done in this area, which entails further research to deepen knowledge on CSR and sustainable development relationship in a developing country like Sierra Leone. Also, there is need to understand the various CSR approaches used by MNCs and their motivations. This has implications for legitimate business operation and genuine contributions to sustainable development.

In order to address the above gaps in the literature, this research poses the below three key research questions:

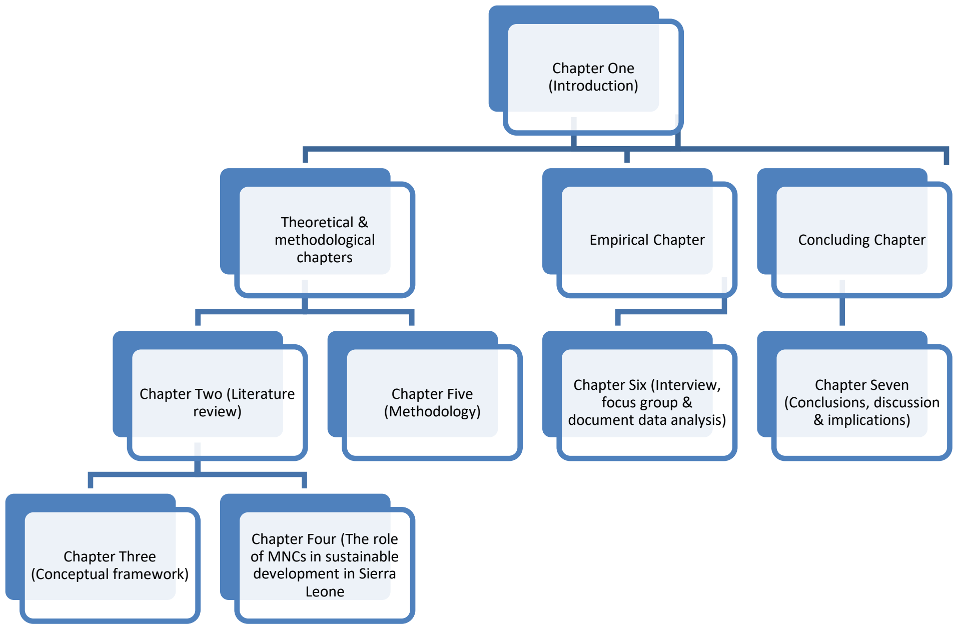
1.7: Research questions

- What are stakeholders’ views about the relationship between CSR and sustainable development in Sierra Leone?
- Why do MNCs engage in CSR and what approaches do they use in Sierra Leone?
- What are the contributions of MNCs to sustainable development, and what are the motivations for doing so in Sierra Leone?

1.8: Thesis structure

The thesis is structured into seven chapters (see Figure 1) for coherent understanding of the study. The thesis structure organically explains interconnections of the chapters in terms of theoretical, methodological and empirical issues as well as conclusions arising from the study.

Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of chapters



1.9: Chapter summary

This chapter has provided overview and background of the thesis; it has equally explained overall research aim, questions and context. The roles played by MNCs in sustainable development through CSR as well as problems statement and research rationale have been indicated in this chapter. Additionally, this chapter presents study significance, research scope and research gaps to be filled. In sum, this chapter has been used to highlight the plan for what this study is all about. It is essentially based on a critical appraisal of MNCs' CSR for sustainable development from the perspectives of stakeholders in Sierra Leone. As a result, the mainstay of this chapter is the rationale and motivations for the research as well as how the researcher intends to meet research's overall aim and objectives. Finally, the chapter highlights structure adopted in presenting various chapters contained in the research. In chapter two, which is next chapter, literature review will be considered.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

2.1: Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the literature review of main theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the thesis. The chapter presents literature on CSR, stakeholder theory, and sustainable development as well as MNCs. Literature on the above issues will be reviewed and discussion will be narrowed to developing countries perspective within the boundaries of Sierra Leone, which is the study's context. The chapter starts with brief background context to the thesis.

2.2: Background and context

Although MNCs' underlying organisational and ideological philosophy is based on fierce capitalist pursuit (Bakan, 2004), the 1980s marked a watershed in international business venturing precipitated by economic liberalisation, globalisation and common global market that are unremittingly profitable to MNCs to outsource raw materials and labour in developing countries such as Sierra Leone (Maconachie, 2012). Developing countries' environment is quite attractive because of cheap labour supplies, poor labour regulations, low wage payment system and unregulated CSR practices, which undermine sustainable development (Idemudia, 2010). MNCs' business operation globally – especially in developing countries – has triggered CSR issues (Amaeshi, Adi, Ogbechie & Amao, 2006), political conflict (Maconachie, 2009), stakeholder conflict (Datzberger, 2014), wars (Binns & Maconachie, 2005), crushing poverty (Maconachie, Binns, Tengbe, & Johnson, 2006), and sustainability issues (Emeseh, 2009).

The above contention makes CSR an important issue in today's business venturing (Obi, 2010; Amaeshi et al., 2006). Additionally, CSR has become an important issue following grand corporate failures, business irresponsibility and poor accountability issues, which undermine sustainable development (Emeseh, 2009; Visser, 2013). This situation has been characterised by Silberhon & Warren (2008, p. 352) as ''false dawns in past decades'' regarding sustainable, ethical CSR practice. The false dawn resonates with corporate sagas such as Enron, Parmalat, Niger delta conundrum, WorldCom, climate change, global warming and civil war in Sierra Leone over diamond mining and unsustainable agricultural practice by MNCs (Maconachie, 2016).

Sierra Leone is a country endowed with huge deposit of natural resources but has witnessed the presence of MNCs in its territory dating backed in the era of colonialism (1808-1912) (Konteh, 1997). Wilson (2015) observed the lack of corporate responsibility and transparency by the then colonial governor about the engagement of British corporations in the exploitation of the country's forest resources. MacGregor in 1942 (cited in Konteh, 1997) details the illegal operation of British firms as early as in 1816 (around the Bullom Shores, Great Scarcies and Port Loko) by a well-known British entrepreneur called John McCormack (Wilson, 2015). In addition, the influence of about a decade of civil war and crisis as well as poor governance exacerbated a situation of intense exploitation of Sierra Leone's natural resources by MNCs leading to poverty (Smillie, Gberie & Hazleton, 2000). The increasing levels of poverty in the country made it possible for businesses to exploit the people and their environment including poor regulatory regime (Maconachie, 2012). Given this situation, it is difficult for MNCs to support CSR initiatives that are meant to help communities grow at a sustainable level as well as invest in local development initiatives (for example provision of pipe-borne water and artisan centres for the locals). There are evidences supporting poor CSR practice of MNCs in developing countries like Sierra Leone (Wilson, 2015; Idemudia, 2014, 2010). However, research suggests that corporate organisations can be instrumental in addressing sustainable development issues around the world including Sierra Leone (Emeseh, 2009). The next section presents meaning of CSR.

2.3: Defining CSR

CSR can be defined as an organisational business model of self-regulation, which deals with organisational responsibility, accountability, transparency and ethics that are enshrined in business practice beyond what the law requires (Aras & Crowther, 2009; Crowther & Aras, 2008; Carroll, 1979). This perspective aligns with Johnson, Scholes & Whittington's (2008, p. 191) definition, which indicates that CSR is premised on ''… ways in which an organisation exceeds the minimum obligation'' to its varied stakeholders specified via regulations and corporate governance requirements. CSR is desirable, not required, and companies benefit a lot from engaging in CSR for social licence, reputation and legitimacy to operate and to justify their actions to stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995; Freeman, 1984). Legitimacy and organisational reputation are two vital intangible resources accruable from CSR that can make MNCs in Sierra Leone to have social licence to operate smoothly and harmoniously with their various stakeholders. CSR contrasts with strategic organisational gains given its inseparable link with normative business model (Garriga & Mele, 2004). Although, there is no consensus on what CSR really means, which makes it ‘‘a contested concept’’ (Okoye, 2009), it is basically an organisational philosophy and practice to make profit but sensitive to social and environmental needs of society. For Idemudia (2010) this organisational practice is synonymous with ‘‘business *in* society’’ debate as opposed to ‘‘business *and* society’’. The former resonates with business helping in providing social goods; while the latter is about profit maximisation for business (Idemudia, 2010).

No matter the apparent lack of agreement on the meaning of CSR, there is a consensus on what it means. It is about giving back to society in contemporary business era, an epoch marked by increasing stakeholder pressures as well as other externalities (Amaeshi, 2010) for companies to move from just thinking about the interest of shareholders to considering interest of anyone who can affect or be affected by their operation (Freeman, 1984). Thus, organisations that do not pay attention to pressures from stakeholders stand the risk of undermining sustainable development (Emeseh, 2009) as well as risk corporate-stakeholder conflict (Katsos & Forrer, 2014) and credibility gap (Deegan, 2002). In furthering this position, following increasing social and environmental expectations of businesses in advancing community development (Blowfield & Murray, 2011), alleviating poverty (Idemudia & Ite, 2006), building local capacity (Frynas, 2005; Boele, Fabig & Wheeler, 2002) propelling social investing (Amaeshi, 2010) and filling governance gap (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011), CSR is conceived as a self-regulating business philosophy, which helps firms to be socially responsible and accountable to its wider stakeholders by being good corporate citizen (Carroll & Shabana; 2010).

2.4: Origin of CSR

CSR is generally conceived as an Anglo-American invention. Following Joint Stock Companies Act (1844) in Britain as well as the parliament passing the Limited Liability Act in 1855, efforts were made towards reconceptualising the role of business in society. Across the Atlantic – in the United States – the US Supreme Court in Santa Clara vs. Southern Pacific Railroad ruled that companies should be seen as persons. Thus, be giving companies ‘‘corporate veil’’, they should also be conceived as persons in relation to being responsible for their actions as well as their impacts on society. This singular action framed largely the creation of the Fourteenth Amendment that empowered companies to have privacy rights with accompanying right to be taken to court, should they violate laws.

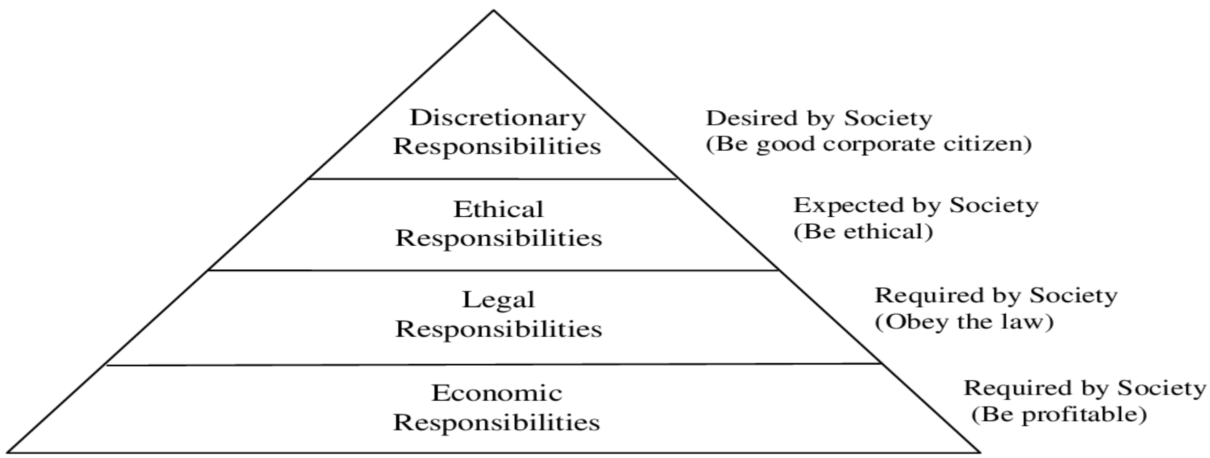
The initial writing on the concept ‘‘can be traced to the exchange of articles in the 1930’s between Berle and Dodd on the role of corporate managers’’ (Okoye, 2009, p. 613). According to writers (Carroll & Shabana; 2010; Boulding, 1956; Bowen, 1953; Kreps, 1940; Clark, 1939; Barnard, 1938; McGuire, 1963; Thompson, 1967; Garriga & Mele, 2004), the history of CSR can be traced to the 1950s with the writings of Bowen (1953), who is generally considered as ‘‘the father of CSR’’. In the 1950s CSR was referred to as *social responsibility*, not *CSR*. The reason for this can be explained from the perspective that corporations at the time were not considered as part of society. These writers stressed that companies should ensure that their business activities add value to society. Also, following Friedman’s (1970) work urging businesses to increase shareholder value, the Committee for Economic Development came up with a seminal report that helped in redrawing the business-society relationship. To this end, a renewed CSR blueprint emerged in the 1970’s replacing what Wood (2010) called ‘‘muddled and ambiguous’’ (p. 52) interpretation of CSR, which has taken the CSR debate further in relation to normative business practice.

Following from the foregoing, Frederick (1978, 1994) identified what he called CSR1, which follows the trend of the early conceptualisation of CSR. Although this type of CSR stresses that businesses have an obligation to work for social benefit (Carroll & Shabana 2010; Wood, 2010; Keim, 1978), this may be a legal or voluntary obligation, where profit is the focus. Opponents of this CSR type claim that the obligation is severely limited by financial and economic considerations (Freeman, 1984). In CSR1, the company follows the preferences of its management, which suggests that CSR1 prioritises the firm's "enlightened self-interests" over others', in order to gain corporate sustainability. This gave rise to CSR2. Frederick (1978) proposed that CSR2 (Corporate Social Responsiveness), refers to the firm's ability to respond to social issues and pressures. Unlike the CSR1, which is steeped in philosophical rationality, CSR2 adopts a managerial method. CSR2 emphasises the management of an organisation's relations with society (Carroll, 1979) as well as focuses on the long-run role of the firm in a dynamic social system (Sethi, 1979).

Subsequently, Frederick (1986) made effort to fill the "values" gap in CSR1 and CSR2 by suggesting CSR3, which he regarded as ''Corporate Social Rectitude''. This model of CSR incorporates moral and ethical dimensions to CSR debate (Frederick, 1986, p.134). He also categorises three value-based and/or ethical motivations for managerial decision-making including human rights (individual concerns of non-manager stakeholders); utilitarianism (economic self-interest of the company); and social justice (distributional or societal-level concerns) (Mitnick, 1995). Nevertheless, Frederick's (1986) CSR3 has been subjected to criticism by scholars arguing that its "overzealous ethics push might reduce business productivity'' and might ''hamper society's vital economising process" (Frederick, 1986, p.8). Other criticism includes the subjective nature of "values" which may differ across cultures, groups and settings. Continuing his normative model and borrowing insights from Mitnick's (1995) "normative referencing" notion, Frederick proposed CSR4 (Corporate Social Reason), which deals with issues of the Cosmos, Science and Religion. Everything, including business operation is a consequence of cosmological mechanisms and processes, and to understand the Cosmos, we need to turn to Science, by going beyond social and behavioural sciences and putting into consideration Third Culture Science, which is a normative science. Thus, companies base their decisions on the CSR4 consciousness, which revolves around the Cosmos, rather than the company. In this framing, companies ought to take into consideration issues around sustainable development such as the environment and social issues. This proposition is central to normative culture and sustainable relationship, which resonates with the ideals of sustainable development (KPMG, 2017).

However, the leading theory on CSR in the 1970s was Carroll's (1979) work known as ''CSR Ladder'' and subsequently ''CSR Pyramid'' (Carroll, 1991), which analysis undertaken in this thesis is based. These two theorisations of CSR laid the foundation for contemporary conceptualisation of the notion (Matten & Crane, 2005). Carroll's (1979) ''CSR Ladder'' is graphically represented in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: CRS Ladder



Source: Carroll (1979, p. 499)

In extant literature, Carroll's (1979) model is the most cited CSR model (Frynas, 2009; Matten & Crane, 2005). Carroll's (1991) ''CSR pyramid'' corresponds with views shared by various scholars (Idemudia, 2010; Frynas, 2009; Ite, 2004; Idemudia & Ite, 2006) for business to be part of society. CSR pyramid is graphically illustrated in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: CSR Pyramid

Source: Carroll (1991)

Following from the above Figure, for CSR to be conscientious, it should be framed in such a manner that the entire range of business responsibilities is embraced (Carroll, 1991). Carroll (1991) suggests that four types of social responsibilities constitute total CSR including economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic. Moreover, these four elements or components of CSR can be represented as a pyramid. The pyramid of CSR depicts the four elements of CSR, starting with the basic building block view that economic performance undergirds all else (Visser, 2006). Also, organisations are expected to obey the law because the law is society's codification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Okoye, 2009). Next element is organisation's ethical responsibility. Simply, this is the obligation for businesses to do what is just, fair and right, and to reduce of avoid harm to stakeholders including consumers, employees, the environment, communities, amongst others. Finally, organisations are expected to be a good corporate citizen (Eweje, 2007). This is considered in the philanthropic responsibility, wherein businesses are expected to contribute financially and socially to the community and to improve people's quality of life and the environment (Crowther & Aras, 2008). In contrast to just making profit for organisations, managers are urged to be more sensitive to the interests and aspirations of other stakeholders whose interest can impact or can be impacted by their action (Freeman, 1984;

Clarkson, 1995). These contrasting viewpoints make CSR an ‘‘essentially contested concept’’ (Miles, 2012).

2.5: CSR as an ‘‘essentially contested concept’’

CSR is a concept with definitional problem as it means different things to different people (Frynas, 2009; Crane, McWilliams, Matten, Moon & Siegel, 2008; Garriga & Mele, 2004, p. 51). That is why it is considered as an ‘‘essentially contested concept’’ (Miles, 2012). Essentially contested concept is a term, which its precise definition is controversial and imprecise. Thus, the meaning of CSR is unclear (Okoye, 2009). Gond & Moon (2011, p. 4) assert that the concept is rather chameleonic – it changes its form to align itself to situations in the context of management ideals and orientation. Lack of consensus on what CSR means has become a critical factor in apprehending its conceptual dimensions, application and theory. This is because theoretical precision aids in enabling and sustaining development of a concept in a manner that facilitates collective understanding by creating ‘‘common frame of reference’’ (Miles, 2012, p. 285). This process can help in making such a concept less complex to understand. The difficulty in understanding CSR makes it problematic to measure the role of business in society (Siltaoja & Onkila, 2013).

2.6: Definitional perspectives on CSR

Definitional perspectives to CSR help to focus attention on ways to better understand it rather than see it as an ‘‘essentially contested concept’’. CSR can be defined as an obligation coming from the implicit ‘‘social contract’’ (Donaldson & Preston, 1995) between business and society for businesses to be ethically and morally ‘‘responsible to society’s long-run needs and wants’’ (Lantos, 2001, p. 600), which can aid them in maximising the positive impacts of business in society. This process can also help in de-accelerating the negative impacts of a firm’s activities on society and environment (Visser, 2013). In agreement with this contention, CSR is the obligation of a firm to its stakeholders, which comprises groups and external stakeholders who can affect or can be affected (directly or indirectly) by such firm’s activities and action. In adding to this, these obligations transcend legal requirements as well as duties and obligation to a firm’s shareholders as prescribed by law. In fulfilling these obligations, firms are positioned to minimise risk of losing ‘‘social licence’’ to operate (legitimacy), while increasing return on investment (ROI) and long-term societal approval of their conduct (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

CSR can be further explained as ‘‘a discretionary allocation of corporate resource towards improving social welfare that serves as a means of enhancing relationships with key stakeholders’’ (Barnett, 2007, p. 801). In agreement with this perspective, Visser, Matten, Pohl & Tolhurst (2007) have argued that CSR refers to the common belief held by citizens that modern businesses have responsibilities to society that go far beyond their obligations to the shareholders or investors. Thus ‘‘the obligation to investors is to generate profits for the owners and maximise long-term wealth of shareholders. Other societal stakeholders that business would also have some responsibility to typically include consumers, employees, the community at large, government, and the natural environment …’’ (p. 122). Thus, fulfilling such obligations brings about accountability, sustainability, responsibility and normative behaviour (Freeman, 1984). Simply put, CSR is about giving back to society in order to have a more sustainable relationship with wider stakeholders (Siltaoja & Onkila, 2013; Crane et al., 2008). Thus, in developing a better understanding of CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008) various perspectives have been developed as seen in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Definitional Perspectives on CSR

Different terms for CSR	**Authors**	**Focus**
Corporate Responsibility	Blowfield & Murray (2011)	Business making positive contribution to society
Business Ethics	Matten & Crane (2005)	Corporate Citizenship
Organisations & Responsibility	Maclagan (2008)	Acknowledgement of stakeholders
Company and Product Relationship	Brown & Dacin (1997)	Perceived societal obligation
Corporate Social	Du, Bhattacharya & Sen	Social Welfare

Initiatives	(2010)	
New Political Role of Business in society	Scherer & Palazzo (2011, p. 912)	Social Connectedness
Corporate Responsibility	Greenwood (2007)	Stakeholder Engagement
Corporate Social Responsibility	Guthey, Langer & Morsing (2006)	CSR and Management
Corporate Social Responsibility	Okoye (2009)	Corporate Relationship to Society/ Stakeholders
Corporate Social Responsibility	Carroll (1999)	Social Responsibility (Compatibility of Profitability and Responsibility)
Business Case for Corporate Social Responsibility	Carroll & Shabana (2010)	Justification for Corporate economic/financial Perspective
Corporate Social Responsibility	Maon, Lindgreen & Swaen (2010)	Consolidate Corporate Social Responsibility
Corporate Social Responsibility	Carroll & Schwartz (2003)	Relationship Between Business & Society
Corporate Social Responsibility	Sweeney & Coughlan (2008)	Focused Stakeholder View of CSR
Corporate social rectitude	Frederick (1986)	Business & Society, Sustainable CSR
Corporate Social Performance	Wood (1991)	Integrative Organisation

Source: The Researcher (2019)

The above perspectives on CSR show multiple ways in which the concept can be explained. Nevertheless, as conceived in this thesis, it is about giving back to society as well as ensuring the wellbeing of the environment rather than just maximising profit for the organisation (Carroll, 1991).

2.7: Theorising CSR

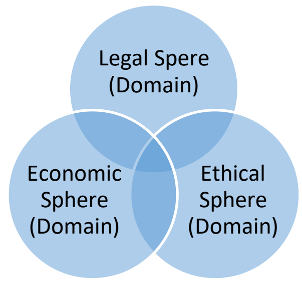
The growth and theoretical development of CSR has facilitated researches aimed at theoretical approaches to explain the phenomenon (Frynas, 2014). As noted earlier, the pioneering work in this direction is Carroll's (1979) ''CSR Ladder''. CSR is in constant theoretical evolution, reinvention and development. Thus,

> There is no accepted theoretical perspective or research methodology for making sense of CSR activities. Indeed, most scholars study CSR without any reference to a given theoretical perspective, and it has been found that CSR research is not driven by continuing scientific engagement but by agendas in the business environment (Frynas, 2009, p. 12).

In taking the above into consideration, in the management literature there are different approaches to theorise CSR. Frynas (2009) has indicated that business-society interface can be theorised from the following perspectives: ''agency theory, stakeholder theory, stewardship theory, institutional theory, game theory, theory of the firm and resource-based view in strategic management'' (p. 13). Despite lack of consensus on developing a coherent body of theoretical approaches to CSR (Belal, 2008), there are dominant theories on the concept. One of the often-cited theoretical positions is developed by Lantos (2001), who proposes three theories of CSR: *altruistic*, *ethical* and *strategic* approaches. Altruistic CSR is pursued on the basis that there is no economic benefit to CSR. Strategic CSR is pursued by companies for reputation effect and cost minimisation; while ethical CSR entails morality of business (Lantos, 2001).

Carroll & Schwartz (2003) developed ''Three-Domain Model of CSR''. This framework helps in outlining three factors including economic, ethical and legal obligations of firms by collapsing the fourth domain – philanthropic or discretionary obligation – that was previously theorised by Carroll (1979, 1991). This theory is represented below.

Figure 2.3: Three-domain model of CSR



Source: The Researcher (2019), Redrawn from Carroll & Schwartz (2003)

In Schwartz & Carroll's (2003) view, the benevolence (philanthropic) responsibility element is omitted, which suggests that philanthropy is discretionary. Nevertheless, for moral and ethical organisational operation, this element is integral. Further to this, researches by Kang (1995) and Mitnick (2000) establish that the underlying concept of CSR is based on making profit and obeying the law as well as companies being ethical and good corporate citizens.

Further to the above, Garriga & Mele (2004), theorised that CSR can be categorised into four parts. The first typology is *instrumental theories*, which emphasise that CSR is fundamentally a way of arriving at profit maximisation for shareholders (stockholders) (Jones, 1995). This instrumental perspective is echoed here:

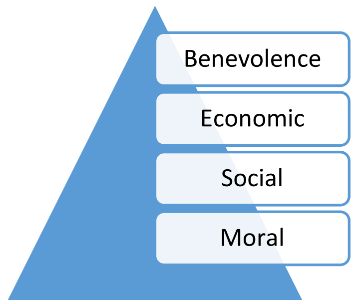
> Although some firms have committed to investments in CSR through the allocation of more resources, other companies have resisted. This could, at least in part, be because of the debate on whether a corporation should go beyond maximizing the profit of its owners as the only social responsibility of business, to being accountable for any of its actions that affect the people, communities and environments in which they operate (Samy, Odemilin & Bampton, 2010, p. 204).

Some authors have argued that rationalising CSR along this axis potentially celebrates and promotes economic interests of shareholders at the expense of wider stakeholders (Idemudia, 2014; Visser, 2013). *Political theories* of CSR as theorised by Garriga & Mele (2004) concentrate on social powers of corporations acquired by using CSR to gain social advantage. Lately, there is an emerging body of research that considers politicisation of organisational practice (Matten & Crane, 2005; Whelan, 2012; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011). The third typology – *integrative theories* – considers theories, based on the notion that businesses depend on society to succeed as well as their continued social legitimacy and existence (Idemudia, 2014). Proponents of this approach (Idemudia, 2010; Frynas, 2014; Kleine & Hauff, 2009) contend that CSR as a business stratagem should be integrated into organisational strategy. The fourth, *ethical theories*, are hinged ‘‘on the principles that express the right thing to do or the necessity to achieve a good society’’ (Garriga & Mele, 2004, p. 60), are the hallmark of CSR.

In criticising Garriga & Mele’s (2004) position, Secchi (2007) developed other ways of theorising by stating that Garriga & Mele’s (2004) approach is essentially ambiguous. As he contends, political and instrumental approaches to CSR are just change of name. Secchi (2007) proposes developing CSR theory based on identifying where organisational responsibility is apportioned. This approach is expressed in *managerial*, *relational* and *utilitarian* approaches to CSR. *Managerial* approaches are essentially based on internal CSR drivers; while the *utilitarian* approaches consider CSR from the perspective of broader mechanisms of firms’ self-interest and marketised system as main driving forces (Renouard, 2011). The *relational* approaches consider business-society interface as basically interpenetrating. In a similar vein, Windsor (2001) proposes three approaches including *corporate citizenship*, *instrumental*, and *political* typologies.

In furthering the development of CSR, Dahlsrud (2008) proposes five typologies: *economic*, *environmental*, *social*, *stakeholder* and *voluntariness*. In addition, Locket, Moon & Visser (2006) offered four approaches: *environmental*, *ethical*, *social* and *stakeholder*. Nevertheless, regardless of theoretical approaches to CSR, an issue that stands out is that firms have to ensure corporate social performance (CSP) through CSR. It is to this end that Wood (1991, p. 693) defines CSR as an organisational practice and philosophy of social responsiveness as it interacts with its various constituents to perform as seen in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Corporate Social Performance Model



Source: The Researcher (2019), Redrawn from Wood (1991)

Conceiving CSR in this way aligns with what Orlitzky (2008) considers being wider and deeper explanation of the concept, which takes into account ‘‘three norms at different levels of analysis: *institutional*, *organisational* and *individual*’’ (Orlitzky, 2008, p. 115). Other theories of CSR have stressed economic factors (see Schaltegger & Wagner, 2006; Orlitzky, Schmidt & Rynes, 2003), institutional factors (Campbell, 2007; Frynas, 2009) and legitimacy issues (Deegan, 2002; Castello & Lozano, 2011).

2.8: CSR classifications

In view of literature reviewed and various approaches adopted by authors on CSR, it can be grouped under environmental/ecological, integrative/relational, economic/financial, ethical/moral, discretionary/philanthropic, normative/institutional, power/political and strategic/instrumental aspects. Table 2.2 demonstrates classifications of CSR as developed by this study.

Table 2.2: Classification of CSR

Aspects	**Emphases**	**Expectations**	**Examples**
Ethical/Moral	Just and fair operation	Social and environmental justice	Doing just business by engaging in filling governance gap and stakeholder engagement
Normative/institutional	Institutionally sanctioned organisational practice	Tailoring business practices towards societal expectations	Operating business in ways that are in agreement with societal principles
Strategic/instrumental	Rationalising managerial motives and activities	Managers are expected by shareholders/investors to maximise profit: principal-agent issues	Strategically positioning organisations through profit maximisation and image laundry
Philanthropic/Discretionary	Supporting and promoting charitable causes	Businesses to be part of facilitating philanthropy and social investing	Giving back to society for fair business practice through philanthropy and discretionary donations

Economic/financial	Financial and profit leverage/advantage	Shareholder values maximisation	Making business profitable by increased shares and profit
Integrative/relational	Emphasis on managing stakeholders inclusively	Cordial and inclusive corporate-stakeholder relationship	Relational interaction and co-operate-stakeholder relations
Environmental/Ecological	Triple bottom line management	Doing business but not harming the environment	Environmental protection and sustainability management

Source: The Researcher (2019)

2.9: CSR stages

As Blowfield & Murray (2011) contend, understanding stages of CSR deals with understanding ‘‘… a convenient way of exploring why companies’ policies, processes and programmes change …’’ (p. 141). As has been argued, CSR policies and approaches change given cultural disparities (Ite, 2004), contextual differences (Idemudia, 2010) and strategic objectives (Idemudia & Ite, 2006). To this end, Maon, Lindgreen & Swaen (2009) have theorised ‘‘reactive’’ and ‘‘proactive’’ CSR stages/development. The former concentrates on reacting to pressures from externalities such as NGOs, pressure groups, civil community protest, criticism from trade associations and other external pressures to make organisations behave more accountably and responsibly. The latter borders on CSR developmental strategies shaped by a deep commitment and sense of personal value premised on a company’s values and orientation (Maon et al., 2009).

Correspondingly, Mirvis & Googins (2006) have theorised five stages of CSR development that include: *elementary*, *engaged*, *innovative*, *integrated* and *transforming*. In deepening CSR development, Visser (2013) theorised stages of development. The focus of his theory is movement from CSR 1.0 that is age of greed, philanthropy, marketing and management, to CSR 2.0, which is age of responsibility. Central to Visser's (2013) stages of CSR are: defensive (greed), charitable (philanthropy), promotional (marketing), strategic (management) and systemic (responsibility). Nevertheless, for an integrative, systematic and ethical approach to CSR development that can factor in expectations of key stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone – that is internal and external stakeholders – it is important to conceptualise a coherent benchmark for sustainable business-society relationship. This re-conceptualisation has the capacity to propel putting into consideration the macro level system – society and ecosystem – and changing organisational strategy to enhance outcomes of such CSR strategy (Lantos, 2001). The above argument parallels Donaldson & Dunfee's (1994) ''integrative social contract theory'' (ISCT). This framework has been lauded for its tendency to bridge the dichotomy between universalism and relativism (Spicer, Dunfee & Bailey, 2004). In doing this, CSR will be developed to take into consideration contextual differences as well as peculiarities of developing countries such as Sierra Leone given the spate of corporate-stakeholder conflict (Maconachie, 2009). In addition, such realisation will necessitate more responsible, sustainable and ethical way of approaching CSR particularly in developing countries where CSR should be conceived differently in the wake of many ''false dawns'' (Silberhorn & Warren, 2007, p. 352) in CSR approach and implementation (Visser, 2006, 2013).

2.10: Understanding why companies engage in CSR

Theorists have considered why companies engage in CSR from the angles of legitimacy (Deegan, 2002), organisational image (Hooghiemstra, 2000), return on investment (ROI) (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2014) and public relations (Clark, 2000) amongst others. Some of the main reasons why organisations engage in CSR are highlighted below.

2.10.1: CSR and organisational legitimacy

According to Suchman (1995) organisational legitimacy is a function of how society approves of an organisation's conduct and activities in society, which resonates with ''social licence'' to operate (Idemudia, 2010). MNCs in particular constantly change the dynamics of their organisational practice to suit situations so as to have legitimacy (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). Organisational legitimacy can be can be strategic or normative (Siltaoja, 2013; Campbell, 2000).

It is strategic when an organisation's managers manage stakeholders' expectations and interests in a way that the management (shareholders) feel that managers are acting in their best interests. When their actions are directed towards external stakeholders for social approval, it is referred to as normative legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

The above contention is based on the assumption that organisations are embedded within the environment of a super-ordinate system, within which, society approves of their conduct as long as their actions are in agreement with wider societal norms and values (Parsons, 1960). In acting within the bounds of wider set of values and expectations, which Donaldson & Dunfee (1994) call ''hyper-norms'', organisations are considered wider stakeholders as acting ethically, normatively and responsibly in relation to CSR (Belal, 2008). Legitimacy theory has been studied variously by different authors (Belal & Owen, 2015; Brown & Deegan, 1999; Guthrie & Parker, 1989; Deegan, 2002). For instance, using legitimacy theory, Brown & Deegan (1999) maintain that media attention reflects community interests and aspirations. In a similar vein, in adopting legitimacy theory Belal & Owen (2015) empirically concluded that by using stand-alone CSR reporting, MNCs in Bangladesh legitimise their operation in a country, where ''both tobacco control regulation and a strong anti-tobacco movement were gaining momentum'' (p. 1160).

2.10.2: CSR and reputation management

Theorising reputation and organisational image takes the form of instrumental management approach that is framed by the contention that reputation is a social resource. Sociologically shaped standpoint to this understanding sees reputation as the outcome of shared socially constructed impression of organisations (Bebbington, Larrinaga & Moneva, 2008). In the view of Fombrun & van Riel (1997), reputation constitutes subjective collective assessment of the reliability and honesty of organisation as it is second-order and derivative characteristic that arises from a specific organisational life. Thus, it can be argued that reputation management is a function of organisational actions aimed at swaying stakeholders' opinion about normative business practice. It is also concerned with effort targeted at managing stakeholders' expectations, feelings and views about how a company is operating in a specific environment such as Sierra Leone. Managing reputation and image helps to reduce social risk (Bebbington et al., 2008; Hooghiemstra, 2000).

2.10.3: CSR organisational performance and ROI

In extant literature, CSR helps to increase ROI. In a study by Ullmann (1985), at the heart of CSR is financial performance. Empirical researches considering the interface between CSR and financial advantage (ROI) take two main approaches. First, some of the studies demonstrate this by applying event study approach to methodologically explain that there are short-term financial effects when firms do not engage in CSR (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). This business method is expressed in the study by Wright & Ferris (1997), where they demonstrated a negative relationship between CSR and firm performance. In the study by Posnikoff (1997), it is noted that positive relationship exists between CSR and financial gain. Second aspect of studies concentrates on locating the relationship between financial gain and CSP model by using financial indices of competitive advantage and profitability. Although opinions are polarised on this argument, however, by adopting CSR and accounting-based performance method Cochran & Wood (1984) concluded that there exists a positive correlation between CSR and accounting performance. In echoing this, Waddock & Graves (1997) found appreciable level of positive association between an index of CSP and performance variables. Thus, there is a lot that organisations can benefit from engaging in CSR from a profit-oriented perspective.

2.11: Brief history of CSR research

The scope and implications of CSR debate has propelled research focusing on how to better understand the business-society interface (Blowfield & Murray, 2011). In addition, as awareness of ideological, economic, political and social impacts of globalisation intensified, so is research in this direction. Also, pressures from externalities and presence of MNCs in developing countries have increased from the 1970s, triggering rise in CSR research. Given the remit of the thesis, an exhaustive analysis of CSR studies from developed countries perspective will not be offered. However, a considerable amount of research has been undertaken in developed countries to understand the role of business in society (Belal, 2008). These studies focus mainly on the drivers and motivation of CSR from developed countries perspective, which include France, Sweden, Denmark, and the UK as well as the United States of America (Visser, 2006). The preceding sections highlight CSR studies undertaken in the West. However, the following section will present CSR studies from developing countries' perspective.

2.12: CSR research in developing countries

There is an on-going discussion concerning the classification of countries as developing, less developed and developed (Visser, 2006). Although different scholars have proffered reasons for these classifications, this research adopts the UNDP's (2006) classification, which states that a developing country is one that has comparatively lower per capita income and less industrialised. Likewise, CSR in these parts of the world is not a standardised notion (Idemudia, 2011). Notwithstanding the different nomenclatures or labels for CSR and the argument that it originated from the West; it is not essentially new notion in many developing countries (Frynas, 2005). According to Idemudia (2008) the move to mainstream CSR was facilitated mainly by three core criticisms including selective amnesia in which issues such as unsustainable investment, tax avoidance, and poverty reduction are not visible on the agenda and do not address the policy and structural determinants of underdevelopment (Utting, 2003). For example, Frynas (2005) has argued that CSR has mistakably diverted attention away from confronting the real economic, political, and social problems facing the people in developing countries. Second, mainstream CSR has also been criticised for universalising CSR blueprint and parameters that are applicable in developing countries (Utting, 2000). Third, mainstream CSR is also being criticised for a tendency to ignore the ''big picture'', which implies the broader ramifications of CSR demands for the people it is apparently expected to protect. For instance, scholars like Blowfield (2005) and Margolis & Walsh (2003) have therefore contended that the crucial question of CSR impacts on society is often ignored in favour of MNCs' selfish goals driven by capitalist ideology. Consequently, critics have questioned the legitimacy of MNCs' CSR (Utting, 2003).

There are a lot of studies on CSR in developing countries. This is essentially driven by contemporary re-conceptualisation of business' role in African society (Belal, 2008). CSR in Africa is vital area of scholarly inquiry. It has been argued that rise of CSR is essentially driven by effort to understand the role of business in society and ''the trend towards improved social responsibility by multinationals in a globalising economy'' (Visser, 2006, p. 18). One of the reasons why this concept is crucial to reinventing the role of business in society is that CSR in Africa has its uniqueness, which is broadly different from other parts of the world (Idemudia, 2014). This standpoint is central to mainstreaming ‘‘Southern-centred CSR’’ debate on the relationship between business and society. Therefore, ‘‘the move to make CSR more South centred rest[s] … on the assumption that … difference in environment is argued to not only shape the nature of obligations business can be expected to attend to in developing countries, but also affects the success or failure of business initiatives to meet their social obligations (Idemudia, 2011, p. 3). Table 2.3 further explains studies done on in Africa. To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, there is paucity of study on CSR in Sierra Leone (Muthuri, 2012; Visser & Tolhurst, 2010; Porto, 2010). As Visser & Tolhurst (2010) noted from 1995-2005, only 12 ‘‘of Africa’s 53 countries have had any research published in core CSR journal, with 57% of all articles focused on South Africa and 16% on Nigeria’’ (p. 479), which makes the present study timely and contributory to the debate on CSR.

Table 2.3: Geographic Explanation of CSR Studies on Africa

Journals Reviewed	**Numbers**	**Country of Focus**
Journal of Business Ethics	40	South Africa (20), Nigeria (11), Kenya (5), Ghana (1), Malawi & Botswana (1), Tanzania (1), Ethiopia (1)
Development Southern Africa (since 1998)	27	South Africa (19), Nigeria (2), Malawi (2), Africa (2), Zambia (1), Tanzania (1)
Journal of Corporate Citizenship	16	South Africa (7), Kenya (4), Africa (2), Nigeria (1), Mali and Zambia (1), Tanzania (1)
Corporate Governance: An International Perspective	12	Ghana (6), South Africa (2), Nigeria (2), Kenya (1), Zimbabwe (1)
African Journal of Business Ethics	11	S. Africa (4), Sub-Saharan Africa (2), Africa (2), Francophone Africa (1), E. Africa (1), W. Africa (1),
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental	9	South Africa (3), Nigeria (3), Egypt (1), Cameroon (1), Uganda (1)

Management		
Business and Society Review	8	South Africa (5), Nigeria (2), Africa (1)
Business and Society	6	South Africa (3), Africa (2), Nigeria (1)
Business Ethics Quarterly	4	South Africa (3), Sub-Saharan Africa (1)
Journal of African Business	3	South Africa (2), Ghana (1)
Society and Business Review	2	South Africa (1), Nigeria (1)
Academy of Management Journal	2	South Africa
African Journal of Economic and Management Studies	2	Nigeria (1), Africa (1)
Journal of Management Studies	1	South Africa
California Management Review	1	Kenya and South Africa
Canadian Journal of African Studies (until 2007)	1	Ghana
No Returns from the following journals: *Academy of Management Review* *British Journal of Management* *Harvard Business Review* *Administrative Science Quarterly* *Organization Science* *Sloan Management Review* *Journal of International Management Studies* *Journal of International Business Ethics*		

Source: The Researcher (2019), Adapted from Muthuri (2012) & Visser (2006)

Overall, CSR research in developing countries rests on the assumption that while the social structures, environment and priorities of people in developing countries might have comparisons with the West, it is also appreciably different. For example, Idemudia (2011) argued for a developmental role for MNCs in developing countries like Sierra Leone because of the disparities in social expectations, environmental conditions and political systems. Given these differences, stakeholders in developing countries have criticised the activities of MNCs, for failing to align their organisational strategy with developmental goals. Nevertheless, in developing and applying organisational strategy and mode of practice, organisations have to put into consideration the interests and claims of their various stakeholders to be deemed legitimate in their operation (Deegan, 2002). Next section looks at the rise of stakeholder theory.

2.13: Stakeholder and organisational orientation: who matters to the firm?

Writers have traced the origin of stakeholder theory (Frynas, 2014). As variously argued in extant literature, a significant event that precipitated the emergence of stakeholder theory was a paper by Berle (1931). Berle (1931) contends that powers granted to corporations are to serve the interests of stockholders (shareholders). Little wonder Friedman (1970) asserted that the only reason why businesses exist is to make profit. Thus, corporate laws should be made to further the interest of owners of business. Subsequently, Dodd (1932) challenged Berle's (1931) contention. Beyond making profit for shareholders, organisations are also established to protect the interest of external stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). Dodd's (1932) position is that businesses and society should not be separated. This perspective corresponds with contemporary notion of CSR as more of ''business in society'' as opposed to ''business and society'' (Idemudia, 2010). On another front, a major reason for theorising role of business in society can be located in the activity of the Stanford Research Institute's (SRI) in the 1960s that brought about an internal memo report. The report amongst others used the word ''stakeholder'' to represent those whose interests are central to organisational decision-making and operation (Freeman, 1984). Also, in the wake of works at Lockhead Company (renamed Lockheed Martin) department of planning in the 1960s that was championed by Igor Ansoff, who was working for Stanford Research Institute in collaboration with Lockhead and Robert Steward, the term stakeholder was further developed (Friedman & Miles, 2006).

2.14: Understanding stakeholders

Stakeholder theory started more than six decades ago when business thinkers started to re-think the role of business in society (Idemudia, 2014; Freeman, 1984). This rethinking is hinged on reconceptualising the part business can play in society. As an analytical tool, stakeholder theory has been generally accepted as a diagnostic framework in understanding the role of business in society in contrast to business and society (Idemudia, 2010). This attempt was also aimed at curbing what Bakan (2004) called the ‘‘pathological pursuit of profit and power’’ in corporate operation (Friedman & Miles, 2002). Freeman (1984) suggests that a stakeholder is ‘‘any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives’’ (p. 46). The various stakeholders identified by Freeman (1984) are represented in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: The stakeholder wheel

Source: The Researcher (2019), Modified from Freeman (1984)

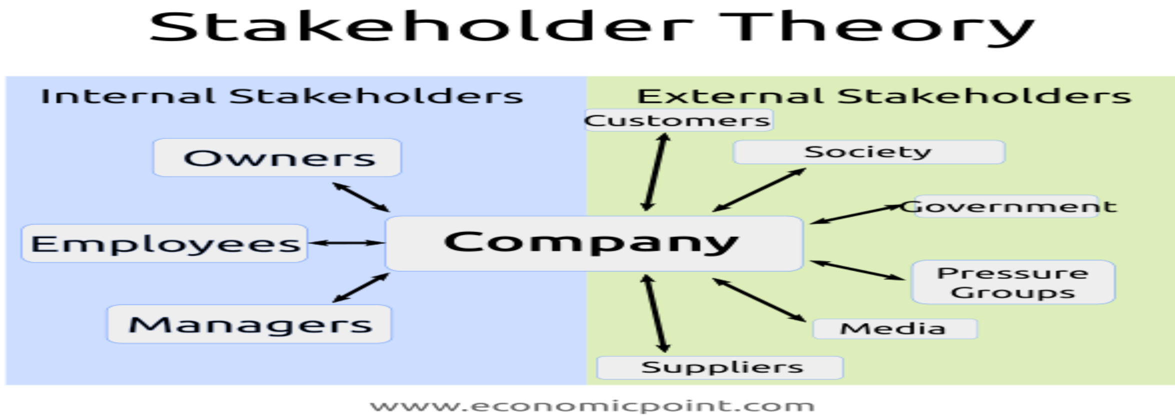
As can be seen in the Figure above, apart from shareholders, the firm has other constituencies that impact or can be impacted by its operation (Kaler, 2003).

From the developed countries' perspective, a good number of CSR studies have applied the stakeholder framework to explain CSR practice and motivation (Belal, 2008). Deegan's (2000) study attempts to find correlation between normative business model and stakeholders' right to information. This approach has relationship with Gray, Owen & Adam's (1996) accountability model, which is premised upon the relationship between normative stakeholder theory model and stakeholder's right to information. This contrasts with strategic/instrumental model (Belal, 2008). Momin's (2013) study also applies stakeholder theory. Momin (2013) concluded that NGOs' executives are rather incredulous of current social reporting pattern and practice in Bangladesh. This study uses in-depth interview of ''leading'' social and environmental NGOs in Bangladesh to test stakeholder theory. Applying similar interview-based method, Belal & Roberts (2010) researched non-managerial perception of CSR in Bangladesh. In the study, both authors conclude that there is overwhelming support for mandatory externally-propelled CSR (disclosure) in Bangladeshi given pressure from externalities.

2.15: Types of stakeholders

In his classification of stakeholders Freeman (1984) identified *internal* and *external* stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are also considered as being inside the confines of an organisation. They are those stakeholders such as managers, employees and investors that are directly involved in value creation of an organisation. These groups of stakeholders have visible responsibilities and roles in organisation. On the other hand, external stakeholders are people or groups outside the bounds of organisation, who however wield influence on the organisation. They include communities, the environment, government, customers, and NGOs, among others. Figure 2.6 details internal and external stakeholder groups.

Figure 2.6: Internal and external stakeholders



Source: Economicpoint.com

Literature on shareholder theory also includes classifications such as *primary* and *secondary* stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995). The former includes those stakeholder groups that are involved in direct economic activity with organisation; while secondary stakeholders are not. Secondary stakeholders include government and the communities in Sierra Leone among others. The combination of Freeman (1984) and Clarkson's (1995) stakeholder typologies will be adopted in this thesis. In Savage, Nix, Whitehead & Blair's (1991) view, there are two main types of stakeholders: *threatening* and *co-operative Stakeholders*. The former deals with stakeholders, who can frustrate or threaten organisational survival and existence; while co-operative stakeholders are those that facilitate the firm's bid to exist. Additionally, Phillips' (2003) model has three types of stakeholders including *derivative*, *normative* and *non-stakeholder*. According to Phillips (2003) normative stakeholders are those to whom a firm owes ethical and moral obligations. This helps in answering the Freeman's classical question: ''for whose benefits … should [the organisation] be managed? On the other hand, derivative stakeholders are those stakeholders whose actions are considered as posing (potential) risk to an organisation. Thirdly, non-stakeholders are those that do not pose any threat to organisational existence in the short-run and long-run (Phillips, 2003). Also, Fassin (2009) classified stakeholders into *direct* and *indirect stakeholders*. Direct stakeholders parallel Clarkson's (1995) internal stakeholders, which are those whose actions, influence and power affect an organisation directly; while indirect stakeholder are those that are not within the remit of organisation. However, both direct and indirect stakeholders pose threat to organisational survival, existence and profitability. Nevertheless, for organisations to survive, it is important to identify these stakeholders, which can warrant salience to be given to such stakeholder group or individuals (Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997).

2.16: Stakeholder identification and salience

Stakeholder identification (or mapping) helps firms to identify the optimal approach for each stakeholder group. Frooman (1999) uses ‘‘resource dependence theory’’ to explain that ‘‘stakeholders have one of four types of resource relationships with any given firm’’ (Hendry, 2005). These resource relationships include the following: *firm power, high interdependence*, *stakeholder power*, and *low interdependence*. Taking the first one, stakeholder power means a condition whereby an organisation relies more on the stakeholder for its continued survival or profitability. On the other hand, when a person or stakeholder depends more on the organisation, this is referred to as firm power. Nevertheless, in a situation where both a stakeholder group and organisation depend on each other, it is seen to be high dependence. In this scenario, the organisation and stakeholder depend on each other’s resources/capital mutually. Finally, in situation where neither a stakeholder nor organisation relies on each other for survival and relevance, it is seen as low interdependence (Frooman, 1999). This argument is central to identifying and mapping different stakeholder groups based on what they mean to the firm.

It is on this note that researches have been carried in different dimension to better understand how firms can manage relationships for normative practice (Freeman, 1984; Hendry, 2005). From the above, how organisations identify as well as give salience to different stakeholder group is critical for them to secure social legitimacy including tangible and intangible resource. Stakeholder salience can be defined as relative importance that an organisation attaches to a particular stakeholder group or persons based on how important such group is to such organisation (Mitchell et al., 1997). Also, in mapping stakeholder groups, this contention is very important (Frooman, 1999). Based on the work by Mitchell et al. (1997), the rationale of giving salience to stakeholders is based on the following factors:

- Power: This attribute deals with how much power that a group has, which can be used by such group or stakeholder to thwart corporate action or profitability. Sometimes, this is based on resource-dependency equation.
- Legitimacy: This stakeholder attribute is based on the contention that if an organisation feels that it has moral and ethical responsibility to a given stakeholder group, it directs attention to requests and demand of such group in order to have social licence to operate – legitimacy
- Urgency: This can be defined as the level or degree at which stakeholder claim calls for immediate attention and such requires priority. Nevertheless, the onus is on stakeholders to make managers of corporations to realise how important they are to their survival and/or existence.

This understanding helps to shape how wider stakeholders conceive of firms as corporate citizens who are operating legitimately (Du, Bhattacharrya & Sen, 2010). Building on this framework, it is further explicated that properly identifying and mapping stakeholders has the potential to enhance organisational wealth and [that] economic benefits can be created by positive relationships between firms and their stakeholders. Thus, ‘‘…stakeholder management enables managers to ensure that the strategic and operational direction of an organisation address stakeholder perceptions’’ (Fletcher, Guthrie, Steane, Roos & Pike, 2003, p. 508). This is at the heart of the nature of relationship between stakeholders and MNCs in Sierra Leone for sustainable development.

2.17: Perspectives on stakeholder theory

In their important study, Donaldson & Preston (1995) attempted to categorise the different streams of stakeholder research by classifying them into three perspectives including descriptive, strategic and normative. While some writers, remarkably Freeman (1999) and Kaler (2003), have criticised the separation of these three perspectives into distinct parts, it has been argued that Donaldson & Preston’s (1995) taxonomy is highly influential in framing consequent research on stakeholder theory (Kaler, 2003). This taxonomy is also the perspective on which this thesis is based.

2.17.1: Descriptive

Donaldson & Preston (1995) contend that the highpoint of research on stakeholder theory is to "to describe, and sometimes explain, specific corporate characteristics and behaviours" (1995, p. 70). Such line of thinking is accurately referred to as descriptive; hence, it deals with issues about how the world is. Additionally, such theorising "interpret the function of, and offer guidance about, the ... corporation on the basis of some underlying moral or philosophical principles" (1995, p. 72). Accordingly, this line of research is perhaps best referred to as normative, since it is focused on the issues concerning how the world including organisational practice ought to be (Kaler, 2003; Phillips, 2003). Descriptive stakeholder pertains to how organisations should operate; it prescribes what should be done for ethical corporate-stakeholder relations and legitimacy. Donaldson & Preston (1995) further argue that stakeholder management is a function of tangible and intangible assets as well as internal and external resources that can propel legitimacy and positive relationship between a firm and its diverse stakeholders. They conceive of stakeholders as ''a constellation of co-operative and competitive interest'' (p. 66) that has intrinsic value including who firms see as possible stakeholders based on building on the theory of organisational capital as both intangible and tangle assets.

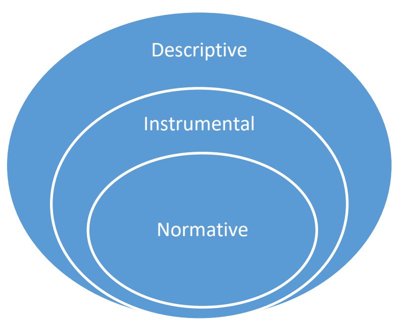
2.17.2: Strategic

This typology maintains that certain stakeholders – internal/primary stakeholders – have more right than others. Strategic/instrumental approach to stakeholder theory was developed by Jones (1995). It stresses that everything being equal organisations that practise stakeholder management will perform better in stability, profitability and growth. It gives priority to internal, powerful stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995). Unlike normative stakeholder theory that outlines who should be considered as a stakeholder including ethics of right or wrong, strategic stakeholder theory proposes that companies are interested in stakeholders based on their perceived benefit to such organisation (Belal, 2008). Strategic stakeholder theory considers relative importance and power of stakeholders, which is a core determinant of how organisations treat such stakeholders (Fassin, 2009). By implication, strategic perspective to stakeholder theory entails excluding certain stakeholder groups and interest in CSR decision-making and practice, which might disadvantage certain groups.

2.17.3: Normative

Normative stakeholder is based on morality, social norms and values (Freeman, 1984). This approach to stakeholder theory parallels Freeman's (1984) ''doctrine of fair contracts''. At the core of the normative typology is the principle of ''right'' and ''wrong''. Thus, morality, which is central to this conceptualisation, takes into consideration the fact that normative or moral principles should be upheld in identifying as well as dealing with various stakeholder groups including internal and external stakeholders. According to Wijnberg (2000) this approach involves balancing interests of stakeholders in CSR via legitimacy rather than considering stakeholders' position, influence, power and urgency (Mitchell et al., 1997). This proposition, in principle, accounts for why equal salience should be given to stakeholders rather than particular groups or persons (Clarkson, 1995). Figure 2.7 is a pictorial representation of the stakeholder paradigm by Donaldson & Preston (1995).

Figure 2.7: Stakeholder paradigm



Source: The Researcher (2019), Redrawn from Donaldson & Preston (1995)

From the Donaldson & Preston's (1995) stakeholder paradigm above, it can be gleaned that these authors presented all three parts of as nested in each other, with the normative as the innermost aspect. The normative facet is considered as the core of the others this is because of its role in shaping what is constitutes the theory, as it informs other aspects (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Although this might be quite vague and intellectual in nature, it however goes a long way in shaping the outlook of the other aspects of the theory – descriptive and instruments – at every stage in time.

The rationale of determining the state of other aspects is premise on the conceptual debate involved in this aspect that leads to the development of the other two parts, which is essentially about what ought to be. This is immediately followed by the instrumental facet that is deemed more very predictive and pragmatic as it attempts to link reality with results following specific corporate practices and actions. The external – the last aspect or shell – is the descriptive facet, which is the very basic level of stakeholder theory particularly as it is based on relating what can be observed in reality. Thus, it does more of the informative part of the theory; hence, it performs what could be referred to as the reporting part of the model by reporting what is really happening in the area. Donaldson & Preston (1995) argue that these three aspects in concert make up the theory. Therefore, whatever debate that takes place within the confines of the area must fall in at least one of the aspects so as to be considered fit; however, it primarily derives most of its make-up from the normative facet of the theory. In agreement, both Agle et al. (1999) and Jones (1995, p.406) noted that the theory is useful for explaining and predicting actions and reactions of stakeholders to each other including the outcomes of such. It is also used to methodically present the identifying the stakeholder deserving organisational attention and which does not, for normative practice.

2.18: Freeman's stakeholder theory and the normative perspective

Freeman (1984) theorised the normative precondition for stakeholder theory, which is based on the assumption that creating value and wealth for businesses should be premised on a contractual engagement involving stakeholders. This normative precondition, another term for ‘‘normative core’’ in stakeholder theory, is hinged on the contention that for organisation's practice to be legitimate as well as have social licence, its action has to be based on a contract that considers everyone who has a stake in what it does as parties. In Freeman's (1984) observation, organisations implicitly enter into agreement or contract with external stakeholders, whose aspirations and interests should be given consideration for organisational social performance and legitimacy. This theorising incorporates the ethical and moral philosophical blueprints companies should adopt with respect to their management and operations (Kaler, 2003) through social contract. Consequently, social contract spells out organisation's methods of engaging stakeholders as well as procedures to sustain the environment and deal with poverty related issues (Visser, 2013). In the context of Sierra Leone, this implies implicit social contract between

MNCs and external stakeholders (the communities in particular), which has to guide organisational conduct for legitimacy.

Ever since Freeman (1984) resuscitated the concept, it has ‘‘… become an important discourse in the translation of business ethics to management practice’’ (Fassin, 2009, p. 113). Additionally, stakeholder practice and management has become a catchphrase that helps to determine and gauge organisational orientation and practice in relation to ethics, morality and normative behaviour. Similarly, according to Mitchell et al. (1997), stakeholder management is considered broadly as a potent framework, which is intended to widen a firm's strategy and vision of its role and responsibilities beyond the confines of maximising profit and strategic gains. This process will aid firms to put into consideration claims and interests of ‘‘non-stockholding’’ (p. 855) entities or groups for more sustainable relationship. Accordingly, Filho & Brandli (2016) have noted the importance of engaging as well as representing the interest of wider stakeholders in business operation, strategy and decision-making for sustainable development (Hemmati, 2002). Complex and problematic operating environments like the Sierra Leonean setting and a range of sustainability issues require MNCs to consider the relationship with their various stakeholders at the strategic level (Crowther & Aras, 2008), since they have the capacity to influence the success or failure of their actions (Filho & Brandli, 2016) as well as the legitimacy of their operations (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002; Deephouse, 1996 Kostova & Zaheer, 1999; Suchman, 1995). Indeed, the overall purpose of stakeholder management and engagement is to shape the strategic direction and operations of organisations, and to make contribution to the kind of sustainable development practice from which the firms, wider stakeholders and society can benefit from (Purvis, Mao & Robinson, 2018).

2.19: From sustainability to sustainable development

To fully understand the emergence of sustainability into mainstream literature, it is important to investigate the wider roots from which the concept emerged (Purvis et al., 2018). This argument is confounded by the fact that much of the scholarship and research that feed into the notion of sustainability predate the language of sustainability (Purvis et al., 2018). Writers have shed light on the rise of sustainability debate (Purvis et al., 2018; Grober, 2012). One of the early developments was insights from forestry experts of the 17th and 18th century who introduced the term ‘‘sustainable yield’’ as a response to diminishing forestry resource across Europe (Purvis et al., 2018). The efforts of political economists in the wake of industrial revolution questioning the limits of demographic and economic growth as well as the inherent trade-offs between social, equity and wealth creation, were also significant in the rise of sustainability concept (Lumley & Armstrong, 2004).

Additionally, the activities of natural scientists of the 19th and 20th century culminating in a clarion call to understand the difference between anthropocentric conservationism and bio-centric preservationist discourse. They prescribed conserving the natural resources for sustainable consumption. The modern language of sustainability was popularised in 1972 (The Ecologist, 1972) with the creation of a ‘‘sustainable society’’ injunction. For brevity and given the remit of this study, the 1972 UN Conference in Stockholm marked the first global summit to address the impacts of human activities on the environment as well as first major effort to reconcile (economic) development with environmental concerns and integrity that were generally considered as incompatible (Purvis et al., 2018). Following from this summit was the notion of ‘‘environmentally sound development’’, which was later termed ‘‘economic development’’ (Mebratu, 1988).

2.20: Sustainable development: genesis and meaning

Sustainability having been arguably subdued in the 1980s the twin social and ecological appraisal of economic development started to interlace with economic development in relation to what has been termed ‘‘sustainable development’’ (World Commission on Environment and Development [WECD], 1987; Barbier, 1987). Furthermore, sustainable development discourse came to the fore on the premise of rethinking economic growth and social and environmental profit accruable when business deal with social issues including when companies (MNCs) give back to society by way of CSR resonating with social justice and community development. For more than 30 decades, the starting point for debate about sustainable development was the publication of *Our Common Future*, which is also referred to as Brundtland Report by WCED (WCED, 1987; Crowther & Aras, 2008). Also, at the 2005 World Summit in New York following the United Nations’ 2000 Millennium Summit, a forerunner to the MDGs, the issue of sustainable development was given a central place in order to address one of mankind’s greatest challenges in the new century.

The concept sustainable development is currently appearing in a great number of discourses and debates (Purvis et al., 2018). Nevertheless, like CSR, sustainable development integrates different issues, concepts and terms including sustainability, development and capacity building as well as related phenomena, which are generally used interchangeably (Ihlen & Roper, 2011). The notion is drawn from a range of aspirations and issues relating to development, peace, freedom, capacity and the environment (Purvis et al., 2018). Contemporarily, sustainable development as a concept, movement, goal or thought is fundamental to the objective of numerous corporate enterprises, businesses, national institutions and sustainable cities (Emeseh, 2009). The Brundtland Commission therefore suggested the current classical definition of the concept: ‘‘development that meets the needs the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987, p. 16).

For our purpose in this thesis, sustainable development means a participatory process that generates and pursues a vision of the community, which respects as well as makes prudent use of its resources – human, natural, human-created, cultural, social and other means – for future co-existence and conflict-free relationship (Filho & Brandli, 2016; Hemmati, 2002). As noted by Desjardins (2000) sustainable development (sustainability) has grown out of the recognition that economic development on a global level cannot be separated from issues regarding social justice and ecological stability. Thus, ‘‘The new worldview emerging as an alternative to the reigning paradigm of economic growth and free markets holds that long-term sustainability is the criterion of successful economic and social development’’ (Desjardins, 2000, p. 10-11). This process recognises that doing business should not jeopardise the wellbeing of the environment and the people both now and in the future (Bebbington, 1999). This process parallels Visser’s (2013) contention that sustainable development attempts to ensure, to the degree possible, that present generations reach a high dimension of economic prosperity and safety, while maintaining the integrity of the ecological systems on which all life and all production is based (Visser, 2013).

Nevertheless, some writers (Chichilinisky, 2004, Parris & Kates, 2003) have noted that sustainable development is ambiguous as it could mean different thing to different people. For instance, Greenpeace has described the concept as mere ‘‘deceptive jargon’’ of anti-environmentalism (Hayward, Fowler & Steadman, 2000, p. 45). Despite the criticism, central to its conceptualisation are development, social participation and protection of the environment (Purvis et al., 2018). Nonetheless, the notion of sustainable development is being adopted to deal with a range of developmental challenges (Crowther & Aras, 2008; Hayward et al., 2000). Due to further ambiguity surrounding the meaning of the concept sustainable development, other definitions are based on ‘‘what it specifically seeks to achieve’’ and ‘‘how it is measured’’, for example, indicators including Environmental Sustainability Index, the Global Reporting Initiative and Wellbeing Index amongst others (Parris & Kates, 2003).

2.21: Sustainable development and businesses

Despite the ambiguity of the concept – sustainable development – it is widely adopted in business strategy and operation for a more harmonious and sustainable relationship between businesses and society as well as other stakeholders (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 1992) sustainable development is:

> the form of progress of business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders at present while protecting, sustaining and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future (WBCSD, 1992, p. 1).

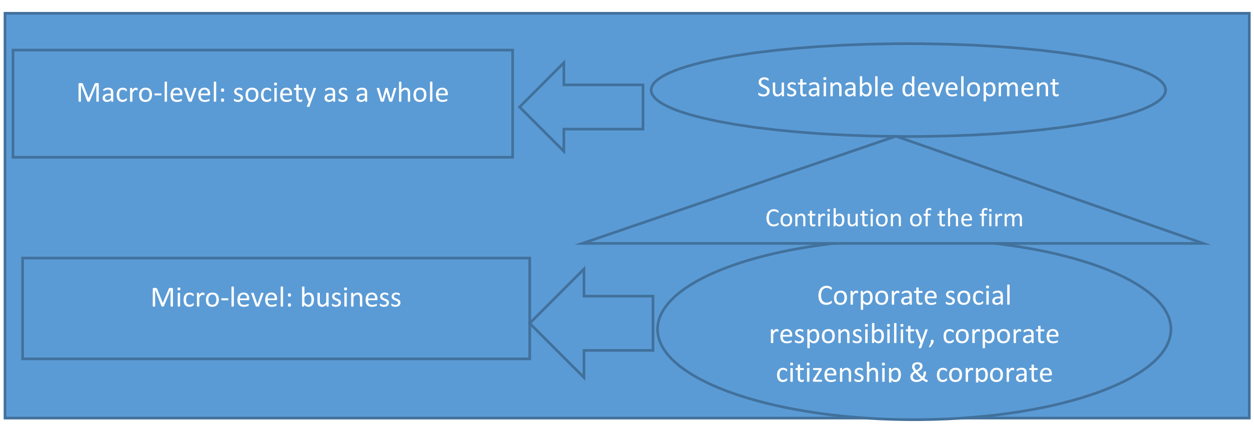
The above principle has been taken into consideration in the ‘‘Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties on European Union, as well as in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21’’, which is ‘‘adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment (UNCED), meeting in Rio de Janeiro’’ in 1992 (Crowther & Aras, 2008, p. 41). The above definition rekindles interest in the original conceptualisation of the notion in the Brundtland Report as well as identifies that economic development must meet the needs of businesses and their numerous stakeholders.

There are seven main issues identified in the Brundtland Report for sustainable development:

- Changing the quality of growth;
- Ensuring a sustainable level of population;
- Reorientation technology and managing risk;
- Reviving growth;
- Managing environment and economic in decision-making;
- Meeting essential needs for job, energy, food, water and sanitation;
- Conserving and enhancing the resource base

The Brundtland Report makes legal and institutional recommendations for change so as to deal with common global issues (Crowther & Aras, 2008). The above definition also brings to attention that businesses depend on natural and human resources that should be preserved for future generation (WBCSD, 1992). From this viewpoint, organisations including businesses (micro-level) are called upon to address social, developmental, environmental and economic issues at the macro level (societal level) including social equity (human rights, community and poverty); environmental accountability (biodiversity, climate change, global warming and land use); and economic efficiency (prosperity, innovation, productivity). According to Pan, Chen & Ning (2018) and Loew, Ankele, Braun & Clausen (2004) micro and macro-level issues are different but interlinked (see Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8: The connection between CSR, corporate citizenship and corporate sustainability



Source: Adapted from Loew (2004)

This perspective further encourages businesses and their managers to consider sustainable development in regards to business operation, strategy and engagement for sustainable development (Filho & Brandli, 2016).

2.22: The business approach to sustainable development

According to Blowfield & Murray (2011) the business approach to sustainable development implies fair distribution across the world's population in relation to quality of life (WBCSD, 1992). As they further noted, this has to be realised by businesses without hindering ability of future generations to meet their own needs in the context of eco-efficiency, eco-justice and social justice and investing. Achieving this goal is central to tackling poverty, climate change issues and social inequality that are rife in developing countries as opposed to developed countries – particularly sub-Saharan Africa, which is the context of this study – Sierra Leone. WBCSD (1992) has continually stressed that issues such as climate change, global warming, poverty, inequality, good global governance and education are responsibilities of the whole world including businesses.

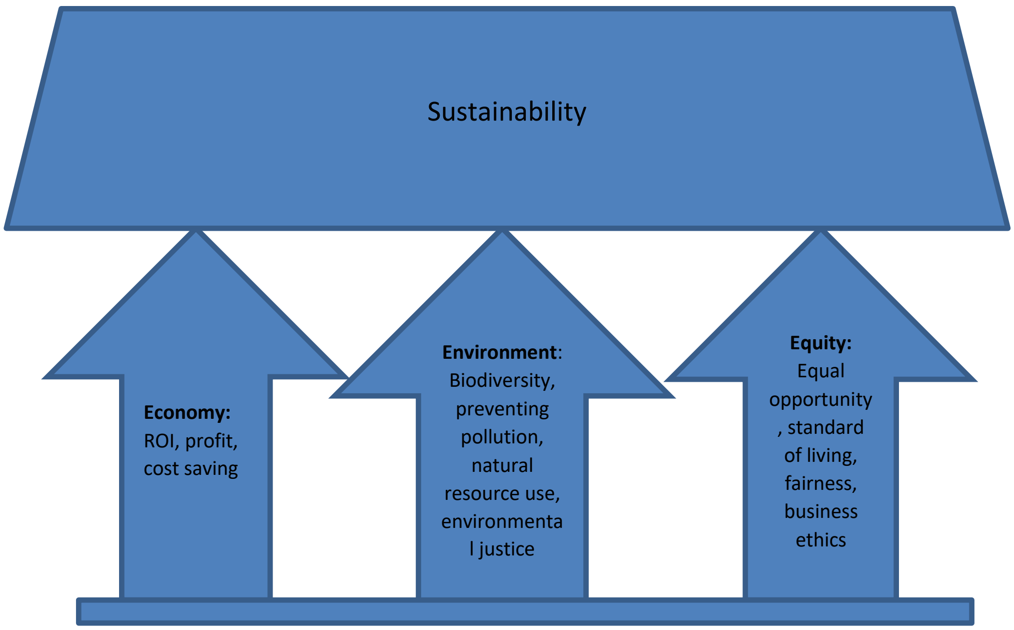
As noted by Elkington (1997), these challenges present businesses with a dilemma about how to adapt inclusive and sustainable business practices to organise profit-making activities to deal with the challenges highlighted above, whilst maximising profit (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Elkington (1997) further observed that such sustainable, inclusive business model will advance the win-win approach (Williams & Preston, 2018) for both companies and society. Furthermore, modelling business practices along the lines of sustainable, inclusive stakeholder relationship brings to light the general consensus that sustainable development sustainability issue challenges all and sundry to understand the social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainability in an integrated way (Sharma & Ruud, 2003). Indeed, the Brundtland Report highlighted three key elements or dimensions of sustainable development, which are:

- Social equity,
- Environmental protection; and
- Economic growth

These three ‘‘pillars’’ of sustainable development (sustainability) have been commonly recognised and adopted as the most significant characteristics of sustainable development (see

Purvis et al., 2018; Crowther et al., 2019; Crowther & Aras, 2008; Elkington, 1997). The three interconnected ''pillars'' (Basiago 1995) conception of sustainable development are ''the dominant interpretation within the literature'' (Purvis et al., 2018, p. 1). They parallel Elkington's (1997) three pillars of sustainability: planet (environment), people (equity) and profit (economy) for sustainable development. In Figure 2.9, the three pillars are explained: profit (economy), people (equity) and planet (environment) is given.

Figure 2.9: Sustainability triad



Source: The Researcher (2019)

The economic aspect is based on growth, efficiency, and stability as the optimal benefits possible from a range of assets without harming future generations. The environmental aspect is connected with the notion that natural dynamics processes can be made unstable because of stress imposed by human actions and activities; while the social aspect is aimed at meeting human needs (Filho & Brandli, 2018). Taken together, CSR is considered in this thesis as a guiding business model, which addresses both short- and long-term social, environmental and economic performance of a business. On the other hand, sustainable development emphases three pillars in the context of long-term wellbeing (Crowther et al., 2019). Therefore, CSR calls on business all over the world to address issues identified in their environment and communities beyond their main objectives (Belal, 2008).

2.23: CSR, sustainable development and MNCs

Firms impact on the natural environment, society and their own workforces and consequently affect the sustainability of the environment and society. These impacts are made through organisational policy, choices of raw materials and suppliers, land use, manufacturing processes including creation of wastes and pollution, management systems, employment and work practices, community activities and lobbying. Also, firms also lobby governments to make laws as well as other regulatory frameworks that can favour their operations. For example, they may have tax deductions for investments, limited liability, infrastructure provided by government, subsidised energy and patent protection. Obviously, firms are influential players in the sustainability debate. So, creating a sustainable society must take into consideration changing the nature of corporate practice (Maconachie, 2009). In relation to sustainable development, MNCs are challenged to improve the efficiency and quality of their own internal operations, to impact positively on the kind of relationship they have with external stakeholders. For example, a car manufacturer might practise this form of sustainable development by applying cleaner production techniques, reducing noise and local air pollution within the factory and beyond its boundaries, consulting with local community about noise, placing strict environmental and social equity requirements on suppliers, and providing public facilities by the corporation.

Thus, the focal point of the Brundtland Report is that corporate actions in the present and their impacts in future has led to what Crowther & Aras (2008, p. 43) consider as ‘‘glib assumption’’ that sustainable development discourse is both desirable and possible and that organisations can demonstrate sustainability by essentially continuing to exist into the future. Thus sustainable development logic rests on the supposition that companies should pay keen attention to the entire life cycles of their products and services as they impact the environment and the people as well as how they relate with external stakeholders. This refers to environmentally valuable activities that are undertaken by organisations, which go beyond legal requirements (Banerjee, 2008) for sustainable development. Sustainable development has been conceived in different ways (Gladwin, Kennelly & Krause, 1995). It has been considered from the prism of vision expression

(Rolston, 1994), moral development (Gray, Owen & Aadms, 1996), value change (Bebbington, Unerman & O'Dwyer, 2014), and social and environmental reconfiguration (Bebbington & Larrinaga, 2014) or social transformation process (Visser, 2013) and ''towards a desired future or better world'' (Gladwin et al., 1995, p. 876). Thus, given that Sierra Leone and other developing countries are at the bottom of the pyramid (Prahalad, 2004), writers (Maconachie, 2009, Daztberger, 2014, 2015) have emphasised how CSR can be used for developmental gains. This is part of the rhetoric of ''filling governance gap'', when government retreats (Palazzo & Scherer, 2011).

2.24: Achieving sustainable development – From MDGS to SDGs

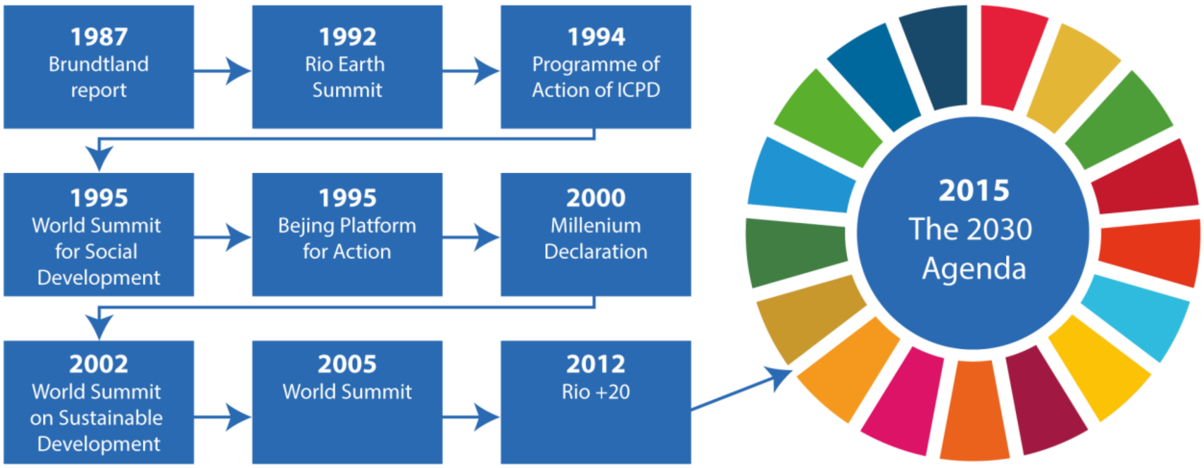
At its 27th Special Session in 2002, the General Assembly of the United Nations, urged governments to commit to specific, time-bound goals, actions and strategies to promote healthy living, equality, environmental sustainability, global partnership and empowerment as well as reduce child mortality and poverty among others. These commitments underscore the MDGs (Lomazzi, Borisch & Laaser, 2014). The MDGs are eight international development goals with 21 targets aimed to be achieved in 2015 (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: The 8 MDGs and explanations

Developmental goal issues	**Interpretations**
MDG1	Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
MDG2	Achieving universal primary education
MDG3	Promoting gender equality and empowering women
MDG4	Reducing child mortality rates
MDG5	Improving maternal health
MDG6	Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
MDG7	Ensuring environmental sustainability
MDG8	Developing a global partnership for development

Nevertheless, as highlighted by Eurostat (2019) there are nine important developments that have shaped the 2030 Agenda that culminated into SDGs (see Figure 2.10).

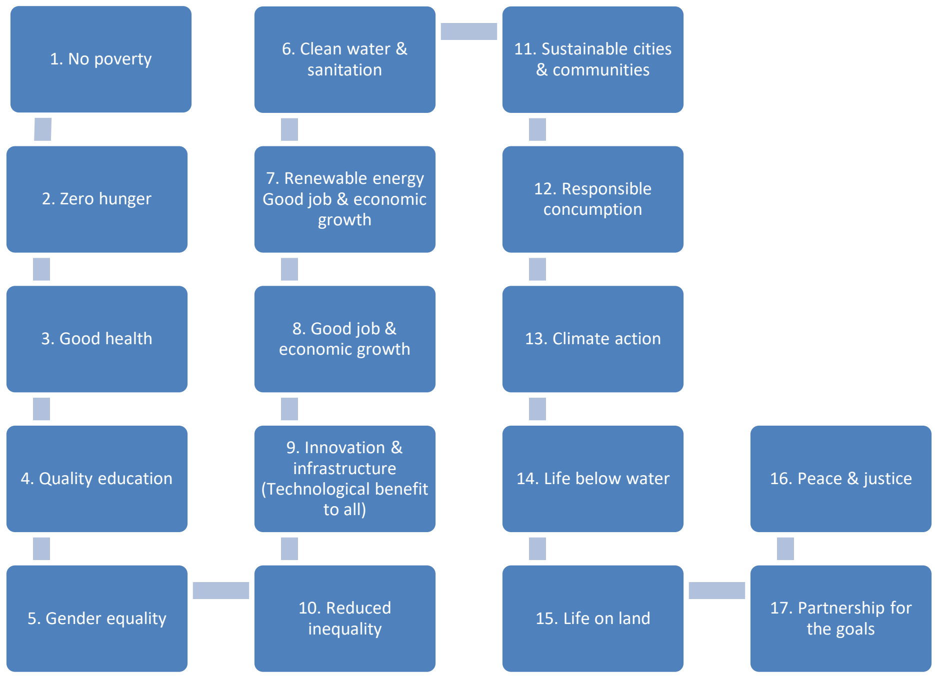
Figure 2.10: The Road to Agenda 2030



Source: Eurostat (2019)

The MDGs have been replaced by the SDGs following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development by UN General Assembly in 2015 (Jackson, 2018). SDGs are a set of 17 goals that have 169 associated targets, which spell out both qualitative and quantitative key objectives across economic, environmental and social facets of sustainable development (Kolk et al., 2017) aimed to be realised in 2030. SDGs are the most widely supported and comprehensive development goals the world has ever had (Lomazzi et al., 2018). The SDGs resonate with a plan of action for the planet, people and human prosperity. It also considers strengthening global peace and freedom including diverse stakeholders acting in joint partnership to achieve these set targets (UN, 2015). Figure 2.11 highlights the 17 SDGs and their explanations.

Figure 2.11: The 17 SDGs and explanations



Source: The Researcher (2019)

Although SDGs discourse has attracted substantial academic and policy debate including the relationship between business and society, sustainability, stakeholder engagement and business management, however, how they affect MNCs' operations is largely unclear and under-researched (Kolk et al., 2017). Crowther & Aras (2008) also argue that MNCs are still far from ensuring that these goals are realised given their interest in profit maximisation at the expense of sustaining their relationship with stakeholders and impact of these on the environment and people in developing countries (Idemudia, 2010).

2.25: MNCs and CSR in developing countries

As noted by Bakan (2004) MNCs are institutions with great power that is wielded over (developing) nations and society. It has been contended that given their ease of mobility, capital base and power as well as apparent lack of loyalty to a given jurisdiction, MNCs are traditionally mistrusted by countries, where they are found (Zerk, 2006). In Europe, the controversy surrounding the MNCs is a post-war event, when expansion was expedient to resuscitate failing (or failed) corporations because of World War II. Also, the expansion and power of MNCs was propelled by public (local authority) resentment regarding overreliance on foreign direct investment (FDI) from the USA. This situation also includes the ‘‘Americanisation’’ of management, culture and lifestyle. On the other hand, in the USA, MNCs appear to have been considered relatively benign by the public and government until the 1960s, when their reputation took a decline resulting in public criticism of their actions in society (Frederick, 1994; Carroll, 1999). By the 1970s the MNCs have become synonymous with global influence, power, wealth and dominance. Extant literature on this phenomenon indicates the degree to which corporations are associated with interest of their state of origin – home countries. They thus depend on less developed (or developing) countries to oil the wheel of their economic interests and activities. As Barnet & Muller (1974) stated, MNCs are conceived simplistically as economic and political agents of their home countries, with no specific allegiance to the nations where they do business or where they invest.

Therefore, relationship between the MNCs and ‘‘host countries’’ has not been cordial to say the least as their host nations see them as jeopardising their economic prosperity and self-reliance, hence, reason for CSR controversy (Frynas, 2009; Maconachie, 2009). In addition, foreign-owned MNCs are deemed to be a threat to the sovereignty and political leadership of their host countries given the fact that they might exercise undue power and influence on these countries as well as aid deepening of inequality and underdevelopment. These reasons and more prompted the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to launch a research project aimed at addressing the activities of the MNCs and their effects on the process of development. Issues such as trade liberalisation, globalisation and the rise of fierce capitalism at the turn of the millennium accentuated and sustained the rise of the MNCs. However, their rise has come with severe criticism from stakeholders and their host countries (Visser, 2013).

According to Zerk (2006) the term multinational is a flexible and fluid concept that has evolved over time. Initially, the very notion of the concept meant any company or firm that is owned directly or via its subsidiaries capital or assets located in the territory of more than one country or state (Fieldhouse, 1986). These firms are also run on integrated basis, which enables smooth operation and transfer of capital from host countries to home states. However, the most distinguishing factor that makes MNCs different from other forms of investment or ‘‘portfolio’’ investment, is the presence of foreign direct investment (FDI). FDI is not the only thing that MNCs bring to the table in relation to operating in periphery nations: it also controls resources and power as well as transfers technology and management style, which preclude development in host countries. It is important to understand who or what is multinational or what it represents. As considered by UNCTAD (2000, p. 267) MNCs can be defined as incorporated or unincorporated firms consisting of parent companies and their foreign associates. A parent company can be interpreted as a firm that controls capital/assets of other entities in countries that are not its home country. This is operationalised by having equity capital stake. In the context of this study, a multinational can be defined as a parent enterprise located in a home state and connected with its foreign associates (affiliates) via affiliation of control – cross-border control nexus.

Nevertheless, MNCs are rather seen by wider stakeholders as not living up to their promises with regard to CSR for sustainable business enterprise (Dicken, 1998). The dominant motif in the extant literature is that although the presence of the MNCs has good sides to economic state of periphery nations such as Sierra Leone, yet, there is increasing pressure from wider stakeholders for more ethical business venturing. Thus, although the dynamics of globalisation and business internationalisation has propelled ‘‘vast opportunities for the multinationals from the global south – foreign direct investment outflow from developing countries having increased from mere 5.2 per cent in 1990 to 14.2 per cent in 2006 – it remains to be seen whether MNCs with their poor record of CSR would modify their behaviour’’ (Raman & Lipschutz, 2010, pp. 5-6). Additionally, the presence of MNCs in developing countries has spawned criticisms and corporate-stakeholder deadlock as their organisational philosophy is in contrast with stakeholders’ interests (Benito & Narula, 2007).

2.26: Gaps in the literature

There is some evidence that firms that build sound, responsive relationships with their stakeholders including the communities in Sierra Leone tend to have sustainable, profitable relationship with both internal and external stakeholders (Carroll, 1991) than others (Wheeler & Sillanpää, 1997). From a developmental perspective, sustainable development is linked to resource mobilisation and equitable distribution of wealth, participation and equity (Michaels, 2003). In the view of Streuer, Langer, Konrad & Martinuzzi (2005) this translates into conceiving sustainable development as ‘‘capital substitution and economic growth’’ (p. 269) that can promote ‘‘win-win business strategies’’ (Elkington, 1994, p. 90; Williams & Preston, 2018). Michaels (2003) position shares a lot in common with Elkington’s (1997) position in which he conceptualised the ‘‘triple bottom line’’ schema, which resonates with ethical consideration of people (equity), planet (environment) and profit (economy) for sustainable development. This emerging organisational philosophy that balances between the Elkingtonian triad is at the heart of CSR. Thus, ‘‘CSR represents a small part of a broader change in the relationships between government, business and civil society – and is symptomatic of the search for new organisational forms related to these changing relations’’ (Michaels, 2003, p. 122).

Consequently, Visser (2013) has argued that MNCs can be instrumental in driving economic prosperity and reducing poverty and raising employment living standard by paying higher wages than local business do. Furthermore, they can contribute to national development by transferring technology and advanced skills to improve social infrastructures and accelerate the pace of sustainable development. Although the presence of MNCs can advance sustainable development, their activities are questionable given institutional and regulatory issues in Sierra Leone, which undermine the pursuit of sustainable development (Aguinis & Glavas, 2010). Research has shown that the impact of institutional environment on practices of CSR makes MNCs’ CSR commitment less credible as stakeholders criticise such practices on the ground of illegitimacy and strategy (Aguinis & Glavas, 2010; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Additionally, this thesis contends that CSR approaches and initiatives are embedded in and framed by wider social realities and institutions, for example, corruption and weak regulations (Amaeshi et al., 2006), which undermine normative CSR practice. Akiwumi’s study (2014) highlights that although MNCs in Sierra Leone make effort to abide by mining laws and regulations; however, their activities exploit natural resources and largely violate the subsidiarity principle of sustainable development as communities are excluded from participating in development projects, which have direct impact on their wellbeing. As organisations with multiple stakeholders, the perspectives of stakeholders including local communities are crucial to MNCs' survival and legitimacy (Freeman, 1984; Margolis & Walsh, 2001). In sum, well executed CSR can be a critically important in sustaining MNCs' relationship with wider stakeholders as well as advancing the ideals of sustainable development.

2.27: Chapter summary

This chapter has considered major literature on the phenomena of CSR, stakeholder theory, sustainable development and MNCs. Specifically, it has highlighted the origin and historical development of CSR, considered CSR as an ''essentially contested concept'' and offered definitional perspectives on the concept. It has also presented theoretical approaches to CSR, types and classification as well as development and stages. Understanding why companies engage in CSR is also one of the main issues presented here as well as brief history of CSR research, CSR research in both developed and developing countries and stakeholder theory. Understanding who matters to the firms is also considered in this chapter including perspectives on stakeholder theory with specific focus on Freeman's stakeholder theory and normative perspective. The chapter also considers stakeholder identification and salience. The relationship between CSR, sustainability and sustainable development were highlighted in this chapter including MDGS and SDGs. The relationship between MNCs and CSR in developing countries is part of the preoccupation of the chapter as well as delineating gaps in the literature. The present chapter also shapes the study's conceptual framework from the literature reviewed, which is explained in chapter three.

Chapter Three
Conceptual Framework

3.1: Introduction

Following from the reviewed literature in chapter two, the present chapter explains important theories and concepts in building a conceptual framework that will guide CSR practice in Sierra Leone and to contribute to sustainable development debate. Various theories have been developed over the years to explain the motivation and rationale for CSR (Crowther & Aras, 2008; Frynas, 2009; Moon, 2007; Freeman, 1984). These theories are generally classified as descriptive (Godos-Díez, Cabeza-García & Fernández-González, 2018; Donaldson & Preston, 1995), instrumental (Windsor, 2001; Friedman, 1970), normative (Belal, 2008; Garriga & Mele, 2004) strategic (Crane et al., 2008) and legitimate (Campbell, 2000). Whilst instrumental and strategic models of CSR are connected with profitability, descriptive and normative models emphasise sustainability strategies including sustainable development (Crowther & Aras, 2008; Visser, 2006). These models of theorising are necessary since motivation for CSR can be instrumental and strategic (Windsor, 2001) rather than normative and descriptive (Garriga & Mele, 2004; Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Additionally, organisations including MNCs need to behave and operate in a legitimate way, and according to legitimacy theory building, legitimacy is a process in understanding stakeholder relationship management for normative practice and stakeholder legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). As known in extant literature, there is an increase in CSR activities as well as MNCs' attempt to be good corporate citizens, but there remains huge legitimacy gap regarding how their CSR practice impacts sustainable development and stakeholders' interests (Visser, 2013; Emeseh, 2009).

Accordingly, the theories to be used in this thesis include Triple Bottom Line Theory (TBLT), Legitimacy Theory (LT) and Stakeholder Theory (ST), to analyse the environmental and social engagement and practices of MNCs in Sierra Leone. These theoretical models are selected because they are often used in CSR and sustainable development research (Godos-Díez et al., 2018; Mitchell et al., 2007); they are popular amongst theorists and writers on CSR and sustainable development (Eweje, 2006); and they have been applied to shed light on CSR practices in developing countries like Sierra Leone (Belal, 2008). It is also noteworthy to state that most of the prior researches on the interface between CSR and sustainable development have applied single theory, which negates the call for theoretical plurality (Belal, 2008; Thurmond, 2001). The application of multiple models rather than just single theory offers a clearer understanding and explanation of a phenomenon including CSR and sustainable development; hence the application of multiple theories in the present study. Consequently, the conceptual framework presented at the end of this chapter indicates a model based on the above three theoretical perspectives as well as knowledge and insights from prior studies. This conceptual framework will be used to guide the analysis in this research.

3.2: Theoretical perspectives

This section considers the three theoretical perspectives adopted in this study to explain the relationship between MNCs' CSR and sustainable development. This starts with stakeholder theory.

3.2.1: Stakeholder theory

The stakeholder notion has been debated in the management and business literature for a long time (Clarkson, 1995). Irrespective of many definitions given to it in attempt to identify who is a stakeholder (Fassin, 2009; Mitchell et al., 1997; Freeman, 1984), the concept has remained unclear (Clarkson, 1995). In this thesis, stakeholder theory is conceived as a firm's relationship with its relevant stakeholders and constituents (Frooman, 1999). Freeman & McVea (2001) defined a stakeholder as ''any individual or group who can affect or is affected by achievement of an organisation's objectives'' (p. 2). Researchers have identified stakeholders as internal and external (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000), primary and secondary (Belal, 2008; Clarkson, 1995), voluntary and involuntary (Clarkson, 1995), direct and indirect stakeholders (Fassin, 2009) and moral and strategic (Goodpaster, 1991). These classifications demonstrate that there are diverse stakeholders groups with different and conflicting interests (Freeman, 1984).

In line with this theory, a firm has to ensure that it satisfies not only the interest of internal stakeholders including shareholders but also disparate expectation of stakeholder groups including external stakeholder like the community. As opposed to shareholder conceptualisation, stakeholder theory proposes a firm's accountability beyond just financial or economic performance (Belal, 2008). Thus, stakeholder theory proposes that financial success and sustainability can be best realised by a firm taking into account interests of all stakeholders (including the community, government, employees, suppliers and others), and consequently firms need to frame policies and initiatives that can provide the optimal balance between them (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000). As noted by Carroll (1991) organisations that hope to achieve success have to pay close attention to diverse groups and classes of stakeholders and determine the forms of power and influence each group possesses. As argued by Frooman (1999) successful managers and organisations are those who identify their stakeholders and evaluate their sources of legitimacy, power and agency. Therefore, failure to identify powerful stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995) might jeopardise organisational success. Mitchell et al. (1997) have noted the issue of trust and organisations and their diverse stakeholder groups, which can be accessed by managers. Likewise, organisations and stakeholders expect mutual benefits, which have effect on the organisation in future. In this framing, firms exist at the intersection of interests.

Building on the conceptualisation of corporate wealth as a function of tangible and intangible resource, it has been argued that that sustainable development and stakeholder relationship management are shaped by tangible and intangible resources as well as internal and external resources that could promote positive relationship and legitimacy between a firm and its stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Thus, stakeholder theory enables managers to determine key stakeholders as well as channel organisational resources to such stakeholders for organisational success. The mapping of stakeholders, aids firms to find the optimal strategy for a given stakeholder group (Frooman, 1999; Hendry, 2005). Thus, organisations with strong relationship with other stakeholders have the propensity to maximise relational rents (Hendry, 2005). In furthering this position, Carroll (1979) states that the stakeholder theory entails organisational business strategy based on how a firm could learn what is desirable to key stakeholders and required by social norms (and the law) to create and sustain ''licence to operate'' effectively (Idemudia, 2010). From the managerial approach to stakeholder theory, for a firm to succeed it must maintain an on-going framework and process of managing stakeholders' interests and claims in a normative and proper way (Freeman, 1984). Additionally, organisations that consider the interests of its various stakeholders have competitive advantage in the marketplace as well as enjoy stakeholders' social licence to operate (Idemudia, 2010). As argued by Frooman (1999) firms respond to not social (and environmental) issues but rather to stakeholder issues. In line with the conceptualisation of this thesis, we classify stakeholders into primary and secondary (Clarkson, 1995).

3.2.2: Legitimacy theory

Legitimacy theory arose from Davis' iron law of responsibility (Davis, 1973). This theory contends that a firm is a social institution, which must use its powers accountably and responsibly in order not to be revoked by society (Deegan, 2002). It has been noted that society in general grants legitimacy and power to organisations. Legitimacy is therefore conceived as a social construct based on cultural and social norms and beliefs of corporate behaviour. Additionally, Dowling & Pfeffer (1975) argue that organisations exist within the milieu of a super-ordinate order, within which, they can enjoy legitimacy as long as their actions are in agreement with wide set of beliefs or values, and aspirations or ''expectations of the super-ordinate system'' (Parsons, 1960). Donaldson & Dunfee (1994) refer to the super-ordinate system as ''hyper-norms'', which are cardinal to legitimate, moral and authentic social principles (norms) upon which other norms are assessed with regard to social justice, equity and fairness. In their view Zimmerman & Zeitz (2002) argue that legitimacy is an integral aspect for new ventures, hence, it can be strategically applied to attain growth as well as increase resources. Deegan (2002, 2017) noted that a firm with a high degree of legitimacy achieves better performance, success and is often insulated from unsystematic variations in its stock prices. It is on this basis that Campbell (2000) asserted that stakeholders' perception of an organisation's legitimacy shapes it behaviour including responsible business operation and contribution to sustainable development (Scherer, Palazzo & Seidl, 2013). Thus, ''… Business firms are considered legitimate when their organisational practices are perceived to satisfy the social expectations of their environment'' (Scherer et al., 2013, p. 262), which can lead to sustainable development (Scherer et al., 2013). This is because a firm's multiple stakeholder groups think of such organisation as operating in agreement with contractual terms reached between it and wider stakeholders (Suchman, 1995). Insofar as these taken-for-granted processes and institutions ''do not fail and are not questioned, they build legitimacy. However, this legitimacy is disputed if stakeholders perceive a discrepancy between a firm's current situation and societal expectations.

Suchman (1995) classified legitimacy in threefold: pragmatic, cognitive and moral. He argues that organisational legitimacy can be based on the benefits, which can be perceived to stem from a firms' behaviour or existence (*pragmatic legitimacy*), or on the acceptance of a firm's behaviour, its structures, operations, and actions as representative of a ''normal'' status quo (*cognitive legitimacy*), or on an obvious moral discourse about the acceptability of a firm and its operation and behaviour (*moral legitimacy*) (Scherer et al., 2013). Since the 1980s legitimacy theory has been studied by different researchers in a bid to explore the application of social contract theory (Belal, 2008). It is a useful framework used to gauge just, equitable and ethical behaviour in society as well as stakeholders' expectations (Campbell, 2000). These expectations could be ''explicit or implicit'' as argued by Belal (2008, p. 15). The explicit aspect of societal expectations is governed by statutes and laws, whereas the implicit facet is shaped by the communities' expectations. In the context of Sierra Leone, these ''explicit'' social expectations translate into government policies on CSR and various regulatory mechanisms in place to ascertain that they are followed by MNCs. The ''implicit'' expectations are unannounced social obligations of MNCs including philanthropic activities in order for their operations to be deemed legitimate (Visser, 2006). Therefore, legitimacy theory suggests that business responsibility and CSR can be appropriated by MNCs to narrow their legitimacy ''gap'' between how they want stakeholders in Sierra Leone and beyond to perceive them and how they actually are.

3.2.3: Triple bottom line theory

In agreement with the legitimacy theory, organisations engage in various environmental and social initiatives in order to gain a good reputation and have social licence to operate (Idemudia, 2010) and thus maintain legitimacy (Campbell, 2000). Interactions between the natural environment and the people have been considered for a long time (Visser, 2013). As far back as ten thousand years ago, agrarian communities that were highly reliant on the natural environment interrogated the dynamics and structures of permanence as well as methods to live in co-existence with each other and the natural environment. Through the millennia, historians and philosophers have articulated ways to understand what has become a mantra: sustainability.

Aristotle focused on this concept by taking a look at the micro-community level and household dimension of sustainability. As noted by Glavas & Mish (2015), ‘‘it is believed that entire civilisations, such as the Mayan people and the people of Easter Island, fell because of unsustainable growth combined with decreasing agricultural production’’ (p. 624). In the industrial age, urban drift, human consumption level, organisational greed and unintended impacts of growth, have combined to shape sustainability issue. As a consequence, environmentalists and researchers (Elkington, 1997) began to theorise how to sustain human ecosystem and social relationships whilst engaging in business. This is the precursor to triple bottom line theory.

This theory is credited to Elkington (1997), where he espoused that business philosophy should factor in social and environmental gains whilst making profit (Crowth & Aras, 2008). Also, environmental and social justice resonates with the triple bottom line concept. This is premised on the notion that companies should rise above financial gains by taking into consideration the social and environmental impacts of their operation in society if they are to be responsible (Freeman, 1984) and legitimate (Deegan, 2002). To this end, firms should be guided by the ideals of long-term benefits for the environment and the people beyond narrow, short-term economic motivations (Frynas, 2005). Thus, CSR is not essentially an economic strategic positioning; rather it should be conceived as a business model to make profit whilst taking the issues of the environment and the people, as cardinal issues. As argued by Elkington (1997), this process translates into win-win situation (Williams & Preston, 2018) for both companies and the larger society as wider stakeholders perceive their actions as legitimate.

3.3: Justification for use of theories

In the wake of observations by scholars (Frynas, 2009; Lantos, 2001; Clarkson, 1995), there are two mutually conflicting perspectives on the CSR phenomenon. These are the shareholder-centric standpoint that conceives the interface of business and society as separable (Friedman, 1970) and the stakeholder perspective that sees business and society as inseparable (Lantos, 2001; Freeman, 1984). However, ethical business philosophy maintains that businesses should be part of tackling poverty and underdevelopment in our world particularly in the developing countries (Visser, 2006), and should be inseparable. Therefore, CSR is fundamentally corporate actions that address issues that are beyond the confines of its narrow economic, legal and technical requirements by putting into consideration social and environmental factors when gauging social performance (Idemudia, 2010). This is why Visser (2006) theorised the ‘‘African’’ variant of CSR. Consequently, CSR should not be a veneer for public relations and green-washing that is characteristic of MNCs’ CSR initiatives in Sierra Leone and other developing countries (Porto, 2010). CSR should also not be a ‘‘comfortable cover for firms to further their natural quest for profit and self-interest …’’ (Amaeshi, 2007, p. 26), which is linked to strategic philanthropy (Porter & Krammer, 2002) as opposed to legitimate, responsible business operation that can support sustainable development (Emeseh, 2009).

3.4: Critique of theories

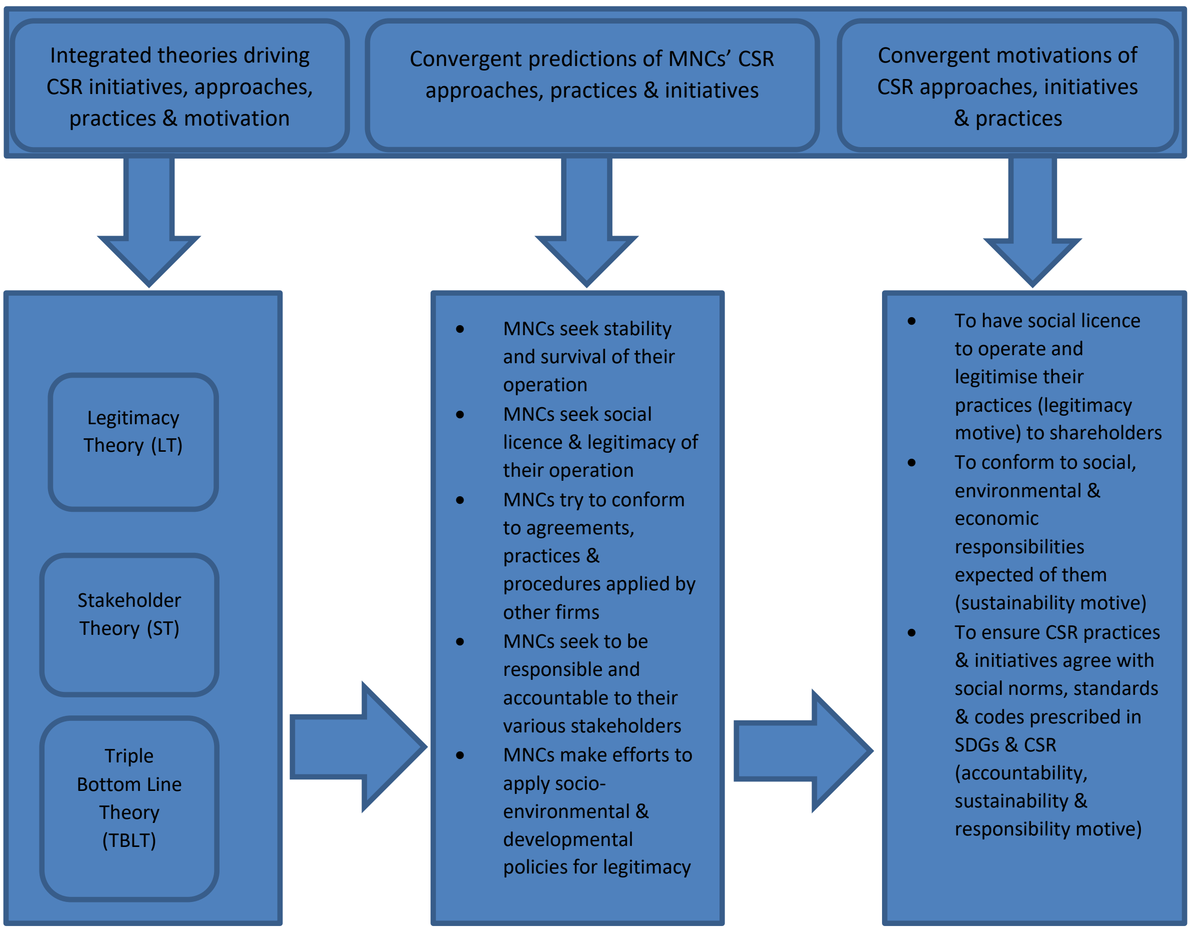
In contrast to the stakeholder theory and other theories explained in the preceding sections, the shareholder perspective is basically connected with legal and economic responsibilities organisations owe to investors and shareholders of the firms. This concept of CSR parallels agency theory of the firm (Hannafey & Vitulano, 2013), which argues that managers are simply agents of the investors/owners of the firm; they are therefore duty-bound to protect interests of investors by acting in a manner that benefits those who have invested in the organisation. This approach takes into consideration the economic rationality to firm theory (Lantos, 2001). As argued by Amaeshi (2007) the shareholder perspective is hinged on market efficiency, optimal returns on investment, competitive advantage and cost minimisation. This approach de-emphasises genuine, legitimate contribution to social and environmental causes (Scherer et al., 2013). Although the rationale of shareholding lends itself to criticism about increase in shareholder value and profit-maximisation, it arguably has substantial benefits to the firm in terms of delivering organisational performance, ROI and market efficiency (Jones, 1995).

3.5: Synthesising theories

This section will synthesise the three theoretical approaches adopted in the thesis: legitimacy, stakeholder and triple bottom line theory and link them to MNCs’ CSR practices and motivation for engaging in such practices and/or initiatives. As presented in previous sections, organisations engage in CSR activities to seek legitimacy (social licence) to operate (Suchman 1995). Deephouse (1996) argues that one of the reasons organisations seek legitimacy is to have credibility and reputation for business viability and ROI. Deegan (2002) contends that an organisation with a higher level of legitimacy can potentially have more organisational outcomes. Therefore a firm can strategically seek different types of legitimacy strategies (pragmatic, cognitive and moral) or maintain diverse forms of legitimacy depending on its organisational aim or objectives (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002; Deephouse, 1996). In the strategic approach, researches have focused on the strategies firms can employ so as to gain, repair or maintain legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). These approaches are summarised in the work of Ashford & Gibbs (1990). They identified "substantive" or "symbolic" legitimacy strategies. Symbolic management strategy refers to various efforts made by a firm to appear consistent with its external environment's expectations to have social licence; while the substantive strategy denotes actual change by or within the firm so as to sustain its operation (Richardson, 1985). From an institutional perspective, a MNC can also legitimise its actions by applying rules such as Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) and Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF) that are institutionally sanctioned in host country (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999) in order to be perceived as isomorphic (DiMaggio & Powell, 1985). Isomorphism is a process of conforming to wider social norms and values for legitimacy.

Legitimisation is thus a process that starts with developing social and environmental policies and/or initiatives that can lead to higher-level commitment to ecological and social engagement (Helmig, Spraul & Ingenhoff, 2016). Consequently, MNCs in Sierra Leone have developed different stakeholder engagement and CSR strategies aimed at seeking legitimacy from stakeholder and to give an impression of engaging in sustainable development (Scherer et al., 2013). Helmig et al. (2016) posited that firms are under pressure in the contemporary era to rethink their role in society for sustainable development (Husser, Andre, Barbat & Lespinet-Najib, 2012). Thus, ''[T]he emergence of CSR and the theme of sustainability pressure executives and undermine the old shareholder-executive-creditor vision because CSR fails to account for stakeholders'' (Husser et al., p. 658). MNCs also need to rethink rules of corporate-stakeholder engagement and management for sustainable development. This thinking frames the theoretical framework of this study, which is highlighted in Figure 3.1. This framework is important for rethinking the business society relationship for sustainable development in Sierra Leone. Guided by theoretical approaches explained earlier, this thesis posits that the motivation for MNCs in Sierra Leone to engage in CSR initiatives is to make wider stakeholders think that their actions are in agreement with social and environmental blueprints and procedures reached with them, for sustainable development, and to secure social licence to operate (Idemudia, 2010).

Figure 3.1: Conceptual framework



Source: The Researcher (2019)

Drawing on the literature reviewed as well as three theoretical approaches adopted in the present study, this thesis identifies three convergent predictions of MNCs' CSR practices and convergent predictions of motivations for doing so (see Figure 3.1). Therefore, for continual existence, MNCs need to routinely balance social, environmental and economic factors in their operation. Within the above framework, MNCs may be motivated to engage in CSR practice including initiatives geared towards sustainable development like building of schools, health centre and environmental conservation project as well maintaining stakeholder participation strategies that integrate CSR into sustainability (KPMG, 2017). Either guided by the ratiocination of institutional logics as motivation for CSR (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), ethical persuasion (Scott, 1995) strategic gain (Porter & Krammer, 2006) and/or sustainability rhetoric (Crowther & Aras, 2008), there are two main positions to theoretically interpret findings of this thesis: *normative/ethical* and *instrumental/managerial* approaches. Given the above, the two main approaches to understanding motivation for CSR are the normative/ethical and strategic/managerial models for sustainable development and stakeholder management. It is through this lens that we can read a story from the data collected.

This model recognises ‘‘development-oriented activities that fall under the broad agenda of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)’’ (Richey & Ponte, 2014, p. 5; Helmig et al., 2016; Scherer et al., 2013; Husser et al., 2012). To help tackle social and environmental issues in Sierra Leone, incorporating this model into MNCs’ business strategy will positively impact CSR and sustainable development (Richey & Ponte, 2014). In this sense, ‘‘[B]usiness is seen as the key solution in addressing poverty because it can’’ (Richey & Ponte, 2014, p. 6) ‘‘create opportunities for the poor by offering them choices’’ (Prahalad, 2004, p. 5). This conceptual framework is grounded on the notion that changing business philosophy should be focused on alleviating socio-economic problems, environmental devastation and unethical business practices which are critical issues in achieving the SDGs (KPMG, 2017). Framing business practice in this way will have positive impact on corporate-stakeholder relationship and the triple bottom line as well as lead to normative practice as opposed to instrumental approach to business venturing (Idemudia, 2014). This contention is central to the study’s conceptual framework – Sustainable Stakeholder Engagement Model (SSEM). This model involves establishing, maintaining, and enhancing strong relationships with the communities, institutions and other relevant stakeholders that affect or can be affected by MNCs’ actions with the goal of delivering long-term environmental, economic, and social value to all stakeholders so as to enhance sustainable business operation leading to achieving the SDGs (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). The ethical/normative paradigm argues that the MNCs should be accountable and responsible to other stakeholders irrespective of their power and resources. In contrast, the instrumental/strategic approach maintains that MNCs pay more attention to more economically powerful stakeholders (Alexander, Doorn & Priest, 2018; Clarkson, 1995). The former helps to shape sustainable development; while the latter diminishes the rhetoric of sustainable development (Emeseh & Songi, 2014).

3.6: Chapter summary

This chapter has considered key theoretical positions that shape this study in terms of using these theories to derive a conceptual framework. Through the conceptual framework developed in this chapter, primary data will be read; this will also help in forming a story out of the data. This chapter nevertheless started with the assertion that there is no mono-axial way of conceptualising CSR theories. This is followed by CSR theories that frame sustainable development including legitimacy theory, stakeholder theory and triple bottom line theory. The underpinning of these theories is that CSR can be a force in shaping sustainable development in Sierra Leone in the wake of challenges of sustainable development and underdevelopment. Extant literature suggests that in order for corporations to have legitimacy or social licence to operate, they could be expected to answer to changing stakeholder views with reference to ethical, social, environmental and ecological concerns. By adopting a stakeholder approach premised on SSEM, it can be investigated whether MNCs in Sierra Leone are actually engaging in normative, sustainable business through their CSR activities as perceived by wider stakeholders.

Chapter Four
The Role of MNCs in Sustainable Development in Sierra Leone

4.1: Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to understand the role of MNCs in sustainable development and CSR in Sierra Leone. Given the relationship between MNCs' activities and sustainable development, it is important to understand how their activities contribute to sustainable development and CSR. The chapter demonstrates that, even though MNCs participate in social and economic development, there is still much expected given economic, environmental and social challenges in developing countries (Visser, 2013) and a myriad of expectations from wider stakeholders (Crowther & Aras, 2008). The case of MNCs analysed in this thesis demonstrate the discrepancy between the CSR strategies of these firms and the local conditions where they are applied (including poverty, social inequalities, environmental degradation, air pollution, and economic problems, amongst others). Given accentuated opposition from stakeholders (including civil society, local communities, international communities, NGOs and others) MNCs have been challenged to ensure their CSR initiatives and practices are sustainable. Also included in this chapter are some historical insights into the context of Sierra Leone, which will help to illuminate the nature of MNCs' CSR practice towards sustainable development. Finally, the chapter is concluded.

Contemporary development in information technology as well as deregulation and market liberalisation worldwide, have triggered an unprecedented growth of MNCs. While they are regarded as exploiters, others view MNCs as engines of prosperity. However, they are constantly reinventing themselves in various ways that confound the assumptions of their critics and advocates alike (Zerk, 2006). After the World War II, research and theory on MNCs and their operations have been given substantial attention by many researchers due largely to the imbalance of natural resources and the increased cost of production of goods and services (see Ghoshal, 1987; Ohmae, 1990). Most of the studies done have rather focused on developing countries including rather than developing countries such as Sierra Leone (Tripathi, 2005).

Despite research advances made, research from the developing countries just commenced about three decades ago (Wells, 1983). As noted by Dunning (1995), the key disparity between MNCs originating from developing countries and those from developed countries is seen in the mode of ownership-specific advantages of developing country MNCs. Tatum (2010) suggests that MNCs operate in diverse structural models.

One of these is that MNCs position their executive headquarters in one country, while they locate production facilities in more other countries. This structural model enables them to take advantage of benefits of incorporating a business in a specific setting, while also producing goods and services in different regions of the world, where there is cheap production cost (Zerk, 2006). The second model allows MNCs to base the parent company in one region and operate subsidiaries in different countries. This model further allows parent company to be based in home country as well as allows the subsidiaries virtually to function independently, outside of a few basic links with the parent company (UNCTAD, 2000; Ohmae, 1990). A third model involves the establishment of headquarters in one country, which oversees various conglomeration stretching many different industry sectors and countries (Tatum, 2010). Marxist criticism considers the rise of MNCs as an aspect of ever growing global capitalism ideology and practices (Stopford, 1988). Although strong institutions are largely responsible for economic development in developing countries, the relationship between MNCs and host countries' institutions is crucial for understanding sustainable development challenges specifically in countries with corrupt regime, social problems and natural resource exploitation (Handmer & Dovers, 1996).

4.2: Understanding MNCs

Multinational corporations (MNCs) are also known as Transnational Corporation (TNCs), Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) or Transnational Enterprises (TNEs). MNCs are key actors in the international business and system and their activities cut across their home countries (Kegley & Blanton, 2011). The term multinational refers to any company or firm that is owned directly or via its subsidiaries' capital or asset located in territory of more than one country (Fieldhouse, 1986). These firms are also run on integrated basis, which enables smooth operation and transfer of capital from host countries to home states (Zerk, 2006). It is important to understand who or what is multinational or what it represents. As considered by UNCTAD (2000, p. 267) MNCs can be defined as incorporated or unincorporated firms consisting of parent companies and their foreign associates. A parent company can be interpreted as a firm that controls capital/assets of other entities in countries that are not its home country. This is operationalised by having equity capital stake. Therefore within the context of the present study, a multinational corporation can be defined as a parent enterprise located in a home state and connected with its foreign associates (affiliates) via affiliation of control. However, the most distinguishing factor that makes MNCs different from other forms of investment or ‘‘portfolio’’ investment, is the presence of foreign direct investment (FDI). FDI is not the only thing that multinational corporations do in relation to operating in periphery nations: they also control resources and wields power as well as transfer technology and management style, which sometimes impede development in host countries.

MNCs have steadily grown in dimension scope and influence resulting from globalisation, rapid interest for business expansion and issues following the end of World War II. Contemporarily, the growth of MNCs is partly as a result of reaction to emerging upsurge in international trade barriers as well as degree of state intervention in economic activities. These factors made it necessary for international firm (MNCs) to manufacture goods locally, which were initially exported, so as to maximise local market share and to be economically relevant (UNCTAD, 2000). That said, MNCs have been involved in politics of their host countries globally particularly in developing countries, where they have masterminded political conflict, war, violence and the over throwing of some governments that are considered to jeopardise the interest of their home countries as seen in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria (Momoh, 2016). This is also replicated in other countries given MNCs’ ability to transfer enormous capital from these firms’ home countries to their host states (Dicken, 1998).

Bakan (2004) states that MNCs are pathological institutions as well as possessors of great power that is they wield over (developing) nations. It has been contended that given their ease of mobility, capital base and power as well as apparent lack of loyalty to a given jurisdiction, MNCs are traditionally mistrusted by developing countries, where they are found (Zerk, 2006). In Europe, the controversy surrounding MNCs is a post-war event, when expansion was expedient to resuscitate failing (or failed) corporations because of World War II. Also, the expansion and power of MNCs was propelled by public (local authority) resentment regarding overreliance on foreign direct investment (FDI) from the USA. This situation also includes the ‘‘Americanisation’’ of management, culture and lifestyle. In the USA, MNCs appear to have been considered relatively benign by the public and government until the 1960s, when their reputation took a decline resulting in public criticism of their actions in society (Carroll, 1999). Extant literature on this phenomenon indicates the degree to which corporations are associated with interest of their state of origin – home countries. They thus depend on less developed (or developing) countries to oil the wheel of their economic interests and activities. As Barnet & Muller (1974) stated, MNCs are conceived as economic and political agents of their home countries, with no specific allegiance to host countries where they do business or invest in.

4.3: MNCs: Rise, development and corruption

As reported in extant literature the origin of MNCs can be traced to the late 19th century. As noted by Mclean & McMillan (2009), the origin of MNCs can be traced to late nineteenth century – about 1890. At this time, their activities essentially focused on mining, agriculture, and extractive enterprises. Though, MNCs mostly engage in mining, agriculture, and extractive activities, however, since the beginning of the 1950s MNCs, they have been associated with manufacturing of goods (Dicken, 1998). The United Nations in 1985 identified more than 600 MNCs that are engaged in the areas of mining, manufacturing, with annual sales over US $1billion. Also, these MNCs produced more than 20% of the total production in the global market and goods production, and noted by Hettne (1995) an estimated 40% of total global trade takes place between MNCs’ subsidiaries and their parent companies. The growth and development of MNCs and their operations have grown progressively after the WWII (Cohn, 1981). Proliferation of MNC’s influence, power and growth has been significant since mid-1970s. Nevertheless, by the end of 1990s, there were roughly 19, 000 MNCs, accounting for about 30% the GDP of all market as well as 80% of the trade in technical and managerial skills (Cohn, 1981). For example, in 1980s and 1990s, notwithstanding radical changes in the volume of FDI, FDI has increased enormously than trade (Dunning, 1995). In 2012, the World Investment Report revealed that the total number of MNCs globally was 103,786 (UNCTAD, 2012). Furthermore, tax concessions received by MNCs from their host countries have made them important players in the contemporary international economic relations (Cohn, 1981). Also, the financial and economic power of MNCs makes it possible for them to influence consumer tastes globally as well as further materialist values through brand development and management (Spero & Hart, 2007).

MNCs include General Motors, McDonalds, Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, Addax Bioenergy and African Minerals amongst others. For instance, General Motors has annual revenue, which is approximately equal to the combined GDP of New Zealand, Ireland Uruguay, Namibia, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Chad and Nicaragua (Momoh, 2016). Nevertheless, one of the significance of MNCs contemporarily is the ability to relocate their capital and service production to other parts of the world, which arguably enables them to escape most state control and regulations (Spero & Hart, 2007). Likewise, Lanz & Miroudot (2011) contend that the advent of global value chains including the growth of the activities of MNCs has enlarged intra-firm trade flows value. To this end, in 2000, the revenue of top fifty MNCs was estimated at over US$50 billion each (Wolf, 2004). Nonetheless, in recent time, there is a rapid upsurge in MNCs' penetration into Africa, which often comes with negative effects (Zerk, 2006; Cohn, 1981). Additionally, the numbers of MNCs in Africa has risen tremendously over the past few decades in various sectors including production, manufacturing, and service sector. Meanwhile, some MNCs still have their headquarters located in developed countries including Britain, USA, the Netherlands and host of other western countries. Furthermore, a few of these MNCs have relocated their headquarters to Africa, particularly in South Africa because of cheap labour among other factors including the favourable political environment after WWII, the privatisation and liberalisation programmes of many developed and developing countries in the last few decade, the developments in communications technologies, transportation and costs and innovation within organisations (Spero & Hart, 2007).

MNCs are agents of change for host-country institutions, which triggers corruption. Corruption and FDI show how the presence of MNCs frames the institutional environment of corruption (Otusanya, Lauwo, & Adeyeye, 2012). Kwok & Tadesse's (2006) study demonstrates how FDI creates positive spill-over effects on the institutional milieu of host countries (Kwok & Tadesse, 2006). Jones' (2011) study demonstrates how the U.S. government has shown willingness to investigate and prosecute some organisations. Nevertheless, his study is based on US Foreign

Corrupt Practices Act and not on the extent of MNCs' involvement in corruption in Africa. On the other hand, Zhu's (2014) study applying a case study approach in China, explains the impacts of MNCs' activities in relation to corruption. The study found that provinces with more multinational activities have a significantly greater dimension and level of corruption. However, this study does not focus on the dimensions of MNCs' involvement in corruption in Africa. Nwanne's (2014) study examines prior literature and demonstrated that bribery as tool of business practice has negative impact on MNCs, the home country and the host country. Nonetheless, Nwanne's work does not interrogate the linkage between MNCs and corruption in Africa. It is based on the preceding contention that this thesis seeks to provide empirical evidence within the context of Sierra Leone about the relationship between MNCs' presence, corruption and unsustainable business practice (Emeseh, 2009). Otusanya et al. (2012) found that there is direct relationship between MNCs' presence and unsuitable business practice, which is largely responsible for recurrent corporate-stakeholder conflict in developing countries like Sierra Leone (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). These findings are consistent with prior literature (see Momoh, 2016; Luiz & Stewart, 2014; Visser, 2013; Idemudia, 2010).

4.4: MNCs in developing countries

Following their influence, MNCs have in contemporary era of globalisation used African nations as spaces for low production cost and cheap labour (Momoh, 2016). MNCs have also failed to provide long term investments and/or relocate the decision-making power from their home country to Africa without much resistance from host countries including Sierra Leone owing to institutional weakness and corruption in host countries (Beemen, 2019; Datzberger, 2014). After African countries gained political independence, they were inundated by a plethora of MNCs, which has had a stranglehold on the continent and its economy (Cohn, 1981). Postcolonial Africa has always faced a number of socio-economic and political problems that have brought untold misery to the continent and its people and thus forced these nations to look for ways of tackling these problems (Dicken, 1988) and this made the MNCs to appear useful in salvaging them from such socio-economic situation. To reinforce incentives given to MNCs by host countries, many of African countries offered special tax treatment and/or exemption to MNCs and cheap labour as well as other incentives to help drive economic development. Furthermore, issues such as trade liberalisation and the rise of fierce capitalism at the turn of the millennium accentuated and sustained the rise of the MNCs. However, their rise has come with severe criticism from stakeholders and their host countries (Visser, 2013).

MNCs have consistently provided the much needed technological skills, capital and innovation necessary to propel socio-economic prosperity in Africa and other developing nations in exchange for a very profitable market. Although MNC's activities have helped in job creation, improved standard of living and rise in national income of their host countries (Dicken, 1988), their presence has without doubt plunged African countries to extreme poverty, deepening poverty and underdevelopment (Momoh, 2016). This reality seems to negate sustainability and accountability (Crowther & Aras, 2008; Visser, 2013). Although the presence of MNC has had positive results, wider stakeholders specifically the communities in Sierra Leone, the media and NGOs have been critical of their activities, which they contend jeopardise sustainable development and deviate from the ideals of CSR (Dicken, 1988). On the surface, MNCs seem to be real developmental partners nevertheless a careful investigation of their hidden motives shows their self-interest and exploitative intentions as they retard economic development in Africa, sap human and natural resources and undermine sustainable development (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). By their ideological orientation, MNCs advance capitalist ethos and global hegemony. Going by the dependence theory hypothesis, African countries are peripheral nations and largely based on primary products that are exploited by industrialised countries and their agents – the MNCs. MNCs activities have caused conflict, war, violence and a plethora of other negative issues on the continent of Africa including Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone, to name a few (Beevers, 2015). The internationalised cases of Charles Taylor and Ogoni crisis are cases in point.

4.5: MNCs in Sierra Leone

Since 2018, President Julius Maada Bio has been the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, which operates constitutional democracy. Democracy is being rebuilt in Sierra Leone after a brutal and devastating civil war (1991-2002), which killed more than 70,000 people and displaced nearly half of the population – approximately 2.6 million people. The war began with a fierce and violent campaign against Joseph Saidu Momoh (APC) government by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) (Datzberger, 2014). The RUF became famous for its cruelty, violence and viciousness by killing innocent civilians, forcing girls into sexual slavery and forcibly recruiting child soldiers. Lacking a clear purpose and ideology, RUF's key objective was to maintain control of illegal diamond mining in Sierra Leone. Diamond mining and business was the main source of income for the RUF, and provided funding for its military activities. Sierra Leone's mineral resources played a major role in the civil war. Quantitative study by Ross (2004) revealed that mineral resources, specifically diamond, contributed immensely to the eruption of civil war. As noted by Ross (2004) of the 13 case studies analysed in the research, it was found that Sierra Leone is the only case in which discontent and grievances following from resource exploitation by MNCs appear to have contributed crucially in the outbreak of civil war (Datzberger, 2014).

The exploitation of natural resources in the country requires foreign investment. Government aims to attract FDI as well as increase exports, which is essentially motivated with the hope of fostering skill upgrade, technology transfer and job creation including benefiting local firms and reducing poverty (Ross, 2004). Nevertheless, MNC's activities often do not support this expectation. Also, the regulatory structure in which they operate is characterised by poor governmental oversight including declining confidence in the government's capacity to protect human rights and ensure sustainable development. Furthermore, Sierra Leone loses more than US$40 million yearly in corporate income tax because of incentives offered to firms to attract investment. This situation redoubles incidence of poverty and socio-economic backwardness (Datzberger, 2014). For example, African Minerals – Sierra Leone, a mining company has abused the weak bargaining position of Sierra Leone's government, and maintaining the vicious circle of dependence on natural resource exploitation in child labour, poor working conditions and other adverse conditions (Steinweg & Römgens, 2015). Following falling iron ore prices and unsustainability of its financial system, African Minerals has gone bankrupt, worsening the vulnerability of the Sierra Leone's state, which is greeted with local grievances and violence as well as a decrease in its previously low tax revenues (van Dorp, 2016).

4.6: Historical and political insights

Sierra Leone is a West African country sharing borders with Guinea in the north and northeast, Liberia in the south and southeast and the Atlantic Ocean in the West part of the country. The country covers nearly 71, 741 square kilometres; the countries total population is about 5.7 million currently. This can be further split into these major ethnic groups: Temme (35%), Mende (31%), Limba (8%), Kono (5%), Krio (2%), Mandingo (2%), and Loko (2%), as well as 15% other ethnic groups comprising refugees from Liberia, European migrants, Lebanese, Pakistanis, Indians and others. It is a tropical region: humid, hot and the country essentially experiences two main seasons: dry and rainy season. The heaviest rainfalls take place along the coastline towards the south of Sierra Leone, which nurtures and sustains dense forest punctuated by mangrove swamps.

Ethnicity, chiefdom and patrimonial system characterise Sierra Leone's national fabric (Datzberger, 2014). As indicated by Pham (2006), it is understood that the Limba ethnic group is considered to be the earliest settlers of the region; they are followed by the Soso, the Kono and the Vai. Subsequently, the Yalunka came on the scene towards the end of sixteenth century following conflict with the Loko and Fula; while the Koranko, settled at the beginning of seventeenth century as well as the Temme, who had previously come into the northwest part of the country from Fula Jallon as traders. Pre-colonial history and indigenous scholarship record that the country known as Sierra Leone has been in existence for upwards of two thousand five hundred years (Datzberger, 2014). English is the official language in Sierra Leone; however, this is very much limited to the literate community. In the south, Mende is the main medium of communication; Temme is the principal medium for communication in the north; while Krio (creolised English) is predominantly used by freed slaves, who settled in Freetown precinct (Datzberger, 2014). In addition, more than 95% of the population speak Krio, which is Sierra Leone's lingua franca.

There are archaeological proofs suggesting that people have occupied Sierra Leone for upwards of 2, 500 years. Early settlers and migrants have contributed hugely in shaping what is today known as Sierra Leone as they brought with them rich cultural, historical, traditional and religious heritage (Visser & Tolhurst, 2010). It is on record that religion plays significant role in Sierra Leonean society, with followers of Islam consisting about 60% of the population; Christians consist about 30%; while African indigenous religion comprises about 10% of the population. There is religious tolerance as both Christians and Muslims co-exist as well as worshippers of African religion. Historically, Sierra Leone was a very vital cusp for Transatlantic Slave Trade until the end of 18th century, when this international practice was outlawed, and subsequently Sierra Leone became a resettlement point for freed slaves. According to Porto (2010) the batch of resettlements were undertaken by St George's Bay Company, which consist of British philanthropists who were essentially concerned with the welfare of the unemployed blacks on the streets of London. As well-known (see Maconachie, 2010; Maconachie & Binn, 2007) the emergence of civil war in 1991 caused many companies and organisations (MNCs in particular) to stop engaging in CSR and community development. Nevertheless, since the end of civil war in 2002, some organisations have declared their intention to engage in CSR initiatives, but this is far from being realised (Porto, 2010). The main reasons for this situation include poor corporate governance, corruption, and weak institutions, which have undermined ethical, sustainable CSR practice (Datzberger, 2014).

4.7: Socio-economic insight

Sierra Leone has been described as rich in diamond and other natural resources such as gold, rubber, bauxite, marine fishery, fertile and arable land but yet suffers from poverty, conflict and war, shaped by resource abundance curse (''paradox of plenty'' or ''resource curse'') (Auty, 1993; Karl, 1997) and poor political leadership (Maconachie, 2012). This limits participatory political participation as well as stifles efforts at resource distribution and CSR for sustainable development. Although hugely blessed with natural and human endowments, Sierra Leone is one of the poorest nations in the world (Datzberger, 2014) and relies essentially mostly on export of diamond, which accounts for more than 80% of the country's export before the outbreak of civil war. Sierra Leone basically depends on foreign aid for sustenance of its economy (Maconachie, 2008). This socio-economic condition has subjected Sierra Leone to crushing poverty and socio-economic problems (Maconachie, 2009, 2012). This situation is largely responsible for the tension between the elite seeking what Maconachie (2012) describes as ''greater control over diamond'' (p. 268) and its attendant unequal power relationship and socio-economic discontent.

Apart from diamond mining, other areas that could generate revenue for the nation including agriculture are neglected. Only about 12% of the country's arable land has been cultivated and private sector involvement in agriculture and food productions remains essentially absent (Porto, 2010). Involvement of private sector participation in agriculture that has potential for economic prosperity and reducing food shortage is undermined as well as consequent employment. An estimated 27% of the nation's population live in extreme poverty and in danger of food insecurity. In addition, majority of Sierra Leoneans particularly those in rural areas lack access to social amenities and social infrastructure (Christian Aid, 2013; Porto, 2010). The above socio-economic landscape fuels violence, war, CSR challenges and corporate-stakeholder conflict. As noted by Maconachie (2009) ''Sierra Leone has recently emerged from a long period of political instability and civil war. The most recent UNDP economic and social indicators suggest that it is once again'' (p. 72) one of the poorest and conflict-prone nations in the world precipitated by ''blood diamonds'' and other social, economic and political issues (Christian Aid, 2013).

Given the above, some mechanisms and initiatives have been established to bring order as well as to create an enabling environment for sustainable development, which will support socio-economic wellbeing of the country. This is fundamental to the establishment of National Recovery Strategy (NRS) in 2002 as well as the launch of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2005. Also in this league are the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) and Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF), which were established to deal with poverty-related matters as well as associated sustainability issues. Although remarkable economic and social progress has been made recently, this is in the shadow of Sierra Leone's Ebola virus disease (EVD) (Maconachie, 2015). Prior to the Ebola outbreak in May 2014, Sierra Leone was at the verge of having economic turnaround (Zayid, 2015), despite inclement business/economic environment created by multinationals' presence and poor private participation in business. This has seen the creation of Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA), to encourage business to invest for socio-economic prosperity. The country has also modernised and strengthened its economic outlook by implementing key trade-facilitation programmes and activities. Despite these initiatives, the role played by MNCs in sustainable development in Sierra Leone is in doubt (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019; Porto, 2010).

4.8: MNCs considered and justification

It should be noted that the list of companies below is not exhaustive. However, it represents MNCs, who are key players in Sierra Leone's agricultural and mining sectors (Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen, 2015). Table 4.1 highlights key sectors and firms in the selected sectors – agriculture and mining. This is why they are used in this thesis. The below companies are also quoted in Sierra Leone Stock Exchange (World Bank, 2019; Sierra Leone Stock Exchange, 2019). Additionally, these firms were selected because of their high investment size, communities affected by their operation, expanse of land they use, employment creation and their economic impact in the country. Essentially, agricultural sector (forestry, fisheries and livestock) was selected because the sector remains one of the main contributors to the country's GDP, which is 71.1% approximately (2016 estimate), employing roughly two thirds (61.4%) of the workforce in this sector (Index Mundi, 2019). Nevertheless, the country remains highly underdeveloped and suffers from sustainable development issues as compared to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Datzberger, 2014). According to International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) of the world's agricultural land, it is noted that 24% is in Africa; however, only 9% of agricultural production is in Africa (IFAD, 2011). More worryingly, up to 85% of arable land is uncultivated in Sierra Leone. Yet, agricultural development is still a major priority for the country, given that it has the potential for bringing sustained economic development and macroeconomic growth, and contributing to achieving the SDG1&2 – No poverty and Zero hunger – hence the selection of the sectors for this study.

Regarding the mining sector, the selection of this sector is due to its large size as well as its key contributions to exports at 90%, 20% GDP, 20% government revenue and 1.5% employment (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, EITI, 2019). Nevertheless, despite the enormous mineral exports, Sierra Leone received revenue of about USD 26 million in 2016 (EITI, 2019). Sierra Rutile Ltd. and Koidu Holdings Ltd. are among the largest mining firms in the country employing large number of the workers in Sierra Leone. Of note, the World Bank has estimated that up to 40,000 individuals are directly engaged in diamond mining and that the related population of immediate family dependents could be more than 100,000-to-200,000 people. If individuals that are indirectly dependent on artisanal diamond mining through forward and backward linkages are considered, the World Bank estimate reaches 200,000-400,000 individuals, who are dependent on artisanal mining for the greater part of their livelihood. This represents about 4-8% of the entire Sierra Leone's population. It is thus arguable that the mining sector has the potential to considerably contribute to the achievement of the SDGs in Sierra Leone.

Table 4.1: List of important selected sectors and companies

Logo	Company	Country of origin	Sectors	Key details/information
	Socfin Agricultural Company Ltd. (SL)	France	Agriculture	Socfin Agricultural Company Ltd. (SL) is a subsidiary of the Luxembourg-based Socfin Group. In March 2011 the Sierra Leone government signed a lease agreement for 16,248 acres (6,575 ha) of land with the Malen chiefdom council and landowners for 50 years with an option to renew for a further 21 years, for the planting of Oil palm. The agreement covered land in five of the chiefdom's nine sections. The government then later turned the land over to SAC through a sub-lease.
	Addax Bioenergy	Switzerland	Agriculture	Addax Bioenergy is a renewable energy and agricultural operation that produces bio-ethanol (anhydrous fuel grade) from sugarcane for export and domestic use, and generates "green" electricity for Sierra Leone's national grid. Addax Bioenergy operations are situated at Mabilafu near Makeni town, in the Bombali and Tonkolili Districts of Northern Sierra Leone. The estate leases 23,500 Ha of land from the Government of Sierra Leone for the production of sugarcane and cassava. Currently 10,000 Ha to be developed under sugarcane that is forecast to produce 900,000 MT for the production of ethanol and power. The company is currently

				developing an additional 2,000 Ha of cassava production as a secondary feedstock.
Sierra Rutile Limited	Sierra Rutile Ltd	Australia	Mining	Sierra Rutile Limited is a mining company with headquarters based in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The company currently has operating mines for Rutile, ilmenite, zircon, and titanium dioxide minerals in South and Northwest Sierra Leone, specifically in the Moyamba and Bonthe Districts.
KOIDU LIMITED	Koidu Holdings	South Africa	Mining	Koidu Ltd, a diamond mining company operates in the Eastern province of Sierra Leone covering the Gbense and Tankoro Chiefdoms near Koidu City in Kono District, Sierra Leone
Goldtree	Goldtree	Belgium	Agriculture	Established in 2007, Goldtree is located in Daru, in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone. Its operations are based on the rehabilitation of an abandoned mill destroyed in the country's 1991-2002 civil war. Apart from Goldtree's own nucleus plantation, the business invests in local enterprises by purchasing fresh fruit bunches from outgrower farmers within a 40 km radius of the mill. Gold Tree (Ltd) lease area is in the Kailahun District, Eastern Province, where the Daru, Bonbohun communities in the Jawe Chiefdom and the Mobai community in the Mandu chiefdom.

Despite the attempts above to ensure more accountability, transparency and responsible practice by MNCs, it has been variously reported that Sierra Leone faces one of the worst forms of CSR dilemma in Africa (Porto, 2010). Given the seemingly failure of various initiatives, this thesis contends that seeking stakeholders' views can advance sustainable development in Sierra Leone. This is because stakeholders' views are critical element in framing business policies that can impact sustainable development (Datzberger, 2014). Stakeholders are also part of organisational core elements that shape its direction, operation and legitimacy (Suchman, 1995; Freeman, 1984).

4.9: MNCs' CSR and impact on sustainable development

Sustainable development from the prism of CSR resonates with using business to promote social and environmental issues beyond just making profit (Idemudia, 2010). Thus, businesses should go beyond CSR and factor in social justice, stakeholder engagement and environmental responsibility for sustainable development to tackle poverty in Sierra Leone. This is because in such business settings there is retreat of governance including appropriate monitoring of MNCs' operations (Maconachie, 2009; Frynas, 2005). Researches have been carried out to assess the impacts MNCs on developing countries (Akiwumi, 2014; Kegley & Blanton, 2011). In the last two decades, globalisation has immensely contributed to substantial increases in foreign investment in developing countries, thereby bringing some of them more structural and political stability (Zerk, 2006). MNCs can play a crucial role in creating jobs, infrastructural development, better standard of living in host countries, driving economic prosperity and raising employment standard by paying higher wages than local business. They are thus seen as agents of sustainable development (KPMG, 2017).

In addition, MNCs have the tendency to increase the purchasing power of the local citizens, which can in turn lead to increased tax payments that benefits host countries' governments. The availability of more capital investment and resources will make it possible for the government to invest more money into social welfare including healthcare, education, transport and infrastructures (Tonelson, 2002). MNCs can contribute to knowledge and technological transfer, which can contribute to national development. It based on this premise that Foss & Pedersen (2004) argue that the host country should encourage the operations of MNCs hence their investments are much easier to obtain than funding from donations. Granted that MNCs can be instrumental to developing and transforming developing countries, it has been argued that their presence in host countries poses more harm than good (Zerk, 2006; Dicken, 1998). Amongst other reasons, their activities are questionable given poor regulatory regimes, poor corporate governance and weak national institutions (Mclean & McMillan, 2009). For example, Zoellick (2008) contends that securing development and sustainability in fragile states or underperforming countries can be very problematic as institutional frameworks are weak or not working in certain instances and corruption including lack of commitment to CSR initiatives (Aguinis & Glavas, 2010). As Zoellick (2008) observed, the presence of various actors including MNCs can be instrumental to tackling underdevelopment. Consequently, a body of research has recently focused on how institutional imperatives can impact MNCs' practices including CSR initiatives (Aguinis & Glavas, 2010).

The above contention suggests credibility gap about the legitimacy of MNCs' contributions to sustainable development through CSR (Idemudia, 2010). Specifically, Akiwumi (2014) has brought our attention to how MNCs' activities erode indigenous cultures, exploit natural resources and violate sustainable development principles. CSR as a construct is often considered as organisational response to stakeholder claims as firms with multiple stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). This is partly responsible for why communities' claims should be given consideration for organisational legitimacy (Deegan, 2017). Thus, a well-executed CSR can be a potent instrument to advance sustainable development; hence, it reflects the inspirations and values of organisations about corporate sustainability (Crowther & Aras, 2008). Since CSR denotes core values and goals that delineate the commitment of an organisation to society, economy, and the environment, its broader scope can be incorporated into sustainable development (KPMG, 2017).

4.10: Summary

This chapter has considered the role of MNCs in sustainable development in Sierra Leone as well as the nature of MNCs considered and justification for doing so. It has also taken into consideration justification for stakeholders not included. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the relevant contextual factors that shape Sierra Leone, which in turn impact the operations of MNCs. The context of Sierra Leone with regards to CSR practice by the MNCs helps to shed light on the motivation for CSR and various CSR approaches and/or initiatives for sustainable development. Other issues highlighted in this chapter include MNCs' rise, development and corruption, MNCs in developing countries, MNCs in Sierra Leone, historical and political insights, and MNCs, CSR and sustainable development.

Chapter Five
Research Methodology

5.1: Introduction

This chapter is based on research methodology adopted in the thesis. It outlines the methodological design used including research aim, questions and method, which is qualitative. It also highlights interpretivist paradigm adopted. In addition, this chapter explains data collection strategies (interview, focus group and documents), sample size/frame, data analysis procedure, which is thematic textual analysis. The chapter also considers ethical implications of the research, delimitation and limitation as well as justification for adopting research methodology.

As observed by Kerlinger (1986) research methodology means a process of adopting a definite methodological framework designed to help with actualising a research intention (see Table 5.2 for detail). Methodology also means a collection of methods (Bryman, 2007) reflecting the epistemological and ontological assumptions, which suggests data collection instruments and analysis (Robson, 2007). Similarly, according to Saunders et al. (2009) methodology resonates with research design decision made that helps in guiding how a piece of research can be operationalised (Berg & Lune, 2012). As variously observed (Bryman, 2007; Silverman, 2006), every research is traditionally premised on appropriate methodology that enables as well as facilitates the development of argument, which supports research findings. This process also helps in ensuring validity and reliability of findings (Saunders et. al., 2009).

5.2: Research Aim

The key aim of this research is to critically explore stakeholders' views about the relationship between CSR and Sustainable Development in Sierra Leone. In order to achieve the above aim, the following questions were answered:

5.3: Research Questions

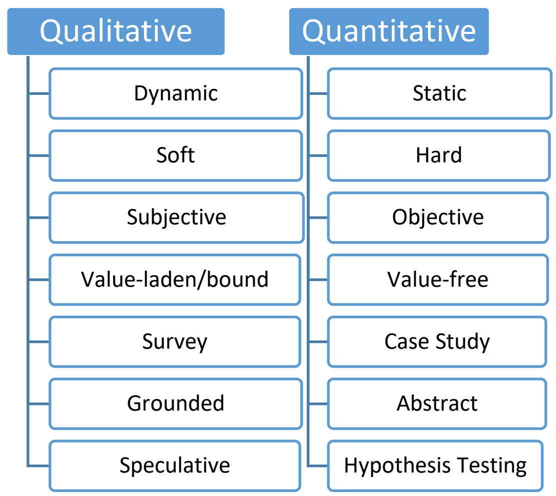
- What are stakeholders' views about the relationship between CSR and sustainable development in Sierra Leone?
- Why do MNCs engage in CSR and what approaches do they use in Sierra Leone?
- What are the contributions of MNCs to sustainable development, and what are the motivations for doing so in Sierra Leone?

This research agrees with Crotty's (1998) suggestion that research methodology or process is underpinned by four main elements: method, paradigm, epistemology and ontology (Burrell & Morgan, 1982). The epistemological and ontological components shape research philosophy (Saunders et al., 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). As noted by Crottty (1998), a researcher can start with any of these elements. However, what is important is not the component that a researcher starts with, but the ability of the researcher to ensure that the research process effectively and appropriately hangs together as well as ensure it is robust and valid (Silverman, 2006).

5.4: Research method

Generally, there are two main types of research method: *quantitative* and *qualitative*. While the former relies on numbers (numerals) to make research-informed judgement, the latter is based on using words (non-numeric) (Saunders et al., 2009). Some researchers also combine both quantitative and qualitative. Although a number of CSR/sustainable development researches have used quantitative approach, there seems to be a rise in the application of qualitative method (Ferns, Amaeshi & Lambert, 2019; Jenkins, 2006; Starky & Crane, 2003). Furthermore, Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug (2001) outlined two different perspectives to adopting research methods: the *pragmatic* perspective, which utilises technical rationale and justification and the *paradigmatic* perspective that applies epistemological rationality. While the former is often used by positivist researchers, the latter is traditionally employed by interpretivist or constructivist researchers (Saunders et al., 2009; Burrell & Morgan, 1982). In this thesis, qualitative method is used as it helps in gathering, condensing, synthesising and analysis data effectively (Silverman, 2006). As argued by Saunders et al. (2009) for more nuanced socially constructed research, qualitative method has been lauded as providing richer and more detailed picture of human condition based on language interrogation that quantitative approach shies away from (Mizruchi & Fein, 1999). Figure 1 graphically illustrates how qualitative and quantitative methods differ.

Figure 5.1: Characteristics of qualitative and quantitative methods



Source: The Researcher (2019) based on Halfpenny (1979) & Saunders et al. (2009)

In addition, one of the main concerns of the researcher is to explore stakeholders' view of how MNCs can contribute to sustainable development through CSR initiatives in Sierra Leone (Emeseh, 2009; Datzberger, 2014). There are three main approaches to research including *descriptive*, *explanatory*, and *exploratory* (Sreejesh, Mohapatra & Anusree, 2014). Descriptive research has a tendency of presenting phenomena or things exactly the way they appear by describing attributes of things or objects. This research strategy could be used in combination of explanatory or exploratory research so as to gain more insights as well as better understanding of social reality. As contended by Robson (2007), this research strategy supports researches that are based on testing hypothesis by making them more structured and systematic in their execution and application. Second, with regard to explanatory research, it deals with situations when a researcher is preoccupied with identifying and understanding cause and effect and nexus between variables, thereby proffering explanation for their existence and relationship (Silverman, 2006).

Third, exploratory research is a research undertaken for a problem or phenomenon, which has not been studied more clearly. It can be embarked upon when there is need to enhance one's understanding of a phenomenon or situation (Saunders et al., 2009). This process foregrounds bringing knowledge and insights to bear regarding the concept being investigated as it affords the researcher the platform to observe new issues and bring them to public knowledge. The present study will apply *exploratory research*, which is specifically useful when a researcher wishes to clarify our understanding of a problem or phenomenon such as CSR, sustainable development and related concepts and to offer insights into real world situations as seen in Sierra Leone (Robson, 2007). It is usually undertaken to have a better understanding of the existing problem. Such research warrants the researcher to start with a general idea and uses this research process as a medium to identify issues, which can be the focus for future research. It aligns with qualitative, interpretive research as it used to answer questions such as why, what and how (Silverman, 2006). Exploratory research could be likened to an explorer's journey in which issues are discovered in the process. One of the advantages of this research strategy is that it is flexible and adaptable as well as has great deal of adjustment as the process develops. As observed by Adams & Schvaneveldt (1991) the flexibility associated with exploratory project does not diminish its direction; rather it entails that research direction could be initially broad but narrowed down to specifics in the end (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 140).

5.5: Research paradigm

In all knowledge gaining endeavours, researchers tend to apply different research paradigms (Bryman, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Philosophical contribution suggests that all research is essentially based on disparate assumptions, which are often referred to as paradigm (Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Kuhn, 1970). Thus, highlighting a paradigm within the context of CSR and sustainable development in Sierra Leone is important. According to Saunders et al. (2009) research paradigm is ''the basic belief system or worldview that guides'' (p. 106) a researcher in making a methodological decision based on appropriate research design, relevance and overall aim intended to be achieved in a piece of research. Accordingly, Thompson & Perry (2004) observed that research paradigm entails a range of linked assumptions regarding the world from the perspective of the researcher. It is subject to the researcher's perceptions/views, which Bryman (2012) considers as a cluster of techniques, values and belief that guides scholars in a given field of inquiry as well as helps them to understand how research should be conducted and how results should be interpreted (Thompson & Perry, 2004). Thus, a paradigm is a researcher's worldview that shapes his/her methodological and philosophical decision and assumptions.

The seminal work of Burrell & Morgan (1982), which is supported by both Saunders et al. (2009) and Guba & Lincoln (1985), is specifically helpful in situating this study's research paradigm. It helps in summarising and clarifying the paradigm adopted in this thesis. (See Table 5.1 for detail).

Table 5.1: Comparison of research paradigms/philosophies

Issues	***Positivism***	***Realism***	***Interpretivism***	***Pragmatism***
Ontology (The researcher's views/perspectives of the nature of being or reality)	Objective, external and independent of social actors	Objective and exists independent of human feelings, thoughts and beliefs or knowledge of their existence; but is interpreted through social conditioning – critical realism	Subjective, socially constructed; it may change, multiple	External, multiple and views/perspectives chosen to best enable answering a specific research question
Epistemology (The researcher's views/perspectives about what constitutes acceptable knowledge	Only observable things/phenomena can provide facts, data. It focuses on causality and law such as generalisation and reducing phenomena to simplest terms	Observable phenomena/things only provide credible facts and data. Insufficient data translates into inaccuracies in sensation (direct sensation). Alternatively, phenomena create sensations that are open to misinterpretation (critical realism). It focuses on explain within a context or contexts	Subjective meanings and social phenomena. It focuses on the details of issues/situations, a reality behind them and subjective meaning motivating them	Either or both observable phenomena/things and subjective meanings can be provide acceptable knowledge dependent on the research question. It stresses practical applied research, integrating different approaches to help in data interpretation
Axiology (The researcher's views/perspectives of the role of values in research)	It focuses on value-free research. The research is independent of the data and stresses an objective stance	Value-laden research, where researcher is biased by worldviews. Considers cultural/historical experiences that impact on research	Value-bound research: The researcher as part of what is being researched. Researcher cannot be separated from research. It is subjective	Values play crucial roles in interpreting results. The researcher adopting both objective and subjective perspectives

Data collection (Data collection technique often employed)	Highly large sample size structured, and quantitative measurement applied (sometimes can use qualitative)	Methods chosen must fit the subject matter: quantitative or qualitative	Small samples, in-depth exploration and uses qualitative method	Uses mixed or multiple designs: quantitative or qualitative

Source: The Researcher (2019) modified from Saunders et al. (2009, p. 119), Guba & Lincoln (1985) and Burrell & Morgan (1982)

This study is aligned to the above highlighted methodological framework outlined in Table 5.1 – interpretivism. Given that the researcher wanted to have an in-depth understanding of the actual experiences of stakeholders who are impacted by the CSR activities of MNCs in Sierra Leone, the researcher applied an exploratory, interpretivist approach, which helps to represent the participants' perceptions accurately (Patton, 2015; Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). It effectively and rigorously examines historical and sociocultural interpretations of the lived world of people through the perspectives of the people concerned (Hammersley, 2013; Saunders et al., 2009). This methodological approach can be used to understand and interpret people's feelings and views about an issue or phenomenon such as CSR, sustainable development and sustainability.

5.6.1: Research paradigm – epistemology and ontology

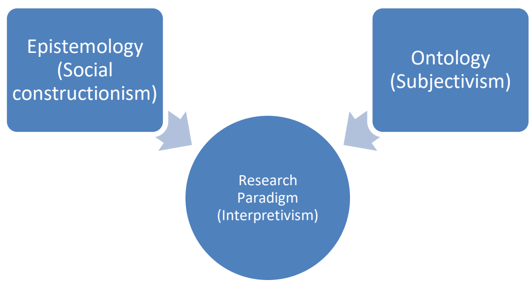
As stated above, the research paradigm adopted is interpretivism (interpretivist paradigm). Other paradigms to research include phenomenology, positivism, realism, pragmatism, postmodernism, critical theory, narrative technique and feminist-poststructuralist approaches amongst others (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Guba (1990) elucidates that research paradigm is underpinned by three underlying issues: epistemology, ontology and methodology. For him, ontology refers to how the researcher may understand the nature of reality; while epistemology means the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known about reality; and methodology entails how the researcher should investigate knowledge. According to Saunders et al. (2009) there are two main methodological paradigms in social science and management research, which can be interpretive or positivist, and can be applied to demonstrate the consistency amongst epistemology, ontology and methodology (Guba, 1990).

Scholars have long attempted to gain insights into the ‘‘truth’’ surrounding many issues and phenomena as well as the impact they have on our daily existence (Silverman, 2006). People sometime care less about testing hypothesis and deductive approach to understanding ‘‘truth’’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Thus, they follow common sense or instincts. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa – Sierra Leone – some of the beliefs people hold lack empirical evidence (Kochalumchuvattil, 2010); however, they represent reality and truth. Accordingly, truth can be a function of an individual’s belief, perception or knowledge. From the ontological perspective, the researcher appreciates multiple frames of realities to be subjective and relative from a specific vantage point over a given period of time (Silverman, 2006). It can therefore be argued that reality is a function of other variables, which bring about knowledge including beliefs, understanding of an issue and environment as well as the researcher’s awareness of CSR and sustainable development in Sierra Leone. Accordingly, Guba & Lincoln (1985) noted that interpretivism can be shaped by prior experience and knowledge. The researcher has worked with some organisations in the areas of CSR, agriculture, farming, cocoa production, sustainable development and community engagement, which have influence on his knowledge of the phenomena of CSR, sustainable development, and development.

Interpretivism facilitates qualitative inquiry with respect to the pursuit of knowledge and philosophy: *epistemology* and *ontology* (Bryman, 2012). The underlying philosophical supposition of interpretivism is that placing people (or stakeholders in Sierra Leone) in their peculiar social settings will yield valuable insights that can be interpreted to socially construct stakeholders’ views about MNCs’ CSR and sustainable development (Belal, 2008). Epistemologically, the researcher appreciates that knowledge is a socially constructed concept and subject to diverse interpretation (Thompson & Perry, 2004). Interpretivism holds that the respondents (interviewees and focus group discussants) and the researcher are in constant interaction (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In addition, since interpretivism is steeped in the notion that reality is not objectively determined, but socially constructed, interpretivist paradigm will facilitate an interpretation of stakeholders’ views about the roles of businesses in contributing to sustainable development in Sierra Leone.

The epistemological/philosophical stance of this study is social constructionism; while its ontological orientation is subjectivism (Silverman, 2006). As opposed to positivism, interpretivism anchors its philosophical basis in constructing the world premised on data interpretation; this is referred to as *social constructionism*. This naturally aligns with *subjectivist ontology* that is linked to social constructionism (Saunders et al., 2009). Subjectivism supports theory building; whereas objectivist research is orientated towards theory testing, which aligns with positivism. Therefore, interpretivists believe that the researcher and realities in social world are inseparable; while the positivists argue that the researcher and what is being researched are separable (Robson, 2007). The research paradigm adopted is represented in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Research Paradigm



Source: The Researcher (2019)

5.5.2: Locating a research paradigm within CSR-sustainable development link – justifying interpretivist paradigm

In most social science and management literature, positivist paradigm has dominated leading to less emphasis placed on interpretivist paradigm (Robertson & Samy, 2017). However, the work of Sharma & Rudd (2003) and others (see Ferns & Amaeshi, 2019; Williams & Preston, 2018; Crowther & Aras, 2008) on CSR, sustainable development and sustainability suggest applying interpretivist paradigm as it enables social-constructionist approach, which facilitates uncovering what motivates businesses to engage in CSR and sustainability initiatives. This calls for the application of qualitative, interpretive approaches, which can capture people's own perspectives of motives, legitimacy and rationale for CSR and sustainability activities. Interpretivist perspective to CSR-sustainable development nexus can help to understand the drivers (including normative and strategic) and motivation for CSR (Visser, 2006; Crane, Matten, McWilliams, Moon & Siegel, 2008). As noted by Donaldson & Preston (1995) motivation for CSR can be descriptive (Godos-Díez, Cabeza-García & Fernández-González, 2018), instrumental (Windsor, 2001), and normative (Garriga & Mele, 2004) as well as strategic (Crane et al., 2008). Whilst instrumental and strategic approaches link CSR to profitability, normative and descriptive approaches place premium on sustainability strategies including sustainable development (Crowther & Aras, 2008; Visser, 2006).

Georg & Fussel (2000) recommend applying interpretivist (constructionist) approach in corporate sustainability research since it examines actors, their emotions and feelings robustly. It also uses the process of narrative that is particularly appropriate in understanding people's view about a phenomenon (Boje, 1991). Furthermore, given that there is paucity of research in CSR/sustainable development research in Sierra Leone (Porto, 2010), interpretive, exploratory research approach afforded the researcher nuanced and rich insights into CSR of MNCs in relation to sustainable development (Akiwumi, 2014; Belal, 2008). This approach is consistent with Robson's (2007) view about exploratory research, which is utilised to know ‘‘what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena'' (p. 59).

5.6: Research axiology

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), one of the elements of research paradigm is axiology (Burrell & Morgan, 1982). This refers to theory of value in research (Saunders et al., 2009). It deals with the branch of research that focuses on researcher's judgement based on personal values that are brought in conducting research. Researchers demonstrate axiological preference by articulating their values as a basis for making judgements about research being undertaken. Heron (1996, quoted in Saunders et al., 2009, p. 116) observed that ‘‘values are the guiding reasons of all human actions''. In the context of this thesis, axiology denotes personal methodological preference that the researcher has in connection with ‘‘value-bound'' and ‘‘value-free'' dichotomy. The researcher is attached to the former, which deals with the consideration of personal values in research. This entails that the researcher's personal values are not unconnected with the context of Sierra Leone being investigated (Silverman, 2006).

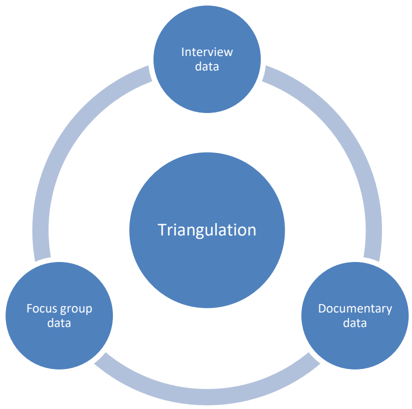
5.7: Research strategy – data collection technique

The present research uses three different data strategies for data collection. Specifically, *documents*, *interview* and *focus group* data was used, which helps in informing a valid, nuanced and rich exploration of how MNCs can use CSR to contribute to sustainable development in Sierra Leone. Data from these sources will be triangulated for validity and reliability of findings (Kumar, 2007). Data was analysed by leveraging on secondary sources including journal articles, books and books chapter as well as related secondary sources. As contended by Kumar (2007) a research's credibility and validity is largely a function of technique through which data is collected. Data was collected based on specific research questions that the thesis wanted to answer as well as the overall aim of the study. As known in extant literature, there are so many methods of gathering data such as interview, survey/questionnaire, ethnography, observation, and focus group among others (Saunders et al., 2009). However, as stated above, this thesis uses, interviews, focus group and documentary sources to collect primary data for empirical analysis. Additionally, data will be textually presented and analysed using thematic textual analysis (TAA).

5.8: Triangulation

Triangulation is the process by which an alternative viewpoint, method and/or source is applied to validate, challenge or extend prior findings (Saunders et al., 2009; Yin, 2009). According to Denzin (1970) it is ‘‘the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon’’ (p. 291). It is generally used to understand human behaviour and social issues more robustly (Flick, 1988). It also relies on the notion of using two known points to locate the position of an unidentified third point, therefore creating a ‘‘triangle’’. Triangulation is also considered by Cohen & Manion (1986) as an attempt to map out or elucidate more meaningfully the complexity and richness of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint. Thus, Flick (1988, p. 230) contends that triangulation ‘‘systematically extend[s] and complete[s] the possibilities of knowledge production … [and] increases scope, depth and consistency in methodological proceedings’’. Likewise, Saunders et al. (2009) argue that it is a means to achieve a more balanced, robust and detailed picture of a situation. Following Yin's (2009) call for multiple data sources of evidence, triangulation is applied here by utilising *three* qualitative sources: interview, focus group and documents as seen in this study (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest, 1966). Figure 5.3 offers pictorial view of data sources used.

Figure 5.3: Data sources for triangulation



Source: The Researcher (2019)

As can be observed from the above Figure, interview, focus group and documents were triangulated in the study. The concept triangulation arose to ensure ‘‘reported consensus’’ in research (Flick, 1988). It has basic attributes including the following:

- It is used to increase level of validity in research
- It is employed to raise confidence level in research
- It is used for validation of findings
- It is used as an alternative to traditional reliability and validity technique

Forms of triangulation include: theory triangulation, data triangulation, investigator (researcher) triangulation, multiple triangulation and methodological triangulation. However, this thesis adopts *data triangulation* (see Figure 5.3).

Data triangulation resonates with the use of heterogeneous data sources, for instance, quantitative and qualitative, contrasting data gathered at disparate settings and times or collecting data using different sampling procedures such as interview, focus group and documents as seen in the present study. In this study, documents were used to enhance coverage as they cover long span of time, many settings and events (Rhee & Lee, 2003). Documents are often used in combination with other qualitative methods as a method of triangulation. This approach enables a researcher to draw up multiple (at least two) sources of evidence in seeking corroboration and convergence through the application of different methods and data sources (Denzin, 1970).

By triangulating different data sources, the researcher makes effort to provide ‘‘a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility’’ (Eisner, 1991, p.110). Also, by investigating information gathered through different sources, the researcher can substantiate findings across data sets and therefore reduce the effect of potential biases. Accordingly Patton (2015) noted that triangulation helps the researcher guard against the accusation that a study’s findings are simply an artefact of a single source or method or a single investigator’s bias. Moreover, triangulating sources aids in gathering rich details that can be corroborated to answer research question(s) and arrive at a study’s objectives (Bryman, 2012). Also, triangulation reinforces conclusions and validity of findings (Eisner, 1991) as well as enhances credibility of research (Silverman, 2006). This process also helps in addressing problems associated with gathering data in developing countries, where there are frequent cases of ‘‘access difficulty’’ (Cowton, 1998).

5.9: Research choice/approach

As argued by Trochim (2006) there are two main approaches to reasoning: deductive and inductive approaches. Accordingly, deductive approach is about moving from the vantage point of general to particular; whilst inductive approach deals with moving from particular to general logic (Saunders et al., 2009; Trochin, 2006). Although Bryman (2007) contends that triangulating inductive and deductive approaches is good as it leads to ‘‘mixed methodology’’ (p. 1); however, a researcher needs to be faithful to the overall aim of the research. Saunders et al. (2009) note that arguments based on experience (or observations) are best articulated inductively (Creswell & Clark, 2007); while arguments based on rules, hypotheses, laws or other commonly acknowledged principles and notions are best expressed deductively (Ivanova, 2017). Furthermore, Creswell & Clark (2007) have noted that deductive research works from the ‘‘top down’’. This means that it works from a theory to hypothesis and to data in order to contradict or add to the theory (Wiethaaus, 2007).

In contrast, inductive research works from the ‘‘bottom-up’’ but leverages on the participants’ perspectives/opinions to ‘‘build broader themes and generate a theory’’ (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p. 23) connecting the themes. Wiethaaus (2007) proposes that inductive approach comprises a process in which:

Findings/observation = theory

While deductive approach entails a process in which:

Theory = Findings/observation

This thesis will utilise inductive approach as opposed to deductive approach. Also, inductive approach is based on the principle of developing theories from data collected (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, the research has opted to apply inductive approach specifically since the researcher is exploring the contributions of MNCs to sustainable development in Sierra Leone using CSR. Researchers choosing inductive approach are more likely to apply qualitative, interpretivist approach (Ivanova, 2017). Summary of research methodological design is presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Summary of research methodological design

Methodological issues	**Explanations**
Method	Qualitative – words used to present and analyse data
Paradigm	Interpretivism (Philosophy): a. Epistemology – Social Constructionism b. Ontology – Subjectivism
Axiology	Value-bound – the researcher as part of what is being researched. Researcher cannot be separated from research and subjective
Data collection technique – Research strategy	Interviews, focus groups and documents
Research choice	Inductive (from particular to general)
Data analysis procedure	Thematic textual analysis

Source: The Researcher (2019)

5.10: Research sampling

This study's sample size/frame is based on ''purposive sampling'' (Silverman, 2006; Bryman, 2007). It is a non-probability sampling technique (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). According to Patton (2015) the rationality of purposive sampling is premised on the assumption that a researcher has a clear and reasonable understanding of what sample size or units to be used, and consequently approaches potential sample size to ascertain if it meets eligibility for selection and/or utilisation (Guest et al., 2006).

The sample size applied in qualitative research methods is frequently smaller than that used in quantitative research methods (Charmaz, 2006). This is based on the proposition that qualitative research method is naturally concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of a concept or phenomenon and is focused on meaning (specifically heterogeneities in meaning), which is often based on the why and how of a specific issue, situation, phenomenon, setting or set of social interactions. Qualitative method is not really concerned with generalising findings as quantitative method does; it does not tend to rely on testing hypothesis either (Saunders et al., 2009). As such, the goal of semi-structured interviews (even in-depth interview) is to create "categories from the data and then to analyse relationships between categories" while focusing on how the "lived experience" (Charmaz, 1990, p. 1162) of research participants can be understood. There has been debate around what sample size is and the right size for a piece of research (Silverman, 2006). Most scholars (Mason, 2010; Silverman, 2006) argue that saturation is the most important issue to think about when considering appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Charmaz (2006) maintains that the issue of sample size can be addressed when new data does no longer provide additional insights into what is being research on or shies away from developing theoretical categories. Therefore, the sample size used in this thesis was applied to satisfactorily analyse data qualitatively and to avoid the pitfall of needlessly gathering a large sample size (Ivanova, 2017).

Purposive (judgemental) sampling encourages selecting cases – stakeholders whose views will be sought – to gain a rich understanding of the relationship between CSR and sustainable development and make possible answering main research question of this study. Accordingly, Saunders et al. (2009, p. 237) note that ''this form of sample is often used when working with very small samples such as … when you want to select cases that are particularly informative …''. Patton (2015) emphasises this point by saying it leads to information-rich sampling. The aim here was to gain an in-depth knowledge and perspectives of stakeholders affected by MNC's CSR practices regarding sustainable development (Silverman, 2006). Similar approach has been adopted in prior literature on CSR, sustainability and stakeholder engagement (see Hennchen, 2014; Joutsenvirta, 2011; Belal & Roberts, 2010).

Additionally, snowball sampling technique was used given the constraints to identify members of the desired target population, which is one of the main constraints in research on CSR in developing countries as well as the sensitivity of the subject under investigation (Elmogla, 2009). This process was also applied, for example, when the researcher wanted to ascertain who will actually offer best insights into the CSR practices of MNCs. Accordingly, this process was therefore employed to:

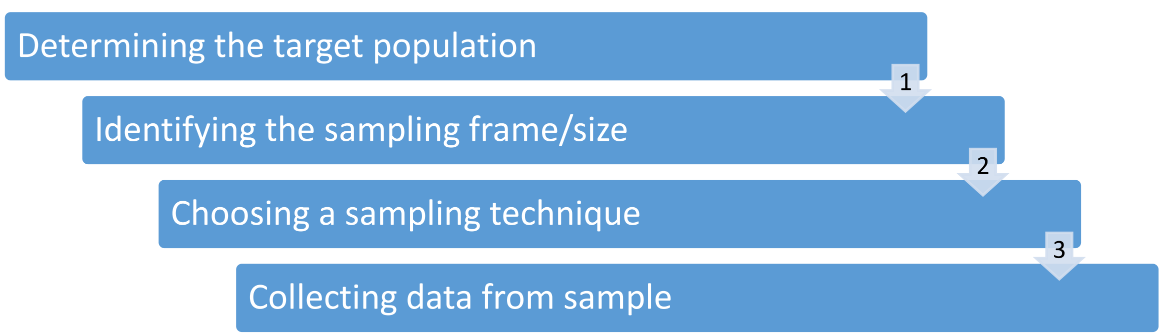
- To enable individuals to identify further individuals (or cases)
- To make contact with one or two individuals in the target population
- To ask identified individuals to identify further or new individuals
- To have a manageable sample (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 240).

Subsequently, the researcher contacted the participants identified through snowballing technique explaining the research objectives warranting access.

5.11: Target population and procedure

Research population refers to a large group of people or objects, in which a piece of research inquiry is focused on (Saunders et al., 2009). Robson (2007) defined target population as a group or set of individuals or objects with some common defining features, which a researcher can identify to research on. Target population is the main districts in Sierra Leone: Freetown, Bo, Kenema and Makeni districts. Narrowing down of research population to four main districts dovetails with judgemental technique (Silverman, 2006). This process resulted in identifying the population size vital for data gathering. The target population (sample size) is the stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995) – academics/consultants/experts, NGOs, government functionaries, community members (including chiefs, youth president, community opinion leaders, and youth leaders) – in the major regions, whose views are relevant to socially construct the relationship between CSR and sustainable development (see Table 6.3 for details**)**. Also, these participants are directly or indirectly affected by the operations of MNCs in Sierra Leone. Figure 5.4 illustrates sampling procedure adopted. Sample in second phase of data collection (post-Ebola) included academics/consultants, managers, employees, NGOs, CSOs, government functionaries, members of parastatals, community members (including chiefs, youth president, community opinion leaders, and youth leaders). Table 6.3 has details of participants in phase two of data collection. The intention to widen the pool of the sample size was to dig deeper into CSR and sustainable development nexus by exploring triangulated, corresponding views from multiple perspectives for validity and reliability (Silverman, 2006). As noted by Wiethaus (2007) in qualitative research, there is no consensus or formula for determining a sample size, which can increase or decrease validity. Nevertheless, the researcher was mainly interested in doing justice to the richness of the qualitative data (Silvermnan, 2006).

Figure 5.4: Sampling procedure



Source: The Researcher (2019) Modified from Wilson (2006) and Churchill & Iacobucci (2002)

5.12: Data collection strategy – documents

Documents are data in the public domain and made available online, which can be publicly accessed. The use of documentary sources to understand organisational behaviour has been acknowledged in existing literature on CSR, management studies and organisational behaviour

(Unerman, 2000). As Bebbington (1999) argues documents are “picture of reality’’ (p. 197). It has been contended that documents shed light on the aspects of organisational behaviour and practices that organisations will not want to reveal (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). They are therefore considered as plausible and valid means of understanding organisational actions such as MNCs in Sierra Leone (Moorman & Miner, 1998). Furthermore, documents do not merely mirror; they also construct social reality (Cowton, 1998). To this end, documents are now regarded as platforms on which social reality can be constructed and represented.

For example, Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006) identified how the raw data from organisational documents (and interview transcripts) helped in the identification of dominant overarching themes, which captured the issue of performance feedback in the self-assessment of nursing practice in Australia. Similar approach is adopted by Angers & Machtmes (2005), in which documents were used as part of an ethnographic case study exploring the context, beliefs, and practices of middle school teachers. Documents are commonly considered as authoritative by researchers (Dey, 2007) since they are externally produced, and can enhance validity as well as comparison between traditional sources such as interviews, questionnaires and observation (Saunders et al., 2009). For this study, documents from four organisations including Christian Aid, Human Rights Watch, the Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL) and Oxfam were used.

Therefore, triangulation of documents and other data sources used foregrounds validity of findings and conclusion. This process resonates with multi-method approach based on combination of documents, interviews and focus group. As generally known (Saunders et al., 2012), cross-sectional studies can be realised via use of documents (Unerman & Bebbington, 2007), which seek to offer insights into concepts such as CSR or sustainable development (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). One major criticism against documentary source is reliability issue. Nevertheless, such reliability limitation is mitigated when data from such source are triangulated against other multiple sources of evidence from, for example, interviews and focus groups used here. Therefore, given the qualitative nature of this thesis, documents alone were deemed insufficient to generate robust data that can be used for empirical analysis as well as sound findings and conclusion (Silverman, 2006). Thus, using interviews and focus group helped in arriving at ‘‘rich data’’ (Saunders et al., 2009) as respondents individualised their thoughts and interacted for more insightful data collection (Berg & Lune, 2012). However, as noted by Platt (1981), circumstances may arise when a document is in the hands of a person or organisation with vested interest in an issue, for example CSR, which could affect the authenticity of such document (Mogalakwe, 2006). Platt (1981) argues that this situation necessitates close scrutiny of documents to ensure they are reflective of the ‘‘truth’’ being investigated. In response to this possible criticism, other sources as have been highlighted above were triangulated with documents.

5.13: Data collection strategy – interview

According to Saunders et al. (2009) an interview is a purposeful interaction and discussion between two or more people that helps a researcher to gather valid, specific and reliable data that is relevant to his or her research aim and objectives. Such interviews could take different forms. Different forms of interview have been identified including *respondent* (*participant*) interview, *informant* interview, *standard interview, non-standard interview, structured interview*, *semi-structured* and *unstructured* interview (Saunders et al., 2009; Robson, 2007). The researcher adopted *semi-structured* interview process in gathering data. Accordingly, Flick has noted that ‘‘[s]emi-structured interviews, in particular, have attracted interest and are widely used … than … questionnaire’’ (p. 76). Semi-structured interview allows flexibility. As stated by Saunders et al. (2009) in this data collection strategy, the researcher will have a list of themes and questions to consider, although this may vary from an interviewee to interviewee. Thus, although the researcher had a list of themes to be explored based on prior literature, knowledge of CSR issues in Sierra Leone, these were slightly varied from one interviewee to the other but the researcher ensured the themes were maintained throughout the interview sessions. No matter how data collection instrument is varied, the researcher maintains focus to achieve the overall aim of research.

As a people’s lived life is not observable by others and not readily available to individuals, interviewing seeks to engage subjects directly in a conversation with the researcher in order to gather a first-person explanation of the participant’s social actualities (Silverman, 2006). Alvesson (2003) refers to this process as (semi-structured) qualitative interview, which is undertaken to gain rich understanding of a phenomenon through an interviewee’s personal perspective. Additionally, interviewing process enables the research participants go beyond the superficial layers of their experience so as to generate informative, novel accounts of the topic of interest (Kvale, 2007). As opposed to most quantitative researches that are essentially limited to thin description of issues and phenomena by way of distributions, frequencies and statistical patterns indicating relationships between ideas or constructs (Alvesson, 2003), qualitative inquiry includes participants’ intentions and motivations, scenic details, and the web of social relationships in which events took place and individuals took action.

For interviews to be representative of its promise as an avenue of providing insights into individual’s lived experience as well as its meaning, data generated needs to be rich in a way that it lends themselves to thick description (Ituma & Simpson, 2007). Thick description aims to demonstrate human behaviour in a manner that not only takes the social and physical context into consideration, but also the actors’ intentionality (Silverman, 2006). In this process, the meaning and significance of behaviours, actions or events are made accessible to individuals or readers. Thus, rich data, which is the hallmark of qualitative analysis, are often viewed as fundamental to lending credibility. This is one of the persuasive strengths of qualitative inquiry (Saunders et al., 2009). Hence, rich data is considered as imparting intimate understanding and knowledge of the social context or phenomenon of interest.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face. Face-to-face interview is a better format to conduct interview as it affords opportunity to understand emotional/psychological aspects of interviewees (Saunders et al., 2009). Additionally, due to poor technological development in Sierra Leone, it can be expected that most of the respondents would not have reliable access to technology that will facilitate teleconferencing and/or online interviews. Thus, feasible interview format was face-t-face. One of the main advantages of face-to-face interview over telephone or Internet based interviews is that the researcher is at a vantage point to understand ‘‘ambience of knowledge’’ associated with answers given to questions through body language, tonality, which is not possible via other formats (Silverman, 2006). Also, the questions in face-to-face interview could be structured or unstructured; semi-structured or in-depth in nature (Saunders et al., 2009). The semi-structured interview was applied in this research and was carried out face-to-face, makes for clarification of questions by the interviewer, while on the other hand the responses are also properly understood (Bryman, 2007). The choice of approach to conduct these interviews was influenced by factors including cost, convenience, duration, and these were taken into consideration with the interviewees as part of negotiations (Silverman, 2006). Interview administration was guided by an interview schedule **(**see Appendix V) that comprises general questions, which prompted other questions as the interview progressed (Silverman, 2006).

The researcher also sought the consent of interviewees prior to collecting data as well as explained the purpose of the research, as was the case when the study was piloted. As noted by Edwards & Holland (2013), it is appropriate to seek the participants' consent to participation and to explain the reason for interviews so as to avoid deception. Notwithstanding the interview schedule and given the flexibility of semi-structured method adopted, the participants were also asked to raise additional issues that relate CSR, sustainable development, sustainability and national development resulting in an illumination of ideas and issues that might be relevant to the research. Therefore, the following points are central to piloting the study:

- To make the process dialogic and interactional so as to encourage more insights and nuanced perspectives from participants outside the scheduled interview instrument
- A belief that knowledge is contextual and situated, necessitating the researcher to ensure that appropriate context is investigated creating situated knowledge
- An understanding that meaning is created in interaction with participants, which can be realised by means of knowledge co-creation (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

All interviews were electronically recorded with participants' consent for ethics, although notes were taken during the process in order not to leave out any salient points in the process before transcription was done (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Drawing on Alvesson's (2003) prior grouping from romanticist, neo-positivist and localist classifications, Qu & Dunmay (2011) provided further insights into rigorous and critical consideration of interview (including focus group) as data collection instrument(s). The present research adopted romantic approach; hence, it emphasises closeness to participants (interviewees/discussants) and interactivity (Saunders et al., 2009; Alvesson, 2003). As argued by Saunders et al. (2009), it discourages an interviewer's personal opinions and rather foregrounds exploring participants' ''talks'' and opinions, which are central to interpretivism (Silverman, 2006). This is at the heart of this research, since it allows participants to express personal opinions and feelings, which thus present a true and realistic picture that would not have been possible applying other traditional methods (Bryman & Bell, 2011). From an epistemological perspective, this process indicates that reality is socially constructed (Georg & Fussel, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, stakeholders' ''talks'' were considered as an expression of their inner world that is gathered through interviews so as to create a subjectively framed reality.

5.14: Data collection strategy – focus group

Focus group can be defined as a collection of people/individuals randomly selected by the researcher to deliberate and comment on, from personal experience, the issue or phenomenon under investigation (Gibbs, 1997). Focus group was adopted to supplement data that was not possible to extract from interviewees and respondents (Zikmund, 2000). As noted by Greenbaum (2003) its interactive process can lead to a consensus view about a phenomenon. Amongst other advantages, Zikmund (2000) further observed that focus group produces synergy as well as enhances snowballing and stimulation, which entails bringing out a discussant's perceptions by the group process. According to Saunders et al. (2009), it is conventionally used to supplement data and/or get alternative voices that would complement or add new perspective to an inquiry. As noted by Krueger & Casey (2000) focus group facilitates gathering diverse but corresponding views and opinions aimed at reinforcing ''data saturation'' from interviews (or other data collection strategy used including documents) (Silverman, 2006). In some instances (see Caillaud & Flick, 2017; Campbell, Foulis, Maimane & Sibiya, 2005), results from focus group and interviews may not be quite differentiated, however, the key themes evoked by respondents in both contexts may be presented together or differently (Caillaud & Flick, 2017).

Focus group permitted discussants to offer their assessment of a specific context, for example, how CSR impacts sustainable development rather than being persuaded by the researcher's (moderator's) bias or predetermined opinion given its interactive process (Saunders et al., 2009).

In addition, Saunders et al. (2009) argue that it can be instrumental in identifying trend in thought and parallel ideas without coercion from the moderator. Although there are other forms of focus group including dual moderator focus group, two-way focus group, mini focus group, duelling moderator focus group, respondent moderator focus group and online focus groups, single focus group is adopted in this thesis. The main feature of single focus group is the interactive discussion of a subject matter by a group of participants with the facilitator in one place. Nine (9) focus group discussants were involved in the exercise.

Furthermore, similar to phase one data collection process, the researcher employed semi-structured interview process wherein the participants were asked a set of common questions, which prompted answers pertinent to the research objectives. Following Onkila (2016), this process helped to enhance the ‘‘dependability’’ of data gathered. Questions were framed based on extant literature (Jimali, 2010; Crowther & Aras, 2008) and sustainability blueprint prescribed in the SDGs (see Table 2.5). Like interviews, questions asked respondents enabled the researcher to seek confirmation or clarification on any apparent inconsistency, in different instances (Guba & Lincoln, 1985), for example, where clarification was needed about the nature of CSR approaches and meeting the SDGs (KPMG, 2017) through poverty alleviation, philanthropy and environmental protection. This process further helped in arriving at ‘‘information-rich’’ sample (Patton, 2015). After 39 interviews had been conducted (first and second phase interviews), further 9 focus group interviews, involving internal and external stakeholders (see appendix VI), were undertaken to avoid bias and to ensure ‘‘data saturation’’ was reached as well as confirmation and dependability (Saunders et al., 2009; Silverman, 2006).

5.15: Addressing bias and data saturation issues

Data from 9 focus group discussants and 39 interviewees was gathered as the researcher thought that considering views of external stakeholders alone could elicit bias. Additionally, it was done to check for ‘‘necessary similarities and contrasts required by the emerging theory’’ (Dey, 1990, p. 30). Following 9 additional focus group interviews, it was clear that there were no new emerging themes as it was observed that emerging themes were recurrent and that there was unlikeness of extracting more themes if more interviews were carried out (Silverman, 2006). Moreover, focus group interviews were undertaken to enhance ‘‘reported consensus’’ (Saunders et al., 2009) in view of the constraints to gather more data following Ebola outbreak during phase one of data collection and to avoid what has been identified as ‘‘investigator bias’’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) as elements of the categories and themes were robustly determined and developed (Urquhart, 2013). Furthermore, additional data collection was undertaken so as to increase validity and reliability of the data as well as to ensure that important themes were not missed out in relation to SDGs. This approach is consistent with what Guba & Lincoln (1985) refer to as ‘‘confirmation’’ echoing sampling saturation (Silverman, 2006). At this stage, data saturation was reached making the process empirically sound (Saunders et al., 2009; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

5.16: Data validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are vital issues in conducting research (Creswell, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Validity can be defined as the accuracy of a piece of research to ascertain whether methods, techniques, and approaches employed have association with the proposed phenomena or issues considered in the research. It further takes into cognisance consistency of study findings (Roberts-Holmes, 2011). Validity and reliability were considered by not being biased in the questions that respondents were asked including being consistent with the overall aim of the thesis (Saunders et al., 2009).

As stated by Easterby-Smith et al. (2011) research reliability/validity is characterised by the following:

- Replication of findings and/or results
- Comparableness about results and/or findings
- Correspondence in thought and pattern in prior research
- Transparency applied in making sense of data

The reliability and validity of the data (and research tools) used for the current study was confirmed by the researcher by ensuring the consistency of the responses from respondents across different questions asked (Easterby-Smith et al., 2011). Also, given the similarities and associations between different data sources used, it was apparent that data was reliable and valid (Silverman, 2006). This process further enhanced the validity of the research tools as measured by the areas covered by prior literature reviewed earlier including data gathered from documentary sources.

5.17: Data transcription and coding

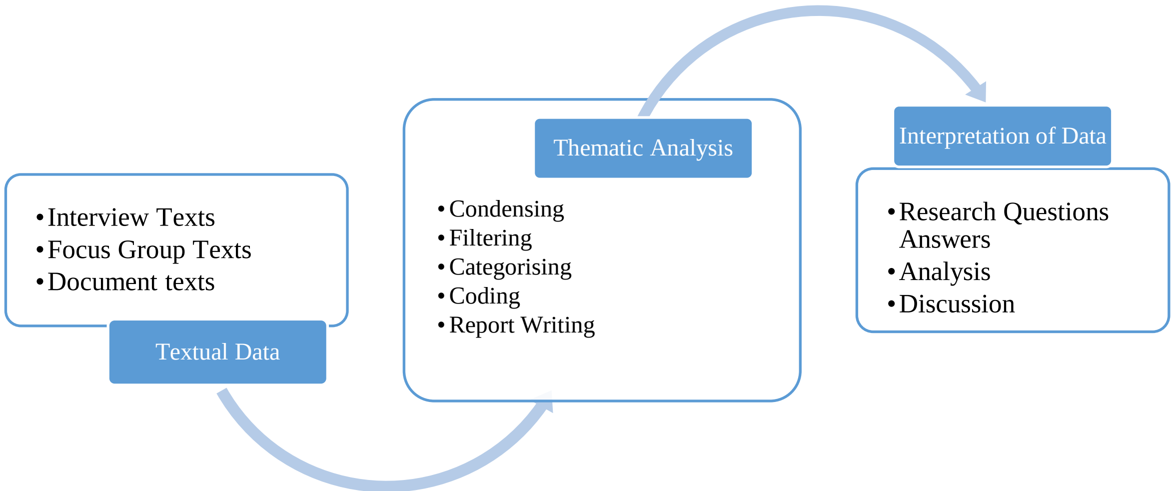
All the interview and focus group sessions were electronically recorded to capture word-for-word respondents' exact words or ''talks'' (Silverman, 2006) and with their permission for ethics (Roberts-Holmes, 2011). Data was transcribed manually by iteratively going back and forth data and theory to make sense of research with the purpose of achieving study's overall aim (Robson, 2007). This process was adopted because the researcher wanted to immerse himself in the data in order to extract subtle nuances and differences, which could be omitted applying qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) – electronic analysis process – such as Nvivo (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). After the transcription stage, the documents were sent back to the respondents so as to ensure their exact words and perspectives were captured and to avoid misinterpretation and misrepresentation (Saunders et al., 2009). At this phase, coding had been initialised. It aided in sorting, compiling and labelling data, and particularly, to develop a storyline. This stage also allowed the researcher to familiarise himself with the data and organise it and to generate initial codes. This process also allowed the researcher to triangulate the data with more certainty and conviction.

Coding was based on insights from extant literature on CSR and sustainability and related phenomena as well as SDGs. To facilitate effective coding, the researcher also created a codebook. Transcripts were coded from the two phases of interviewing undertaken to generate a list of themes and sub-themes. The coding framework was meticulously created by brainstorming between the researcher and supervisors to avoid selectivity, which allowed semantics contained in the data to naturally frame codes (Soundararajan & Brown, 2010). The codes were discussed by the researcher and the supervisory team and modified. The researcher further engaged the services of two researchers, who have written on CSR, sustainable development and related concepts, which helped to compare notes, and to identify areas of similarity in themes including where there was overlap (Javadi & Zarea, 2016).

5.18: Data analysis procedure

This thesis employs TTA in analysing qualitative data. This process is focused on gathering data, classifying data into categories, framing data into stories and eventually writing report. Figure 5.5 offers more explanation of TTA applied. TTA is a process of detecting, scrutinising and reporting themes (patterns) within a text corpus or data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process is comparable to ‘‘thematic thinking’’, which explains the relation of phenomena or things that are externally related but co-occurring or interacting in space and time. As observed by Bowen, Edwards & Cattell (2012) it emphasises a qualitative method investigating research data so as to understand and represent the lived experiences of participants as they engage and encounter with their lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Braun & Clarke (2006) maintain that thematic (textual) analysis is a qualitative data analysis technique in its own right and separate from related analytical approaches such as grounded theory, interpretive phenomenological analysis, content analysis and narrative analysis (Edwards et al., 2012). TAA has been applied in a variety of disciplines and contexts, for example, corporate responsibility, CSR, sustainability and sustainable development research (see Tate, Ellram & Kirchoff, 2010). Central to TAA is search for themes in text corpuses (Saunders et al., 2009). Themes signify patterned meaning or responses within text corpuses or data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes are generally a form of consistent meaning or idea embedded in text corpus that help a researcher to recognise or understand related ideas and how they come together to generate overall meaning or central thought of data set. A theme naturally captures main thoughts/ideas about the data regarding research questions or objectives.

Figure 5.5: Thematic textual analysis process



Source: The Researcher (2019)

5.19: Operationalising data analysis process

Braun & Clarke (2006) have provided key ways of making sense of data including the following:

- Researcher familiarising his or herself with data set or text corpuses
- Generating initial code to operationalise analysis
- Searching for patterned themes and/or thoughts
- Reviewing themes
- Defining/interpreting themes
- Naming/labelling themes

The above process has relationship with Saunders et al.'s (2009) benchmarks for qualitative data presentation: categorising data: summarising/condensing meaning; grouping/categorising meanings; and structuring/ordering meaning through narratives. The process entails re-reading texts by going back and forth theories, methodology and texts corpuses. In view of potential limitations of qualitative methodology, the researcher set certain parameters to fully read themes that border on CSR, sustainable development, sustainability and above all, how MNCs can contribute to sustainable development in the Sierra Leonean context (Datzberger, 2014). In actualising this intention, the steps taken to generate themes included asking the below questions:

- What types of themes are to be generated in the text corpuses that link to CSR and sustainable development?
- How do themes in text corpuses work to shape meaning in relation to CSR and sustainable development?
- Are there relationships between the themes and study's overall aim and objectives?

This research employed the six-phase thematic content analysis as provided by Braun & Clarke (2006) in organising analysis, which Graebner, Martin & Roundy (2012) recommend is appropriate for inductive (and exploratory) analysis. This process facilitated a rigorous data analysis procedure in which relationship was established between the theories underpinning CSR, sustainable development, sustainability and SDGs and related concepts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, this process enabled a rigorous data analysis technique whereby links were made between the claims by the researcher, theories and empirical data. Initially, the researcher started with open coding by way of familiarising himself with the data and carefully reading and re-reading the transcript. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 509) refer to this procedure as ''the disaggregation of data into unit''. Next, the researcher began to examine and identify main issues, ideas, and conceptualisations about CSR, sustainable development, sustainability and stakeholder theory, which were considered framing or informing the ''semantic content of the data'' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84). These are direct quotes or ''talks' of the respondents (and documentary sources) that can help to make sense of issues in interpretive procedure (Whittemore, 2001). The units of coding were individual statements by respondents (Silverman, 2006). This process gave rise to the creation of a large number of codes. Correspondingly, coding schemes were created by meticulously going line by line data collection instruments and data to form categories (Soundararajan & Brown, 2010). Next stage corresponds with axial coding – the development of categories based on shared features between codes. A number of the codes, which had been developed previously were considered to be dealing with the same issues and phenomena (sharing similar elements) and thus combined to form categories. Examples of categories include <u>exploitation</u>, <u>inequality</u>, <u>engagement</u>, <u>philanthropy</u>, <u>resources</u>, <u>stakeholding</u>, <u>stakeholder</u>, <u>partnership</u>, <u>domination</u>, <u>responsibility,</u> <u>accountability</u>, <u>legitimacy</u>, <u>power,</u> <u>environmentalism</u>, <u>(under)development</u>, <u>relative power</u>, <u>CSR benchmarks</u>, <u>(un)sustainable</u>

practices, stakeholder salience, normative practice, stakeholder management, lax regulation, ethical responsibility, economic responsibility, legal responsibility, discretionary/philanthropic responsibility, social justice, social entrepreneurship, poverty eradication, social obligations, and unequal engagement processes.

Following this, selective coding was applied, which aided in further reviewing of the categories by examining and scrutinising relationship between them with the aim of integrating, developing and naming/labelling core categories – (merged categories) – themes and sub-themes. By merging categories that have comparable ideas, 10 merged categories (sub-themes) were identified and further reduced to three main themes for ease of analysis and to gain a deeper understating of the emergent key areas concerning stakeholders' perceptions of MNCs CSR and relationship with sustainable development (see details of main and sub-themes in Table 6.5). Main themes include meaning of CSR, meaning of sustainable development and CSR strategies and motivation.

5.20: Ethical considerations and implications for research

Ethics entails guidelines, principles and system, which regulate or govern a researcher's conduct (Roberts-Holmes, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). As a branch of philosophy, it focused on the standards for judging something as ''right'' or ''wrong''. Ethical issues in the present study deal with protecting respondents' privacy, their informed consent, respect for anonymity and confidentiality of participants as well as reason for collecting data and its use (Silverman, 2006). Ethics is a vital issue in research (Saunders et al., 2009) as it helps to give research findings validity. This thesis is carried out by ensuring that Cardiff Metropolitan University's (CMU's) guidelines and procedures provided for ethical practice were upheld.

Following CMU's guidelines, the researcher ensured that appropriate codes of conduct that do not conflict with the rights and privacy of participants and their anonymity as well as those of organisations used in the study were applied. For example, all interviewees were duly informed of the research purpose, and they voluntary consented to give their opinions. Respondents were informed that they could withdraw at any point in the process and they eventually gave their informed consent (Robson, 2007). According to Robson (2007) this process is considered as ‘‘informed consent’’, which helps in avoiding deception. Accordingly, Roberts-Holmes (2011) observed that ethical process ensures study participants are fully aware of the research objectives and purpose and the right to withdraw at any point. As indicated by Koch & Harrington (1998) ethical matters can cause problems when building power relations in order to create a balanced and mutually respectful relationship between the researcher and his/her participants. Also, issue of research reflexivity was put into consideration by ensuring that the researcher’s personal knowledge and background did not affect what is being investigated as well as methods of judgement (Robson, 2007). McLennan (1992) defines reflexivity as a process of ‘‘increasing self-questioning’’ (p. 344) and being self-critical for valid, quality interpretive research (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). Also, beyond the pre-set data collection instrument, participants were asked to raise additional issues that are connected with CSR and sustainable development to further dig deep into issues being investigated (Nolan, Macfarlane & Cartmel, 2013). Participants were also told that pseudonyms would be used to represent their identities. Additionally, piloting the study ensured that ethical methodology was applied in order to gather appropriate data that will inform findings and to confirm participants that had good knowledge of the phenomena being investigated (Saunders et al., 2009).

5.21: Research limitations and delimitation

This research has some limitations, particularly in terms of research design. The first limitation is the coverage and selection bias (Bethlehem, 2010), which could be linked to the sampling criteria applied. However, this was required given the nature of the study. Secondly, the study is limited by qualitative exploration, which might restrict generalising findings. But in avoiding this, the present study largely relies on data triangulation, which has been explained in preceding sections. Triangulating data from interview, focus group and documents enabled the researcher to rise beyond potential limitation as it helped in drawing out similarities and congruence existing between phenomena or different data sources (Berg & Lune, 2012). The study is demarked by focusing on stakeholders in selected areas in Sierra Leone, and justification for selecting participants has been provided in the preceding sections.

5.22: Chapter summary

This chapter has considered the methodological design adopted in the thesis as well as provided information on study's overall aim and research questions. It has also highlighted research method applied, which is qualitative. Qualitative method used takes into consideration words to interpret triangulated data from interview, focus group and documentary sources to read stakeholders' perceptions of how MNCs can use CSR to contribute to sustainable development in Sierra Leone. Interpretivist research paradigm is employed to tease out how talks in data collected and analysed can help to understand the relationship between CSR and sustainable development. Given the socially constructed nature of the thesis, subjectivist perspective was applied, which this chapter explains. Furthermore, attempt has been made in this chapter to locate the present research within CSR-sustainable development link in the context of prior literature on the phenomena of CSR, sustainable development, sustainability and related issues. Research axiology has also been delineated, which is value-laden, hence, the researcher is not separated from the research.

Data collection strategies which included interview, focus group and documents have been provided as well as rationale for using them and triangulation. Also, method of data analysis, TAA, has been provided. Research choice/approach which is inductive given the preoccupation of the thesis to build theory rather than test it, has been provided. In addition, this chapter has provided insights into research sampling and target population and procedure including justification for piloting the study. Issues of bias and data saturation have been highlighted in the chapter as well as rationale for data validity and reliability. The process of data transcription including coding and data analysis procedure has been presented and how data analysis was operationalised. Finally, ethical considerations and implications for research have been presented as well as research limitations and delimitation. Next chapter – chapter six – will focus on data presentation and findings.

Chapter Six
Interview, Focus Group and Document Data Presentation and Analysis

6.1: Introduction

This chapter builds on chapter five, which is the methodology chapter. It provides profiles of interviewees and focus group participants as well as information on documentary data used in the thesis. There were 15 interviewees in phase one; while there were 24 interviewees and 9 focus group discussants in phase two of data collection – during Ebola outbreak and after. In total, 39 participants were interviewed. The profiles of participants are presented in Tables, 6.1, 6.3 and 6.4. Documents from four organisations including Christian Aid, Human Rights Watch, the Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL) and Oxfam were used. However, before undertaking data presentation and analysis, explanation on piloting study is given.

6.2: Piloting study

As noted by Junyong (2017), pilot project can be compared to ‘‘feasibility study’’ carried out before actual data collection. Piloting this study ensured that the data collected was relevant as well as based on the overall research aim and objectives of the thesis (Saunders et al., 2009; Robson, 2007). Besides, the pilot project was undertaken to determine the practical application of the data collection schedule. It equally enabled the researcher to have a trial run in preparing the final data collection tool (Patton, 2015). For example, it was during the pilot study that the researcher identified gatekeepers and ‘‘knowledge agents’’ (Idemudia, 2017, p. 7) i.e. participants, whose views are pertinent for understanding the phenomena being explored, and this helped in adjusting data collection instrument accordingly. Bryman & Bell (2007) are of the opinion that ascertaining the relevance of data collection instrument prior to actual data collection enriches the reliability of data collection instrument. The pilot study was beneficial in the following ways:

- It aided in verifying whether the data collection tools/strategies were valid and feasible;
- It facilitated ascertaining whether the respondents were fit for purpose;

- It helped in ascertaining whether data to be collected was potentially result-oriented; and
- It enabled restructuring of the of final data collection tools.

Before undertaking the analysis, a synopsis of the pilot work carried out is given below; this demonstrates insight into what shaped the research strategy taken.

The criterion for sampling was non-probability sampling (purposive sampling) (Guest et al., 2006), which is based on respondents' literacy level and their connections with MNCs in Sierra Leone either by having worked for them or currently working for them or affected by their operation. These criteria were considered important as it was considered these respondents have fairly good knowledge of the operations of MNCs as well as literate enough to express their views about the companies' activities. According to Hussey & Hussey (1997) good knowledge of the subject under investigation by participants facilitates gathering relevant and credible data. This positively impacted on the quality, validity and the nature of data collected. The process also served as scrutiny, subjectivity and validity measures towards the findings as well as confirmed the feasibility of data collection procedures (Silverman, 2006).

Pilot study was carried out in two phases: pre-Ebola and post-Ebola phases. Pilot study in the pre-Ebola phase was undertaken between November 2014 and January 2015. The researcher made it clear to potential pilot project participant that the exercise was basically for academic purposes and that their confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. The researcher embarked on pilot study involving one participant, who has worked in Bo, Mekani, Kenema and Freetown, which was considered to be sufficient as a consequence of detailed and in-depth information gathered from the piloting as well as the constraints of Ebola outbreak. The interviewee in the pilot helped to identify 15 participants that were interviewed eventually. Following pilot study, 2 interviewees, who helped to identify others, were identified by judgemental approach (snowball technique) through the contact of the pilot interviewee, whom had worked in close connection with the companies for a reasonable length of time (15 years) and understands the context (Saunders et al., 2009). The responses gathered from the unstructured pilot interview were considered insightful and helpful and consequently impacted on the adjustment of the final interview schedule (see Appendix V).

During post-Ebola data collection phase, both interviews and focus group interviews were conducted, to further dig deeper into stakeholders' perceptions of MNCs CSR activities in relation to sustainable development. The rationale for this has been given in chapter five. Pilot study was undertaken in March and April 2018 involving 9 participants. It was during the pilot that I identified interviewees and discussants that helped in gaining access to the right person to interview eventually. For example, it was during pilot study that I identified the persons that have insights into environmental sustainability issues as well as responsible for key decisions about these issues. As with the first phase of interviews, the second phase involved 24 face-to-face semi-structured interviewees with stakeholders, who have adequate knowledge and understanding of MNC's operation in Sierra Leone (see chapter five and Table 6.3 for detail). Piloting the study ensured that possible obstacles to data collection were minimised and/or avoided. It also aided adjusting and modifying unstructured pilot interviewing process to structured one, which was used in eventual data collection. For instance, the researcher wanted to include personal observation, but this procedure was discarded after pilot study in view of the feedback gathered. In addition, questions incorporated in focus group interviews as well as semi-structured interviews were refined and fine-tuned during pilot study to accommodate SDGs issues that were not previously addressed in phase one of data collection. Additional questions such as motivation for CSR and approaches put in place by MNCs to facilitate sustainable development were refined accordingly.

6.3: Introduction to the findings

The findings in this chapter are based on data collected from 39 interviewees (first and second phases involving internal and external stakeholders) and 9 focus group discussants (3 internal and 6 external stakeholders).

6.3.1: Interview data collection – phase one

Data was collected between December 2015 and February 2016. A total of 15 interviews were carried out and lasted between 45 and 50 minutes. The interviewees had upwards of four years' experience working across Sierra Leone in the communities (Bo, Freetown, Kenema, and Mekani) as well as have direct contact with MNCs (London Mining & Sierra Rutile Limited, etc.) and other stakeholders: Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Food Security (MAFFS) and Sierra Leone Investment & Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA). Table 6.1 has details of interviewees in phase one of data collection. Additionally, the researcher was working and living in Sierra Leone, which helped in gathering data.

Table 6.1: Interviewees' profile (phase one)

Serial Number	**Pseudonyms**	**Responsibility/Position**	**Gender**	**Experience**
1	Bo01	Youth President	M	N/A
2	Bo02	Community Opinion Leader	M	N/A
3	Bo03	University professor & Community Development Expert	M	24 Years
4	Fr01	Community Development Expert	M	N/A
5	Fr02	Community Project Officer London Mining	M	15 Years
6	Fr03	Consultant/CSR Expert	F	12 Years
7	Fr04	Project Officer Malen Land Owners & Users Association (MALOA)	M	12 Years
8	Fr05	Community Opinion Leader	M	N/A
9	Fr06	Community Relations Officer Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Food Security (MAFFS)	F	16 Years
10	Me01	Community Chief	M	N/A
11	Me02	Sustainable Development & Social/environmental Impact Assessment Lead Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development (SLeCAD)	M	18 Years
12	Me03	Sustainable Initiative Officer Sierra Rutile Limited	F	16 Years

13	Ke01	Partnership & Development Head Sierra Leone Investment & Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA)	M	12 Years
14	Ke02	Community Opinion Leader	M	N/A
15	Ke03	Community Development Officer World Bank	M	18 Years

6.3.2: Interview data collection – phase two

Following pilot study, data was collected between August and September 2018. Interviewees were undertaken in 12 communities within the lease areas in Sierra Leone (Addax Bioenergy lease area in the Bombali and Tonkolili Districts, Northern Province; Gold Tree lease area in the Kailahum District, Eastern Province; Sierra Rutile lease area, SAC lease area in the Pujehun District, Southern Province; and SLA lease area in the Port Loko District, Northern Province), where five MNCs in the mining and agriculture sectors are operating. The agricultural companies are Addax & Orynx Group Bioenergy, Socfin and Goldtree; while the mining companies included Sierra Rutile and Koidu Holdings. Table 4.1 gives details of the five organisations focused in this study and sectors – agriculture and mining. Interviews were also conducted in the capital city, Freetown, Western Province, with key informants representing: government ministries (Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry); civil society organisations (Centre for Good Governance and Accountability, CGGA); parastatals (National Protected Areas Authority, NPAA); and NGOs (Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone, HRDN-SL). Table 6.2 gives details of organisations used.

Table 6.2: Organisations concerned about CSR for sustainable development

Organisations	**Classification**
Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources	Government ministry
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	Government ministry
Centre for Good Governance and Accountability	Civil society organisation (CSO)

National Protected Areas Authority (NPAA)	Parastatal
The Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL)	NGO

Additionally, the researcher's knowledge about Sierra Leone's historical and social-cultural milieu helped in gathering appropriate data to supplement data previously gathered in the first phase. Interviews lasted between 55 and 68 minutes. As with first phase, participants' consent was sought and reason for research explained for ethical process. Participants' confidentiality was also assured and they were told that their honest opinions were sought (Silverman, 2006). In addition to participants from MNCs used, Table 6.3 represents participants from MNCs as well as government ministries, civil society organisations (CSOs), parastatals and NGOs that also participated in the process. 24 interviewees were undertaken as well as 9 focus group involving 3 internal and 6 external stakeholders. Pseudonyms are used to represent research participants for anonymity, confidentiality and research ethics (Silverman, 2006).

Table 6.3: Interviewees' profile (phase two)

Serial number	Pseudonyms	Descriptions	Responsibility/Position	Years of experience	Gender	Number
Socfin Agricultural Company Ltd. (SL)						
1	Interviewee A	Agriculture	Senior manager	13	M	2
2	Interviewee B	Agriculture	Manager	11	M	
Addax Bioenergy						
3	Interviewee C	Agriculture	Employee	9	F	2
4	Interviewee D	Agriculture	Manager	12	M	
Sierra Rutile Ltd						

5	Interviewee E	Mining	Employee	8	M	2
6	Interviewee F	Mining	Employee	9	M	
Koidu Holdings						
7	Interviewee G	Mining	Employee	8	M	1
Goldtree						
8	Interviewee H	Agriculture	Employee	3	M	1
Government Ministries						
9	Interviewee I	Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources	Senior Manager	14	M	2
10	Interviewee J	Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources	Employee	6	F	
Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)						
11	Interviewee K	Centre for Good Governance and Accountability		2	M	1
Parastatals						
12	Interviewee L	National Protected Areas Authority (NPAA)	Employee	3	F	1

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)						
13	Interviewee M	The Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL)	Employee	1	M	1
Others						
14	Interviewee N	Community member	Community member	N/A	M	1
15	Interviewee O	Community member	Community chief	5	M	1
16	Interviewee P	Community member	Community member	N/A	F	1
17	Interviewee Q	Community member	Community Opinion Leader	3	M	1
18	Interviewee R	Community member	Youth President	5	M	1
19	Interviewee S	Community member	Community member	N/A	M	1
20	Interviewee T	Community member	Community member	N/A	M	1
21	Interviewee U	Community member	Community member	N/A	M	1
22	Interviewee V	Community member	Village chief	4	M	1

23	Interviewee W	Community member	Community member	N/A	M	1
24	Interviewee X	Community member	Community member	N/A	M	1
Total Number: 24						

Key Guide:

- Interviewee A & B (Socfin Agricultural Company Ltd.)
- Interviewees C & D (Addax Bioenergy)
- Interviewees E & F (Sierra Rutile Ltd.)
- Interviewee G (Koidu Holdings)
- Interviewee H (Goldtree)
- Interviewee I & J (Government Ministries)
- Interviewee K (Civil Society Organisations, CSO)
- Interviewee L (Parastatal)
- Interviewee M (Non-Governmental Organisations, NGO)
- Interviewees N-X (Community members)

Table 6.4: Focus group discussants' profile

Serial number	Pseudonyms	Descriptions	Positions	Years of experience	Gender	Number
Socfin Agricultural Company Ltd. (SL)						
1	FGDA	Agriculture	Employee	13	M	1
Addax Bioenergy						
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Sierra Rutile Ltd						
2	FGDB		Employee	9	M	1
Kiodu Holdings						

3	FGDC			12	M	1
Goldtree						
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Others						
4	FGDD	Government Ministries	Senior Manager	14	M	1
5	FGDE	Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)	Employee	2	M	1
N/A	N/A	Parastatals	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
N/A	N/A	Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
6	FGDF	Community member	Community member	N/A	M	1
7	FGDG	Community member	Youth President	5	M	1
8	FGDH	Community member	Community member	N/A	F	1
9	FGDI	Community member	Community member	N/A	M	1
Total Number: 9						
Key Guide: Focus Group Discussants (FGDs)						

6.4: Documents

Data from three organisations that report on social, economic and environmental issues as well as related concepts in Sierra Leone from external perspective is used. They are: Christian Aid (CA), The Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL), and Human Rights Watch (HRW) (see section 5.12).

Table 6.5: Organisations used for documentary data

Serial Number	Names of Organisations	Codes	Years
1	*Christian Aid*	CA	2013, 2015
2	*The Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL)*	HRDN-SL	2015
3	*Human Rights Watch*	HRW	2014
4	*Oxfam*	OF	2015, 2015

In readiness for data analysis, data from interview, focus group and documents were transcribed manually (see chapter five for more explanation). By identifying themes in the data, which were dominant, three main themes were identified (and rationale for this has been explained in section 5.19). These main themes have 10 sub-themes (see Table 6.5 for explanation), which were subsequently analysed. These themes were developed to gain rich, nuanced understating of the emergent key areas about stakeholders' views about how MNCs can contribute to sustainable development through CSR. Analysis starts with meaning of CSR.

Table 6.6: Themes and sub-themes

Meaning of CSR		
Sub-themes	Evidence from data and literature	Contextual explanation
1. Philanthropy	This is considered as various ways and approaches through which MNCs engage in philanthropic initiatives aimed at reducing poverty, engaging with stakeholders and contributing to responsible business and environmentalism. It also entails organisational desire to promote people's welfare in communities in Sierra Leone expressed particularly through charitable donations to good causes.	This tends to denote the way respondents considered philanthropy is not quite different from what prior literature says about the concept. However, respondents' views expressed as well as evidence from documentary data seem to be a reflection of people's experience in Sierra Leone, which makes philanthropy doubtable
2. Responsible and accountable practice	This theme is focused on CSR practices aimed at addressing accountability and business responsibility for organisations to be deemed to be good corporate citizens, who are ethical and normative in their operation	This theme explores respondents' views about CSR initiatives including their normative standing. Evidence suggest that there are variations in terms of how stakeholders perceive these CSR initiatives, which in part constitutes corporate-stakeholder dilemma
Meaning of sustainable development		
Sub-themes	Description	Evidence from data
1. Community development & poverty alleviation/eradication	Sustainable development initiatives are often seen to denote rural development as well as addressing issues such as poverty alleviation/eradication	Data shows that whilst these initiatives are geared towards sustainable development there are incongruence between targets and results, which makes realisation of these targets challenging
2. Stakeholder	Central to sustainable	This theme really connects the views of

engagement and empowerment	development is to engage stakeholders in order to build local capacities and empower them to contribute to SDGs	the respondents with their experiences in relation to stakeholder engagement and empowerment. However, empirical data shows that whilst there is element of engagement in CSR initiatives to address sustainable development, there is lack of empowerment, which is fundamental to participatory, sustainable engagement
3. Inclusive, legitimate and peaceful society/institution	Sustainable development is supposed to bring inclusiveness, harmonious and peaceful society and legitimate practice	These issues have been captured by various perspectives from stakeholders as well as documentary sources. However, stakeholders stressed lack of inclusive, legitimate and peaceful society/institution
4. Stakeholder relationship and salience	Stakeholder relationship management is an important issue in managing conflict. By using their influence, stakeholders can make or mar an organisation's continual existence and its subsequent operating and financial performance. However, how salience is given to each stakeholder group can shape the nature of relationship that exists amongst stakeholders	This theme shows the nature of relationship existing among stakeholders as well as who gets more salience than the other, which is part of the continual conflict and corporate-stakeholder problem in Sierra Leone. Various respondents stressed variation in salience.
CSR strategies and motivation		
Sub-themes	Description	Evidence from data
1. Social responsible investing	Organisations are encouraged to invest part of their profit in social and environmental causes. This is called sustainable or responsible investing. It is an investment strategy that promotes both	In exploring this theme, respondents acknowledged the creation of social/environmental initiatives to promote social change through for example environmental stewardship. However, respondents expressed

	environmental/social good and ROI for social change	displeasure about the workability of these initiatives, which negatively impacts on social/environmental change. Respondents' views further imply these schemes are used to legitimise MNCs' operation to have social licence to operate
2. Environmentalism	Environmentalism is a conscious organisational action to conserve the environment and to ensure the future is preserved and to ensure a better world. Various respondents identified initiatives single-handedly undertaken by MNCs or in concert with other agencies	Respondents admitted the existence of environmentalist schemes but also emphasised the managerial motivations for their creation, which impedes effective implementation and consequent corporate-stakeholder problems
3. Adherence to contracts & agreements	Adhering to contractual agreements reached between stakeholders and MNCs is one of the main ways to legitimise organisational operation and securing social licence to operate	Evidence in the data suggests that it is not the lack of contractual agreements that is behind corporate-stakeholder problem but unethical CSR practice. This denotes going beyond these agreements. Empirical evidence suggests that obeying implicit and explicit contracts makes organisational operation ethical
4. Legitimisation	Legitimisation is the process and strategic means of providing legitimacy, which can be ideological and/or interest seeking or promotional by attaching action to social norms and values	Various perspectives by respondents stress that most of CSR projects are used for legitimisation and to gain social license by MNCs to operate

6.5: Data Analysis

Data will be presented by taking into consideration Braun & Clarke's (2006) framework, which includes the following:

- Collecting data
- Classification data into categories/classes
- Structuring data into narratives
- Writing report

After presenting data, analysis will be undertaken by applying TAA. Analysis undertaken will involve qualitative data from interviewees, focus groups and documents using TTA. TTA is used to present and analyse qualitative data (see Figure 5.4 in chapter five for detail). TTA is a process of detecting, scrutinising and reporting themes (patterns) within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Central to TAA is search for themes in text corpuses. Themes suggest patterned meaning/responses within text corpuses. They are consistent ideas or meanings enshrined in text, which help a researcher in understanding correlated ideas and how they come together in generating overarching meaning. This entails that main themes from data are identified and then subsequently explored further focusing on sub-themes. The findings will be analysed in turn. Qualitative themes from data are analysed from the lens of prior literature on CSR (Visser, 2006, 2013; Crowther & Aras, 2008; Idemudia, 2010), specifically Carroll's (1991) model, which has philanthropic, ethical, legal and economic dimensions of CSR as well as principles of SDGs.

However, it is important to re-state the research questions to be answered that will set the stage for data analysis subsequently. The main research questions to be answered are:

- What are stakeholders' views about the relationship between MNCs, CSR and sustainable development in Sierra Leone?
- Why do MNCs engage in CSR and what approaches do they use in Sierra Leone?
- What are the contributions of MNCs to sustainable development, and what are the motivations for doing so in Sierra Leone?

Accordingly, this study maintains that in order to achieve the SDGs and see CSR activities translate into sustainable development, the above questions are important to be answered. Answering above questions will help to understand the relationship between CSR and sustainable development, in particular, how CSR initiatives translate into meeting the SDGs. This argument is based on the notion that CSR and sustainable development should be inseparable (Crowther & Aras, 2008) in order to achieve the SDGs (KPMG, 2017). The SDGs are the fundamental principles aimed at achieving a better and more sustainable world and future for all (Falck & Heblich, 2007). They address the challenges humanity faces globally including, inequality, prosperity, peace, justice, poverty, climate change, and environmental degradation amongst others (Seuring, Hahn & Gold, 2013) (see Figure 2.7). The SDGs are interconnected and in order to realise them, it is imperative that through a concerted effort, involving MNCs' partnership, humanity can achieve each goal and target by 2030 (Schönherr, Findler & Martinuzzi, 2017).

6.4.1: Meanings of CSR

This section will analyse data based on two themes including philanthropy and responsible and accountable practice. The participants generated a wide range of views on the meaning of CSR and sustainable development, which are analysed below. It starts with philanthropy.

Table 6.7: Theme and sub-themes - Philanthropy and Responsible & accountable practice

Theme	Sub-themes	Excerpts
Meanings of CSR	Philanthropy	*CSR ought to be used to ascertain the social responsibilities of organisations …*
	Responsible and accountable practice	*It can be said that these organisations are making effort to be responsible … But I … think they are still far from this ideal.*

6.4.1.1: Philanthropy

As gathered from the data, most participants observed that philanthropy was one of the most common practices by MNCs, which is important in CSR (Scherer et al., 2013). This type of CSR practice takes the form of donations, charities, and/or local community initiatives and developmental projects aimed at helping the communities. Participants were asked what they understood by CSR, and all participants endorsed the notion that CSR should be used for philanthropy. The following statements typify respondents' views about the meaning of CSR:

> *I think that the main issue in CSR is basically to use programmes and actions to tackle issues about social inequality and rising social problems plaguing Sierra Leone, which have been there for decades now ... This should be the basis of corporations translating CSR into sustainable development. This doesn't seem to be happening …! As long as CSR is not geared towards social causes and improvement of lives and communities there will be unending problem in the land (Interviewee J).*

> *CSR ought to be used to make meaningful impact in society beyond making shareholders happy ... organisations should use the project to address poverty issues in the communities in Sierra Leone, not just to the business owners. Some of the initiatives to alleviate poverty or social imbalance in Sierra Leone are not purpose based, which causes conflict. The various CSR undertakings in mining and agricultural sectors are not producing expected results. This is not good for an ailing economy that requires serious turnaround (FGDE).*

> *For me, CSR should be based on helping those at the base of the society. This is crucially important in our country, where governance has failed to deliver on social good and services that can enhance our livelihood (Interviewee Q).*

> *We have been careful in ensuring that what we do about giving back to society in Sierra Leone is based on helping people about social problems. We can't deviate from this given our intention to continually do business in the country …no matter the accusation we get (FGDC).*

The above observations continue here:

> *If you ask me philanthropic endeavour is quite welcome especially to show that an organisation is committed to sustaining relationships and fighting poverty and inequality … they are doing our best but the sustainability of what they do is another issue … (Me03).*

> *In business, we have to be sensitive to making profit no matter what happens even as we engage with the communities and come up with projects to address some concerns about social inequality (Interviewee C).*

Overall, the above comments suggest the need to use CSR for philanthropic causes including poverty alleviation and fighting inequality, which are integral to sustainable development (KPMG, 2017; Idemudia, 2014, 2010). The above perspectives agree with previous position of scholars that CSR should be used to advance social issues (Kolk et al., 2017; Visser, 2013). Accordingly, Dobers & Halme (2009) have argued that CSR is founded on the proposition that corporations are in a relationship with other interests including the communities, and that this relationship demands of them to have a strong social presence in society for sustainable relations and development (KPMG, 2017; Dahlsrud, 2008). Nevertheless, in having presence in society through philanthropic initiatives, Eweje (2007) notes that organisations should seek collaboration with external stakeholders including the communities in order to reasonably represent their interests in their CSR projects. As noted from Interviewee C’s comments, although his organisation – Addax Bioenergy – engages in philanthropic initiative(s) but the statement does not consider perspective of external stakeholders which is not good for sustainable practice. This observation is evident here: ‘‘… What we do is to encourage charity giving to ensure we do business smoothly ... It is in our values to deal with various form of inequality … (FGDA). Furthermore, from the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders (Me03, FGDC; FGDE, and Interviewee Q), there is no indication of how MNCs get the communities involved in their social initiatives for sustainable relationship.

These findings are consistent with research (O'Riordan & Fairbrass, 2013; Manetti, 2011) aimed at understanding the need to incorporate stakeholders' perspectives in CSR for dialogic engagement and sustainable development. Moyeen (2018) argues that CSR management strategies (and initiatives) in relation to stakeholder engagement between MNCs and other stakeholders can foster sustainable development. In the context of poverty alleviation in developing countries, philanthropy should be appropriated to ensure that the major stakeholders (i.e. MNCs, governments, NGOs, etc.) involved in the development process are clearly identified and the responsibilities, roles and obligations of each stakeholder are clearly articulated to avoid or limit conflict (Idemudia, 2010; 2014). Idemudia (2014) further noted that this approach to CSR will advance collaboration amongst key actors for sustainable development. This proposition supports SDGs in particular SDGs1 & 2, which emphasise no poverty and zero hunger (KPMG, 2017) as well as SDGs 10 & 17. It is to this end that scholars (Frynas, 2005, 2009; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007) have observed that the increased role of MNCs in social and environmental issues relating to CSR. It is argued that this is a direct response to unremitting weakening of the state in developing countries, particularly in resource-rich countries, where there is high incidence of inadequate or near lack of social amenities that is triggering corporate-stakeholder dilemma (Eweje, 2006, 2007; Idemudia, 2010). Also, as suggested by Scherer & Palazzo (2007), this is also important in the era of post-national state thesis (Habermas, 1988), when MNCs should be part of governance process in developing countries where there is governance problems (Frynas, 2009). It has also been noted that CSR is a response to ever increasing shareholder activism, international organisations' decry of MNC's activities and NGO pressure (Christian Aid, 2003). For example, the current corporate accounting scandals focusing on lack of corporate commitment to socially and ethically responsible behaviour are forcing organisations to be more ethically responsible than before (Crowther & Aras, 2008).

Therefore, there is need for each stakeholder including MNCs to recognise that no single development actor can be expected to provide solutions to social problems, there is thus need to engage other stakeholders for result-oriented CSR initiative (Moyeen, 2018). This thesis therefore supports Scherer et al.'s (2013) view that although business and other stakeholders may share responsibility for social, environmental and economic development, the primary focus for MNCs is still wealth creation, productivity and profit maximisation (Jones, 1995). This is line with Ite's (2004) argument that profit maximisation is at the heart of community projects in the sustainable development strategies of MNCs. In addition, Idemudia (2010) posited that what MNCs do in Africa is to manage relationships between them and the communities for social licence, not genuine contribution to sustainable development. Accordingly, Frynas (2005) maintains that CSR projects are used to legitimise and sustain organisational existence. Building on this argument, critics contend that the notion that businesses including MNCs in Sierra Leone through CSR can contribute to social causes and further ‘‘sustainable development in Africa is misguided’’ (Idemudia, 2008, p. 93) because of the following reasons: weak regulatory framework, business case principle and the de-politicised understanding of development (Blowfield, 2005).

Moreover, majority of the respondents admitted that although CSR is inseparable from fighting social causes, however, the ‘‘business case’’ orientation of such initiatives undermines the authenticity of CSR: ‘‘the link between social responsibility and development cannot be broken … but this is not happening in Sierra Leone as these organisations have to make profit’’ (Interviewee M). Also, a respondent from the community corroborated this: ‘‘how can they truly engage in social causes when there are some loopholes in the country to do business as they like?’’ (Interviewee X). This is why Oxfam (2015) observed that ‘‘Multinational companies cheat Africa out of billions of dollars’’. Also, the business case motivation for CSR makes MNCs to ‘‘lobby hard for tax breaks as a reward for basing or retaining their business in African countries. Tax breaks provided to the six largest foreign mining companies in Sierra Leone add up to 59 per cent of the total budget of the country or eight times the country's health budget’’ (Oxfam, 2015). In curbing the incidence of tax avoidance, Christian Aid (2015) is encouraging ‘‘international donors, the UK and governments in the global South to support Sierra Leone in developing a robust, effective and efficient national tax system that is able to raise greater tax revenues and consequently create better public services’’. However, in societies with weak regulatory regimes, ineffective policies and corrupt governance like Sierra Leone, it is difficult to achieve this (Maconachie, 2009). Consequently, Pemunta (2012) has noted that the faith reposed in MNCs engaged in charity giving, has ‘‘come to naught’’ (p. 197). They were previously considered as having ‘‘the panacea to African development and governance crises, building up expectations’’ (p. 197) that are not materialising. Also, Utting (2005) stresses that the mainstream CSR debate frequently tends to ignore some of the more important social and developmental issues related to corporate power, policy influence and unsustainable investment. This position is supported by Frynas (2005) and Visser (2006). Specifically, Frynas (2005, p. 581) sums up this development disappointment as ‘‘the false developmental promise of’’ CSR by MNCs in developing countries such as Sierra Leone, which constitutes ‘‘impediments to community development in post-war Sierra Leone diamond and rutile mining areas’’ (Wilson, 2015, p. 704; Marco & Maconachie, 2019).

Also, majority of the participants linked philanthropy to socio-economic development. For example, FGDG commented that ‘‘corporate donations should extend to factor in social and economic growth and development, which can bring genuine change in people’s lives’’. For Interviewee P ‘‘CSR refers to a range of voluntary undertakings that not only minimises a company’s corporate bad practice but should be part of a nation’s social and economic advancement’’. As most of the participants, Fr02 and Interviewee C’s comments confirm the above findings. The main objective here is that CSR should be used to make a difference in the communities and people’s lives, which is the right thing to do and part of the broader composite of sustainable development (Kolk & Lenfant, 2013). However, this is not happening as evidenced in the below quote, for example, a youth president stated that:

> *CSR initiatives in the mining sector, which is the base of the nation’s economy and all other sectors are mainly focussed on remedying the impacts of the companies’ extraction activities on the local communities. They make effort in providing pipe-borne water, equipping the schools and hospitals, but these don’t change anything developmentally as the youths are angry that these initiatives are mere cosmetic (Interviewee R).*

Additionally, majority of the respondents expressed the view that ‘‘these community activities engaged by the companies are repeatedly based on ad hoc basis and not sustainable’’ (Interviewee W). For example, Christian Aid (2013) in its report on the activities of MNCs in Sierra Leone confirmed that a large portion of socio-economic initiatives engaged by corporations are not sustainable (Interviewee T, FGDH and Ke02) and either abandoned or failed to address socio-economic issues in the communities (Datzberger, 2014). This is in agreement with Wilson (2019) and Rwabizambuga's (2008) study on ineffective CSR initiatives in resource cursed nations like Sierra Leone.

To add to this, Idemudia & Ite (2006) have noted that the government in developing countries like Sierra Leone has continued to renegade on its commitment to provide social amenities that it has become virtually impossible for CSR initiatives to translate into positive contributions to socio-economic wellbeing of the locals (Maconachie, 2009). In other words, macro-economic underperformance is due largely by government failure in providing social goods (Idemudia, 2014; Porto, 2010), which entails that it is very unlikely for CSR initiatives to make practical contributions to local communities. No doubt, CSR has a powerful potential to ‘‘genuinely contribute positively to socio-economic needs of the people’’ (Me1) and ‘‘better the lots of disadvantaged locals in developing countries’’ (Fr03). However poor implementation of these philanthropic initiatives makes it challenging to realise their objectives. Idemudia (2010) has indicated that poor implementation and politicisation of CSR initiatives is central to why these initiatives do not see the light of the day in Africa. One of the discussants in the focus group painted a bleak future for sustainable development: ‘‘there is a danger that in the long haul, companies will be part of the synergy needed for sustainable development in Sierra Leone given the obstacles in the process of making genuine positive changes to people's social and economic life’’ (FGDF).

Furthermore, majority of internal stakeholders interviewed explicitly expressed their organisations' commitment to ethical responsibility. For instance, a senior manager in Socfin Agricultural Company stated that his ‘‘organisation has principle based approach to use CSR to make ethical impacts … We're not engaging in CSR for publicity or to be popular, we rather feel that ethical responsibility is crucial for our very existence’’ (Interviewee A). Also, the following cluster has varying perspectives on ethical part of CSR:

> *We believe that there are serious consequences for not being ethical in our operation. We're values-based organisation and ethical responsibility is one of our core values (Interviewee G).*

> *Knowing the implication of unethical approach to business venturing, we're ever committed to applying ethical procedures in dealing with our diverse stakeholder … As you may know failure to do this will be disastrous for our business (Interviewee H).*

> *Sierra Rutile believes in measures that will bring about moral responsibilities … People sometimes accuse of us not engaging in ethical responsibility in our CSR projects, but this is not the case as we have committed measures to deal with ethical issues … For example, we have on-going programmes to help tackle Ebola since it started in the country … for us, this is the moral thing to do … we don't make any financial gain doing this but to show that we're committed to ethical causes as a business that respects its wider stakeholders' interest and concerns (Interviewee E).*

Indeed, the perspectives above portray that organisations can use CSR as a moral and ethical force to have a sustainable relationship with its diverse stakeholders (Fassin, Rossem & Buelens, 2010; Visser, Matten, Pohl & Tolhurst, 2007).

Although ethical CSR can be used to further ‘‘discretionary allocation of corporate resource towards improving social welfare that serves as a means of enhancing relationships with key stakeholders’’ (Barnett, 2007, p. 801), as well as to assure stakeholders that their interests are part of the firm's values, Visser et al. (2007) stressed the ‘‘increased vagueness and overlap in concepts related to business ethics and CSR’’ (Fassin et al, 2010, p. 425). Therefore, given this vagueness, the assumption that businesses should be ethically and morally ‘‘responsible to society's long-run needs and wants’’ (Lantos, 2001, p. 600) is false. Thus, Idemudia (2010) cautions that such CSR activities are borne out of maximising shareholders value and de-escalating the negative impacts of a firm's operation in society and environment. Although an employee at Sierra Rutile Ltd. said that his organisation has a culture that ‘‘celebrates ethical causes’’ (FGDB) other respondents (in particular FGDH and Interviewee P) from the local communities condemned what MNCs do stating that their actions are rather unethical as they engage in child labour (Ke3) and hardly treat their local employees ethically right (Fr03 and Interviewee V). These perspectives/findings are consistent with the study by Dimitrova (2017) that highlights ethical dimensions of MNCs operations including sweatshop, bribery, corruption, environmental pollution and abuse of human rights.

6.4.1.2: Responsible and accountable practice

This theme analyses whether CSR initiatives are aimed at social responsibility and accountability. The below cluster illustrates shared perspectives of respondents about social responsibility and accountability:

> *We've been involved in community development and environmental management … and since I have been in this organisation, I can see drastic measures to curb bad image and impact of what we do on the environment and the communities. We're committed to responsible practice (Interviewee D).*

> *When it comes to accountability and social responsibility, were not the best but we're doing our best. Recently, we embarked on social and environmental programmes such as rebuilding schools and making serious plans to support government's bid to deal with the issues following Ebola outbreak (FGDA).*

> *It can be said that these organisations are making effort to be responsible and consider the effects of what they do on the environment and people. But I sincerely think they are still far from this ideal … they need to seek our views in framing these policies in this effect (FGDI).*

> *If you ask me, these companies are trying to be responsible, but there is no much on ground to show that they are genuinely responsible … we're not part of the decision-making … our voices are not considered … (Bo01).*

As can be deduced from the above quotes stakeholders perceive MNCs as making effort through CSR to be responsible and accountable in their business operation. These findings are in consonance with prior research on this phenomenon (Utting, 2005; Frynas, 2005). That said, accountability is concerned with a firm recognising that its operations affect the external environment, and thus assuming responsibility of the impacts of its operation in society and the environment (Valor, 2005; Newell, 2002). This implies that organisations should quantify the impact of what they do in society to all parties or stakeholders including internal and external stakeholders, who are impacted by their operation. The concept of accountability therefore implies recognition that a firm is part of broader networks and therefore has responsibility to all networks rather than just the shareholders. As noted by Crowther & Aras (2008) beyond accepting that external stakeholders are important in the discharge of its accountability obligation, a firm must ensure that it recognises these external stakeholders have the power to influence or affect the methods in which those actions of the firm are taken on board as well as a role in ‘‘deciding whether or not such actions can be justified’’ (Crowther & Aras, 2008, p. 16).

Nevertheless, ‘‘ambiguity remains because the social responsibility of business is whatever society decides that it is’’ (Eweje, 2006, p. 96). This also calls into question the reliability of what the organisation says it does in relation to CSR and bias about it (Belal, 2008; Crowther & Aras, 2008). This is because communities at different times establish different constraints within which business is expected to accomplish this purpose. For example, in the African context business are expected to fill social roles neglected by governments in order to be seen as socially responsible (Visser, 2006). According to Etheredge (1999), a firm’s social responsibility implies responsibilities that go beyond meeting minimum legal requirements and satisfaction of primary stakeholders and takes into consideration notions of voluntary corporate behaviour and actions, which are both beneficial and acceptable to various social constituencies that determine its existence (Deephouse, 1996; Suchman, 1995). By their nature, MNCs operate simultaneously in often different environments and societies around the world where standard, values, and expectations of their actions may radically differ (Visser, 2006). This great diversity in standard, attitude, systems, and cultures makes it more challenging than in a comparatively homogeneous national business environment. Other scholars (Helmig et al., 2016; Rwabizambuga, 2008) argue that business has a responsibility, indeed an obligation, to help addressing matters of social concerns and taking stakeholders’ view on board in doing so. Keim (1978) and Cragg (2012) support this notion, proposing that it is a matter of enlightened self-interest for firms to be socially responsible and accountable because ethical behaviour is more rationale, profitable and normative than strategic, unethical behaviour, which is antithetical to organisational effectiveness and survival (Scherer et al., 2013). From a developmental angle, the latter as Richey & Ponter (2014) argue will lead to achieving the ideals of win-win thesis for an organisation and wider stakeholders (Williams & Preston, 2018). Specifically, Eweje (2006) contends that this will lead to corporate citizenship.

Although corporate citizenship is a contested concept, hence, some argue that companies are not real citizens (Valor, 2005), it however stresses that firms have rights and duties like normal citizens in society. Some of these duties include “a re-conceptualisation of business-society relations’’ (Idemudia, 2010), in which they become powerful public actors in providing social goods to communities in instances when government retreats (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). Some studies (see Frynas, 2009, 2005; Moon, Crane & Matten, 2005) have also empirically confirmed that “good’’ corporate citizenship advocates that MNCs have an obligation to act as responsible and accountable members of the societies which accords them ethical, normative standing (Moon et al., 2005; Ite, 2004). Corporate citizenship arose to recognise the (political) role of business in society (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). It deals with the capacity of organisations to treat their diverse stakeholders in a socially responsible and accountable way. It is about charitable and philanthropic giving to society and environment, where MNCs do business with social conscience and a sense of social and environmental responsibility. This is critically needed for sustainable development particularly in post-war Sierra Leone.

Against this background, CSR is being argued to involve two major participants – business and society. According to Carroll (1991) CSR has four aspects including philanthropic, ethical, legal and economic responsibilities implying that business and society are obliged to take proper moral-ethical, legal, and philanthropic actions aimed at improving the welfare of both business and society as a whole, all of which must be realised within the economic structures and capabilities of every stakeholder involved (Eweje, 2006). However, the ‘‘accountability school of thought’’ (Belal, 2008) suggests that ‘‘CSR is structurally constrained by the logic of capitalist production and profitability’’ (Idemudia, 2008, p. 93). Consequently, Idemudia (2008, p. 93) goes further to emphasise that ‘‘business will continually choose profitability over making a meaningful contribution to development’’. This argument is supported by Blowfield & Frynas (2005) and Utting (2005).

Similarly, the issue of corporate accountability is central to Crowther & Aras' (2008) ''the principles of CSR'' including sustainability and transparency. They further argue that companies' bid to increase efficiency as well as not really considering interest of external stakeholders in environmental performance and reporting negates the tenets of responsibility and accountability. Accordingly, critical take on CSR stresses ''the need to consider underlying motivations for business to embrace and perpetuate the CSR concept'' (Hamann & Acutt, 2003, p. 255), which can be done for green-washing and public relations (Hamann & Kapelus, 2004). Hamann & Kapelus (2004) equally argued that such CSR initiatives are aimed at implementation of cosmetic changes to business practice for legitimisation of organisational practice. Levy (1997) provides a comparable analysis of environmental management on the basis of the Gramscian notion of hegemony, whereby environmental management can be understood as an integrated, corporate response on the practical and ideological dimension, which ''serves to deflect more radical challenges to the hegemonic coalition by stakeholders'' (Levy, 1997, p. 127; Driscoll & Crombie, 2001). Therefore, ''CSR initiatives and ''partnerships'' are mere veneer to give an impression of accountable, responsible business operation …'' (Fr01) in Sierra Leone. In concurring to this observation, a community Chief (Interviewee N) stated that ''these programmes are intended to normalise companies' activities'', which a respondent in a government ministry confirmed: ''when they engage in CSR, it is to legitimise and strategically normalise their activities to keep the communities quiet'' (Interviewee I).

In ensuring that the MNCs use CSR initiatives to fill credibility gap they use these projects to seek legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) rather than use them to actually empower the locals and contribute to community development (Newell & Frynas, 2007). For example, in the mining industry in Sierra Leone, an employee observed that his company virtually gets away with anything because of lax and corrupt regime in the country, which makes it easy not to engage in genuine CSR projects (Interviewee F). This observation is confirmed elsewhere by Rivas-Ducca (2002, p. 4) when they stated that ''in a vacuum of effective, legally binding regulation, mining corporations simply walk away from what should be their corporate responsibility'', including their social and ecological debt to affected societies. Comparable view has been expressed elsewhere in the agricultural industry (Interviewee H). In sum, some of the initiatives are philanthropically based but lack the capacity to foster genuine corporate-stakeholder engagement and social responsible investing benefits (Datzberger, 2014). In taking this perspective further, it can be seen from the preceding argument that there is a lack of community participation in philanthropic initiatives, which negates genuine motivation and normative approach to CSR. In highlighting the significance of philanthropy in sustainable development in developing countries, Frynas (2009) asserted that ‘‘[I]n Europe, the notion of philanthropy was previously dismissed and often not regarded as part of CSR … But firms are primarily expected to actively assist their local communities in many developing countries’’ (p. 4) like Sierra Leone.

6.4.2: Meaning of sustainable development

This theme focuses on understanding the relationship between CSR and sustainable development as perceived by stakeholders. Four sub-themes, which are analysed subsequently, underpin this theme. Analysis starts with community development and poverty alleviation/eradication.

Table 6.8: Theme and sub-themes – CSR and Sustainable development

Theme	**Sub-themes**	**Excerpts**
Meanings of sustainable development	Community development and poverty alleviation/eradication	*…We do recognise that organisational goals have to be tied with communities*
	Stakeholder engagement and empowerment	*The multinational companies in Sierra Leone … should factor in the views of wider stakeholder groups, whose contributions are crucially important to oil the wheel of CSR and sustainable development…*
	Inclusive, legitimate and peaceful	*The notion of living and working in harmony with multinationals is*

	society/institution	*a good idea …*
	Stakeholder relationship and salience	*We need to change the whole process of thinking that others are more important here*

6.4.2.1: Community development & poverty alleviation/eradication

One of the themes of sustainable development is community development and poverty alleviation/eradication. This is fundamental to the overall aim of sustainable development (United Nations, 2017; Le Billon & Levin, 2009). Some of the questions were asked to ascertain how MNCs can use CSR to contribute to community development and poverty alleviation/eradication. Understanding the meaning of community is important here. First, community can be defined as a group of people or individuals sharing a common purpose, who are symbiotic in their relationship towards fulfilling specific needs, and interact on a regular basis and live in close proximity (Federation of Community Development Learning, 2009). The group is considerate and respectful of the individuality of other people in the community. In every group, there should be a sense of community, which is defined as the mutual feelings, of commitment and co-operation to the group welfare, of responsibility to and for others, and of willingness to engage openly, as well as to one's self. The tenets of community development and sustainable cities are enshrined in Principle 1 & 11 of the SDGs (KPMG, 2017).

Majority of participants acknowledged that community development and poverty alleviation/eradication are central to the tenet of sustainable development, and thus should be inseparable (Le Billon & Levin, 2009). This excerpt illustrates this: "Here what we do is to ensure we proactively engage our diverse stakeholders to mutually arrive at sustainable outcomes since we're pursuing same goals" (Interviewee B). Another respondent observed that ''sustainable development is more or less … a key aspect of what we do here in Addax … we do recognise that organisational goals have to be tied to communities' aspiration'' (Interviewee D). Also, Interviewee C and a community opinion leader admitted that sustainable development ''is a collective approach to reducing poverty and inequality … it's the organising principle for realising human development goals'' (Ke02) that ''will benefit everyone mutually'' (Interviewee C).

The above quotes help to understand that community development and poverty reduction are embedded in sustainable development (Mason & Beard, 2008). Consistent with this argument, the Brundtland Report stresses the sustainability of community by investigating the nexus between a community and development (Schönherr et al., 2017). Such development should serve people's present needs and future needs including reducing poverty, mutual engagement and capacity building of local capacity (Akiwumi, 2014). Cultural, economic, environmental, and social, issues are elements of the Brundtland Report (Crowther & Aras, 2008) which, when implemented, attempt to move the community from just being a mere community to a mechanism of development. Nevertheless, most of the ''initiatives set up to provide alternative modes of governance promoting poverty alleviation and reducing inequalities in the artisanal diamond sector (in Sierra Leone) largely failed amidst poor leadership'' as well as ''political wrangling'', ideological nature of such initiatives (Le Billon & Levin, 2009, p. 707). This argument is further elaborated by some of the participants in the following cluster:

> *As well known, sustainable development of Sierra Leone's valuable mineral resources, which include not only its highly priced diamonds – but also rutile, gold, iron and bauxite and related resources – are no doubt government's priority. These issues are central to the government's creation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of March 2005 and Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) of October 2002. However, none of these initiatives has garnered enough momentum to raise the issue of sustainable development beyond the old and tried – if anything, each of these programmes has failed to bring sustainable development. A major contributory factor has been the role the multinationals have played in the nation, given that most of the viable companies are externally run and owned by foreign firms (Fr06).*

> *Various projects have been churned out to address business-poverty relationship in Sierra Leone and to bring lasting peace and development. Sadly, none of these projects has lived up to its billings. They are at best overly optimistic and at worst unworkable.*

Their feasibility is undercut by corruption, personal interest and weak and/or poor institutional framework to enforce their workability. This is really regrettable for a country that should be on the path of recovery and poverty reduction and underdevelopment (Bo03).

It is really false to think that Sierra Rutile Limited will act in the best interests of the communities; it has to put first the interest of shareholders, who are the reason for its existence''. The realities of what we do as a company are shaped by business environment that we have come to see in Sierra Leone; we have not really taken ''order'' from our home country (Me03).

The above findings are echoed by Community Project Officer for London Mining:

London Mining's effort to see beneficial, mutual interaction and engagement with the local communities and other institutions in Sierra Leone is seriously undermined by the nature of the country's political history and governance system (Fr02).

In summarising the above observations, it can be seen that efforts by government and MNCs to bring about sustainable development are confronted with many challenges regarding implementation. The respondents have highlighted that the governance regime, vested interest of MNCs and political leadership are detrimental to realising the ideals of initiating community development initiatives that will positively impact on poverty reduction and sustainable development ultimately. For example, Fr02 and Me03 stated that governance problems and vested interest of MNCs are responsible for not achieving the ideals of sustainable development. Additionally, for the community to develop sustainably, it needs a procedure of social/community capacity among various actors within such community to develop so as to be able to determine and achieve their vision (Frank & Smith, 1999). In this sense, the community members work and engage cooperatively to proffer solutions to problems affecting them. As seen from the data, it is almost impossible to realise these ideals in the Sierra Leonean context:

For me, community development summarises sustainable development idea and in particular corporate-stakeholder relationship … It clearly illustrates the desired state where resources and living conditions are used to meet human needs in a community without damaging stability and integrity of the natural system … it should address the needs of the communities in the present as well as make provision for not undermining the ability of future generations to meet their own needs through genuine collaboration where collective goals are pursued. Our case makes it impracticable to have genuine, workable business-community relationship and consensus-based projects that can bring sustainable relationship (FGDH).

For humanity to live harmoniously, our environment should be sustained through mutual beneficial initiatives and plans …. The activities of these companies should be channelled toward sustainable practices. As a village chief, I represent the views of my people by saying that there isn't much to show that we're marching towards sustainable development when the locals don't have much input in most of these developmental schemes (Interviewee O).

Central to sustainable development is community development and local capacity building as well as ensuring that everyone's voice is represented in efforts to bring social transformation and development. As indicated in extant literature (Ismail, 2009) community development is the combined processes, strategies, activities and initiatives that make a community sustainable. The entire set of procedures and strategies to community development practice can be considered a form of engagement and alliances addressing, organising and building the social infrastructure at the community level. Such engagement is should have minimum external control and empowerment of locals in deciding what is best for them, for example, government control and/or business influence (Le Billon & Levin, 2009). The widely adopted meaning of community development was given by the United Nations (United Nations, 1971) in which community development is taken as planned effort of community individuals undertaken conducted in a way to facilitate solving community problems with a minimum external help.

The implication of UN’s definition of community development therefore, emphasises self-reliance, participation and creativity in the community regarding short and long term goals, but not defying the CSR roles of MNCs (Akiwumi, 2014). In relation to the people of Sierra Leone ‘‘… community development is basically organisational and educational … It should be based on a commitment to equal partnership among all stakeholders with equal power and opportunity to make genuine contribution to community transformation and peaceful relationship’’ (FGDE). In this way, ‘‘people’s rights to say their minds in what concerns them will be made possible. … This will reduce conflict seen our communities’’ (Interviewee M). The observations of these respondents underscore Principles 5, 16 & 17 enshrined in SDGs (KPMG, 2017). Also, this kind of partnership and community-based action can help communities to share knowledge, skills, awareness, and experience so as to bring genuine, collective change (Mason & Beard, 2008). As argued by Mason & Beard (2008) this type of community development effort will facilitate addressing the symptoms of poverty, such as difficulties with access to basic infrastructure, services, and unemployment [and] likely … address poverty’s root causes’’ (p. 246). The hallmark of this type of community-based developmental initiative is to work with communities experiencing poverty, deprivation and inequality, to support them to collaboratively clarify objectives, identify needs and rights, and take collectively action to meet these within a democratic structure that respects the aspiration, needs and rights of all. This approach to community development therefore celebrates diversity and recognises differences among social actors in the community. The framework draws from social capital, collective action, and social movements (Baker, 2006).

However, when collective vision and aspirations are not sought as seen in the Sierra Leonean context, it often results into stakeholder disengagement and disempowerment, a source of unsustainable development (Datzberger, 2014). This contention supports this study’s main argument about sustainable development by connecting it with the embedded principles and values rooted in the Brundtland Report, which is about development that does not compromise the capacity of the future generations to meet their own social and environmental needs (WCED, 1987), and capacity building framework that works towards realising sustainable development under Agenda 2030. Following from the preceding insights, it is evident that CSR has implications for community development and overall involvement of business in developing communities and engaging with relevant stakeholders to realise the SDGs cannot be overemphasised. This can lead to empowering stakeholders including the locals in Sierra Leone (Maconachie & Hilson, 2013). According to Ismail (2009) CSR is the third most important driver of community development, engagement and empowerment. Consistent with prior literature (see Federation of Community Development Learning, 2009) community development implies projects carried out by community in partnership with external organisations including MNCs to empower groups or individuals by providing them with the necessary inputs and voices required to have a say in what concerns their welfare and wellbeing.

6.4.2.2: Stakeholder engagement and empowerment

This theme is connected with the previous theme but essentially emphasises engaging community members and other relevant stakeholders for participation and empowerment and to achieve sustainable development. It explores various initiatives that involve interaction and engagement between MNCs and the communities by getting the communities involved in a dialogic manner, which could improve relationship. Accordingly, extant literature has stressed the need to engage stakeholders through public-private partnerships, interaction and dialogue for empowerment and to achieve SDGs (Filho & Brandli, 2016). Three key recent governance and engagement initiatives in Sierra Leone are the Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF), the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA) and Enhancing the Interaction between Citizens and the State in Sierra Leone (ENCISS), which will constitute bulk of analysis done in this section. Starting with DACDF, it is also a governance initiative for accountability and engagement of all stakeholders in the mining sector. As indicated by Maconachie (2014) comparable to other community-led natural resource management mechanisms in Africa, DACDF advocates community-based decision-making as a genuine way of facilitating and accelerating more inclusive corporate-community relationship than has never been. Some of the objectives of DACDF include addressing power inequality and better governance within the diamond industry, ‘‘and to make local decision-making about diamond resources more equitable’’ (Maconachie, 2012, p.261). The below quotes represent shared perspectives of respondents about how stakeholder engagement and empowerment is central to sustainable development:

> *Giving the birth of DACDF, we thought we're finally at a pint where we could reach the much anticipated Promised Land … (Interviewee N).*

> *Amongst other initiatives, DACDF was greeted with much relive and hope that we can finally come to genuine negotiation table with these companies and see how we can better our land … This is against the background of lessons learnt previously about sustaining relationship with them (FGDI).*

> *With DACDF, we were optimistic that our business will not be obstructed anytime soon by the communities who have always accused us of not giving them a chance to contribute or influence decision on mining activities in Sierra Leone (Interviewee F).*

The above extracts suggest that DACDF was conceived to restore confidence and trust in the nature of corporate-stakeholder relations in Sierra Leone, which has been undermined by public perception that previous frameworks were not working to say the least. These findings echo comparable studies on this phenomenon (Beevers, 2015; Akiwumi, 2014), which decry lack of corporate-stakeholder engagement in Sierra Leone. From the above findings, DACDF was considered as a potential platform through which more productive engagement could be achieved between stakeholders in Sierra Leone. It was also thought that this framework could improve social and environmental performance of MNCs and make genuine contribution to sustainable development due to its potential to empower the communities by providing them with dialogic exchanges and information which could trigger much anticipated critical scrutiny of companies' operations and, where necessary, pressurise them into improving their performance (Beevers, 2015).

Nevertheless, there is doubt about the workability of DACDF (as well as ENCISS and SLIEPA) and related initiatives emerging from the opinions of most respondents, who expressed poor implementation and workability of this initiative as a barrier to empowerment and sustainable development:

> *The multinational companies in Sierra Leone … who are located in third world nations such as ours should factor in the views of wider stakeholder groups, whose contributions are crucially important to oil the wheel of CSR and sustainable development. This is very vital in post-war Sierra Leone where developmental projects that will come to fruition with profound inputs from wider stakeholders – not limited stakeholders – in terms of deliberation and constant negotiations on the right path possible for sustainable development. To me, this is the best route to preclude the mistakes of pre-war Sierra Leone and to forge a more sustainable peace for our nation, which is at the moment plagued by Ebola, social maladies and economic … political quagmire. The conceptualisation and creation of DACDF should fall within the quadrant of this basic knowledge: anything short of this will increase our national malaise as well as deepen the misery of a nation on tenterhooks (Bo03).*

Likewise, ‘‘in reconstructing Sierra Leone after Ebola epidemic, it's more of giving people a chance to say how they want things to be … we've often made the mistake of not giving the people a chance to do so in the past in most of the projects including DACDF and other engagement-oriented projects’’ (FGDD). For Interviewee D, the supposed low participation and engagement of host communities is borne out of ‘‘neglect of stakeholder voice in the Diamond Area Community Development Fund’’ and similar instruments for engagement’’ that ‘‘… have failed to yield collegial effort in addressing corporate-community concerns … this also limits empowerment’’ (Interviewee G). Additionally, a statement from Human Rights Watch (2014) validates lack of genuine, result-oriented corporate-stakeholder engagement mechanisms:

> *African Minerals, which has gone through several leadership changes since July 2012, had promised to remedy mistakes and chart a more positive and productive engagement with the surrounding community. But meaningful results of this effort are not yet apparent (HRW, 2014, p. 5).*

A similar observation is made by Christian Aid (2003) ‘‘… Addax Bioenergy has … a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and 29 environmental and social management plans. The MOU signed in 2010 between Addax Bioenergy and the GoSL [Government of Sierra Leone] states that …'' (Christian Aid, 2003, p. 44). However, Christian Aid (2013, p. 13) and other sources (see Wilson, 2019, 2015; Oxfam, 2015; Maconachie, 2009) report that the above mentioned company and other MNCs operating in Sierra Leone have not lived up to their promise to contribute to sustainable development by engaging relevant, stakeholder groups like the communities.

The above contention does not suggest that DACDF has not made any progress. Thus, building on the gains and ideals of erstwhile community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) frameworks in Africa, DACDF was formally introduced by the Sierra Leone's Ministry of Mineral Resources in December 2001, as part of a wider programme reform for diamond sector in the wake of the end of the war. As noted by Maconachie (2011), like other community-based natural resource management approaches elsewhere in Africa, which include CANPFIRE in Zimbabwe or Gestion des Terroirs in Mali, DACDF professes to adopt transparent, participatory strategies aimed at mobilising local inputs in decision-making. Accordingly, Datzberger (2015) has indicated that Sierra Leone has witnessed an unparalleled amount of diamond revenue returned since its creation; however, more success is required. The first tranche was actually made in early 2001, and there were immediate disbursements of the funds accruing from this initiative until 2006. As at 2011, ''the funds accumulated'' upwards of ''$4.25 million in revenue, of which $3.5 million had been disbursed to communities'', where diamond is mined (Maconachie, 2011). Nevertheless, according to Maconachie (2011) there are grave concerns in three areas regarding the feasibility of DACDF:

- Citizen involvement in the decision-making processes and strategies
- Ineffective use of funds
- Lack of accountability and transparency in the use of funds

Ample evidence suggests that since the inception of DACDF, the project has been instrumental in ensuring that local chiefs improve their accountability and transparency in the use of funds including supporting SGDs in the communities. Nonetheless, the Sierra Leone's High Level Diamond Steering Committee (HLDSC) noted some concerns about the misappropriation and embezzlement of funds that subsequently led to the immediate suspension of disbursements following the July-December tranche of fund that was released (Maconachie, 2011).

In a similar vein, the concerns raised by HLDSC were replicated by the findings of Search for Common Grounds (SFCG), an NGO that assessed the status of DACDF community development projects undertaken in five chiefdoms. Like the HLDSC, SFCG confirmed the concerns of HLDSC regarding lack of accountability, transparency and near absence of community participation in the decision-making frameworks – specifically women and youth participation. This scenario depicts lack of attention to the realisation of SDGs 5&10, which emphasise gender equality and reduced inequality. Specifically, United Nations (2015, p. 1) has noted that ‘‘inequality threatens long-term social and economic development … and … [permits] … people [to be] excluded from opportunities’’. To this end, an alliance of 18 national and international NGOs was initiated, which is called Advocacy Coalition on Extractives (ACE). This alliance creates ‘‘chiefdom development committees (CDCs)’’ (Maconachie, 2011, p. 2). ACE’s core objective is to ensure fair and wide representation of broad range of community interests. Nonetheless, the creation of CDC is fraught with criticism as it is essentially a collection of rural elites (such as section chief), who stifle every effort at collective engagement in the extractive industry. This state of affairs is described by an interviewee in this manner: ‘‘Members of the CDC are personally and selfishly appointed …’’ (Ke02). This argument continues in an interview granted by the director of one of the NGOs, GTZ, Moiwo, who re-affirms the views of one of the interviewees from data collected: [The committee should be composed of people who are truthful and] ‘‘willing to represent the community’s affairs honesty’’ (Moiwo, 2008, p. 1, in Maconachie, 2012, p. 267).

The concept of stakeholder engagement is different from stakeholder management and salience (Cumming 2001). It examines how organisations relate with relevant stakeholders in promoting social benefits for all in terms of development (Wilson, 2019). Stakeholder engagement begins when organisations involve, negotiate, or dialogue with the communities in Sierra Leone in regards to their expectations and how best these expectations can be met. The entire process covers agreement to negotiate, setting benchmarks for the engagement procedure and monitoring the outcomes. The difficulty, though, is how MNCs can engage their stakeholders while making effort to make profit. In Sierra Leone, for instance, the unremitting conflict in the mining sector is not essentially due to lack of appropriate mechanisms for engagement; it is argued that it is more of mismanagement of stakeholder engagement processes (Wilson, 2019). In particular, the communities regard these initiatives as self-imposed, asymmetry methods that serve the interest of MNCs (Datzberger, 2014). Thus, there is clear demarcation between genuine corporate-stakeholder engagement and stakeholder management. The former is dialogic and empowering, while the latter is disempowering (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). This situation negates stakeholder voice and genuine corporate-stakeholder partnership. One of the methods applied in decision-making processes is collaboration with stakeholders. This includes any group who can affect or is affected by organisational objectives (Freeman, 1984). Complex operating settings and a variety of sustainability issues necessitate collaboration with stakeholders, since they possess the ability to influence the success or failure of their operations (Akiwumi, 2014). Knowledge obtained from such engagement and partnership affects sustainable relationship management, may contribute to sustainable development (Hemmati, 2002). Also, stakeholder involvement and engagement in decision-making can improve the quality of decisions (Wilson, 2019).

However, the views expressed above show that the various corporate-stakeholder engagement instruments including DACDF are not working and unfortunately the creation of DACDF is not an antidote to corporate-stakeholder dilemma in Sierra Leone. The below statements lend credence to this contention:

> *Despite attempts to bring better engagement between the communities and foreign companies, every attempt has failed to bring at least hope in the minds of the suffering masses in Sierra Leone, who largely depend on the country's natural resources to survive or eke out a living (Bo01).*

> *We don't know who to complain to … lack of genuine contact with the big foreign firms in Sierra Leone (Ke02).*

> *Everything is not really working regarding engagement with the companies … I think that genuine involvement requires consultation and ensuring what we say is taken into*

consideration. With present development, all engagement is a sham and not producing results … even when we engage, our voices are not heard in the decisions that made after (FGDF).

The findings above suggest that there are palpable concerns about the workability of DACDF. This is evidenced in Richey & Ponte's (2014) research: ‘‘despite the commonalities of these actors and alliances [including engagement initiatives] … they are limited in their ability to act as agents of development'' (Richey & Ponte, 2014, p. 2, my parenthesis) given the apparent lack of genuine community participation in the entire process. This argument is in agreement with Wilson's (2015) work in Sierra Leone, in which he highlighted that lack of genuine engagement between the MNCs and the local communities has created ‘‘spaces for contestation'' (Marco & Maconachie, 2019, p. 231) and conflict that are negatively impacting on sustainable development. This is seen here: ‘‘Till date, we seem to be wasting our time about bring the companies and us (the communities) together on a proper discussion table …'' (Ke02). Interviewee C further notes that such regrettable situation makes effort towards peaceful, sustainable co-existence between her organisation and the locals rather ‘‘challenging and prone to suspicion''.

The above insights further suggest the power imbalance between MNCs and stakeholders, which is seen to be preventing any meaningful engagement of this nature (specifically FGDF, Interviewees D, F and G). In contrast with much touted productive result from fostering partnership through corporate-stakeholder engagement, those interviewed explicitly expressed displeasure about the workability of such initiatives and their consequent marginalisation of stakeholders' voice and democracy, which could limit collegiality and empowerment (Gallén & Peraita, 2018). Engagement scholarship (Gallén & Peraita, 2018) has explored many issues, which can contribute to achieving stakeholder democracy through the potential empowerment of stakeholders via the supply of multiple information and perspectives for improved accountability and transparency. Stakeholder democracy refers to ‘‘stakeholder participation in processes of organising, decision-making, and governance in corporations'' (Matten & Crane, 2005, p. 6). Central to stakeholder democracy and empowerment is less power distance that can propel equitable contribution from stakeholders as well as constructive criticism of CSR policies and practices (Gallén & Peraita, 2018).

Paradoxically, as suggested from the findings concrete ways and methods in which stakeholders' interests and opinions are considered in making corporate decisions in Sierra Leone are not considered in DACDF, hence, its lack of feasibility. Therefore these initiatives ''… have caused significant friction between multinational companies and communities and human rights defenders working on land rights and business and human rights, in particular in the Pujehun, Kono and Port Loko Districts (HRDN-SL, p. 8). Additionally, this has implications for partnership, power redistribution and collegial engagement in achieving the win-win situation between business and society (Maconachie & Hilson, 2015). It also negates the tenets enshrined in SDG17 as the initiatives do not ensure that power circulates and functions as a chain where stakeholders (including the communities) are its conduits, not its points of application (Foucault, 1980).

Following Weber (1947), power is fundamental to human relationship and exchanges as it largely decides control of such relationship. As evident in studies on CSR and stakeholder theory (see Hendry, 2005) it is vital to note that the relationship between organisations and wider stakeholders (in particular the communities) is being controlled by the former. In fact, it has been asserted by Fassin (2009) that communities' dependence on organisations to achieve their objectives is what accords them stakeholder status. Freeman (1984) in laying the groundwork of stakeholder theory defined stakeholders in regards to their connections with the firm, particularly in relation to influence and interest. Therefore, reworking power/knowledge through genuine community engagement and participation could potentially lead to ethical CSR (O'Riordan & Fairbrass, 2013).

Similarly, the objective of ENCISS was to improve accountability, participation and strengthen citizens' voice in decision-making as well as access to information (ENCISS, 2019). It is an NGO set up by partnership between Christian Aid Sierra Leone, UK's Department for International Development (DfID) and European Union (EU). The initiative is also aimed at building the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) while supporting CSO activities on governance, gender, and youth employment.

Like DACDF, respondents expressed comparable views about its role in inclusive engagement:

> *ENCISS method concerning mentoring visits and learning labs in the extension stage has been the additional worth that has made the difference in training delivered. There is improvement in capacity development; there is more virile negotiation between civil society and government, sharing quality evidence to authorities on local matters, improved civil society access to meetings and decision-making procedures. This also includes robust awareness creation of development matters from local to national levels (Me02).*

> *After a perplexing inception year ENCISS began to develop tools and systems to gather and assess information. IPs and ENCISS staff were trained on results management. ENCISS approach of supporting IPs was part of three-monthly monitoring visits. ENCISS carried out reliable Annual Reviews and assessments which fed into programme learning and adjustments. Monitoring was enhanced all over the programme, staff capacity improved in collecting information and consequently became more consistent to feed into the entire framework to assess change in relation to goals and timeframe (Bo03).*

> *The ENCISS project is interactive and participatory to not only ensure there's genuine contribution coming from all stakeholders but for us to make more impact in the lives of the communities … dialogue it at centre of this programme … (Interviewee F).*

As can be seen from the above quotes, ENCISS is an optimistic initiative institutionalised to strengthen corporate-community relations by acting in concert with CSOs at the grassroots level to ‘‘facilitate debate between MNCs and the communities in mining and agricultural sectors IN relation to sustainable development and lasting peace’’ (FGDA). Studies by McLennan & Banks (2019) and Marco & Maconachie (2019) support the above findings and emphasise the institutionalisation of community-based, de-centralised mechanisms to natural resources redistribution and stakeholder management across sub-Saharan Africa (Wilson, 2015).

However, Datzberger (2014) maintains that the naïve acceptance of the idea that ‘‘the community’’ is the locus of development runs the risk of de-politicising (sustainable) development, and this is tantamount to moving away from the broader power equation within which sustainable development takes place. In addition, Pemunta (2012) notes that ‘‘[M]ost grassroots NGOs are owned by urban-based local elites who lay claim to insider status and local knowledge. With their hands tied by the complex geo-politics of aid conditionality, these individuals are engaged in the simultaneous manipulation of management and performance of local-ness’’ (p. 197). A statement from Fr03 further reveals the disappointment that has greeted ENCISS: ‘‘The intentions of setting up ENCISS is melting like a candle in the face of harsh, scorching elite politics about natural resource redistribution’’. Therefore, local communities have a different view about the development effects of CSR and corporate activities. Indeed, as argued by McLennan & Banks (2019, p. 118) ‘‘there is a growing body of work that questions the ways in which businesses “do” development, the impact of these initiatives, and whose interests they ultimately serve’’ (see Richey & Ponte, 2014; Idemudia, 2010). This demonstrates the gaps between ‘‘rhetoric and practice, the way in which CSR can provide legitimacy for corporate authority’’ (p. 117), and a tendency for firm to remain detached from the local communities (Frynas, 2005). It is to this end that Gilberthorpe & Banks (2012) observed that CSR initiatives including ENCISS are often conceptualised and operationalised based on ‘‘values that differ from local understandings of development and community desires for connection and relationship’’ (McLennan & Banks, 2019, p. 118).

In furthering these insights, an interviewee observed that: ‘‘as much as foreign donation and partnership are good including private-public partnership to confront accountability and transparency … even citizen voice … in the case of ENCISS, there remains huge scepticism about the realisation of these inputs following unrealistic hope and cultural differences’’ (Ke03). Similar views are expressed by Interviewee Q: ‘‘ENCISS is not a workable … it’s not the solution to unending resentment seen with the local people about unworkable partnerships … like many other similar projects we can’t see inputs from us as promised’’. The hallmark of this project was to improve the quality of lives of suffering locals, youth, children and women through increasing their inputs in the decision-making mechanism for fair resource distribution. It is DfID's key instrument in fostering the ideals of other civil societies in Sierra Leone including transparency, accountability, empowerment and accountability agenda. In this regard, ENCISS has played a key role in building relationships and strengthening networking between its Implementing Partners (IPs) and non-partners regarding matters, which are of shared interest and concern in regards to political and social practices as well as corporate-stakeholder engagement within Sierra Leone. One of the projects of ENCISS is ENCISS (III). This is a £10 million grant and capacity building contract, which started in late 2010. The service provider managing the contract is Christian Aid. ENCISS has made a substantial input to consolidating the efforts of civil society organisations' influence and capacity. The practical transformation in IPs – principally regarding organisational development and introduction of monitoring and advocacy knowledge – are basic ingredients for the realisation of sustainable development in Sierra Leone. These include tool and skills support provided by ENCISS. Also, these include Engagement in Accountability Platforms (EAP), Learning Labs, Policy forums and other platforms that have built connexions between the government and IPs on crucial issues. Nonetheless, ENCISS still has a long way to go in the implementation of advocacy and monitoring in practice.

Despite the above, ENCISS is bedevilled with corruption and centralised power equation as well as uncritical notion of private-public partnership and corporate-stakeholder relations, which make its workability incredulous. Accordingly, the Department for International Development (DfID) has noted that noted that ''[W]hilst initial progress in setting up the approach was promising, it then slowed, reflecting poor definition of roles and responsibilities in the programme document … management and design issues have meant continued slow progress in Freetown'' (DfID, 2008, p. 34) and other places. Oxfam (2015) has also indicated similar roadblock in ensuring partnership with the communities to Ebola response in Sierra Leone (and Liberia). Following Cowen & Shenton (1996), the above insights help to shed light on why it appears difficult for local communities to distinguish between rhetoric and practical solutions to the everyday challenges they face as a result of extractive activities, for example, community development and a focus on relational aspects of MNCs' presence in the communities. Thus, partnerships and interrelationships and dependency require genuine engagement for sustainable development from the perspectives of many communities, which their absence can trigger conflict.

Like ENCISS and DACDF, SLIEPA was created to stimulate domestic and foreign investment by the leveraging of public and private sector resources. It is the government agency supervised by the Ministry of Trade and Industry responsible for the generation, co-ordination, and promotion of foreign and domestic investments, and also value addition, the development of traditional and non-traditional exports diversification, and provision of support to businesses. This move started in 2004 by the government of Sierra Leone, when an Investment Promotion Act no. 10 was enacted. The main objectives for this enactment are as thus:

- To expedite and encourage investment incentives to potential investors via the establishment of an organisation, which is charged with the responsibility to assist in the registration of businesses and their development including training and access to advocacy and finance, etc.
- To promote and strengthen fair treatment and protection of foreign investments in terms of guarantees against expropriation, free transfer of funds and to facilitate harmonious settlement of disputes.
- To provide information to potential businesses on investment and business opportunities
- To facilitate registration of companies as well as assist investors in obtaining licenses, permits, clearances and certificates required for starting business (acting as a “one-stop” shop)
- To assist potential investors in identifying joint venture partnership.
- To develop and strengthen relationship between private and public sectors

The administration of investment promotion was initially given to the Sierra Leone Export Development and Investment Corporation (SLEDIC), but in 2007, this responsibility was later assigned to SLIEPA.

The creation of SLIEPA promised to engender more business development, investment promotion opportunities and corporate-stakeholder relations that will alleviate poverty. Paradoxically, like other agencies in this regard:

> *There are signs of contradiction here in regards to the creation of SLIEPA. Available statistics suggest that its objectives are from being realised. A central thread that runs in the creation of most initiatives for sustainable relationship between government, the locals and business is problem with our local style of governance (Fr06).*

Another interviewee considers SLIEPA as mere camouflage to give an impression of strengthening good relations between the people and businesses. For him, this is fuelling more violence in the country:

> *Like similar projects, SLIEPA is not working neither is it serving as a catalyst to boost business initiatives and to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Sierra Leone, who perennially depend on the activities of extractive industry for survival. This is accelerating the rate of violence, youth unrest and political violence, which contradict the concept of the initiative (Fr05).*

In agreement with the above findings position, the Head of Partnership and Development for SLIEPA asserts thus: ‘‘From evidence on ground, SLIEPA is incapacitated to deliver on its promise to build a bridge between prospective businesses and the government and the people in terms of investment promotion as well as its good impact in the society’’ (Ke01). For Interviewee I SLIEPA ‘‘…has become an extension of the failed attempt at collaborative governance and dialogue’’, which is making ‘‘peaceful progress nearly impossible … as the people’s suffering continues’’ (FGDF). In addition, Fr01 thinks that ‘‘… SLIEPA is underperforming and should be disbanded as it has not realistically provided a vent out of people’s suffering from bad business venturing in the country’’.

In agreement with views of various commentators (Maconachie, 2008, 2012, 2009; Datzberger, 2014) on business-society relationship, SLIEPA is underperforming (Ke01; Fr01) and indeed is not delivering on the ideals of dialogue, engagement and relationship building on which it was created. Like comparable engagement mechanisms that have turned into ‘‘a double-edged sword’’ (Pemunta, 2012, p. 196), SLIEPA’s creation has failed to address the unequal power relations within these partnerships – even local-global forms – which has given rise to donor-driven projects that have failed to deliver on the ideals of addressing social issues and engagement (FGDF, Fr06, Fr05 and Ke01). Commenting on this reality, Fowler (2003) notes that authentic and genuine partnership resonates with ‘‘a joint commitment to long-term interaction, shared responsibility for achievement, reciprocal responsibility for achievement, reciprocal obligation, equality, mutuality and balance of power’’ (p. 3), which are lacking from the instances seen above. A broader understanding of the corporate-community link demonstrates the way in which community development activities and initiatives are often embedded in power relationships (Marco & Maconachie 2019; Maconachie & Hilson, 2013). As argued earlier in this thesis, the issue of power is central to genuine dialogue and reciprocal exchanges between social actors (Foucault, 1980) as it celebrates mutuality, respect and inclusiveness (McLennan & Banks, 2019).

In line with the objectives of the above analysed initiatives, anything short of empowering the locals and other stakeholders can lead to not achieving measurable, realistic and genuine outcomes of these initiatives triggering unsustainable relationships and partnerships in the country (Wilson, 2015). Consequently, McLennan & Banks (2019) note that communities are active participants in shaping and realising SDGs not simply passive recipients, and such agency is usually negotiated throughout CSR activities and sustainable community development projects. In fact, the “quest for development is sometimes led by many communities themselves, principally by way of ‘‘autonomous’’ forces ‘‘from below’’ including ‘‘community-led collective action or social activism” (Maconachie & Hilson, 2013, p. 350). Furthermore, scholars (Gilberthorpe, 2013; Maconachie & Hilson, 2013), have noted that community mobilisation often arises as a result of disempowerment, lack of dialogue, marginalisation and extreme exploitation by powerful multinational organisations. Gilberthorpe (2013) contends that such situation can in turn trigger reaction of community actors to firms’ CSR activities, which can plays a significant role in framing wider CSR agendas, strategies and subsequent outcomes, for sustainable development.

6.4.2.3: Inclusive, legitimate and peaceful society/institution

This theme is based on questions asked respondents about the relationship between peace, legitimacy, inclusiveness and institutions in Sierra Leone. The theme focuses on analysis of respondents' views on how inclusive, legitimate and peaceful society/institution can lead to sustainable development. The United Nations (2017) has stressed that ''peaceful and inclusive societies [and institutions are important] for sustainable development''. The following cluster illustrates respondents' views:

> *The notion of living and working in harmony with multinationals is a good idea … but how do we accomplish this when we're marginalised and kept out of the loop of things? Some projects and action pans have been in existence for a long time ... but are they producing results? I'll say no …! This is very damaging to mutual trust, respect and harmony. This is partly one of the triggers of conflict in the communities …. (Interviewee R).*

> *We do understand that there are institutions and policies on peaceful relationship and inclusiveness that are unquestionable issues in sustaining legitimate relationships … What we have on ground is way too small for us to think we're going to have a harmonious, conflict-free relationship. … I think that war may happen again … but given the level of poverty in the land we will continue to be subservient to these cannibals (Interviewee W).*

> *Tell me that peace is not sustainable by including all voices on the discussion table and I'll tell you that's not true! As you can see there some plans and initiatives for relationship building ... But the question that persists is … are they working? Everything about peace has a lot to do with including everyone that matters … When people feel belonged they'll be quiet and peace will rain … This is good for proper behaviour, which we're doing in this organisation (FGDB).*

> *I'd like to state that shareholders are the primary beneficiaries of the multinationals' presence in Sierra Leone. … This is a very disturbing pattern for a country emerging*

from the shadows of upwards of ten years' bloody war, and is at present, embroiled in other forms of socio-economic, environmental and political 'wars'. We need genuine relationship between the stakeholders and the multinationals, for lasting peace and development that will contribute in lifting the veil of poverty in the land (Fr04).

The various views (FGDB, Interviewee W and Interviewee R) above illuminate that there is evidence of institutions and initiatives created to ensure there is inclusive and peaceful-co-existence between MNCs and wider stakeholders, in particular, the communities in Sierra Leone. This notion is in agreement with the preceding analysis and discussion in this chapter. A body of research has been developed that confirms the presence and centrality of these institutions for lasting peace and prosperity in fragile states or nations facing resource curse (Donais & McCandless, 2016; Kolk & Lenfant, 2013). Local communities in conflict-affected states and fragile areas are prone to many challenges, displacement, insecurity, armed violence, destruction of means of livelihood and ecosystem destruction.

An increasing number of MNCs operate in fragile and conflict-affected spaces, where there are risks of human rights violation and lack on inclusive relationships are rife. MNCs have been involved in fuelling this situation (Kolk & Lenfant, 2013). As a consequence, the United Nations (2017) has stated that these initiatives are required in building just, peaceful and strong institutions and societies for sustainable development (KPMG, 2017; United Nations, 2017; UNDP, 2006). Also, the UNDP (2006) has noted that these initiatives can be instrumental in governance and peace-building for justice and legitimate strengthening of the resilience of state-society relations. Accordingly, Beevers (2015) argues that these frameworks can help in facilitating the promotion of the rule of law, responsible institutions, justice, human rights, security and inclusive political processes as well as supporting conflict prevention.

However, the findings also suggest that these institutions are not producing the much anticipated results in which they were conceptualised and established (Fr04, FGDB, Interviewee W and Interviewee R). According to Human Rights Watch (2014, p. 54) the above painted landscape has advanced to violence, which makes it problematic to arrive at peaceful co-existence between MNCs and local communities (Lambourne, 2009). Therefore, as noted by Beevers (2015) it is difficult for sustainable development to take root in Sierra Leone based on current climate of lack of inclusive relationship between MNCs and the communities, which ‘‘destroys peaceful co-existence between us and them in this society’’ (Interviewee P). These findings are in agreement with previous studies (Dorp, 2016; Ikelegbe, 2001; Lambourne, 2009) and lend support to Ibaba’s (2011) research, which contends that failure of MNCs to engage with communities and work in concert for peaceful co-existence could degenerate into frustration-aggression and unsustainable relationship. Frustration aggression thesis helps to explain ‘‘the gap between what people feel they want or deserve and what they actually get sets in frustration that culminates into aggression and violence’’ (Ibaba, 2011, p. 324). As noted by United Nations (2017), these institutions ‘‘are necessary to achieve the … SDGs ... Therefore, ‘people everywhere need to be free of fear from all forms of violence’’ (United Nations, 2017, p. 1; Lambourne, 2009). Ibaba (2011) further noted that this is a harbinger of uncooperative relationship, violence and conflict between MNCs and communities, which is antithetical to the principles of legitimate engagement and sustainable development. Likewise, SDGs16 stresses peace and sustainable development as reliant on peaceful, just and strong institutions. Thus, peace and sustainable development are in a two-way relationship. Annan (2004) has argued that durable peace and continual corporate-stakeholder relationship are central to sustainable development in Africa. Accordingly, the findings lend themselves to the research by Ihugba & Osuji (2011) and Eweje’s (2007), who also identified ‘‘scepticism of stakeholders in host communities’’ in relation to lack of credible and inclusive institutions.

Additionally, respondents passionately voiced their concerns about excluding them from the planning and implementation of initiatives as local participation is cosmetic:

> *In line with every approach for representative engagement, including all voices is very important for progress … One thing is to include us and it’s another to take our views seriously … This is not seen in our case … (Interviewee O).*
>
> *Involving the people in the decision-making is not about strategy to gain reputation and court legitimacy … I stand here to speak for all the community members that we’re not part of this … It is very annoying .. I tell you peace will hardly be seen (FGDI).*

Since exclusion can function as a driver of conflict, genuine, inclusive methods have long been considered vital in peace-building and sustainable relationship. Inclusive methods can take diverse procedures including for example increasing representation of women, young people and efforts to strengthen dialogue and common interests (Eweje, 2007; SDG10). Similarly, such approaches often seek to widen consultations in the planning, execution and monitoring of peace-building initiatives to include different views, such as civil society, the private sector and the communities. These methods can sometimes include initiatives geared towards diversify representation by seeking the involvement of local people. Recent initiatives such as the *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States* emphasise that ‘‘an engaged public and civil society, which constructively monitors decision-making, is important to ensure accountability’’ (Datzberger, 2015, p. 1594). Despite this attempt, Pemunta’s (2012) notes that ‘‘[I]n Sierra Leone, severe economic underdevelopment and poverty has thwarted ‘peace-building from below’ because of a marriage between local and modern state structures based on neo-patrimonialism and corruption’’ (p. 201). Maconachie (2012) corroborates this: ‘‘[T]he endurance of pre-war patrimonial relationships subverts fair access to, and control of, the nation’s diamond resources and threatens prospects for peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction’’ (p. 261). In sum, there is lack of agency and voice of the people, which undermines inclusive, legitimate and peaceful society and institutions in Sierra Leone.

Indeed, since the launch of ‘‘the landmark 1992 UN document *An Agenda for Peace*, there has been an increase in the ‘‘deployment of localism in the discourse and practice of the liberal peace, together with actions by local communities to harness, exploit, subvert and negotiate the internationally driven aspects of the local turn’’ (Datzberger, 2015, 1594). It is on this basis that a community youth president noted that ‘‘…true and genuine multi-stakeholder approach that respects views from below is all that is needed for change in Sierra Leone’’ (FGDG). Thus, for peace-building approaches to lead to sustainable peace, legitimate engagement, participation and collaboration from a broad spectrum of society is essential for peace. As noted by Interviewee H ‘‘while broadening participation is broadly recognised … there is still much room for improvement in relation to genuine local participation’’. Also, corporate-community and peaceful co-existence endorses sustainable development on the principles of notion of mutual respect, democratised relations and social justice (Ismail, 2009; Falck & Heblich, 2007). SDG16 endorses this concept (Schönherr et al., 2017; KPMG, 2017).

6.4.2.4: Stakeholder relationship and salience

This theme is focused on understanding who the stakeholders think are given more salience (or consideration) in corporate-stakeholder relationship. Stakeholder salience is the degree to which ‘‘managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims’’ (Mitchell et al., 1997, p. 854). They further suggested that salience is dependent on the possession of three stakeholder attributes including legitimacy, power and urgency. This implies who the firm considers to be most important stakeholders or groups. It is vital to determine a stakeholder group that has power over others (Frooman, 1999) and how this affects the nature of stakeholder relationship and engagement. This has implication for sustainable development (Heikkurinen & Bonnedahl, 2013).

The below excerpt demonstrates shared views of the respondents:

> *‘‘What can I say? ... We need to change the whole process of thinking that others are more important here ... All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others, to borrow that age long statement… Some people have more powers than others. It’s hard for these companies to think we matter (Interviewee O).*

A respondent from NPAA has also indicated that ‘‘the companies habitually don’t think that we matter … they are more inclined to listening to themselves, which is a strong source of dissatisfaction. The youths have been rebellious because of this. This is not good for sustainable relationship’’ (Interviewee L). In substantiating this statement, an employee of Goldtree mentioned that his organisation is often ‘‘… reluctant to discuss CSR projects and environmental programmes with the communities because what the communities need is just money … ’’ (Interviewee H). He goes ahead to state that ‘‘the country’s politics and governance process is contributory to this problem’’ (Interviewee H). A community project officer in London Mining observed that ‘‘everyone knows who matters here ... the big companies with influence matter …

if they're not on our soil it'll be difficult for our livelihood as we're poor with manufacturing and export (Fr02).

The above findings continue below:

> *''No doubt, there is apparent difference between who matters to these companies and those that don't matter … This can be felt from whose views they take into consideration when making policies and those that are given attention in the entire process of corporate-community relations …. In my humble opinion, the stakeholders that mean to multinationals are just those that could stop their existence … the owners … not us … we're less powerful … '' (FGDG).*

> *It is no news that only vested interest of shareholders and their allies are given due consideration on each discussion table … We all know that more power and privileges go to some groups over others. The case of unequal relationship between Kenema people and these companies is glaring as well as other places in the country (Interviewee U).*

The above perspectives give an indication that participants understand that there is apparent disparity in the way some groups or stakeholders matter to MNCs (Interviewee L, Interviewee H, Interviewee O, Fr02, FGDG, and Interviewee U), hence, different levels of salience in relationship. These findings tend to agree with several perspectives on who matters to the firm (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Agle, Mitchell & Sonnenfeld, 1999; Freeman, 1984), which is premised on impact (anyone who is impacted or can be impacted) and who is given consideration (Heikkurinen & Bonnedahl, 2013; Frooman, 1999). As noted by Freeman (1984) a stakeholder is ''any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives'' (p. 46). However, this definition does not specify who is really benefitting from corporate-stakeholder relationship, particularly if such relationship is unethical. Additionally, there appears to be implicit generalisation of this perspective to stakeholder theory, which tends to confuse whose claims are given more consideration or seen to be legitimate from the perspective of managers (Agle et al., 1999). Therefore, in order to ascertain the legitimacy of corporate strategy or action, for example, its policies on renewable energy or environmental protection or stakeholder relationship, it is important to understand who benefits from such action.

As can be seen from the above findings, some stakeholders are regarded as more important than others, which brings up the issue of primary (internal) and secondary (external) stakeholders dichotomy (Clarkson, 1995) in corporate-stakeholder relationship. Accordingly, Clarkson (1995) suggests that firms would naturally give more salience to the primary stakeholder group that they think have more power and more strategic resources like shareholders (Mitchell et al, 1997), while giving less priority to secondary stakeholders including the communities, whom they feel have less resources to thwart their existence in a society that is corrupt (Akiwumi, 2014), where MNCs can get away with corporate malpractice (Idemuida, 2010). This also has implications for urgency of claims made by the communities as well as legitimacy of such claims as perceived by managers (Neville, Bell & Whitwell, 2011). As generally agreed in management literature (see Mitchell et al., 1997) power and legitimacy seldom flows to stakeholders that managers perceive to have less influence and power over organisational operations. And as argued by Mitchell et al. (1997) it is by achieving legitimacy with powerful organisations including MNCs that low power actors, like the communities, can acquire some degree of salience that can be applied to exert influence over organisational decisions. Sadly, this is not the case in Sierra Leone (Maconachie, 2009). This argument has implications for sustainable, normative relationship between MNCs and the communities. Whereas stakeholder salience examines how MNCs identify and manage priority amongst their competing stakeholders (Carroll, 1991; Freeman, 1984), stakeholder relationship explains how they relate with recognised stakeholders in promoting development and social benefits. The quality or degree of such relationship may however impact the placement of specific stakeholders or groups in the salience scale. MNCs are thus embroiled in maintaining a balance between their interaction with wider stakeholders and their profit maximisation agenda (Akiwumi, 2014).

Stakeholder theory identifies that corporations are entangled in much wider interest contestation than those of shareholders (Freeman, 1984). Thus, for corporations to be sustainable in their interaction with wider stakeholders, they need to pay attention to the interests of the communities in Sierra Leone and ‘‘prioritise their actions to satisfy these numerous stakeholders … without politicising what they do or taking advantage of corruption in the land'' (FGDF). From the above findings, Interviewee H and FGDF also added that political structure in Sierra is contributory to why the communities are given less salience in ''spaces of contested development'' (Hennings, 2018, p. 521), which breeds ''spaces of contestation'' Conteh & Maconachie (2019, p. 231) with regard to sustainable development. Accordingly, the Human Rights Watch (2014) has observed that:

> *Private investors operate in a weak regulatory context, allowing them to exploit inadequate oversight of environmental and social impact, the lack of clarity around land title, and competing and underfunded government institutions vulnerable to corruption. These weaknesses create fertile ground for human rights abuses connected to development projects, as evidenced by the African Minerals Limited case (p. 19).*

From the politicisation of corporate-stakeholder relations as seen above, to the dynamics of salience and claim to legitimacy by managers in the entire processes of engagement that re-institutionalise existing dichotomies between stakeholders, power courses through every aspect of the engagement process. This situation makes the communities passive collaborators and undermines their rights and inputs in organisational decision-making. In supporting these findings, Pemunta (2012) stated that ''committees that were put in place as part of the post-war recovery to administer development and humanitarian aid'' are rather engaging in ''undemocratic practices and fraud'' (p. 201), which does not stimulate or support ''greater engagement of an increasingly diverse stakeholder group on accountability issues'' (Oxfam, 2013, p. 22).

As argued by Heikkurinen & Bonnedahl (2013) it is understandable that the stakeholders who are crucial in regards to sustainable development (for example, the communities, non-humans and future generations) are not given salience. Additionally, all the respondents concur to the fact that the less powerful stakeholders or those without strategic resources are not considered in the overall process of corporate-stakeholder relations, hence, why certain stakeholders are more powerful than others (Clarkson, 1995). It is to this end that Binns & Maconachie (2005) noted that such mode of corporate-stakeholder relations exacerbates unsustainable development as well as limits normative CSR practice as organisational legitimacy is questioned in the process (Mitchell et al., 1997). Similarly, Kourula & Halme (2008) specified that organisations should take into consideration the development of new mechanisms of corporate-stakeholder relations that will accord legitimacy to their engagement and practice by identifying and including wider stakeholders' view on CSR projects for sustainable development. Additionally, such inclusiveness can, on the one hand, lead to increased financial performance, competitiveness, and new business opportunities as well as enhance corporate image and knowledge on how to foster sustainable relationship (Binns & Maconachie, 2005). This is in agreement with the views of Hart & Sharma (2004, p. 7). They argue that ''… by reversing the logic of traditional approaches focused on managing powerful stakeholders'' MNCs can identify ''voices at the fringe of their networks'' and accordingly create ''mechanisms for complex interaction and empathy with those on the fringe'' for sustainable development. Broadly, giving salience to only powerful stakeholder groups is detrimental to harmonious stakeholder relationship.

6.4.3: CSR strategies and motivations

Five sub-themes will be analysed, which underpin CSR strategies and motivations. This starts with social responsible investing.

Table 6.9: Theme and sub-themes – CSR Strategies and Motivations

Theme	**Sub-themes**	**Excerpts**
CSR strategies and motivation	Social responsible investing	*A lot of efforts and resources have been channelled towards addressing many environmental issues in this country*

	Environmentalism	*… the Sierra Leone Biodiversity Conservative Project is a sham, and has failed grossly in driving the agenda of environmental protection and conservation …*
	Adherence to contracts and agreements	*As a company, were committed to ensuring that everything in the agreements we have signed with the stakeholders are kept … but I don't think that truly represents what we do …*
	Legitimisation	*Surviving in such a combustible environment, … requires more than just obeying the law …*

6.4.3.1: Social responsible investing

This theme is about CSR activities and strategies that are philanthropically oriented and based on responsible investing to win hearts and minds of stakeholders. Social responsible investing is about ''integrating personal values and societal concerns with investment decisions'' (Berry & Junkus, 2003; Schueth, 2003) for sustainable development. It is also referred to as social and sustainable investment or ethical investing or socially conscious investing, which can be a form of corporate strategy that seeks to consider both social/environmental good to bring about social change and ROI. According to Berry & Junkus (2003) such corporate investment can promote environmental stewardship, human rights and corporate image (Berry & Junkus, 2003). A central notion that is shared by most respondents is that MNCs use social responsible investing to address many environmental (social) issues including environmental stewardship. First, understanding environmental stewardship is important here. It is a process that promotes responsible use of, and safeguard of, the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices (Rivera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood, & Kolk, 2015). Gauging socially responsible investing through environmental stewardship is necessary since it gives insights into how social investments of MNCs can ameliorate environmental situation in Sierra Leone. Although extant literature has stressed that one of the motivations to engage in socially responsible investing is to support mutual gain between business and society (Hebb, 2012), respondents acknowledged this but also expressed displeasure with projects aimed at environmental stewardship:

> *Behind many of the agri-environment projects and policies is to ensure we have a stable, sustainable relationship with the companies ... But the fact still remains that there are serious limitations on their workability to advance issue of sustainable relationship ... we think it's about strategy to have uninterrupted operation… (FGDI)*

> *A lot of efforts and resources have been channelled towards addressing many environmental issues in this country ... Land degradation is admittedly a grave issue in our country ... Various actors have been involved to bring about concerted effort to fight this problem caused by natural hazards like floods and droughts. ... This situation is aggravated by diamond mining and unsustainable agricultural practices carried out by the big companies in Sierra Leone ... The issue of making these plans work is another thing ... these issue make sustainability issue problematic (Interviewee S).*

In agreement with Interviewee S and FGDI, a community opinion leader (Fr05) stated that most the investment in environmental stewardship ''maybe created with genuine intention … but they're not producing results''. This situation creates and fosters ''environmental dilemma'', which ''continues to be a major detriment to Sierra Leone's progress in its national recovery plan''… (Me03).

The above findings indicate the age long tension between strategy and business ethics (Gilbert, 1986). For Porter (1996), strategy means "the creation of a unique and valuable position, involving a different set of activities" (p. 68) like environmental stewardship, which can make or mar business ethics (Gilbert, 1986). This is consistent with the views of Singer (2010), who argues that "strategy and ethics have long been regarded as expressions of contrasting value priorities" (p.480). Aguinis & Glavas (2013) state that what matters in the strategy of organisation is the context specific result, which when not seen triggers conflict as evident in developing countries (Visser, 2006). One of the dimensions of socially responsible investing is called ‘‘impact investing’’, which is concerned with the conscious creation of social impact through social investment for ROI, reputation management and legitimacy seeking (Scholtens, 2014). Accordingly, businesses engage in social responsible investing in situations, where their image is poor as seen from the operations of MNCs in Sierra Leone (Ngoasong, Korda & Paton, 2015). Specifically, Brest & Born (2013) and Banerjee & Duflo (2011) think these investments are ‘‘donor-driven paradigm of making markets work for the poor’’, which promotes ‘‘bottom-up development, market-building through private individual initiatives and the emphasis’’ (Ngoasong et al., 2015) on those at the bottom of the pyramid (Kingsley, 2008). However, Gilbert (1986) has noted that corporate strategy including social investing is a tool for organisational effectiveness, which questions its moral standing as well as the ethical nature of corporate-stakeholder interaction in general.

Furthermore, the above quotes suggest that the local people are side-lined in the decision-making process that affects their livelihood and welfare. In line with the growing CSR rhetoric, critics maintain that CSR is essentially about projecting an appropriate image to stakeholders in order to placate stakeholders and ensure business as usual (Hamann & Kapelus (2004)). Commenting on lack of endorsement and engagement between MNCs and communities about land use and related environmental stewardship, HRDN-SL (2015) has this to say:

> *… [I]n the provincial areas, the Government has never involved community members in its negotiations with multinational companies for the use of the community members' land. In particular, there has been no prior and informed consent for the use of land by multinational companies, as required by the African Charter (HRDN-SL, p. 8).*

Another interesting issue from the views of participants is lack of endorsement from local communities in companies' use of their lands as well as involvement of local chiefs who are there for their selfish ends (Maconachie, 2009). This process also resonates with irresponsible use of natural resources and environment (Rivera-Santos et al., 2015), which negates sustainable development (Visser, 2013). Accordingly,

> *[As] a result of the company's efforts to mine iron ore near Bumbuna, the rights of local villagers' to land, water, and livelihood were impeded. The company in 2010 formally leased land from the government for mining, and worked through the relevant paramount chief, a local customary official, to evict hundreds of families, relocating their households to an arid location near the town's quarry. The paramount chief did not appear to have engaged in meaningful consultations with the affected residents (HRW, 2014, p. 2).*

Comparable observations are made below:

> *It can be said that there is clear transgression on the rights of the communities … and lack of involving the communities in decisions made to protect the environment and social justice too … However, it's not our fault that environmental health of the environment is in jeopardy … (Interviewee B).*

> *There has been a tendency among proponents of large-scale farmland investments to overlook the full range of resources that rural communities lose when they sign away their land. Investors and the government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) appear not to fully appreciate the value to rural communities of agro-biodiversity and local biodiverse resources found on and around rural farms, the importance of fish, bush meat (game), domestic livestock and poultry, or the wealth of plant genetic resources on which farm families – especially women – depend (CA, 2013, p. 5).*

The above perspectives showcase implicit motivation for establishing these social responsible investments, which is more of strategy than genuine attempt at sustainable development. In agreement with prior research, there is poor stakeholder engagement, dialogue and inputs from the locals in the management of these lands by MNCs in cahoots with village chiefs, who are rather engaging with these companies for their own selfish interests without representing the people (Datzberger, 2014). In addition, putting the fate of local people in the hands of corrupt and elite-salving local chiefs further promotes social injustice, inequality and unsustainable development. Similar observation is made by HRW (2014, p. 67): ‘‘while Sierra Leone has encouraged mining firms to invest in the country … the few efforts that have been initiated have gone nowhere.’’. Therefore, ‘‘[B]oth the government and its corporate investors will need to act in accordance with international standard….’’ for the ideals of sustainable development to be achieved. In adding to the issues presented above ‘‘Private investors operate in a weak regulatory context, allowing them to exploit inadequate oversight of environmental and social impact, the lack of clarity around land title, and competing and underfunded government institutions vulnerable to corruption’’ are other issues triggering this situation. HRW (2014) continues to state that ‘‘these weaknesses create fertile ground for human rights abuses connected to development projects, as evidenced by the African Minerals Limited case’’ (HRW, p. 19). Overall, this context impedes peace-building objectives of community-driven projects towards social justice and environmental stewardship.

6.4.3.2: Environmentalism

This theme is based on environmentalism. Respondents’ views were sought about how CSR projects initiated by MNCs can foster sustainable development. This theme also sheds light on other similar projects established in concert with MNCs to help preserve the environment as well as how these companies are addressing climate change issue. Corporate environmentalism (Elkington, 1994, p. 91) refers to environmentally valuable activities that are undertaken by organisations, which go beyond legal requirements ‘‘towards a desired future or better world’’ (Gladwin, Kennelly & Krause, 1995, p. 876) in which the environment is preserved as well as improvement of its health. According to the findings, there are concerns about these projects in delivering on the ideals of sustainable development: ‘‘… we’re still here … no progress made with the instruments to bring about protecting our environment ... they’re well designed but lack capacity to bring transformation in land use and environmental conservation’’ (Interviewee V). For FGDI, these projects are ‘‘not effective’’ and tend to ‘‘derail the purpose of national policy on environmental conservation’’. The above insight is central to the creation of reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD) of forests and REDD+ among other comparable projects. The following excerpts illustrate poor environmental approaches by MNCs in Sierra Leone:

> *[e]nvironmental, social and health impact assessments (EIAs), mandatory for large agricultural investments, do acknowledge some of the environmental, social and health risks of large-scale industrial plantations that supplant smallholder farming. But there are gaps in the EIAs; while they attempt to meet the basic requirements outlined in the Environmental Protection Act 2008, they are not rigorous enough in providing information on their potential impact (CA, p. 7).*

> *Private investors operate in a weak regulatory context, allowing them to exploit inadequate oversight of environmental and social impact, the lack of clarity around land title, and competing and underfunded government institutions vulnerable to corruption. These weaknesses create fertile ground for human rights abuses connected to development projects, as evidenced by the African Minerals Limited case (HRW, p. 19).*

> *In the Port Loko District, London Mining Company is causing serious damage to community property and farm lands as a result of a waste dump. Additionally, the London Mining Company continues to evade payment of any compensation to community members for damage to their property, or relocation of community members (HRDN-SL, p. 8).*

The above extracts indicate that activities of MNCs are causing serious damage (HRDN-SL, HRW and Christian Aid) to the environment and the people as well as shies away from genuine impact assessment for environmentalism. In agreement with prior literature (Maconachie, 2009; Binns & Maconachie, 2005), this situation negates the premise of establishing environmental these initiatives to guard against ecological footprints and environmental degradation in Sierra Leone (Akiwumi, 2014).

As noted by Hamann & Kapelus (2004), voluntary environmental initiatives are mere green-wash because MNCs are ‘‘the world’s most polluting corporations that have developed the most sophisticated techniques to communicate their message of corporate environmentalism'' (p. 86). Consequently, the primacy of social justice and genuine environmental stewardship are negated (Rivera-Santos et al., Holt, 2015). To this end, Sierra Leone has been embroiled in environmental and social justice dilemma, which is aggravated by MNCs' operation (Wilson, 2015). These issues constitute a roadblock to sustainable development (Datzberger, 2014). The failure of these initiatives undermines SDGs 9, 13 & 15.

Additionally, the Sierra Leone's Biodiversity Conservative Project (SLBCP) was created and funded by the Global Environmental Facility and executed by the World Bank and Österreichische Bundesforste Consulting (ÖBf) in association with the Forestry Division of the MAFFS in three protected areas in Sierra Leone. They include the following areas: The Outamba/Kilimi National Park (OKNP), Kangari Hills Forest Reserve and Luma Mountain Forest Reserve (soon to be National Park). The initiatives hope to assist the government in enhancing the management of selected priority biodiversity conservation sites as well as improving its capacity for duplication of best biodiversity conservation strategies in Sierra Leone.

REDD+ capacity building in Sierra Leone is funded by the European Union and applied by the country's MAFFS. It addresses REDD+ readiness at the national level in Sierra Leone. The overall goal of the scheme is to contribute to the establishment of pro-poor development and low-carbon emission whilst improving the degree of environmental protection and optimising the gains offered by environmental services. Particularly, it is aimed at generating the basic conditions for developing the technical, institutional, and social experience and local capacities necessary for sound forest and environmental governance in the renewable energy sector in Sierra Leone. Similarly, the Sierra Leone Biodiversity Conservative Project (SLBCP) has three aims:

- Strengthening the national agenda for biodiversity preservation
- Conservation site management and planning
- Managing, monitoring and evaluating projects

Nevertheless, SLBCP is imperilled by donor pressure and funding scarcity as well as dependency on foreign aids, which undercuts meaningful efforts at sustainable development and private-public partnership for poverty alleviation and environmental wholesomeness. Like most failed environmental projects, SLBCP and REDD+ are not exemptions. Additionally, of definite significance to REDD+ is the first element which comprises revising and updating the wildlife and forestry regulations and policies as well as identifying viable, sustainable financing choices for conservation sites. This includes Payments for Environmental Services (PES). Also, Sierra Leone Biodiversity Conservative Project has immensely fostered the establishment of the Protected Area Authority and Conservation Trust Fund Act, which was passed in October 2012, thus establishing the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) and a Conservation Trust Fund. Closely linked to this perspective is Hibou's (1999) contention that these projects are mere ''…reinforcement of the power of elite, particularly at the local level, or of certain factions, and sometimes stronger ethnic character … the NGOs are established by politicians, at the national and local level … (p. 99). Hibou's (1999) disappointment about environmental conservation projects continues:

> *As has been seen in many areas, the Sierra Leone Biodiversity Conservative Project is a sham, and has failed grossly in driving the agenda of environmental protection and conservation, which it hypothetically represents (Ke02).*

Analogous views are offered here: ''the creation and application of strategies created and promoted by the Sierra Leone Biodiversity Conservative Project has never produced a palpable benefit in the country's march from poor environmental health to a wholesome one'' (Fr05). For Bo05 ''The promise of a more sustainable business, poverty alleviation and environmental health that underpins the creation and operation of SLBC including REDD+ and others is not happening, as our environment is still seriously pillaged''.

6.4.3.3: Adherence to contracts and agreements

The focus of this theme was to investigate whether there are any contracts and/or agreements entered into by the stakeholders, and to ascertain if they are kept by MNCs. These agreements/contracts can legalise and/or further legitimise MNCs' operation (Belal, 2008). They are considered to be important benchmarks in determining MNC's social licence to operate and legitimacy of their operation. Prior literature on legitimacy of organisations emphasises that adhering to contractual agreement between stakeholders is significant in determining legitimacy of behaviour (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

A respondent from Kiodu Holdings responded thus regarding these agreements:

> *As a company, were committed to ensuring that everything in the agreements we have signed with the stakeholders are kept … Permit me to say that sometimes we're accused of not complying by these agreement, which creates problems … but I don't think that truly represents what we do … (FGDC).*

Another focus group respondent from Socfin Ltd. Stated thus:

> *Often, we're accused by local farmers and the people, who time and again say we're land grabbers and that we don't respect the law and agreement about farming in Sierra Leone … Well … we have been doing our very best to comply with many of the agreements governing cocoa farming and others (FGDA).*

The first focus group participant (FGDC) offers an indication of agreements being signed between his organisation and the relevant stakeholders and saying they are being kept. However, he acknowledges that stakeholders are not satisfied with the nature of keeping to the terms of the agreements/contract by his organisation. This is the main reason why wider stakeholders including the communities accuse them of not implementing the terms of these agreements. This statement implies that keeping to these agreements could lead to sustainable relationship between the organisation and communities (Akiwumi, 2014). The second responded stressed that his organisation is doing its ''very best to comply with'' the agreement. Additionally, Interviewee D's comments are comparable to the above: ''we at Addax Bioenergy are conscious of implementing agreements reached with stakeholder, whether the communities believe or not''.

The following statement offers more insight:

> *I think that we are all missing the point here … the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme as well as similar reforms to bring sanity in the mining industry – particularly trade in alluvial diamond – is perennially enmeshed in problem of implementation, which historically underlines our country's march towards development and good governance including charting a course to deal with issue of corporate-stakeholder dilemma. Although we can notice some improvement since the inception of the reforms to confront issues of lack of sustainable development, incessant corporate-community conflict and historical pauperisation of the masses, more needs to be done. This improvement is demonstrated in success noticed in a large number of illicit diamond mining/trade from underground networks into official channel. But … ehm … more needs to be done (Ke01).*

Analogous perspectives are painted below:

> *In my view, the whole exercise about corporate-stakeholder engagement is to lift Sierra Leone from the doldrums of economic, social, political and corporate siege, which is not only about reforms and recasting the mould of better governance! More than anything, it is centred on ensuring that the people that matter – the communities – have input in deciding what concerns them as well as making sure their views are taken seriously. In a corrupt system, this is a far cry I must admit. To bring Sierra Leone to its pristine period is still a long way …! (Fr01).*

> *Private investors operate in a weak regulatory context, allowing them to exploit inadequate oversight of environmental and social impact, the lack of clarity around land title, and competing and underfunded government institutions vulnerable to corruption. These weaknesses create fertile ground for human rights abuses connected to development projects, as evidenced by the African Minerals Limited case (HRW, p. 19).*

As can be gleaned from the above quotes, both interviewees (Ke01 and Fr01) admit that the workability of agreements (or corporate-stakeholder engagement) transcends establishing them; it is more of implementing them to drive sustainable development and good governance (Porto, 2010). This contention agrees with the views of commentators on the rise of Sierra Leone for sustainable development (Maconachie, 2016; Datzberger, 2014, 2015). Overall, the above perspectives underscore the need to go beyond instrumental approach to signing of agreements to ensure they are kept. In responding to the above views, a Senior Manager in one of the government ministries observed that:

> *Multinational enterprises in this country are not actually obeying the agreement signed with the stakeholders. What they are implicitly doing is to stabilise relationship with dissatisfied community people and the international communities by engaging in falsified project to stabilise relationship with stakeholders (FGDD).*

It is because of the above insights that Sierra Leone's farmers and wider stakeholders ‘‘continue to fight multinational land grabs’’ (Gbandia, 2016). Gbandia (2016) further stated that ‘‘protests will continue until local landholders receive justice’’. Commenting on the need for justice and social licence to operate, a member of CSO commented that ‘‘the agitation about land use and keeping to terms of agreements in doing business will continue until there is justice and fairness in the process (Interviewee K)’’.

Furthermore, given the pressures of corporate-stakeholder conundrum as well as conflict surrounding diamond mining and related resources, the government of Sierra Leone enacted ‘‘a variety of laws, under the direct supervision of international actors, to restart an industrial mining sector’’ (Beevers, 2015, p. 231). This move saw the emergence of the Mines and Mineral Act (2009) to give the government more control of the sector, increase royalty rates, enhance environmental protection, increase community benefits and amplify inputs of the locals in the governance process. Amongst other agreements, Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPSC) and Sierra Leone Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (SLEITI) were initiated to bring accountability, legitimacy and transparency in the extractive industry (Beevers, 2015). However, creating these regulatory instruments is no panacea to the lingering development problems in Sierra Leone as well as other African countries going through resource curse (Ite, 2004). Accordingly, Dwan & Bailey (2006) have commented that international actors demanded more supervision and more regulation that saw the emergence of a flurry of regulations, policies and initiatives aimed at managing trade in alluvial diamonds and related industries (Beevers, 2015, p. 231).

The below cluster illustrates this observation:

> *SLEITI is a welcome development as shown in its principles and blueprint but its practicality is undermined by lack of genuine involvement of the communities … Most importantly, this initiative has been plagued by lack of community presence. You now tell me! Is this the right way to move our country forward? The present mantra is that businesses should not be divorced from governance framework in developing countries, where there is shortage of good governance and leadership. (Bo02).*

> *Well … before any company will be seen to be supporting the community, it has to identify with the aspirations of the locals, whose environment is constantly devastated by the multinationals' operation. These people also suffer from social and economic hardship because of natural resources like diamond and bauxite. For me, I think that the road to social justice and fighting resources curse is to give the communities genuine opportunities through inputs in corporate-stakeholder engagement to make meaningful, lasting imprints in the overall effort to see a renewed Sierra Leone. (Bo01).*

> *This country needs proper framework to address years of pillage and corruption stemming from bad leadership and multinationals' presence. We don't really need these foreign companies; they cause more harm than good. They sometimes talk about providing jobs for our people, but they take far more than one can image! More than this, Sierra Leone is in dire straits of actualising the framework initiated such as SLEITI and DACDF, which are supposed to guarantee achieving the aims of partnering with NGOs, government and related agencies. To able to do this, people's voice needs to be heard (Fr04).*

These interviewees (Bo01, Fr04 and Fr04) stressed the unworkability of agreements and related contractual initiatives between the communities and MNCs. These findings further show that ‘‘foreign companies in Sierra Leone cannot be trusted to be legitimate in what they do because of disappointment from implementation of these initiatives’’ (FGDC). For instance, ‘‘KPSC is a total failure of effort at checkmating activities in diamond mining’’ (Ke03).

As noted by Maconachie (2015) Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPSC) has been applauded as the most viable, acclaimed governance mechanism and initiative in Sierra Leone’s diamond industry. This initiative has been heralded on different fronts as a feasible instrument to transcend the travails of illegitimate trade in diamonds as well as uncontrolled conflict surrounding diamond mining and trade. Before the advent of KPSC in 2002, several attempts including the UN certification scheme had been introduced in October 2000, ensuring that through complicity of the rebels, the multinationals did not export diamonds, thereby undermining corporate responsibility, governance and accountability. The provenance of the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme was a series of consultation held in South Africa, starting in May 2000, which afforded NGOs, governments and the private sectors (MNCs) the opportunity to meet in order to address the contradictions and conflict surrounding diamond mining, manufacturing and export. KPSC is widely known by many industry commentators to be the ‘‘gold standard’’ of voluntary CSR tool, which is now supported by national legislations in upwards of 72 countries (Maconachie, 2008). Additionally, it has to be noted that using the KPCS (including SLEITI) as tools for addressing CSR-related issues, is fraught with danger as they have not genuinely dealt with the concerns of wider stakeholders about corporate-stakeholder engagement, corporate governance and CSR for sustainable development (Beevers, 2015).

However, as rightly indicated by Hilson & Maconachie (2009, p. 52) using EITI and KPCS as frameworks for good governance and to operationalise ideals of normative CSR (Frynas, 2015) and sustainable development (Visser, 2013; Richey & Ponte, 2014) is by no means straightforward. Thus, EITI is not necessarily a blueprint to expedite the process of good governance in Sierra Leone including other resource-rich countries, given contradictions in its operationalisation. They continue to contend that EITI is a policy tool that could prove to be operational with substantial institutional change in host African countries but, on its own, it is incapable of fighting corruption and mobilising citizens to hold the MNCs and government officials accountable for hoarding profits from extractive industry activities (Hilson & Maconachie, 2009).

That said, Fr03 highlighted the need for MNCs to embrace the urgency of operationalising these initiatives for good governance and development rather than mere green-washing:

> *As an expert on sustainable development and CSR, policy measures are not sufficient to ride the wave of changed Sierra Leone from lack of engagement, responsibility transparency and accountability to corporate-community engagement enabling CSR practice and sustainable business and investing (Fr03).*

In a similar vein, an interviewee blurted that ‘‘as a community opinion leader, our condition will subsist unless we widen the process of governance to take on board views of the less powerful’’ (Bo02). Another respondent added that ‘‘… multinational corporations’ genuine involvement … and other bodies … in implementing the principles in these contracts will lead to a win-win situation for all’’ (Interviewee Fr06).

In taking this perspective further, Newell & Frynas (2007) stated that ‘‘… partnership with non-governmental organisations, development agencies and local communities are said to be able to help private firms to develop new markets, while providing the poor with access to markets and services’’ (p. 670). Richey & Ponte (2014, p. 2) consider this form of partnership as ‘‘new actors and alliances in development’’. Although such a process to CSR and sustainable development is not directly concerned with the broader environmental and social responsibilities of business, and admittedly, its conceptualisation of poverty eradication and access to market/services could be problematic, nevertheless, it promises the dialectics of ‘‘win-win logic’’ (Newell & Frynas, 2007, p. 670) for wider stakeholders. Thus, ‘‘we’re not saying businesses should provide food for our people – but they can contribute to healing some of the social wounds inflicted by poor governance on the people resulting from resource curse …’’ (Me01). This position is supported here by a World Bank community development office: ‘‘The new idea of business in modern world has a lot to do with ‘helping’ those at the bottom of the society to rise up’’ (Ke03).

In stressing the need for business to go beyond instrumental approach to contribute to sustainable development – normative approach – through CSR initiatives, Idemudia (2011) explicitly argued that:

> The rethinking of the role of business in the pursuit of sustainable development objectives since the mid-1990s has also meant business has had to respond to this changing societal expectations by increasingly redefining and justifying its involvement in developmental issues in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Regardless of whether one accepts or rejects CSR premise, the idea of CSR presupposes that businesses have obligations to society that go beyond profit-making to include helping to solve societal and economical problems'' (p. 1).

To this end, as contended by Christian Aid (2013) Sierra Leone is still battling to rebuild its fallen nation with poor development indices after eleven years' of civil war, which was triggered by unfair redistribution of natural resources (Porto, 2010), which MNCs are implicated in (Datzberger, 2014). The foregoing illustrates some of the challenges confronting sustainable development in Sierra Leone. So, although there are laws, agreements and contracts between the stakeholders and MNCs, but for more sustainable relationship, the findings suggest that MNCs should go beyond proving that they are obeying the law. It is therefore imperative for MNCs to act in concert with the wider society to achieve win-win situation. However, this can be realised when wider stakeholders endorse firm's actions and behaviour, which relies on legitimate collaboration with multi-stakeholder groups such as the communities, government and others (Idemudia, 2010). Scherer & Palazzo (2011, p. 899) refer to this new form of engagement as ''the political role of business in a globalised world''. There has been continual discussion about the role of contracts and regulations in framing corporate-stakeholder relationship and management. Such debate has dominated the minds of early theorists including Hobbs (1651), Rousseau (1762) and recently Rawls (1971). Although contracts and agreements can serve as control and regulatory mechanisms (Binmore, 1994) they do not guarantee legitimacy of action. Organisational action and behaviour is deemed normative and legitimate when enforcement and implementation of these actions are judged by an umpire, who does not take sides.

6.4.3.4: Legitimisation

Legitimisation is the process of courting legitimacy. It takes into consideration the methods and acts through which an ideology is made legitimate by its attachment to social norms, beliefs and values within a specific society (Suchman, 1995). It also entails the process of acquiring and maintaining support from various stakeholders. It helps to justify and rationalise organisational actions including commitment to sustainable development (Scherer et al., 2013). Central to legitimisation is the search for legitimacy (Deegan, 2002). It is therefore a strategic process as it helps to influence public opinion by acquiring social licence through such process. Legitimacy theme is considered to be vital for MNCs to operate harmoniously, smoothly and effectively in the home country and host countries (Kostova, Roth & Dacin, 2008). It has been argued that MNCs no longer rely on the agreement, legal licence and contract granted them by stakeholders (including the government) to be enough to operate sustainably (Gehman, Lefsrud & Fast, 2017). All the respondents that were engaged on this theme stressed that legitimacy is very important for sustainable business. The below statements typify their shared opinions:

> *Surviving in such a combustible environment, where there is on-going criticism of multinationals' activities and intention in Sierra Leone requires more than just obeying the law … More needs to be done in the eyes of the communities for them to survive (Me02).*

> *It is hard to have sustainable corporate-stakeholder engagement and for companies to be deemed fair in their operations if the people they deal with have low approval rating of their actions (Interviewee I).*

> *Licence to do what you want to do is usually conferred on organisations by the people, not the other way round (Interviewee A).*

> *We're the ones to say these caterpillars are doing well or not … This is a serious issue to continually be in business with them even as we're going through hard times in this country owing to poor governance … We know there's poverty in the land and these*

organisations are helping but they're taking too much and not giving much back (Interviewee P).

The first respondent (Me02) admitted that legitimacy is crucial in sustaining corporate-stakeholder relationship as well as the fact that it helps organisations to do more beyond obeying the law to have social licence to survive. This suggests that although an organisation might have legal approval to operate, however, surviving in ever hostile environment of mining and agriculture in Sierra Leone requires more than just obeying the law (Akiwumi, 2014). The second respondent (Interviewee I) confirms that social sanction of MNCs' actions is vital for continual presence of these organisations.

For Interviewee A, legitimacy is given by external stakeholders. And in the case of Interviewee P, conferring legitimacy to what organisations do is a critical success factor for their success and continual existence. These findings confirm that ''good organisational image and survival are essentially reliant on how their various stakeholders perceive what they do'' (Interviewee K). For example, an employee from one of the parastatals stated that ''the people are always happy when these firms truly engage in social and environmental causes …. It's not just about acting as if they're legal in their undertaking'' (Interviewee L). In supporting this perspective a community opinion leader (Fr05) asserted that ''… what we need and require for smooth operation of these companies is not them just proving they're obeying the law … we need evidence …''.

These perspectives reflect Donaldson & Dunfee's (1994) observation that legitimate business operation in the true sense of social contract theory demands that firms go beyond obeying the law and act morally and ethically to secure legitimacy to operate sustainably (Bice, 2014; Freeman, 1984). Furthermore, Bice's (2014) work agrees with achieving sustainable development by leveraging on legitimacy, a form of social licence, which wider stakeholders confer. Consequently, Scott (1995) has cautioned that legitimacy reflects cultural and social alignment and can be located beyond the confines of laws and rules; it is often found in communities' evaluation of a firm's action relying on cues from the media, regulators, and other relevant stakeholders (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). The theory of legitimacy emphasises that society will judge an organisation to be legitimate or not within the social environment in which it resides based on whether its operations, beliefs and value system and behaviours are in agreement with that of that society (Deegan, 2017; Suchman, 1995). In particular, Suchman (1995) defined legitimacy as “a generalised perception'' that the behaviour and actions of an organisation or entity are normative, desirable, appropriate and proper within specific ‘‘socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (p. 574).

6.5: Chapter summary

By applying TTA, this chapter is being used to validate evidence in prior literature and empirical data through the identification of the three main themes analysed here. Three main data sources including interviews, focus group and documentary data was used in the analysis. The three main themes analysed in this chapter comprised understanding the meaning of CSR, the meaning of sustainable development and CSR strategies and motivation for doing so. Together, these themes help to make sense of the relationship between CSR and sustainable development as well as approaches for CSR and motivations for doing so. The findings emanating from this chapter are summarised as follows.

One of the main findings of this study is that respondents admit that MNCs engage in various philanthropic projects so as to be seen as operating reasonably and accountably and to be good corporate citizens. These initiatives include community development projects and various corporate-stakeholder engagement platforms, which evidence provided shows that they are rather strategic rather than normative. Another finding of this study is that there is existence of environmentalist projects as well as social investing initiatives; however, these projects are not working as they are faced with a lot of challenges, which inhibit sustainable development. Additionally, empirical evidence supports the notion that MNCs make effort to abide by various agreements, pacts and contracts signed between them and the communities as well as international actors. Nevertheless, this does not bring solution to the lingering conflict in the country in relation to diamond mining and agriculture and community participation agitation (Wilson, 2015). Respondents also admit that there are different types of stakeholders in Sierra Leone including powerful stakeholders and less powerful stakeholders, which account for variation in salience given to these stakeholder groups (Clarkson, 1995).

The analysis has demonstrated that although MNCs engage in CSR in Sierra Leone, this CSR initiatives either initiated by them or the government or other stakeholders are being pursued but produce little result in addressing sustainable development issues in Sierra Leone. Additionally, as evidenced from the empirical analysis, respondents acknowledge that there is effort by MNCs to engage in CSR; however, due to business case motive as well as corrupt institutions in the country, CSR projects are not effective in addressing the ideals of SDGs including contributing to poverty alleviation, zero hunger, equality, sustainable societies, climate action, partnership and peace, justice and strong institutions as well as others. These findings echo the perspectives of previous scholarship (McLennan & Banks; 2019; Wilson, 2019; Conteh & Maconachie, 2019; KPMG, 2017) on these phenomena. This negates the promise of win-win thesis proposed by using CSR to address social and environmental issues for both firms and society (Williams & Preston, 2018; Elkington, 1997). Most of the respondents as well as documentary evidence stress that most of the CSR initiatives are used to legitimise organisational operation and to continually social licence to operate and to maximise profit for shareholders at the detriment of wider stakeholders (Marco & Maconachie, 2019; Maconachie & Hilson, 2015; Idemudia, 2010; Eweje, 2006; Ite, 2004). This situation continues to pose threat to peaceful and harmonious relationship between MNCs used in the current study and others in Sierra Leone, which shies away from the ideals of sustainable development and normative CSR.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions, Discussion and Implications

7.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions, discussion and implications of the thesis. Specifically, section 7.2 presents overview of the research context; 7.3 highlights concluding comments on the research findings and discussion; and study implications and contributions is the focus of section 7.4. Additionally, section 7.5 details study limitations and suggestions for further research direction; recommendations arising from analysis undertaken in the study are presented in section 7.6; and finally, section 7.7 explains personal reflection on the study.

The intention of this study was to critically explore stakeholders' views about the role of CSR in achieving sustainable development in Sierra Leone. The overall aim of this research was to examine how MNCs' CSR initiatives and practices could contribute to sustainable development in developing countries like Sierra Leone (see sections 1.6 and 5.2). CSR is founded on the notion that businesses are in a relationship with other stakeholders including the communities and their environment (Dobers & Halme, 2009; Dahlsrud, 2008; Carroll, 1991; Freeman, 1984), and that this relationship demands of them to have social presence in society for sustainable development (KPMG, 2017; Crowther & Aras, 2008). In doing this, organisations should seek collaboration and inputs from wider stakeholders in order to be deemed responsible, ethical and transparent in their operations (Kolk & Lenfant, 2013; Eweje, 2007). This is even more important in ''spaces of contested development'' as seen in the Sierra Leonean context (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). Sustainable development is taken to represent the organising principle aimed at meeting human development goals and at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the ecosystem services and natural resources upon which the economy and society depend (Crowther et al., 2019; Williams & Preston, 2018; Kolk et al., 2017; WBCSD, 1992). This argument is central to the creation of the Brundtland Report.

While organisations – in particular MNCs – engage in CSR and can be powerful agents in realising the ideals of SDGs due largely by their power and resources, extant literature suggests that they are not doing enough in this regard (Wilson, 2015; Akiwumi, 2014; Idemudia, 2010; Eweje, 2007, 2006), which is largely responsible for unremitting corporate-stakeholder problems witnessed in Sierra Leone. Although CSR and sustainable development progressed differently, they share a lot in common (KPMG, 2017). CSR is thus a business model that can be instrumental in promoting business contributions to sustainable development as it creates a balance between environmental needs, economic interests and social expectations by incorporating the ideals of sustainable development into organisational practice and strategy (WBCSD, 1992). The interaction between CSR and sustainable development has increased in recent years as well as research in these areas (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). CSR is often considered to be an essential aspect of sustainable development (KPMG, 2017; WBCSD, 1992). Indeed, corporate sustainability is the firm's version of sustainable development (Crowther & Aras, 2008); while CSR is a voluntary organisational strategy to sustainable development (Eweje, 2006).

In furthering this research's overall aim and objectives, the following three key research questions, which were identified in chapter one (section 1.6) were asked:

- What are stakeholders' views about the relationship between CSR and sustainable development in Sierra Leone?
- Why do MNCs engage in CSR and what approaches do they use in Sierra Leone?
- What are the contributions of MNCs to sustainable development, and what are the motivations for doing so in Sierra Leone?

In answering the above questions, it is intended that this study makes unique contributions to the body of knowledge in the areas of CSR and sustainable development. The aim and objectives of this thesis have been met as this study has explored stakeholders' views about the relationship between CSR and sustainable development, with focus on perspectives from internal and external stakeholders.

First, the perceptions of stakeholders between CSR and sustainable development have been identified by triangulating data from interviews, focus group and documents used with agreement amongst them. Exploring the views of stakeholders has also facilitated identifying meanings of CSR and sustainable development, particularly with a consideration of different elements that characterise these phenomena. Second, there has a discussion on the strategies employed by MNCs in their CSR practices and initiatives and motivations for doing so. This exploration has enabled insights into various strategies through which MNCs address CSR and sustainability issues to be deemed normative, and to secure social licence to operate while maximising ROI. Therefore, this thesis has demonstrated that a critical exploration of stakeholders' views can help in understanding about the roles MNCS can play through CSR in achieving sustainable development in Sierra Leone. Also, a critical analysis of stakeholders' views will shed light on where there are concerns about the relationship between MNCs, CSR and sustainable development to arrive at ''win-win logic'' stance of sustainable development (Newell & Frynas, 2007, p. 670; Elkington, 1997) for everyone (Richey & Ponte, 2014).

This leads to the approach of CSR adopted in the present study being confirmed by the data used as being one, which is considered by the stakeholders as environmental and social obligations expected (and desired) by the communities and wider stakeholders owned to them by MNCs (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019; Wilson, 2015; Ite & Idemudia, 2006). Given that there is a possibility for a piece of research to lose its main focus in relation to carrying out data collection if the right questions are not asked and provided right answers, essential questions were asked in this regard. These questions help in gathering relevant data for the study. This approach was principally shaped and based by insights from prior literature on MNCs, their practices in developing countries (especially Sierra Leone) and gaps in the literature.

By focusing attention on the role of CSR in sustainable development in developing countries, this research responds to wider call (Siltaoja & Onkila, 2013; Frynas, 2005) to broaden knowledge on the role of business in society (Idemudia, 2010; Crane & Matten, 2010; Moon, 2007). Furthermore, by focusing on how CSR initiatives can contribute to sustainable development by engaging various stakeholders (Newell & Frynas, 2007) this thesis contributes specifically to the debate on CSR and sustainability through partnership working for inclusive and sustainable relationship and engagement where ''new actors and alliances in development'' Richey & Ponte (2014, p. 2) can help create a fairer, more sustainable societies, institutions and organisational practice for the realisation of SDGs (KPMG, 2017). This conceptualisation supports the ‘‘enabling environment view’’ (Idemudia, 2008; Utting, 2003) approach to CSR as it seeks stakeholder participation, a ‘‘Southern CSR agenda’’ (Idemudia, 2008, p. 94), voluntary approaches and government regulations that will create enabling environment for CSR to make contributions to sustainable development. Such participatory, dialogic pattern of engagement in decisions that affect all is a suggested approach (see Gilberthorpe & Banks, 2012; McLennan & Banks, 2019) to build corporate-stakeholder relationship and give ‘‘voice’’ to the less economically powerful stakeholders including the communities in Sierra Leone. Accordingly, Idemudia (2008) further notes that this approach can precipitate local capacity building and development priorities (Moon, 2007; Frynas, 2005).

Reflecting on Visser’s (2006) observation, this approach aligns with the idea for businesses in developing countries to be used to further SDGs (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019) for a harmonious and sustainable business-society relationship. This approach to sustainable development path apparently challenges the dominant thinking in business investing and can champion normative approach to CSR rather than instrumental approach, which increases corporate influence and power and community dependency and underdevelopment (Datzberger, 2014; Pemunta, 2012; Porto, 2010). This proposition further suggests that micro-level efforts and initiatives by businesses should be used to address macro-level concerns including social, developmental, environmental and economic issues, which are societal issues (see Pan et al., 2018; Loew et al., 2004; WBCSD, 1992; Figure 2.8). Furthermore, macro-level issues are central to SDGs like partnership for achieving the goals (SDG17), which MNCs can be part of and peaceful and just institutions (SDG16) that can be created through concerted effort involving corporations (see Figure 2.11; WBCSD, 1992). This perspective is central to the framing of the Brundtland Report (Crowther & Aras, 2008). This re-conceptualisation of business in society has also meant that businesses have had to respond to the changing societal expectation by progressively rearticulating and justifying their participation in developmental issues in relation to CSR (Ite, 20004). Nevertheless, while there is a tacit agreement that CSR will vary from context to context, the mainstream CSR debate has failed to adequately espouse this diversity. Therefore, despite the significance of universal principles and consensus for both businesses and stakeholders (Crane & Matten, 2010), there is a frequent tension between universalised mode of business practice and local expectations, challenges and opportunities (Idemudia, 2008; Frynas, 2005).

As a result, empirical analysis thus contrasts the views expressed in universalised, mainstream CSR literature (Jones, 1995; Friedman, 1970) suggesting that CSR cannot be used to deal with social, environmental and developmental problems affecting humanity. There is ample evidence that corporations increase profitability, become more competitive and secure social licence to operate when they are part of society through delivery of social goods, payment of taxes and engaging collaboratively with wider stakeholders (McLennan & Banks, 2019). This thesis also builds on Visser (2006, 2013) and Moon's (2007) observation that CSR should be used to make contribution to sustainable development in developing countries (Idemudia, 2008; Ite, 2004). Empirical evidence supports the notion that CSR in developing countries is essentially shaped to respond to socio-economic issues for sustainable development. The findings further supports Porter & Kramer's (2006) view that CSR strategies (and initiatives) should avoid short-term gains, legitimacy-seeking endeavours and reputational capital and focus on long-term strategies to realise win-win gain, which can positively impact competitive advantage and continual existence of MNCs (Idemudia, 2010). In addition this thesis uses the lens of stakeholder, legitimacy and triple bottom line to shed light on motivations for CSR by MNCs as well as approaches they adopt to continually have social licence to operate even in controversial settings like Sierra Leone. Following from the above, this study presents a new approach within the business sustainability literature, which offers considerable insights into how CSR can be instrumental in furthering the ideals of SDGs and sustainability development in general.

7.2: Overview of research context

This research was set out to critically explore stakeholders' views about the relationship between CSR and sustainable development in Sierra Leone. The context of Sierra Leone presents a huge opportunity to fill research gap in the developing countries, which is understudied (Porto, 2010) and to further illuminate how organisations – specifically – MNCs can contribute to sustainable development and realisation of SDGs by extension.

Sierra Leone is a country endowed with huge natural resources; yet suffers from resource curse (paradox of plenty) including poverty, environmental devastation, socio-economic problems and political conflict. It has been observed that MNCs are implicated in the ugly situation in Sierra Leone, which triggers continual corporate-stakeholder problems specifically in the extractive industry in the country (Beevers, 2015). Despite regulatory, institutional and policy effort to bring more harmonious relationship between MCs and the communities, there remains lingering conflict as stakeholders maintain that the nature of engagement and processes are not participatory and genuine. However, one of the ways to bring solution to this problem is through CSR that can support sustainable development and relationship (Emeseh, 2009; Visser, 2013). There have been calls to extend research on the relationship between CSR and sustainable development (KPMG, 2017). According to Akiwumi (2014) corporations as major players, have a particularly substantial role to play in the range of processes to achieve sustainable development by contributing to a myriad of multiplier effect including job creation, technological transfer, human capital development, skills training and rural capacity building amongst others (McLennan & Banks, 2019).

In addition, the MNCs have been identified as major contributors to food insecurity, poverty, environmental devastation political conflict and a plethora of problems associated with resource depletion and scarcity (Emeseh, 2009). Therefore, there has been intensified debate for MNCs to shift towards sustainable development through CSR at a faster rate than they currently do for more prosperous, sustainable and safer future (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). There is therefore urgency to rethink the relationship between the environment, people and economy as well as plan for action to realise the ideals of SDGs through organisational strategies in concert with other global actors and institutions for a better world (Newell & Frynas, 2007). Nevertheless, while the issue of sustainability has been given attention in the prior literature (KPMG, 2017) the complexity of its journey into practice has been paid little attention. The most common notion used to express organisational transition is CSR, which is conceptualised to give corporations the necessary guidelines and benchmarks to maintain or improve their profitability while enhancing their performance towards the environment and society.

Several studies in the developed (and developing) countries have attempted to explore the relationship between CSR and sustainable development (Idemudia, 2008; Eweje, 2007); however, it is documented that there is still paucity of research offering empirical evidence on how CSR can be aligned with the ideals of sustainability (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). Given this gap, this thesis makes effort to contribute to the literature. It does this specifically by empirically using the context of Sierra Leone, which is far less represented in the literature (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019; Porto, 2010) to further research in this area. Employing qualitative, interpretive approach, this thesis has been able to shed light on how ‘‘talks’’ from stakeholders have enabled a social construction of the role of CSR in sustainable development. Against the backdrop of positivist paradigm that dominates prior literature, interpretivist paradigm (Robertson & Samy, 2017), the approach taken here has presented an opportunity to dig deep into stakeholders views, which has facilitated capturing the lived experiences of stakeholders (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Mizruchi & Fein, 1999).

7.3: Concluding comments on the research findings and discussion

In this section, the main research findings will be presented, which are main themes that emanated from the data.

7.3.1: Understanding the meaning of CSR

In the study, the findings have shown that philanthropy as well as social responsibility and accountability of MNCs are central to how various stakeholders consider CSR. Through the analysis undertaken, this study has demonstrated that philanthropy is not only desired in developing countries like Sierra Leone but expected and required for responsible business and accountability and to be considered as good corporate citizens by firms (Eweje, 2007). This is consistent with the observation of (Frynas, 2009) and Moon et al (2005). Respondents noted that philanthropy takes local community initiatives, developmental projects and donations that will make to be seen as good corporate citizens for sustainable development. Through two sub-themes explored in this thesis, this study was able to draw from extant literature on CSR, sustainable development and business ethics to show that CSR is conceived differently in developing countries like Sierra Leone (Idemudia, 2010) and as such the expectations of MNCs in order to achieve the SDGs go beyond profit maximisation and include genuine and practical contributions to community development, capacity building and other developmental and environmental issues (Crowther & Aras, 2008). All the respondents emphasised that CSR is essentially about accountability, transparency and social responsibility beyond just obeying laws and increasing ROI. These findings support Carroll's (1991) notion of CSR in order for MNCs to have less stakeholder criticism of their operation in Sierra Leone.

7.3.2: Understanding the meaning of sustainable development

These finding sheds light on the relationship between CSR and sustainable development as perceived by stakeholders. Four main issues are central to this finding including community development and poverty alleviation/eradication, stakeholder engagement and empowerment, inclusive, legitimate and peaceful society/institutions as well as stakeholder relationship and salience. According to prior literature, these issues are pertinent to (Le Billon & Levin, 2009). From the analysis undertaken, participants indicated that CSR is about understanding the meaning of community and developing it consequently for sustainable relationship as well as peaceful and normative operation (Filho & Brandli, 2016). Respondents also noted that the culture of giving salience to the economically powerful group like MNCs diminishes the ideals of sense of community and sustainable development b extension.

Therefore, community development can be made problematic if other stakeholders are relegated to the background in the decisional processes and engagement initiatives, which can frustrate co-operation and willingness to engage (KPMG, 2017). This also has impact on stakeholder empowerment. From the analysis, the three key governance and engagement initiatives in Sierra Leone including are such as SLEDIC, SLIEPA, DACDF, SLIEPA and ENCISS amongst others aimed at accelerating the pace of public-private partnerships and engagement for better governance and accountability in mining (even agriculture) are not effective. A number of issues including governance structure, lack of political will and corruption were identified by respondents and documentary data as obstructing community-based decision-making and inclusive corporate-community relationship (Maconachie, 2009, 2011; Datzberger, 2014). Stakeholder salience, which is the degree to which an organisation prioritises competing stakeholder claims (Mitchell et al., 1997), is also considered by the respondents as a major issue to achieving sustainable development.

The SDGs, which part of UN Resolution 70/1 to be realised by 2030, offers a powerful blueprint for businesses to engage in CSR to have a more sustainable future for everyone (Schönherr et al., 2017). In Sierra Leone, the CSR policies and initiatives including KPCS, DACDF and SLEITI as well as other instruments were established to address the numerous developmental and governance challenges facing Sierra Leone. CSR and SDGs together have great potential to develop an interconnected framework for sustainable development (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). Although there are some thematic overlaps between CSR and SDGs with regard to (national) development areas of both concepts (KPMG, 2017), realising the SDGs has tremendous opportunities for business sector. These goals are aimed at ensuring private actors from several sectors are involved so as to achieve the common goals of sustainable development through exploring synergies between disparate stakeholder groups for development and cumulative synchronised growth. For instance, when a firm defines its CSR area of focus about enhancing community development and livelihoods of the community through skill development training of youth and local people, it is contributory to various SDGs including creating a framework to alleviate/eradicate poverty, enhancing quality education and economic growth and reducing social inequality.

While the Sierra Leonean government has made bold moves through its various initiatives to reach out to local communities and contribute to achieving the SDGs the findings stress that wider stakeholders have argued that such development-oriented initiatives mediated are essentially used strategically rather than genuine developmental pursuit that guarantees interest of all stakeholders (Porto, 2010). This is due by asymmetrical power relations between MNCs and the communities in which these companies engage in pre-defined development initiatives, which are in many instances, in disagreement with community aspirations and needs (Wilson, 2015). Furthermore, the social structure at the community level obstructs community development.

7.3.3: CSR strategies and motivations

There are four main issues in this finding including environmentalism, social responsible investing, legitimisation and adherence to contractual agreement. From the analysis carried out, respondents as well as evidence provided in documents indicate that the above are the main approaches used by MNCs to continually have social licence and legitimacy to operate smoothly in Sierra Leone. The analysis also helps in understanding the motivations for CSR. One of the findings of this research is that CSR activities and strategies are philanthropically oriented to win hearts and minds of stakeholders, which can be done through responsible investing. Such investment decision in form of environmental stewardship is strategically aimed at increasing ROI and shies away from genuine CSR as evidenced in the findings. Majority of the respondents acknowledge that although MNCs engage in social investing and environmentalist initiatives, these projects are whitewashed. As noted from the analysis done, corporate environmentalism should go beyond the legal requirements and securing social, licence on environmental performance for a desired future for mankind and the environment (Gladwin et al., 1995; Elkington, 1994).

Another finding of this study was that stakeholders perceive obeying contractual agreements by MNCs is not the solution to lingering corporate-stakeholder problem in Sierra Leone. As variously observed in the analysis undertaken, it is not lack of agreements and benchmarks for that regulate CSR that is the issue; rather it is about going beyond these agreements for more sustainable relationship. Respondents therefore stressed that these agreements and related CSR undertakings are often used for legitimisation, which is a process of acquiring legitimacy. Legitimacy is social licence to operate, which sometimes is achieved by emphasising what a firm does in society rather than actual and normative conduct, for example, giving back to society in terms of philanthropy (Visser, 2013). Legitimacy and organisational reputation are two vital intangible resources accruable from CSR that can make the MNCs in Sierra Leone to enjoy corporate longevity, less stakeholder pressure and legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). The findings emphasise that legitimacy is one of the central gains organisations can achieve from engaging in CSR activities (Eweje, 2007). From this perspective, actions taken by organisations need to be isomorphic with, or adapted to, institutional and societal systems and norms if they are to be considered by wider stakeholders to be legitimate (Suchman, 1995; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

CSR could, thus, be considered as a tool for MNCs in Sierra Leone to use to become isomorphic, and hence perceived as legitimate. Just like CSR, defining a legitimate action is a delicate undertaking since society is made up different groups and with widely different value systems (Suchman, 1995). If society considers an organisation to be operating illegitimately, it might revoke the organisation's social licence (Eweje 2006), which could have negative impact on the organisation.

7.4: Study implications and contributions

The research implications of this thesis are wide-ranging. In the first place, this study has given insights into how MNCs conceive stakeholders that matter to them (Clarkson, 1995) and who is given salience in corporate-stakeholder engagement and relationship. Evidently, there are two main types of stakeholders: the economically powerful (internal stakeholders) and the less powerful (external stakeholders). This thesis further demonstrates that the presence of agreements and contracts do not ensure that MNCs act legitimately and responsibly, which elicits the continual corporate-stakeholder problems. Given this business case logic of CSR activities and initiatives, it becomes difficult for MNCs to be normative in their operations (Crowther et al., 2019). However, insights from this study suggest that for win-win situation, there is need for MNCs to not only get motivated by profitability in their practice, but to consider broader gains including environmental and social gains, which are at the core of sustainable development (WBCSD, 1992).

Another implication of this study is that understanding the nature of corporate-stakeholder engagement and governance system in Sierra Leone is crucial for achieving the ideals of SDGs. Therefore, the various initiatives and policies explained in this study to deal with confronting CSR-related issues and sustainability problems are fraught with doubt and lack of feasibility as they are not delivering on the ideals of their creation (Beevers, 2015) in empowering the communities through dialogic mechanisms, contributing to local capacity building and developmental causes. There is thus need to rethink the creation of various strategies and initiatives aimed at furthering corporate-stakeholder engagement and sustainability community participation and stakeholder dialogue, which can potentially increase knowledge and insights into solving problems in Sierra Leone.

This study has made a number of contributions. The contributions of this thesis will be explained in four main areas: theory, methodology, policy and practice. The contributions are explained in the following sections.

Theoretical

The overall aim of this thesis was to critically explore stakeholders' perceptions about what role MNCs can play through CSR in achieving sustainable development in Sierra Leone. This study has made some vital contributions to the CSR and sustainability research in Sierra Leone especially from the developing countries' perspective, which is currently understudied and under-researched (Wilson, 2015; Eweje, 2006, 2007; Idemudia, 2010). This study has identified that exploring stakeholder's views about CSR can be instrumental in rethinking and repositioning the discourse on corporate-stakeholder relationships and sustainable development and CSR as well as overall action to realise the principles embedded in SDGs for a more sustainable world. The findings from this study have demonstrated how MNCs use CSR to legitimise their operations, advance profitability and acquire and sustain social licence to operate.

To help understand the relationship between stakeholders, MNCs and CSR activities as well as motivations for doing so and the impact of these activities on the environment, people and profit, this study combined three theoretical perspectives including legitimacy, stakeholder and triple bottom line theories to characterise CSR practice and activities in Sierra Leone (see section 3.5 and Figure 3.1). As such, these theoretical approaches build on the literature on CSR and sustainability research. Accordingly, this study responds to the call in wider CSR literature for theoretical plurality (Gray, Owen & Adams, 2010) by using the combination of these theories, which to the best of the researcher's knowledge has not been applied in the extant literature on CSR in Sierra Leone. In supporting this approach, Bebbington, Larrinaga-González & Moneva-Abadía (2008) have argued ‘‘for … a plurality of approaches and a multiplicity of lens through which to observe, explain and predict CSR … practice’’ (p. 372). Furthermore, Frynas & Stephens (2014, p. 20) have observed that CSR research ‘‘can benefit from combining multiple theoretical perspectives, as different theories can contribute complementary insights at different levels … a pluralistic approach may allow for more robust and richer theory building’’. This also entails the theoretical approach developed in this study can be applied in comparable studies to further gain more insights into the phenomena of CSR and sustainable development.

Methodological

In terms of methodology, this thesis has made some contributions. The qualitative interpretivist paradigm employed here has aided in capturing the lived experiences of various stakeholders used in the study, which quantitative method does not enable; this approach helps to categorise data sets and analyse them to locate relationships and ‘‘truth’’ that is socially constructed for more nuanced, richer understanding of human condition (Mizruchi & Fein, 1999) as seen in Sierra Leone. This is made possible by using semi-structured interviews and focus group data as well as documents. This attempt serves as a way of deepening understanding on CSR and sustainability studies that are dominated by positivist paradigm leading to less emphasis placed on interpretivist paradigm (see Ferns & Amaeshi, 2019; Williams & Preston, 2018; Robertson & Samy, 2017).

Also, by combining unconventional data source, documentary data (Saunders et al., 2009), alongside traditional methods such as interview and focus group, this study has contributed to methodological approach to understanding CSR and sustainability debate. Despite the potential limitation of using documents in research which have been acknowledge in this study, it is one of the ways to bring novelty to methodological design (Wang & Soergel, 1998). In addition, most studies in this area use single data source (see for example Williams & Preston, 2018; Belal & Roberts, 2010; Jamali & Mirshak, 2007); this research combined different data sources for a richer contribution to the field of CSR and sustainability. This methodological perspective marks a shift in various methodologies applied in the field.

Practice

In relation to practice, the insights and findings of this study could be appropriated by organisations – MNCs in particular – for better organisational practice in relation to realising SDG targets and thereby making our world safer and more sustainable as well as ensuring that MNCs’ CSR activities and practice are more transparent and accountable. Specifically, insights presented here can lead to improving the nature of relationship existing between MNCs and the communities in Sierra Leone. Hence, these insights make the MNCs as well as the government to realise that communities are expecting more in their relationship and engagement and that more sustainable CSR practice will lead to more cordial and harmonious relationships. Additionally, the findings indicate that the government has more responsibilities than just creating and assisting in the establishment of agreements and benchmarks guiding CSR practice and sustainable development. By government playing more effective roles, the activities of MNCs in relation to community development, capacity building, socio-economic development and environmental protection will be ensured. The findings also illuminate how the application of the conceptual framework developed in this study – Sustainable Stakeholder Engagement Model (SSEM) – can help in improving strong relationships with the communities, MNCs and other stakeholders who affect or affected by MNCs' business operation in order to deliverer on long-term environmental, economic, and social value furthering achievement of SDGs in Sierra Leone (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). It has been argued here that this conceptual model has the capacity to bring more peaceful, sustainable corporate-stakeholder relationship given its normative and inclusive orientation. Additionally, business managers apart from MNCs may apply the findings presented here to explore methods and strategies to reframe CSR so as to optimise ROI, corporate-stakeholder relationship and engagement. Understanding the benefits of inclusive, sustainable relationship management and engagement, for example the potential suggested in this thesis, can help in rethinking organisational practices that will enhance SDGs.

Policy

This study has made some contributions that can impact policies that regulate CSR and sustainable development. According to the European Commission (2011) report on CSR, governments (and organisations) play a crucial role in establishing blueprints and policies that promote business responsibility and accountability. They do this by creating for example voluntary policies and, where necessary, complementary guidelines that will bring about corporate transparency and accountability. According to Visser & Tolhurst (2010) CSR policy in Africa is at the crossroads and corporations can and should, be instruments of social policies to address poverty related issues as well as ecological and problems affecting developing countries (Ite & Idemudia, 2006). As further argued by Visser & Tolhurst (2010), "there is no comprehensive or concrete CSR policy or law in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa region, apart from some rather ad hoc legislative and non-regulatory activities (p. 8)". This situation suggests that the state of CSR policies in Africa is counterproductive to the efforts aimed at achieving (Conteh & Maconachie, 2019). Commenting on the 2009 global financial crisis, Emeseh, Ako, Obokok & Ogechukwu (2010) noted that "if corporations have failed to regulate themselves even in their core areas of business necessary for their own survival, how much less do we expect of effective self-regulation in the area of CSR, which is currently purely under a regime of voluntarism (p. 259)?''.

Therefore, from the findings of this study, a rational and instrumentalist perspective of this conceptualisation is that businesses are not separated from society (Idemudia, 2010) and they have huge resources to make social change. This is mainly true for the numerous MNCs operating in Africa including Guinness, Microsoft, Nestle and others – apart from those used in the thesis. This study thus urges government and all those involved in establishing, monitoring and enforcing CSR policies to rethink their action for a better world. Given social legislations and policies that are apparently poorly formulated, less comprehensive and weakly monitored, insights from this study can help in rethinking the implementation and monitoring of policies for a more sustainable future through CSR activities. In sub-Saharan Africa, the apparent lack of a CSR regulatory regime has fashioned an enormous implementation problem of CSR polices. For example, Newell's (2002) work highlights problems with checks and balances associated with CSR policies that impede ensuring that firms are accountable and responsible.

7.5: Study limitations and suggestions for further research direction

This study is qualitative as well as combines data collected through interviews and focus groups with documentary data. Given vested interest of preparers of documentary data (Mogalakwe, 2006), this research acknowledges potential bias. However, triangulating data will help in addressing limitation issue. This process will enrich this study's findings, validity and reliability. Additionally, close scrutiny of documents was done to ensure that issue of potential bias is further limited; and different years were used as well.

Despite the above insights arising from this study, there is need to carry out more research to further address issue of sustainable development for more knowledge about better relations between organisations and their varied stakeholders in the current world of international business venturing. One of the ways to further research in this area is to employ different methodological designs. The research design adopted in this study is based on qualitative, interpretive framework, which emphasises that stakeholders' ''talks'' are expression of their inner world in creating a subjectively framed reality (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). This presents an opportunity for further research. This approach is employed to understand how talks in data collected and analysed can help to understand the relationship between CSR and sustainable development.

Also, a longitudinal study might be conducted to bring new insights to bear; longitudinal study involves repeated observations of the same issues or phenomena over long periods of time. Further studies can be undertaken to aid generalisation through quantitative approach (Silverman, 2006) as well as comparative research to further extend knowledge and insights into the phenomena of CSR and sustainability. Also, as argued by Patton (2015) sample sizes are characteristically smaller in qualitative study for the simple reason that, as the study continues, collecting more data does not necessarily generate more information. However, collecting more sample size and/or combining different data sources can help to shed more light on this issue. Another way to further research in this area can be made possible by using other theoretical lenses and approaches.

7.6: Recommendations

Proceeding from analysis undertaken here as well as the findings, this study has the following recommendation:

- For a more sustainable future in Sierra Leone, this study recommends that it is important that national government exercises political will with regard to enhancing governance and regulatory climate in the agricultural and extractive sectors.
- Another recommendation is that although various regulatory and corporate governance as well as engagement frameworks have been established, however, for a more participatory and sustainable relationship between corporations and the stakeholders, addressing the issue of power imbalance and more salience given to more economically powerful stakeholders will go a long way in strengthening relationship and trust for the furtherance of SGDs.

- As noted above, the politicisation of engagement mechanisms is central to lack of feasibility of the engagement processes and initiatives in Sierra Leone. This study therefore recommends that de-politicising engagement mechanisms is crucial for a more sustainable future in the country.
- Although stakeholder engagement is central to the formulation and creation of the mechanisms for corporate-stakeholder engagement in Sierra Leone. However, as seen from the empirical evidence provided, these mechanisms and initiatives including KPCS, SLEITI, SLIEPA, ENCISS and DACDF amongst others are not producing the desired result due to a myriad of reasons outlined earlier. Therefore, for a more productive collaboration that will advance the ideals of SDGs, this thesis recommends that MNCs and government take a wider view of the corporate-community relations that takes into consideration the wider range of participants and groups, which form the community. This will be good for sustainable development.
- Another recommendation is that for a more sustainable, harmonious relationship between MNCs and the communities in Sierra Leone, the companies should be sensitive to developmental issues grounded in long-term strategies and initiatives rather than short-term measures for mere profit maximisation and reputation building. Engaging in initiatives that can increase organisational power, profit and image only can be counterproductive to sustainable development.
- Corporate philanthropy, the predominant mode of capacity building and interdependence in Africa, is a desired and expected issue in developing countries like Sierra Leone. However, corporate philanthropy is dominated by ‘‘donor-recipient relationship’’, low level of community input and patronage system, which make it ineffective (or even unworkable in certain instances). This thesis thus recommends that philanthropy should be conceived differently for ethical and normative CSR practice. This is especially so in fragile states as well as places, where governments are relatively weak, to provide adequate social and environmental goods and where civil societies are incapacitated to pressure better governance.

- This thesis further recommends that motivations for engaging in CSR as well as strategies to operationalise while ideological and strategic should be curbed, for a more sustainable relationship between MNCs and the communities.
- Additionally, through the findings and insights presented here, policymakers need to rethink the nature of policies they initiate as well as their implementation and monitoring for a more sustainable future.

7.7: Personal reflections on the study

Reflection helps to evaluate learning supporting continual way of doing things, innovation and allowing better experience to guide future action. It provides a method of analysing issues, circumstances and events as well as supporting alternative solutions and plan for future action (Kolb 1984; Gibbs, 1988). According to Cavilla (2017) personal reflection impacts academic performance and motivation as well aids in preparing a learner or researcher for future endeavour – be it personal or professional. It also helps in gauging various challenges encountered by the learner as well as a means to show whether the learner acquired the prerequisite knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to compete in the ever changing, competitive world of work (Cavilla, 2017).

Upon reflection, I can honestly say that embarking on this academic journey has been very challenging and arduous. Undertaking this doctoral work has presented me with a plethora of challenges. These challenges were encountered in reviewing literature, collecting data and impact of my professional work on my academic work as well as family challenges. I must say that embarking on PhD study is a very daunting task, as I considered giving up at a point especially given that this study has dragged-out. Also, my father's death during the course of this course impacted negatively on its progress. Also, this is the ninth year that I started this research! However, in the course of my study, I have enjoyed cordial and professional relationship with my supervisory team as well as the members of staff in the university. I am of the opinion that knowledge, skills and competences gained will be invaluable in my future career, nevertheless.

Specifically, collecting data was very daunting and expensive as well as posed serious challenge with my professional work as I had to take time off work to travel to the places where data was collected. I had to traverse the length and breadth of Sierra Leone especially Freetown to collect data – in pilot the study and when actual data was collected. Additionally, owing to poor technology in the country, collecting data was made more complex and challenging. Additionally, collecting data in a developing country like Sierra Leone is very difficult because of people's attitude to research, but I was able to rise above these challenges. Nevertheless, data analysis although challenging was equally fascinating and revealing as it allowed me to better understand the relationship between corporate involvement in community issues through CSR, which is fundamental to sustaining the environment as well as reducing poverty in the country. Broadly, the experience was rich and invaluable, and will shape my knowledge and skill set moving forward.

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APENDICES

APPENDIX I: Data Collection Instrument Letter

London School of Commerce
Chaucer House, King's Head Yard,
London SE1 1NX
27th November, 2015

Company Name & Address (Govt. Body)
Attn:
Dear Sir/madam,
RE: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT LETTER

I am writing to introduce to you Henry Yamba Kama, who is researching for his PhD at Cardiff Metropolitan, United Kingdom through the London School of Commerce. Mr Kamara is researching on ‘‘A Critical Appraisal of Stakeholders’ Views about the Role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Achieving Sustainable Development: The Case of Sierra Leone’’, a research that examines how the MNCs can contribute to sustainable development in Sierra Leone, given the global call for organisations to be part of the society.

To this end, we have identified your organisation as one of the veritable organisations whose views matter to progress on the research. Thus, conducting interview with your staff members will give depth to this research work. We must state here that the research will be undertaken within the remit of ethical regulations guiding research in our institution.

Your support will be highly appreciated in furthering the objectives of this research work. Please, do not hesitate to contact me, should you have any inquiry or concerns.

Sincerely yours,

Uzoechi Nwagbara, PhD.
(Senior Lecturer in Corporate Social Responsibility & Management)

APPENDIX II: PHASE ONE RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – COMMUNITY LEADERS

1. Introductions

What is your role in the community?

2. What's your view(s) about the MNCs in using CSR to contribute to sustainable development in Sierra Leone?

3. Who are the stakeholders in Sierra Leone, in your view?

4. In your judgement, who are the main stakeholders in Sierra Leone Why that?

5. How would you explain the nature of relationship between the MNCs in Sierra Leone and other stakeholders – particularly the communities?

6. How does your community feel about the impacts of the MNCs' presence? And why is this the case?

7. How is the relationship between your community and the MNCs managed?

8. Are there procedure through which the MNCs can use CSR to contribute to sustainable development in Sierra Leone?

9. If yes, are these procedures efficient and effective?

10. In what ways can the MNCs contribute to sustainable development in Sierra Leone?

11. Can the MNCs' intervention bring about sustainable development?

12. Do you think that issues of sustainable development is at the heart of underdevelopment and poverty in Sierra Leone?

13. Any other issues/comments?

APPENDIX III: PHASE ONE RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – NGO's/EXPERTS

1. Introductions
2. How long have you been in this industry?
3. What's your role?
4. What's your view about CSR, the MNCs and other stakeholders in Sierra Leone?
5. Do you think that sustainable development can be propelled by the MNCs? If yes, why?
6. Do you think that issue of sustainable development is central to underdevelopment and poverty in Sierra Leone?
7. Does your organisation know if the MNCs have framework in place for contributing to sustainable development in Sierra Leone? If yes, are they effective and efficient?
8. How do you consider the role of business in contributing to sustainable development?
9. How are the environment and people impacted by the activities of the MNCs in Sierra Leone?
10. Any other comments/remarks?

APPENDIX IV: PHASE ONE RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONARIES

1. Introductions
2. How long have you been working in this organisation?
3. What's your role?
4. What role have you played in relationship between the MNCs and other stakeholder – specifically the communities?
5. Do you find any connection between CSR and sustainable development in Sierra Leone?
6. Do you think that the MNCs can contribute to sustainable development through CSR?
7. Does your organisation know if the MNCs have framework in place for contributing to sustainable development in Sierra Leone? If yes, are they effective and efficient?
8. How do you consider the role of business in contributing to sustainable development?
9. How are the environment and people impacted by the activities of the MNCs in Sierra Leone?
10. Any other comments/remarks?

Many thanks for your time. Much is appreciated!

APPENDIX V: PHASE TWO RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

1. What do you understand by the term corporate social responsibility?
2. Does your company have any policies and procedures regarding CSR activities?
3. What CSR approaches does your company practice?
4. What is your understanding and perspective regarding sustainable development in Sierra Leone?
5. Does your company have sufficient sustainable development strategies and approaches? Please specify?
6. Does the use of CSR by MNCs contribute to sustainable development in Sierra Leone? Please specify?
7. What combination of CSR activities by MNCs contributes towards sustainable development?
8. How effective are the CSR activities of your company towards bringing sustainable development in Sierra Leone? Specify
9. How do you perceive the relationship between the CSR practices of your company and sustainable development?
10. What is your perception of your company's contribution towards sustainable development in Sierra Leone using CSR as a tool?
11. How has the activities of your company impacted sustainable development in Sierra Leone?
12. In what ways have the activities of your company impacted the community and environment in which they operate? (negatively/positively/both, specify)
13. How would you describe the nature of stakeholder relationship between your company and communities and NGOs?
14. In your judgement, are the CSR activities from your company enhancing sustainable development in Sierra Leone?

APPENDIX VI: PHASE TWO RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

1. What do you understand by the term corporate social responsibility?
2. What CSR approaches does your company practice?
3. What is your understanding and perspective regarding sustainable development in Sierra Leone?
4. Do multinational companies (MNCs) have sufficient sustainable strategies and approaches? Please Specify
5. Does the use of CSR by MNCs contribute to sustainable development in Sierra Leone? Specify
6. What combination of CSR activities by MNCs contributes towards sustainable development?
7. How effective are the CSR activities of MNCs towards bringing sustainable development in Sierra Leone? Specify
8. How do you perceive the relationship between the CSR practices of MNCs and sustainable development?
9. What is your perception of MNCs' contributions towards sustainable development in Sierra Leone using CSR as a tool?
10. How has MNCs' activities in Sierra Leone impacted the country's sustainable development? Explain
11. In what ways has the activities of MNCs impacted the community and environment in which they operate? (negatively/positively/both, specify)
12. How would you describe the nature of stakeholder relationships between MNCs and communities and NGOs?
13. In your judgement, are the CSR activities of MNCs enhancing sustainable development in Sierra Leone?

APPENDIX VII: PHASE TWO RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT (FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS)

1. What do you understand by CSR?
2. Are there policies and procedures about CSR in your organisation?
3. What is your view about sustainable development?
4. Does your organisation have sustainable development strategies and approaches?
5. Do you consider the relationship between multinationals and the community peaceful?
6. How do you consider the relationship between CSR and sustainable development in your organisation?
7. Are the multinationals striving towards sustainable development in Sierra Leone?
8. What role do you think CSR can play in advancing development in Sierra Leone?
9. Are there poverty alleviation programmes in Sierra Leone?
10. Are there pacts and agreements entered between multinationals and stakeholders in Sierra Leone?
11. Are these pacts effective, if not why?
12. How do you think that the activities of multinationals are affecting the people of Sierra Leone and their environment?
13. What are your views about why multinationals engage in CSR, if they do?
14. What are the outcomes of CSR strategies and initiatives by multinationals and how do people see them?
15. Do you consider CSR strategies developmental, if not why?
16. What are the social and environmental impacts of CSR activities of multinationals?
17. Do multinationals obey the law?
18. Is obeying the law enough for multinationals to harmoniously work with stakeholders in Sierra Leone?
19. Are multinationals following agreements and initiatives entered with stakeholders?
20. In your view, are some stakeholders given more consideration than others?
21. Do you think that multinationals have any business intention for engaging in CSR?

APPENDIX VIII: Organisations used for documentary data

Serial Number	Names of Organisations	Codes	Years
1	*Christian Aid*	CA	2013, 2015
2	*The Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL)*	HRDN-SL	2015
3	*Human Rights Watch*	HRW	2014
4	*Oxfam*	OF	2015, 2015