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Child Labour Remaining Status Quo?

A Case Study of Child Labour in Sierra Leone's mining sector

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ABSTRACT

Children working in mining related activities are not uncommon in Sierra Leone. Their involvement has become a matter of increasing global attention and significant measures have been taken at national and international levels to combat the problem. However its prevalence gives reasons for concern. In the case of Sierra Leone it has been argued that there has been a failure to carry out an analysis of the mining sector and engage in the complex realities of the children. This study aims to understand how mining exploitation and cultural aspects to child labour can act as potential obstacles to child labour elimination in the mining sector in Sierra Leone. This study draws upon dependency theory and the concepts of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), resource curse and socially constructed childhood to discuss and analyze the child labour issue in Sierra Leones mining sector. Thus, deriving from a research overview this study is based upon secondary data. The study finds that the failure to acknowledge sociocultural aspects embedded in the Sierra Leonean society along with economic exploitation of the mining sector constitutes potential obstacles to the elimination of child labour.

Key words: Child labour, Mining, Exploitation, Sierra Leone, Sociocultural

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

C138	ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Work
C182	ILO Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 182
CLU	Child Labour Unit
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DACDF	Diamond Area Community Development Fund
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPEC	International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour
KPCS	The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme
NDMC	National Diamond Mining Company
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTSC	National Technical Steering Committee
SLST	Sierra Leone Selection Trust
TNMC	Transnational Mining Companies
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the research area

Child labour in Africa is not only a prevalent issue but also a much-contested phenomenon. Children's involvement in economic activities is perceived in a wide variety of ways, resulting in multiple constructions of child labour. Scholars have argued that the issue of child labour is contentious because their work concurrently involves interdependent realities of survival, socialization, participation but also abuse and exploitation (Hilson, 2010; Bass, 2004; Kielland and Tovo, 2006). Recent research has drawn attention to the complex ways in which children perceive and make use of unconventional ways of livelihood pathways in order to generate income, including engaging in work that is categorized by international policy as worst forms of child labour. In Sierra Leone, an increasing number of children are engaging in mining activities and reports have found that several thousand children are working in mining related activities (Levin, 2006; IPEC, 2013). The issue of child labour in this sector has attracted attention both locally and internationally (Maconachie and Hilson, 2016). Although involvement in such unconventional forms of livelihood requires young people to violate social, moral and legal boundaries, it also enables them to obtain life-sustaining necessities for themselves and their households, increasing their level of social and economic independence (Abebe and Bessell, 2011). Furthermore it has been argued that child labour in Sierra Leone is subject to intercultural differences and that work in the mining sector presents a way for children to enhance their livelihood opportunities, which could be understood as a product of prevailing patterns of rural livelihood diversification now widespread across sub-Saharan Africa (Kielland and Tovo, 2016). However in the case of Sierra Leone such labour contributions have been condemned by international agencies and children's rights advocates and consequently shaped the process of post-war development in Sierra Leone.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been active in raising public awareness of the problem and implementing policies and collaborative project work aimed at reducing children's participation in mining activities in Sierra Leone (ILO, 2005). The approach to tackle child labour has been through abolishing all forms of child labour and to promoting education (ILO, 2012b). The ILO and other advocates presupposes that moving children out of work and into school will improve their livelihoods and thus help eliminate child labour. However recent research has emerged that argues that such policies are not

effective and that there has been a failure to carry out an analysis of the mining sector and engage in the complex realities of the families involved (Maconachie and Hilson, 2016).

The mining sector in Sierra Leone is the current driver of economic growth in the economy and the country has through economic liberalization opened up the economy and adopted new mining codes to stimulate foreign direct investments (FDI). The liberalization of mineral exploitation is strongly supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as they consider the extractive sector a trajectory for development in resource-rich countries. However many argue that this rarely leads to local-level development and that investments in mineral extraction is associated with global capitalist expansion (Akiwumi, 2012; Bebbington *et al*, 2008). Although there is an evolving agenda for greater corporative and governmental accountability in issues concerning development and human rights in extractive industries in Sierra Leone, introduction of complex monitoring processes represent a significant challenge for Sierra Leone that is emerging from war and is suffering from serious deficits in human capacity, where good governance, accountability and transparency will most likely take time to develop. While Sierra Leone's natural resources have become increasingly important in global markets and the country is experiencing accelerated economic growth, paradoxically, the region remains the poorest in the world. Additionally, communities surrounding the location of extraction are often among the most marginalized and economically depressed.

In order to further understand how exploitation of the mining sector to gain economic benefits have the potential to act as a obstacle to child labour elimination, the following study will use the theory and concepts of dependency theory, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), resource curse and socially constructed childhood in an effort to explore the child labour situation in Sierra Leone's mining sector. This study will broaden the understanding of the child labour issue in Sierra Leone's mining sector and contribute to ongoing recent research and critical analysis to prospect of international policies in eliminating child labour. After critically examine the child labour issue in Sierra Leone the reminder of the thesis underscores the challenges involved in addressing it. This study does not claim that the phenomenon of child labour is completely explained by the cultural practices surrounding youth in Sierra Leone or lack of protection, nor is it an attempt to make reasonable the participation of child labour. Instead it is an effort to understand contextual and cultural practices surrounding children, but also wider structural and macro-economic changes affecting the mining sector and therefore potentially child labour.

Despite recent attempts to eliminate child labour it continues to be a challenge for Sierra

Leone. In the analysis of the child labour issue, this paper first provides a background on Sierra Leone and current legislations on child labour along with a background on the mining sector, which will be done in chapter two. A review of existing literature is provided in chapter three. The fourth chapter presents the methodology used in this study and the fifth chapter is devoted to the theory and concepts that underpins the final analysis. The sixth chapter presents the analysis and results of the findings and provides a discussion of the research questions. Limitations will be discussed in the seventh chapter and the eight and final chapter will summarize the study and present further implications.

1.2 Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this thesis is to examine and analyze the impact of cultural factors together with economic exploitation of the mining sector and its potential impact on child labour elimination in Sierra Leone's mining sector. The aim is to broaden the understanding of the child labour issue and illuminate the various factors underlying the reasons children engage in mining and why it is prevalent. This study does not intend to take a moral stand on child labour, but rather provide an extended and critical analysis in order to obtain an increased and contextual understanding of the child labour problem in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, it complement the critique, which argues that there has been a failure to carry out an analysis of the mining sector to engage in the complex realities of these families involved and further stresses that child labour is far more nuanced and complex than many policymakers' portray it to be. The dependency core-periphery model together with the concepts of CSR, resource curse and socially constructed childhood will provide a tool, which allows for an analysis and understanding of the child labour issue in Sierra Leone's mining sector.

1.3 Research questions

Against this background two research questions have been identified:

What are some of the reasons children engage in mining in Sierra Leone?

What are some of the potential obstacles to child labour elimination in the mining sector in Sierra Leone?

2.0 CONTEXT OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE MINING INDUSTRY

2.1 Child labour under the ILO framework

Ever since its establishment, the ILO has made it one of their core tasks to combat child labour and bring the problem to global awareness. The term 'child labour', suggests ILO, is best defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or work that interferes with their ability to attend regular school, or work that obliges them to leave school prematurely, or work that requires them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work periods (ILO, 2004b). Provisions against child labor are part of ILO's core labor standards and they are together with other children's rights advocates like the UNICEF (2014) calling for laws prohibiting child employment. The ILO provides specific recommendations with regards to elimination of child labour. Furthermore it supports governments in setting policies and conventions as well as implementing numerous programmes, which include direct projects such as vocational training for children and indirect projects that strengthen the capabilities of governments and organizations.

A majority of the countries in the world have adopted legislation to prohibit and put restrictions on the employment and work of children following two of the most fundamental conventions of the ILO, Conventions 138 and 182. *ILO Minimum Age Convention (No.138)* state that the minimum age for work should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, and in any case not less than 15. Children between the ages of 13 and 15 years old may do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training. Any work likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals, should not be done by anyone under the age of 18 (ILO, 2012a). *ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No.182)* defines worst forms of child labour as: all types of slavery, including the sale and trafficking of children; forced labour to pay off a debt; any other type of forced labour, including using children in war and armed conflict; all activities which sexually exploit children, such as prostitution, pornography or pornographic performances; any involvement in illegal activities, especially the production or trafficking of drugs; any work which could damage the health, safety or well-being of children (so called "hazardous work") (ILO, 2012a). However it is to be emphasized that ILO admit that not all work done by children is considered as child labour and that children under the age of 18 may legitimately be engage in employment which may

even be beneficial in preparing them for a productive life as adults. Nevertheless, the ideas underpinning the C182 ultimately led to mining being classified as worst form of child labour.

Additionally to ILO's traditional work in creating labour standards, the International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was initiated in 1992 with the overall goal of the elimination of child labour. The main purpose of IPEC is to support member states in fulfilling their obligations under relevant ILO instruments and to achieve the main goal of eliminating child labour, with specific attention to its worst forms. Since IPEC is mainly working with eliminating the worst forms of child labour, which includes mining, they have stressed that mining constitutes a form of work that is dangerous to children in every way and calls for its immediate elimination. Moreover there is no justification for it – poverty included. Due to the sub-sector remoteness, informal character and mobility, the number of children involved in mining is difficult to measure. Most children are involved in small-scale mining, which is a sub-sector where activities are often artisanal, family-based and labour intensive (IPEC, 2011). Since the C182 calls not only for prohibition of the worst forms of child labour, but also for their elimination, its full implementation requires significant programmatic measures and they argue that access to education is a key step in ensuring protection against child labour, however they do note that education is not the sole solution (IPEC, 2013).

2.2 Child Labour in Sierra Leone

Since the civil war ended in Sierra Leone in 2002, the country has been faced with a great number of post-conflict challenges, child labour being one of them. During the war, child labour was overshadowed by conflict and poverty and it had severe consequences, which resulted in increasing numbers of street children, children working in mines and child victims of trafficking. For many children growing up during the war there was no possibility to attend school and consequently this period has been named the “lost decade” (IPEC, 2013). However in recent years there has been a number of donor-supported programmes attempting to respond to this, seeking to provide education, employment, opportunity and skills training for young people. These programmes have been funded and driven by international organizations (Maconachie and Hilson, 2016). Additionally, Sierra Leone has made strong progress in re-establishing democratic institutions, building and strengthening core systems and established decentralization to bring decisions closer to the citizens. Until the Ebola outbreak in 2014-2015, Sierra Leone was achieving macro-economic stability, but the country remains a low-income country and one of the poorest in the world with a GDP per capita of

US\$513 in 2013 (World Bank, 2016).

Furthermore the government of Sierra Leone has taken active steps to address the harms caused by child labour. According to Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey (2014) some 37 per cent of children aged five to fourteen are involved in child labour and the proportions of children engaged in labour is substantially higher among rural children (43 per cent) than urban children (24 per cent) (Statistics Sierra Leone, 2014). In order to respond to the high rates of child labour the government of Sierra Leone has implemented several policies and legislations and in 2011 they ratified the ILO Convention No 138 and No 182. In relation to this, IPEC launched the project ‘Tackling child labour through education’ (TACKLE) as a means to linking actions to end child labour with ensuring access to education. The project was jointly launched by the European Commission and the ILO. The TACKLE project was IPEC’s first ever project in Sierra Leone. Previously, Sierra Leone had ratified the convention of the Right of the Child (1990) and the Child Rights Act (2007), which set the minimum age for employment at 15 and increased the age of compulsory education to 15. Following the project a National Technical Steering Committee (NTSC) was established, comprising all key partners and stakeholders to oversee all child labour related activities. Furthermore a Child Labour Unit (CLU) was established within the Ministry of Labour to take the lead in ensuring that actions following the ratification of Conventions 138 and 182 are met beyond the duration of the project. The project further aimed to empower national institutions to help provide a strong basis for ensuring sustainability and impact (IPEC, 2013). While the outcome of the TACKLE project showed that rates of child labour has remained consistent, through the project and related initiatives, the Government of Sierra Leone have succeeded in increasing the number of children involved in child labour who continued to attend school. Between 2005 and 2010 there was an increase in school attendance for children involved in child labour from 50 to 76 percent (Statistics Sierra Leone, 2014)

Additionally, more holistic child-development programmes have been established, driven in part by recognition within the country’s Third Generation Poverty Reduction Strategy: Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2018) (Government of Sierra Leone, 2013). The paper recognizes that there is a persistently high level of poverty and inequality, which is affecting the majority of children. Therefore the development of the country depends on universal programmes, which reaches all of them rather than only the originally targeted vulnerable minority groups. The paper includes strategies to address child labour such as making basic education compulsory for all children of school going-age. Nonetheless investing in human

development and creating opportunities for children within the sectors of education, health and social welfare remains one of the greatest challenges facing the country. Weak protection systems, standards and capacity are major bottlenecks to attaining a protective environment for women and children. Limited budgets for social welfare services undermine the capacity to respond to the needs of the people (UNICEF, 2014).

2.3 Mining in Sierra Leone

According to a report published by the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School (2009) nearly 10 000 children are working in diamond mining sites in Sierra Leone. The extractive sector in Sierra Leone is playing an important role for the country's national economy and it accounts for 22 per cent of the GDP (African Development Bank, 2013). Management of natural resources which includes diamonds, gold, rutile, bauxite and iron ore is a pillar of the Agenda for Prosperity and key for the country to achieve its goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2035. Because the extractive sector is of importance for Sierra Leone it has also been the reason for political and economic struggle in the country.

Organized mining started when diamonds were discovered in the 1930s during the colonial era and the British mining company Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST) was established, which had exclusive rights to diamond mining with Sierra Leoneans legally prohibited from mining their own diamonds. The paramount chiefs were given the responsibility by the colonial administration to control settlement and migration and thereby also the power to decide who belong to the mining areas. However corruption and bribes were common from miners who wanted permits to mine (Akiwumi, 2014). The people of Sierra Leone started to require change and mining and economic liberalization reforms were introduced to balance peace and revenue imperatives with local needs. Consequently indigenous alluvial mining was made legal. However indigenous miners had to sell their diamonds, which were often undervalued, to the government and private contractors had to sell to SLST later the National Diamond Mining Company (NDMC) while the authority selected contract scheme participants that often favored non-local elites and foreigners. Channeling diamond resources through these informal elite networks undermined state revenues, institutional capacity and local development. Further in the 1970s and 1980s, in the post-colonial period, mining sector reforms were pushed by the World Bank and IMF since the extractive sector was believed to act as trajectory for development (IMF, 2009). Consequently the government welcomed economic liberalization to attract FDI – this helped to institutionalize unequal power relations and concentrate mineral wealth in the hands of

corporations and a few elites at the expense of poor miners and citizens (Zulu and Hilson, 2012). Gradually, the state lost control over its assets, private entrepreneurs took over and mineral-rich areas and diamonds became the cornerstone of a culture of corruption and mismanagement of national resources for personal enrichment and benefits.

Consequently it has been argued that these were some of the factors responsible for the civil war. Even though the causes of Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war are complex, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to account for these, there seems to be some consensus amongst commentators that poor governance and the creation of a socially excluded underclass were responsible for fomenting the pre-conditions for war. Furthermore it has been argued that diamonds played a central role in the conflict because various parties used them to fund their war efforts (Maconachie, 2009). The outcome of these combined political and economic struggles has resulted in loss of formal control over the diamond areas, already underway during the last stage of the colonial period, further continued under independence. This created wealth for some, but for most of the population Sierra Leone's mineral resources have only brought more poverty and misery (Bøas and Hatløy, 2006).

Hence, one of the main challenges emerging after the conflict relates to governance, including accountability, transparency and corruption for the government and corporations in the extractive industry. Some of these challenges are captured in the Government's medium term development plan *The Agenda for Prosperity 2013-2018* (Government of Sierra Leone, 2013). Moreover, there is an evolving agenda for greater corporative and governmental accountability in issues concerning development and human rights in the extractive industries in Sierra Leone and the sustainable development of the country's valuable mineral resources is a government priority. The government regards the revival of the mining sector as one of the main sources of economic growth and poverty reduction. Much has been done in relation to Sierra Leone's mining industry in order to keep it legitimate and policies and reforms aim to make it more transparent. The Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources is responsible for the administration of the mining sector, which is regulated by the *Mines and Minerals Act of 2009*. This law determines that all rights of ownership in the control of minerals in Sierra Leone are vested in the state (Government of Sierra Leone, 2009). Moreover, the *Mines and Minerals Act* contains specific clauses requiring that companies invest in local development of mining communities in order to promote sustainable development, improve the general welfare and quality of life of mining communities (Wilson, 2015). This is part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, which many transnational mining companies (TNMCs) have embraced. CSR is a way for businesses to demonstrate how they through

ethically and socially responsible behavior contribute to society by initiating various development programmes beyond what they are legally required to do (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005).

In response to the many challenges facing the mining sector after the war, the government implemented two important initiatives, The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) and Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF). The KPCS is a regulatory reform that seeks to maintain the legitimate circulation of diamonds through the issuance of conflict-free certificates of diamond exports. The DACDF is part of a broader reform programme for the diamond sector which aims to involve local actors in natural resource management responsibility and decision making power. It has also been an incentive for miners and diamond-rich chiefdoms to engage in legal-diamond mining activities and revenue reporting by returning a percentage of mining revenue back to producing chiefdoms (Government of Sierra Leone, 2008). Furthermore the government of Sierra Leone is also trying to implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) a policy mechanism that has been widely celebrated by governments, Western donor agencies and international NGOs as the key to resurrecting the stagnating economies of resource-rich African countries. The EITI is a global standard to promote the open and accountable management of extractive resources, which will assist in holding companies and governments accountable, resulting in improved economic importance, political stability and a better investment climate (EITI Report, 2014). Nevertheless, the codes are ultimately voluntary and it could be argued that unequal relations are still in place, creating unequal exchanges for the mining community. National mining legislations have become means of encouraging foreign investment and facilitate mining operations. However it is suggested that this has resulted in unequal trading relationships and an imbalance in the distribution of power and resources, which affects aspects of local life, child labour included.

3.0 REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an extensive understanding of the context that this study is examining. The literature preferred in this section contains academic articles, books, journals, reports and research studies that in various ways are applicable to the child labour discourse in Sierra Leone. The object is to see how child labour in this sector has been perceived in sub-Saharan Africa and Sierra Leone more specifically and to provide a brief account of the overall main findings of why children engage in the mining sector. Research on

child labour and mining could be divided into two broad categories, the poverty hypothesis and the sociocultural approach and in most cases these two have been treated separately. The research overview is organized into two broad sections highlighting these findings.

3.1 Child labour and poverty

Child labour in mining related activities varies according to context, mineral and type of operation. Nevertheless, children involved often come from chronically poor families and their inclusion is widely associated with multiple forms of deprivation (Hentschel *et al*, 2002). Baland and Robinsons (2000) suggest that since child labour is inefficient, policies that strictly enforce children to be out of the labour force would improve welfare. In essence those children out of the labour force are, by assumption, acquiring human capital through schooling, and therefore increase their future labour productivity. Education is here assumed to be readily available in terms of access, affordability and quality (Baland and Robinson, 2000).

Child labour is often treated as a combined subject without consideration to sector in which children are involved. Some studies (Bass, 2004; Basu and Van, 1998; Hope, 2005) have argued that the problem of child labour is largely linked to poverty, claiming that household financial situation have forced children into the labour market. Bryceson and Jonsson (2010) report that families in Tanzania have moved to mining as a way to accumulate capital. Their work illustrates that for some families, mining offers better career trajectories. They further note that some individuals become miners and then hope to acquire enough capital to become pit holders and they develop knowledge of mining techniques and business environment through extended involvement in mining. They also note that an increasing number of men view mining as a vehicle for earning capital to return to school.

Furthermore, Doytchen *et al* (2014) have examined how FDI impact child labour across 100 countries. They find that different sectors generate varied effects on child labour. In general it is believed that economic openness and child labour have a negative relationship because it could create economic opportunities that would not otherwise have existed. Their findings reveals with the expectation of mining FDI among the African countries, FDI have been found to have negative effects on child labour. The reason why the African countries did not indicate a negative relation between FDI and child labour is in their study explained by the large and non-transparent supply chains and that many actors are benefiting from the openness and not the people in the examined countries. Consequently this lead to continued child labour. Moreover Bøas and Hatløy (2004) in their comprehensive study of child miners

in Sierra Leone report that children engage in mining because they are in search of income and besides from mining there are but a few other economic opportunities available. They also note that children want to attend school but they could not afford it and they conclude that poverty eradication is the solution to the child labour problem. Another study on child miners in Sierra Leone finds government failure and poverty to be the primary causes for child labour (Harvard, 2009). Furthermore the report finds that mining deprives children of their right to an education and that the survival and development of children is threatened by widespread practice of child mining.

3.2 Local understanding of child labour

Recent academic literature has moved rapidly towards a critical evaluation of the mainstream discourse on child labour and is arguing that this is overlooking the reasons behind why children work. Thus a great deal of literature has emerged that focuses on the local understanding of child labour. This emerging literature finds that mining is part of African life, that it mirrors the changes in rural sub-Saharan Africa, and is part of rural livelihood diversification (Bryceson and Jonsson, 2010; Banchirigah and Hilson, 2010; Maconachie and Binns, 2007).

This growing body of literature highlights that rural African households are turning to rural non-farm activities and more specifically mining. Drawing upon findings from communities in Northern Ghana, Hilson (2010) underscores this point, arguing that among the tens of thousands of families that have branched out into mining, it may be a case of the same farm hands having become mine hands. André and Godin (2013) offer examples from Congo where children are working in mining because of duty and obligations valued by families but they also find that children engage in mining even when not encouraged by parents because they have chosen to distance themselves from household dynamics, which has given them new social status. Additionally, Maconachie and Hilson (2016) find that in Sierra Leone children's work in mining contributes to income and school and is a vital part of family survival. Furthermore they note that many children are combining work and education. Moreover, Kielland and Tovo (2006) note that in a number of rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa work is connected to family survival and is therefore seen as a joint struggle for survival, giving a strong feeling of belonging and strengthening group solidarity and in some places it is a lifestyle and an important part of what it means to be a family. Hence, in many rural communities throughout sub-Saharan Africa there is a cultural acceptance of children 'going to farm' (Kielland and Tovo, 2006). Furthermore, a great deal of research from sub-

Saharan Africa finds that child labour in mining is a product of a combination of cultural issues, household poverty and rural livelihood diversification (Hilson, 2012; Bass, 2004; Potter and Lupilya, 2016). Life in rural areas is a struggle, which makes going to farm together as a family—children included—essential to the survival of the household. A systematic unpacking of the going to farm narrative helps to explain why scores of young boys and girls are present at so many mining camps across sub-Saharan Africa.

Furthermore, Orkin (2010) stresses the need for a regulatory approach of the least restrictive alternative, which means that restriction of children's labour needs to be limited because of the context. Harmful work is currently based on international definitions and standards but Orkin (2010) argues that children and parents in sub-Saharan Africa are better able to define harmful work according to them. She also criticizes the abolitionist approach of children's work that wants to ban all work. Instead she argues for a regulatory approach to child labour defined by each country. The least restrictive approach means that governments should not unreasonably or unnecessarily inflict harm or costs and should use alternatives that minimize intrusion on individuals touched by the state's action. A regulatory approach will be most successful in definition of harmful work when it is based on local understanding and includes the view of the children. Orkin's (2010) findings draws from Bourdillon *et al* (2009) that argue that the international organizations simply advocate a ban of all forms of work independently of the local context. Minimum age policy reflects paradigms that assume that children benefit from being withdrawn or excluded from work (Bourdillon *et al*, 2009). Supporting above findings, recent research emphasize the involvement of children in economic activities is subject to intercultural differences. Conventions and laws reflect a degree of international consensus of best practice and the idea that work is inappropriate for children is based on cultural construction of childhood specific to contemporary America and Europe (Meyer, 2001).

Many societies perceive children working as perfectly acceptable and have therefore argued that attempts to eliminate child labour have to be sensitive to the diversity of childhood (James and Prout, 1997). For example, Bass (2004) and Punch (2003) have found that while children's involvement in farming and weaving may be unimaginable in some societies but play important parts of a child's proper upbringing in other societies and as such their participation is not deviant. Okyere (2013) even argues that child labour in Ghana presents the solution and not the problem to working children and their families and Aitken (2006) shows that children working have helped families against poverty. The lives of the poor are more likely to be improved by access to more and better options, rather than by

removing their chosen option for improving their situation (Bourdillon, 2006). Others like Ruddick (2003) have stressed that Western countries demand non-Western countries to follow Western path to modernization as part to enhance competitiveness in the development of skilled labour markets. Globalization is characterized by increasing economic divergence between nations and regions, those who are integrated and those who are excluded. Ruddick (2013) argues that child labour in developing countries is challenging the thinking in the West around many constructs that are fundamental and that the ILO definition of child labour follows a distinctly Western model of childhood.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

This study presents a research overview, which is conducted as a qualitative case study where mainly secondary data is gathered and analyzed. The study is primarily concerned with explaining the case of Sierra Leone with support of theories. George and Bennett (2005) argue for the use and value of employing a case study approach in social sciences. They furthermore argue that the method of a case study should be structured in the sense that the researcher writes general research questions with the research objective in mind and use theoretical focus appropriate for the objective (George and Bennett, 2005:70). As such, this study will be a case-driven case study because it focuses on understanding the explanations underlying a phenomenon that together with the conceptual framework will provide the lens through which child labour in the mining sector in Sierra Leone will be analyzed (Lokke and Sorensen, 2014). Furthermore, the case study allows for in depth understanding of Sierra Leone specifically. Although there might be concerns as to which extent generalizations can be made with a case study, this study does not aim at generalizing the findings but rather achieve a greater understanding of the situation in Sierra Leone.

Material from previous research and academic authors is for the most part used as secondary sources to support the thesis arguments and provide the context of Sierra Leone but also from the larger region of sub-Saharan Africa. Official documents from the government of Sierra Leone are used to form the primary sources. The sources collected are of both empirical and theoretical nature, this allows the study to build a critical analysis constructed on diverse perspectives. Secondary analysis also allows the researcher to examine data that was not examined by the primary investigator and new interpretations may be possible. Furthermore it allows the researcher to spend more time on the analysis and interpretation of the data (Bryman, 2012:312). Nonetheless, there are some limits to secondary analysis that

one has to be aware of, including lack of familiarity with the data for the researcher, the complexity as the data is very large and that the researcher has no control over the quality (Bryman, 2012:315). Since the author of this thesis has collected no primary sources, only the secondary sources will provide the analysis. Therefore the theoretical motivations are of importance when constructing the analysis, to consider these findings relevant, enable contesting views and possibly provide some sort of understanding and conclusion (Bryman, 2012:69).

5.0 THEORETICAL GROUNDING

This section attempts to clarify how the theory and concepts are understood in this study.

To scrutinize the situation in Sierra Leone where child labour is taking place, the analysis is based on the following theory of dependency theory as well as the concepts of CSR, resource cure and socially constructed childhood.

5.1 Dependency Theory

Dependency theory emerged in the 1960s particularly among social scientists in Latin America who were concerned with the underdevelopment of the newly independent Third World. Drawing on the notion of inequality between the industrial nations and the non-industrial world, dependency theorists referred to the former as the 'core' and latter as 'periphery'. Prebisch (1962) and Frank (1967) argue that powerful capitalist countries forced developing nations into dependency by structural conditions dictated to them. According to Frank (1967) capitalism acted to develop underdevelopment and the condition of developing countries is a reflection of the manner of their incorporation into the global capitalist system. Furthermore it is argued that dependency comes with a chain of exploitative relations via the process of unequal exchange. The periphery produces cheap labour and raw material while the core is producing high profit consumer goods, which places the periphery at the bottom of the value chain. Expanding on dependency theory, Wallerstein (1974) argued that extraction and productivity processes link labour in the peripheral places with core regions in process of unequal exchange, such incorporation into the world system causes restructuring of rural society to meet labour demands of global market which impact households in the periphery.

The concern of dependency theory has once again surfaced, largely in response to increasingly asymmetrical power relations between global extractive industry corporations and weak peripheral nation-states (Akiwumi, 2012). A number of critical scholars concerned

with the extractive industries and development are adopting this theory to broaden the understanding of the uneven nature of global capitalism and its unequal benefits in poor countries in the global South (Francis, 1999; Hall and Chase-Dunn, 2006). The resource extraction areas, like mining communities become the peripheral in the world-system, while corporations act as the core and exploit mining communities for labour and raw material. Trade consequently devolves into an exploitation of one group by another, either within a country or between countries. The hierarchical organizational structure of TNMCs is a form of institutionalized power equal to or exceeding that of core states. Mineral concessions granted to TNMCs give them great power over the peripheral state. Dependent on royalties, taxation, and mineral extraction income, and having weak bargaining power, the peripheral state acts as facilitator for mineral exploitation. Although argued to be not as popular today, dependency offers an explanation, which has encouraged developing countries to depend upon the support of more advanced states. Dependency theory can be used as a tool to analyze unequal economic relations between rich and poor countries. In the case of Sierra Leone and the extractive industry, it offers a way to analyze the economic relations, which has the potential to keep child labour where it is today.

5.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

Over the past decades CSR has grown as an approach to international development. The rapid growth of multinational corporations has led to acceptance that corporations should consider effects of their actions. The idea that business enterprises have some responsibilities to society beyond that of making profit for the stakeholders and businesses nowadays demonstrate how they through ethically and socially responsible behavior contribute to society by initiating various development programmes (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005). Generally CSR is recognized to be a concept whereby companies integrate social, ethical and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with stakeholders on a voluntary base.

However recent academic literature has moved rapidly towards a more critical evaluation of CSR and its role in the developing world. Because when looking closer at the CSR concept it reveals to have been inadequately understood and rather diffuse. One of the concerns with CSR is that there seems to be a great debate over the definition and conceptualization of the term (Carroll and Shabana, 2010). The debate mainly concentrates on clarifying what responsibility means and how to achieve the balance between profitability and social objectives. The concept of CSR has continued to grow both in importance and

significance. CSR has been the subject for debate, commentary, theory building and research. Even though there is no clear definition of what it means and what it exactly embraces, it has developed and evolved in both academia and in communities worldwide. However critiques of the concept is arguing that it is driven by self-interests and that CSR programmes and policies are originally adopted by companies to deflect criticism of their social and environmental misconduct. Therefore some have argued that more and more companies embrace CSR as a way to reduce negative social and environmental impact of their business to maximize the positive impact of their investments particularly in developing countries.

Milton Friedman (1970) argued that the only reason for business to engage in social issues is to increase profit. Other scholars have highlighted the notion that CSR is replacing governments' responsibility (Newell and Frynas, 2007) but the fact that it is non-binding and self-regulatory makes it hard to properly address equality rights (Utting, 2007). Furthermore, Blowfield and Frynas (2005) have observed that alternative to government responsibilities, "CSR is frequently advocated as a means of filling gaps in governance that have arisen with the acceleration of liberal economic globalization" (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005:508). Furthermore they note that CSR is winning support from policy-makers in national governments and intergovernmental organizations, supported by the assumption that firms are capable of policing themselves in the absence of binding national and international laws to regulate corporate behavior. As such, CSR in Sierra Leone has become increasingly important and the government has through legislative measures made companies embrace CSR programmes (Wilson, 2015). However the fact that the concept is not universally defined and that it is essentially voluntary may have implications for the kind of development it can contribute to. Given the wide range of activities that CSR has been used to describe, Blowfield and Frynas (2005) suggest that it is perhaps more useful to think of it as an umbrella term used to describe a variety of beliefs and practices which hold that:

- 1) Companies have a responsibility for their impact on society and the natural environment, sometimes beyond legal compliance and the liability of individuals;
- 2) Companies have a responsibility for the behavior of others with whom they do business (e.g. within supply chains);
- 3) Companies need to manage their relationship with wider society, whether for reasons of commercial viability, to add value to society, or both.

5.3 Resource Curse

Academics have in recent years lent overwhelming support to the negative effects that natural resource dependence can have on economic growth. Consequently the concept resource curse is a concept that refers to countries rich in natural resources, which paradoxically have experienced limited reward and instead experienced underdevelopment, corruption, political instability and in some cases violent conflict. The term was first used by Richard Auty to describe how countries rich in natural resources were unable to use that wealth to boost their economies and how counter-intuitively these countries had lower economic growth (Auty, 1997). Further, Sachs and Warner (2001) find a strong correlation between natural resources and poor economic growth. The resource curse has been manifested in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa where resource endowment has resulted in conflict-ridden underdevelopment. In Sierra Leone it has been suggested that diamonds played a key role in the war, an issue that gave rise to the term “blood diamonds” (Maconachie, 2014).

The resource curse concept shows how natural resources can lead to poverty and destruction if there is no control over resources. The resource curse occurs as a country begins to focus all of its energy on a single industry. As a result the nation becomes overly dependent on the product. Additionally, government corruption often occurs when proper resource rights and income distribution framework are not established in society, resulting in unfair regulation of the industry. Furthermore, it refers to the failure of many resource-rich countries to benefit fully from their natural resource wealth, and for governments in these countries to respond effectively to public welfare needs (Auty, 1997). What should be a blessing turns out to be an incentive for corruption and conflict.

Sierra Leone’s large amount of natural resources are seen as having negative impact on the country because the focus on mining and foreign investment into the mining sector is leading them into a resource curse. The government and national economy is focusing on natural resources and investments for other sectors are not prioritized or may even drop in support in order to increase the growth in the mining sector. The Sierra Leonean economy is already experiencing a large amount of exports coming from mining. Foreign investors are investing in Sierra Leone because of the economic opportunities existing for mining companies. The government needs to use the generated income to diversify and support other sectors and build up a stronger economy in order to get out of the resource curse.

5.4 Socially constructed childhood

Recent experiences from various field studies suggest that the homogenous notion of childhood is too simplistic, that there is an international divide and it has been widely recognized that childhood is both a social and cultural construct. This concept builds on work of James *et al* (1998) that childhood is socially constructed and not something universal and more importantly that children act as agents rather than passive subjects (James *et al*, 1998:75). This approach argues that children's work has its own sociocultural meaning and context. The Northern-influenced labour standards do not adequately fit with the realities of the developing countries. There is a belief that childhood is just as much a culturally constructed phenomenon as it is a natural phenomenon of biological construct. James and Prout (1997) argue that there are many different childhoods linked to particular context "neither timeless nor universal but, instead rooted in the past and shaped in the present" (James and Prout, 1997:232). This perspective emphasizes the diversity of childhood and argues against the European and North American middle-income concept of childhood that have been promoted worldwide and assumed to apply to all contexts. Although involvement in unconventional forms of child labour requires children to cross boundaries, the sociocultural perspective to child labour has highlighted a sense of pride and achievement that could bring to children in that they both develop resilience to daily hardship of poverty and navigate to adulthood.

While this concept of childhood argues for the rights of children to support and protection, it views childhood as continuous with the adult world. In this view work is normal to child development (Bourdillon, 2006). Punch (2001) points out that the majority of the world's children live in the economically poor South and the most common type of 'childhood' is therefore that of Third World children. Paradoxically, Third World childhood tends to be considered deviant when examined within globalized model of childhood, which are based on Western ideas that children should play and study, not work. This study will use James *et al* (1998) concept of childhood as a social construct in examining why children in Sierra Leone are involved in the mining sector.

6.0 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section draws on the research overview to make a discussion and analysis of the thesis. To further elaborate on the findings in this study, a contextualization and theorization of the

findings will be provided in this section. In order to answer the research questions this section will act as a critical analysis of why children engage in mining and what the potential obstacles this study has found for the purpose to eliminate child labour in the mining sector.

6.1 Factors affecting children's involvement in mining

The focus on child labour features prominently in mainstream development institutions such as the UN and ILO and it is associated with multiple forms of deprivation. However Trask (2009) argues that children's work is primarily being evaluated through a Western lens and in the current discourse on child labour, children in the South tend to be portrayed as exploited overworked innocent beings. This discourse and most critics of children's work argue that families take their children out of school to help sustain the household, and that work is against the children's right and affects their development. Furthermore as Boyden (1997) argues, the core ideology, which was originated in the West and later exported to the South, has resulted in national governments emphasizing schooling and adopting child labour standards and legislations. Sierra Leone has been pressured by the international establishment to establish child labour standards and the government, dependent on aid, is following the recommendations. Accordingly, Sierra Leone has signed and ratified the ILO Conventions No 132 and 182 to join a more globalized unity and the message now resonating in policymaking circles is that mining is a poverty driven sector that needs to be eliminated. However it has been suggested that the situation of the children has not been properly analyzed. As a result, international and governmental prohibitions on child labour risk force children into less-desirable alternatives. Based on information available to families in Sierra Leone, they tend to choose the best available job for their children. Taking that option away from them will not eliminate the necessity to work and it risks leading them into less desirable job. As repulsive as a child working in a mine might be, it is suggested that it is not as repulsive as a child forced into prostitution through the action of Western policymakers. Yet studies have demonstrated this is not always the case. Although poverty is a main driver of child labour it is not the only reason for it and not all children working are exploited or forced to do it.

The sociocultural perspective to child labour is useful in understanding the continuity and underlying reasons of children's engagement in mining in Sierra Leone. Instead of work being seen as an obstacle to education that has been argued many times before (ILO, 2012a) it has been suggested that children's earnings play a vital role to pay for school fees. In the case of Sierra Leone, Maconachie and Hilson (2016) find that children combine work in mines with school in order to pay for school fees since it is still largely unobtainable for many

children. Furthermore, they call for a re-thinking of the child labour problem because mining activities undertaken by the children are helping them attend school and thus putting them in an improved position. This makes the applicability of the ILO conventions C182 and C138 problematic for Sierra Leone since many children rely on work to pay for school. Their study further shows a different picture to the child labour “problem” which contributes to the complex understanding of child labour and why they are involved in mining. Accordingly a contextual understanding of child labour has been argued for throughout this study and an emerging body of literature has done the same (Bass, 2004; Bourdillon, 2006; Boyden, 1998). However these literatures as well as this study stress the importance of not ignoring children’s work to be problematic in sub-Saharan Africa and Sierra Leone. Nevertheless simply using the term child labour in a negative way with no regard to context risks ignoring the potential positive effects of work. Although it has been acknowledged that poverty is usually the main reason why children work instead of going to school and having children attend school is ideal. The failure to attend school is usually due to poverty rather than cultural values because families are in need of income (Edmonds, 2005). Nevertheless, in the context of sub-Saharan Africa and Sierra Leone rural livelihood diversification is another explanation to children’s engagement on mining. Kielland and Tovo (2006) report that systematic unpacking of going to farm narrative, which is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa where children have helped out on family farms, helps explain why an increasing numbers of children are involved in mining activities and how it could be understood as a product of a combination of cultural issues, household poverty and rural livelihood diversification. Together these findings suggest that child labour is not a one-dimensional problem associated with poverty where parents force their children into life-threatening work but rather a more complex problem.

While it is suggested that there are some benefits to children working there are also evidence that exploitation and abuse occur and therefore children’s work should not be romanticized or considered to bring only benefits. Following research from mining sites in Sierra Leone, it is demonstrated that some children feel exploited, their health is negatively affected and they are not able to attend school because of their involvement in mining (Bøas and Hatløy, 2006; IHRCH, 2009). Likewise the ILO (2004a) has reported of similar findings from children working in mines, and although these are against children’s rights, the problem it is suggested, is that they seem to focus only on these “bad” outcomes. Therefore the sociocultural perspective on children’s work highlights the need for a balanced understanding of children’s work, as child labour is not a homogenous issue. Here Boyden (1998) has argued that the values and norms of a safe, happy and protected childhood are based on

Western understanding of childhood and consequently the legislative framework and policies are applied accordingly. However as demonstrated in this study, such assumptions often fail to acknowledge the complex reasons for children to engage in mining as well as to understand the context within which children live and work. Thus it can be argued that any discussion of the child labour problem that excludes the country's sociocultural practices does little to reveal why child labour persists within the sector and even less to indicate appropriate policy intervention.

6.2 Sierra Leone's part in the world economy/The role of the mining sector

In order to analyze the child labour situation in the mining sector in Sierra Leone this study has therefore taken a more holistic approach and argued for a need to situate child labour in a contemporary market-led development mode that discriminate against poorer societies. The economic and political transformations affecting the lives of young people are varied and complex. These include, poverty, debt, corruption, war, geopolitical conflict, unfair trade, inappropriate policies and ineffective legislations, all of which Sierra Leone has experienced. Sierra Leone's adoption of new mining codes as an effort to stimulate FDI has resulted in unprecedented increase in a number of international companies engaging in mining (Bebbington *et al*, 2008). Where the market-liberal agenda has resulted in phenomenal growth for some countries it has paradoxically left the mining communities marginalized and economically depressed. Since Sierra Leone's incorporation into the world system through mining began in the 1930s their dependency on developed countries for natural resource extraction has only continued to present time. The unequal trading relations introduced during colonial times helped undermine the impact of mineral revenues on poverty reduction. The mining legislations in place today along with the government's lack of accountability and transparency still have the same consequences.

Furthermore the discourses of modernization and progress have remained a driving narrative in justifying and legitimizing extractive industry investment in Sierra Leone and has become a means of encouraging FDI and facilitate mining operations, and such unequal exchange translate into the mining communities. The mining communities are representing the periphery in the extraction structures where socioeconomic, political and cultural changes are a result of unequal trading relationships and imbalance in the distribution of power and resources. The presence of mining corporations affects all aspects of local life, child labour included.

Although resource extraction can be perceived as a process of exploitation it can also be perceived as an opportunity enhancement. The government has made it top priority as a means to poverty reduction and to become a middle-income country by 2035. As Hilson (2012) notes, there is more efficient technology that has made extraction faster and more profitable. Furthermore, the World Bank and the IMF are stressing the social value that can be achieved through investment in large infrastructure projects which together with external markets available will provide opportunities and accordingly the extractive sector will foster economic growth, leading to increased levels of socioeconomic development and well being. Though the situation where donor-driven post-conflict reconstruction guides the development process, it is often the case that romanticized and idealistic vision of development is aspired, rather than that which is needed in the context or applying policies accordingly. These do typically not match up with the complex realities in Sierra Leone or the competing visions of the local people.

The macroeconomic policies imposed by the World Bank and the IMF in response to the Washington Consensus, whereby poor countries are forced to open their economies are seen as having devastating impacts on the lives of children in remote areas, resulting in a situation where child labour is trapped between exploitation and economic benefits. The result of their incorporation in the world system is rather underdevelopment and exploitation as they are integrated at the bottom of the hierarchy. Prebisch (1962) and Frank (1967) both argued for the uneven nature of global capitalism and its unequal benefits in poor countries in the South. Additionally, it could be argued that FDI rarely lead to local-level benefits and investments in mineral extraction are instead associated with global capitalism expansion, leading to increased preconditions for child labour. According to Wallerstein (1974) extraction and production processes link labour in peripheral places with core regions in processes of unequal exchange. Such integration of Sierra Leone into the world system causes restructuring of rural society to meet labour demands of the global market, which impact households in the periphery. The historical roots of such unequal trading arrangement in the world market date back to the colonial exploitation of cheap natural resources and could be argued to continue to present time though extractions of natural resources.

Moreover, this has further implications for child labour elimination because the market-liberal changes in Sierra Leone have the potential to undermine young people's efforts to obtain well-paid jobs. This is demonstrated in Jeffrey's (2009) work from India where he finds that despite families making huge investments in formal education, the market-liberal changes undermine young people's efforts to obtain well-paid jobs. Consequently this results

in one of the most unsettling paradoxes of contemporary social change; that at the same time the increasing numbers of children formerly excluded from schooling have recognized the possibilities held out by education for individual improvement, the opportunities for these groups to benefit economically from schooling is disintegrating (Jeffrey, 2009). With ILO setting labour standards and promoting education as means to eliminate child labour this demonstrates potential obstacles to the current way of eliminating child labour because it undermines economic changes and consequently child labour. It rather creates incentives for further prevalence of child labour since children are not benefitting from education.

Furthermore introducing complex monitoring processes represents a challenge for the government of Sierra Leone. It should be acknowledged that it has made some progress but it is emerging from war and suffers from shortage in human capacity where good governance, accountability and transparency will take time to develop. Evident in the KPCS and DACDF, Sierra Leone shows signs to be more accountable and achieve local development. However as demonstrated by their attempt to implement EITI, The African Development Bank (2013) reported that Sierra Leone failed to meet 4 of the 21 EITI benchmarks, which manifests systemic governance challenges in managing revenues from the extractive sector. As such it will prove difficult to eliminate the complex networks of actors that have long sustained corruption and lack of transparency that characterize local mining extraction. Challenges ahead will be difficult to meet because many powerful groups have vested interests in continuing to exploit mining revenues and ensure status quo.

The increasing focus on supporting and expanding the mining sector has further implications for child labour as it can be argued that the natural resources act as a curse instead of a blessing. Sierra Leone appears to be a classic manifestation of the resource curse as most of the population has seen little benefit from over eighty years of mining in rich mineral resources and Sierra Leone being the ninth poorest country in the world (UNDP, 2016). The increasing focus on extraction and exportation of raw material may undermine other sectors in the country and prevent Sierra Leone from diversifying its economy while pushing the country too heavily on the reliance of these materials. Reinert (2007) argues that many developing countries are poor because raw material does not allow for increase in productivity and are suffering from diminishing return to scale, and what little innovation or productivity there is in raw material tends to result in lower profits whereas innovations in manufacturing leads to new products which creates higher profit, wages and governance revenues in rich manufacturing countries (Reinert, 2007:151). He further argues that capitalism needs to be understood as a system of imperfect competition (ibid:210).

Accordingly the asymmetric power relations between global core-periphery dynamics of economic and social inequalities could explain this. Here the political and economic analyze reveal further contradictions in the work of international organizations which can be seen as incompatible discourses where the ILO advocate for a 'idyllic' childhood while market-liberal policies advocated by the World Bank suggested in this study lead to exploitation of labour in Sierra Leone and potentially child labour. Furthermore, ironically, Chang (2002) notes how the developed countries have not followed the policies they advocate for today. Still, they keep putting pressure on the developing countries to eliminate child labour although it took centuries for Europe to eradicate child labour and attempts to introduce institutions to regulate child labour was met with resistance (Chang, 2002:104-105).

6.3 The CSR paradigm and child labour

The role of CSR emerged in Sierra Leone following the adoption of market-led development and the debate regarding CSR mainly concentrates on the responsibilities and how to achieve the balance between profitability and social responsibility. CSR is proven to be a complex concept and there is no universally recognized definition of the term, demonstrating that CSR represents different things to different people. Corporations can make contributions to the society they operate in, as they are major sources of investment, development of products and job creation. As such CSR can have certain benefits to raise labour standards and since the regulation lies with the corporation it can determine how labour standards should regulate specific sectors. CSR can also influence social and political recognition on the conditions of children working under harmful conditions (Carroll and Shabana, 2010). Here it is suggested that CSR policies, if optimally used, can have impact in the area of child labour. However it is also suggested that CSR is not the solution to ineffective international labour standards in Sierra Leone.

The role of CSR has gained much attention but in the case of Sierra Leone there has been mixed accounts on whether CSR has made meaningful contribution to development or not. CSR initiatives implemented in mining communities in Sierra Leone after the war embraced the opportunities to fill development voids, seeing it as an opportunity to enhance their international reputation and strengthen their social licenses to operate. However CSR projects are often top-down and the unequal power relations are central to reinforcing the interpretations of sustainability and powerful mining companies are able to control any development that might take place. Together with the loose definition of CSR, companies can decide what sustainability entails to them. The voluntary initiatives and self-regulations

further bring complications because corporation's purpose is to be profitable and their main objective is to develop, produce and supply products to their costumers.

Nevertheless power relations remain with the CSR policies as been argued by Wilson (2015) since companies leverage over mining communities in executing corporate-controlled rather than community-led development. These corporate-centric projects are in many places not responsive to community desires and needs. Furthermore, as the government in Sierra Leone has not had the resources to provide the local community with assistance, the extractive industry companies have increasingly been expected to fill these voids by providing the services that the government has failed to deliver. Although they are bound by law in the Mines and Mineral Act, there is no monitoring mechanism in place to control for them being met and it is many times argued that mining companies are unable or unwilling to fulfill these expectations. Civil society actors have been active in lobbying against mining companies, not suggesting that mining should stop but rather that institutional arrangement should be put in place to ensure that local communities are compensated with development investments and better employment opportunities.

In the case of Sierra Leone, Wilson (2015) demonstrates that OCTEA Mining, a kimberlite diamond mining company involved with community, as part of their CSR implemented a football project, which according to the people in the community was not needed. He further suggest that the company used their dominant decision making and undermined community-led development. The case demonstrates how corporate-centric development projects are not responding to community desires and needs. Community development and child labour are not improving when companies are adopting CSR as a clear business motivation to improve corporate reputation and influence the global debate surrounding sustainability (Auty, 1997; Blowfield and Frynas, 2005). This is further demonstrated in Fryna's (2012) study of Shell's development projects in Nigeria, which points out that less than one-third of those projects were fully functional. Additionally in Pakistan Bendell (2005) finds that corporate responses to campaigns against child labour in the sporting goods industry has led children to take less-desirable jobs in more hazardous and abusive industries. It is based on this position that considerable concerns have been raised that extractive industry companies implement programmes without understanding context. Supporting these arguments Dauvergne and Neville (2010) add that in weak states such as Sierra Leone, where governments lack the power to influence the underlying agenda for TNMCs, such absence of regulatory oversight and control makes it even more unlikely voluntary corporate initiatives will lead to meaningful social outcomes (Maconachie, 2014).

Thus arises the argument that CSR is creating more problems than solutions for developing countries because companies know too little about the host country and region and they do not include local people in the process or integrate the initiatives into larger development projects. As such CSR programmes and policies can further work as a means for deepening the multiple forms of inequality and social exclusion for the already marginalized mining communities.

Today, policies against child labour are normal parts of CSR but without clear visibility in the supply chain, identifying and addressing child labour is challenging and if there is no cooperation with the mining communities it has the potential to further create an obstacle to child labour elimination. Power structures in Sierra Leonean society are highly uneven and it is difficult for the government to eliminate complex networks of actors that have long sustained corruption and lack of transparency. However with the KPCS and DACDF they have showed the willingness to improve things in the mining sector to become more transparent. Local government officials have stressed that companies should work with civil society in community development as such community development would likely be more capable of accommodating local people's needs.

This study has demonstrated that elements of the CSR framework (voluntary, loose definition, self-regulatory, set standards themselves) and accountability have undermined community development outcomes, which in turn might have implications for child labour. This has showed that corporate-centric development projects are in many cases not responding to community desires and needs because they facilitate minimum and unsustainable development. This is indicating that the only reasons for corporations to engage in social issues is profit making, findings from previous studies in Sierra Leone show similar tendencies and it can be argued that corporations do act in their own interest, creating obstacles to child labour elimination. As such it can be argued that there is a need to make social and human rights standards mandatory and legally binding because voluntary approaches are frequently insignificant. The voluntary suffer the shortcoming of inadequate nature of monitoring and enforcement systems, which makes these codes ineffectual.

7.0 LIMITATIONS

Since child labour is an extreme complex phenomenon and a lot of factors are affecting it, this study is limited to examining child labour in mining in Sierra Leone. It does not include child labour in any other sector. Moreover as specified in the purpose of the research, this study is

concentrated on explaining the cultural and economic aspects of child labour in Sierra Leone. However it does not claim that these are the only factors affecting child labour, and it does acknowledge there are other factors as well. Nonetheless the paper rather shining light on the selected factors because they are believed not to be sufficiently examined. It does not either claim that child labour elimination in Sierra Leone is impossible. A limitation is also that the implementation of the ILO convention in Sierra Leone was made rather recently and thus makes it hard to draw conclusion concerning the prevalence of child labour. It can therefore only show potential factors that may influence the elimination of child labour in the mining sector. However even if such correlations cannot be made in this research it could have implications for further research.

Furthermore, this study focuses on child labour in the mining industry and not in every sector in the country, some researchers may treat it as a whole problem, but this research have aimed to find sources that look more specifically at the mining industry. Furthermore, finding available statistics on child labour in mining is a challenge because there is not much available in Sierra Leone. This is due to the remoteness of the mining sites and the hidden problem of child labour in mining and it has therefore been a challenge in finding authentic numbers and statistics on child labour in mining. Additionally the relatively recent establishment of the ILO conventions and because child labour is not something the government or the companies seem to want to readily acknowledge is also a contributory factor. The government has not had the resources to conduct survey or report on the child labour problem but it is on the way with the help from ILO to release a National Action Plan.

Due to these limitations it is highly important to be critical by examining the motive and validity of the sources. The available research is more centered on child labour in diamond mining but it is important to stress that this study includes all types of mining. Therefore the precise number of children who are affected by child labour cannot be firmly established it can only be estimated in this thesis and supported by various sources. Furthermore, this study does not include NGO's and other civil society actors and what they do to eliminate child labour. It does acknowledge that these are important players in the process of eliminating child labour but that is for further research to examine. Instead it is believed that potential obstacles need to be examined before the role of civil society and NGO's.

8.0 ENDING DISCUSSION

This study has presented and examined potential obstacles to the elimination of child labour in the mining sector in Sierra Leone. It has found that the failure to acknowledge sociocultural aspects embedded in the Sierra Leonean society along with economic exploitation of the mining sector constitutes potential obstacles to the elimination of child labour. By examining why children in Sierra Leone engage in mining, this study demonstrates the cultural factors that are often disregarded in child labour studies, but in this case have proven to play an important role. It has also addressed economic factors brought by Sierra Leones incorporation in the world economy, which recognizes how not only local factors but also broader international factors contribute to increased understanding of the child labour situation in Sierra Leone. Through this research of Sierra Leone it has been suggested that socioeconomic discourses of children's labour are well equipped to enhance understanding of the very complex factors that interconnect to create the context of Sierra Leone in which children engage in mining activities. In order to understand factors that could constitute potential obstacles, dependency theory was selected to further explain exploitation in the mining sector. The concepts of CSR, resource curse and socially constructed of childhood further demonstrate the situation where child labour is connected to processes of development and socioeconomic and cultural change. It constitutes a situation where child labour is arguably trapped between economic benefits and exploitation and if not recognized has the potential to keep it at status quo.

In the last years, international organizations, local governments and non-state actors have made extensive efforts to eliminate the existence of child labour in the mining sector in Sierra Leone. However, the prevalence is still high and there is a long way to go towards total elimination. The challenges of tackling child labour in mining must be approached as argued in this study, with understanding of the complex economic, social and cultural factors that contribute to it. In short, these aspects of Sierra Leon's mining sector present very real challenges for child labour elimination. The fact that the country has implemented projects to strengthen the government and other important stakeholders to manage child labour and make accountable for the mining sector is a positive first step. However the challenges ahead will be difficult to meet, not least because local understanding of child labour is many times different from mainstream Western views, but also because so many powerful groups have vested interests in continuing to exploit mining.

Unlike other findings, which promote education and the benefits from it, this study shows how education may not be an option for children since they will not benefit from education if unequal structures that contribute to unequal exchange will continue to undermine such education. It is important to further position these findings, demonstrating their possible implications for a larger debate of policies on child labour elimination. Therefore it is essential to problematize the policies of the ILO and their “one size fits all” kind of approach and how it might not be well suited in the case of Sierra Leone. A starting point to the debate of the applicability of the ILO policies is to recognize that the post-conflict setting in Sierra Leone is unique and that Sierra Leone might be in a less favorable position to embrace Western conceptualization of childhood than other countries. Sierra Leone and its policymakers continue to go ahead with the development vision of international organizations but following such policy narratives, findings in this study point to a continued prevalence of child labour.

Therefore more holistic policy mechanisms are needed to address child labour in impoverished mining communities. Ultimately, a more nuanced understanding is needed if more adequate and efficient policies and programmes are to respond to child labour in mining in Sierra Leone. These factors interconnect to create the context of Sierra Leone in which child labour takes place. Taking these finding into account, although they are by no means the only explanation and potential obstacles to child labour elimination, it offers a suggestion of where research is needed. One that gives insight into the complex dimensions of child labour. Further research should aim to critically understand the wide and varied situation in which children work. Likewise they need to recognize that the diverse activities children participate in have their own histories, politics and cultures. Such work could recognize how children’s work is constructed in different ways in different places and how it becomes either rewarding or exploitative.

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