

2022

## **Barriers to the Implementation of Effective Sustainable Development Plans in Sierra Leone: Stakeholders' Perspectives**

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# Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

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August 2022

Abstract

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Leone: Stakeholders' Perspectives

by

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MSc, Kingston University, 2004

MBA, University of Leicester, 2003,

B.A, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, 1995

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## Abstract

Stakeholders' competing positions with elected officials created barriers to the effective implementation of sustainable environmental policies. This study aimed to explore the barriers to implementing the National Environmental Policies (NEP), passed by the parliament of Sierra Leone in the 1990s. Sabastier and Jenkin-Smith's advocacy coalition framework model provided the theoretical foundation for this study. The key research question explored is stakeholders' perceptions of the barriers to effectively building coalitions to implement sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone. A case study research approach was used to understand the barriers to implementing the NEP in Sierra Leone. Data were collected from public documents and structured interviews of 36 respondents. The data were coded inductively, and their content analyzed, which produced six emerging themes that included: the perceived role of stakeholders in environmental policy implementation, the benefits of stakeholders' engagement, meeting the needs of organizations, perceived challenges in policy implementation, empowering stakeholders to participate in formulating and implementing policies and providing the necessary support for the effective implementation of environmental policies. Recommendation included that more research be conducted to identify why key stakeholders, stakeholder groups, and some governmental stakeholders were not sufficiently included in environmental policy discussions. This study has positive social change implications because it examined issues from stakeholders' perspectives about the opportunities and barriers to implementing sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to my late father, Mr. Lamin Turay, who we lost in the civil war in Sierra Leone. I also dedicate this work to my mother, Ya Kaday Bangura, my uncle, Pa Moray Kamara, and my auntie and second Mother, Tha Kaday Moray Kamara. I would also like to dedicate my work to my children, Katie Ann Turay, Mohamed Lamin Turay (USA), Pa Alie Turay, Zainab Marion Turay, and Mohamed Lamin Turay (Sierra Leone), who inspired me greatly to get to the end of this program. This work is dedicated to my wife, Madam Khadijatu Fofanah (Mommy Kay), for her unconditional love and support in this program. I would like to dedicate my work to my brother Abdul K. Turay for his love and support. This work is also dedicated to my brother, Abu Bakarr Turay who passed away on April 19<sup>th</sup> 2022. Finally, I dedicate my work to every member of Tawopaneh Tara Theme, an organization that I founded to support the needs of women and children in all Themne communities in Sierra Leone.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Multiple perspectives from elected officials in the design and formulation of public policy in Sierra Leone create barriers to implementing sustainable development policies, such as lack of trust by the beneficiaries of the proposed policy and differences in thinking, needs, and goals between elected officials targeted stakeholder groups. For example, community development stakeholder groups are interested in being part of the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of development projects. Individuals of community development projects might support projects if they participate in discussing them, and they are not merely informed after decisions have been made (Gyam & Ampomah, 2016). Barriers to the implementation of public policy might occur when individuals of nongovernmental stakeholders affected by government policies do not support their implementation because their inputs or opinion were not considered during the discussion of the policies.

Engaging stakeholders in Sierra Leone, such as traditional leaders, local villagers, civil society organizations (CSOs), and youth development organizations, in the formulation of policies that affect lives in their communities is relevant to avoid conflict between elected officials and these stakeholders (Stakeholder Engagement Guide [SEG], 2017). Other groups in Sierra Leone that elected officials needed to engage to minimize competing positions in implementing policies, which affected their interests, included professional groups such as lawyers, doctors, teachers, and the business community (SEG, 2017). These individuals and organizations are usually affected by policy

proposals introduced by elected officials. Therefore, they might influence the formulation and successful implementation of good policies in Sierra Leone.

Stakeholders could influence policy formulation and implementation by not supporting any process that might improve potential challenges after implementing the project. For example, the stakeholders who are affected by the project that is implemented might refuse to provide the necessary feedback that would enable elected officials to address the potential flaws of the specific policy that targets the interests of a particular stakeholder group but did not include their opinions when discussing the policy (SEG, 2017). Stakeholder groups' support for policies or projects that affected their interests might be based on perceived trust and the desire to achieve the beliefs of individuals of their groups. Also, the individual belief systems promoting the group's interests might create the willingness for stakeholder groups to collaborate and participate in the implementation of policies.

This study focused on examining the barriers to implementing the National Environmental Policies (NEP) passed by the parliament of Sierra Leone in 1990. Specifically, the study explored the belief system of stakeholders in influencing government policy in the implementation of the NEP in Sierra Leone. The study also examined the opportunities for building coalitions between elected government officials and stakeholders to enhance the effective implementation of sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone. Engaging stakeholders in discussing proposed policies that affect their activities might enable the members of those groups to support the implementation of those policies (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015). Conflicts between elected

officials and stakeholders might arise when the opinions of the affected stakeholder groups are not sought during government policies or if the financial interest of the coalition directly affected by the proposed policy is not fully addressed (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016). Gyan and Ampomah (2016) indicated in their study the potential barriers to the implementation of community projects due to competing positions about financial investments to support community projects that might not involve people in those communities. Suppose community stakeholders are not involved in discussing the technical and financial aspects of community projects. In that case, the lack of involvement might lead to conflicts between stakeholders and elected officials. On the other hand, involving stakeholders in discussing financial investment projects that promote community development might lead to opportunities for the people in those communities and less conflict in implementing policies (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016). This research examined the barriers to creating coalitions to effectively implement sustainable development plans such as the NEP introduced by elected officials in Sierra Leone in 1990.

The main policy issue examined in this research was the National Environmental Policy passed by elected officials in Sierra Leone in the 1990s. The National Environmental Policy developed by elected governmental officials facilitates the effective control of resources in the natural environment of Sierra Leone (Kamara, 2015). Elected officials introduced other environmental regulations and laws in Sierra Leone, primarily to promote the security of the natural environment. Examples of those environmental laws included: the Mines and Mineral Act of 1994, the Environmental



Protection Act of 2008, 2004, and 2009, the Land Commission Act of 2004, and the National Land Policy (Kamara, 2015).

This chapter discusses the background of the problem and provides the purpose of the research, the nature of the research, and the research question. It also discusses the scope, delimitations, and limitations of the research. In addition, this chapter includes a discussion of the significance of the research and how it might contribute to positive social change.

### **Background**

Stakeholders are important in policy formulation and implementation. Excluding stakeholders from discussing proposed policies could minimize the significance and potential of positive outcomes of public policies (Salum et al., 2017). Since independence in 1961, elected officials in Sierra Leone did not engage stakeholders effectively in the decision-making process, which might have prevented stakeholder groups affected by the proposed policies from supporting their implementation (Salum et al., 2017; SEG,2017).

There are no data that suggested why successive governments in Sierra Leone have not effectively engaged stakeholder groups affected by public policy. However, Hughes (2019) maintained that some CSOs expressed concerns that the Open Government Partnership Secretariat (OGPS), which framed commitments with multi-stakeholders and CSOs, did not represent the general views of civil society. He added that the OGPS even failed to publish minutes for the attention of stakeholder groups. The extractive industry is another area that showed limited engagement between elected officials and stakeholders in Sierra Leone. Extractive Industry Transparency International

(EITI) is the recognized institution that sets the global standard to enhance accountability in managing and controlling mineral resources, oil, and gas. The government of Sierra Leone made some improvements in introducing the EITI standard, yet it failed to fully engage civil society and multi-stakeholder groups (Extractive Industry Transparency International, 2019). The board gave Sierra Leone 18 months to make meaningful improvements in the engaging CSOs to avoid suspension from EITI.

A key benefit that elected officials would derive from including stakeholders in discussing policy issues relates to the development of meaningful collaborative relationships that are mutually beneficial to each other (Salum et al., 2017). Also, engaging stakeholders would build goodwill based on the transparency of the process and trust elected officials as an entity that fulfills its obligation to the people (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016). If community stakeholder groups' interests conflict with those of elected officials, the project might fail irrespective of how well planned it is.

Trust is a significant condition with the potential to maintain or disrupt relationships. Lack of trust for elected officials might result from failure to engage community stakeholders in discussions of proposed policies for their communities, resulting in a lack of trust for elected officials (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015; Salum et al., 2017). According to Gyan and Ampomah (2016) and Lemke and Harris-Wai (2015), community stakeholder groups with significant power in the communities where they operate might support or disapprove of policies designed for their communities if their opinions are not included in the design and formulation of

policies (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015). Failure to support the implementation of proposed policies poses barriers to implementing those policies.

Elected officials in Sierra Leone could address stakeholder conflict by engaging groups affected by the proposed policies to formulate such policies. Examples of the measures that elected officials could use to engage stakeholders in Sierra Leone include: collaborating, informing, involving, and consulting (Lemke & Wai, 2015). Involving stakeholders to seek their input or opinions when developing policies that affect their interests is significant to build trust and minimize barriers to policy implementation.

According to a report provided by Sierra Leone's previous administration in 2017, only 11% of the 45 government proposals in 2013 showed evidence of engagement with stakeholders (SEG, 2017). Two percent of the proposals indicated the future engagement of stakeholders (SEG, 2017). The report suggested that if stakeholders were seriously engaged, 56% of proposals would have yielded positive outcomes (SEG, 2017). The failure to include stakeholders in the decision-making process might lead to a lack of trust in elected officials and might affect the support for the implementation of the goals of the NEP and environmental laws and regulations (Jackson, 2015; Kamara, 2015).

The main policy area investigated in this research is the barriers to implementing the NEP of Sierra Leone, which was initially passed in 1990 by parliament and revised in 1994. The NEP primarily emphasized the implementation of the nation's environmental policy goals to facilitate sustainable development in Sierra Leone. That process involves the creation of a framework that would enable the effective management of the natural resources and the environment (Kamara, 2015). To create a quality environment for all

Sierra Leoneans, the goal of the NEP was to conserve the natural resources and environment, preserve biodiversity, and maintain the conditions that enable the ecosystems to continue to exist.

Despite the determination of the individuals behind the NEP to protect the country's natural resources, elected officials often face criticism from stakeholders such as environmental NGOs in Sierra Leone due to the chaotic nature of the land sector (The Government of Sierra Leone [TGSL], 2015). Stakeholders were not included in discussing the implementation of environmental policies and laws (FAO, 2016; Johnson, 2015; Kamara, 2015). Examples of environmental laws and regulations designed to promote sustainable economic development in the country are the New Forestry Act of June 1988 and the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1972 (Kamara, 2015). According to Kamara (2015), the NEP and other environmental laws did not effectively address the environmental goals they were designed to accomplish due to stakeholder conflict concerning accessing environmental resources, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient public knowledge, and poor environmental management. The failure to fully implement environmental policies in Sierra Leone might contribute to environmental degradation in the country.

Sierra Leone did not have a sustainable energy framework capable of replacing the demand for the energy needs of the majority of the population, such as the demand for fuelwood. Since most households use wood for cooking and drying fish, there is always a high demand for fuelwood and charcoal (Jackson, 2015), which comes from the forests. In 2010, the entire forest cover in Sierra Leone was estimated at 2,725,821

hectares, which was 38% of the entire land area in the country (Munroe et al., 2017). The annual deforestation rate between 1990 and 2010 was 20,000 hectares of land (Jackson, 2015; Munroe et al., 2017). This level of environmental exploitation had a severe impact on biodiversity and ecosystems, which could only be addressed if sustainable economic growth was achieved in the country (Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security, 2017; Munro et al., 2017). There were no recent figures that suggested the rate of deforestation has increased, but the deforestation rate might have increased since 2017 due to the dependency on forest resources by a large number of the population to support their livelihood.

Elected officials in Sierra Leone were not able to develop viable and sustainable development strategies in the country. Sierra Leone did not have a diversified economy, and successive governments have depended on loans and aid to carry out capital infrastructural development projects (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016; US Department of State [USDS], 2014). The failure to provide public services consistently to the people put pressure on the relationship between stakeholders and elected officials in Sierra Leone (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018; USDS, 2014). Examples of public services that would address the needs of citizens in Sierra Leone include productive employment, medical facilities, food security, nutrition, and access to quality education (Barr et al., 2019; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018). The lack of public services forced a large portion of the population of Sierra Leone to rely on international NGOs and agencies to support their medical, economic, and social needs. Reliance on international NGOs by citizens to seek

support for their social and economic needs might not be a sustainable way of addressing those needs.

Given that the majority of the population faces serious challenges in satisfying their socioeconomic needs, a large part of the population used the forest as a critical source of livelihood for food, such as killing animals for bushmeat and cutting trees, primarily for firewood and construction of homes (Johnson, 2015; Kamara, 2015). Several people also mine mineral resources like gold and diamonds, cutting trees, and degraded land suitable for agricultural purposes (Kamara, 2015). These actions have serious negative implications for environmental stability in Sierra Leone, such as deforestation, soil erosion, and destruction of biodiversity and the ecosystem.

Since the civil war ended in 2002, a number of poverty alleviation measures have been introduced in Sierra Leone, such as the Agenda for Prosperity (2016) and the third poverty reduction strategy paper in Sierra Leone. Also, Sierra Leone adopted international development strategies such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (SDGs, 2015; The Agenda for Prosperity, Road to Middle Income Status, 2016; UNFPA, 2016). SDGs are global goals created by the United Nations in 2015 as a new action plan that would transform the world into a more inclusive, protect the environment, and enhance prosperity for all by 2030 (SDG Indicators, 2019). As aspirational goals that might support the erosion of the barriers to sustainable development, adopting sustainable growth policies as outlined in Goals 8, 9, and 10 of the UN might improve the quality of life of the people and limit their dependency on environmental resources to support themselves.

The issue of multiple perspectives between stakeholders and elected officials in Sierra Leone is the primary condition that leads to barriers to the implementation of sustainable socioeconomic plans in the country. The implementation of the SDGs based on agreement with stakeholders to support the economic growth agenda of Sierra Leone could address the barriers to the implementation of sustainable socioeconomic policies and create opportunities that lead to sustainable development.

Barriers to policy implementation might affect the implementation of economic growth programs to improve the quality of life of present and future generations of people in Sierra Leone. For example, the shutting down the \$300 million Mamamah Airport project by the newly elected government in Sierra Leone caused competing positions among different stakeholders (Marsh & Westcott, 2018). The previous government believed that constructing a new airport was part of Sierra Leone's agenda for infrastructural development and job creation for unemployed people in the country.

Stakeholder conflicts in the implementation of policy related to the shared interests of environmental resources by all groups and actors. Conflict among stakeholders in Sierra Leone might occur because elected officials merely informed stakeholders of the decisions without sufficiently involving them. For example, in 2018, President Bio removed all the commissioners of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone and dissolved it without parliamentary approval or consulting relevant stakeholders in the country (Kanu, 2018). That action led to a serious reaction from leaders of the CSOs, such as Saidu Bangura, the Executive Director of Initiative for Democracy and Rule of Law, who issued a strong statement condemning the President's

decision regarding the Human Rights Council of Sierra Leone. Leaders of human rights CSOs reminded President Bio of his responsibility to respect the constitution of Sierra Leone, which guaranteed the labor rights of the commissioners who were dismissed from their jobs without due process (Forst, 2018; The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2018; Kanu, 2018; Sierra Leone News, 2018). Seeking the opinions of relevant stakeholders in proposed policy discussions, such as the decision to dissolve the SLHRC, could address barriers to the implementation of policies.

Stakeholders potentially influenced the design, implementation, and monitoring of sustainable development policies, which affected their communities' lives. This capacity might have led to the potential barriers to the effective implementation of public policies based on general welfare, such as cost overruns and time delays. Other obstacles to the successful implementation of public policy might relate to a lack of collective agreements and collaboration among different stakeholders and failure to effectively communicate the purpose of public policies to the beneficiaries when formulating policies (Croft & Carley, 2016; Koontz & Newig, 2014). Kamara (2015) and Jackson (2015) addressed the conditions that contributed to the barriers to the effective implementation of the NEP in Sierra Leone, such as the failure to build Civil Society Organization capacity and empower local leaders to strengthen their participation in designing and implementing environmental protection. Elected government officials could facilitate greater public participation by engaging with stakeholders in consensus building.

Sierra Leone adopted the SDGs locally by (a) developing a framework that simplified the format of the SDGs to make it easier to educate and create awareness about



the SDGs nationally; (b) the 2016 national budget of Sierra Leone to reflect the SDGs; and (c) creating a national framework based on setting a national policy that defined how the country would locally own and implement the SDGs (Interim Millennium Developments Goals Report Sierra Leone, 2016). Sierra Leone developed several SDGs and indicators specific to the country and intends to implement the SDGs by 2030 fully. The adoption of the SDGs in the development agenda of Sierra Leone was consistent with the United Nations' determination to ensure the complete implementation of the new 2030 Agenda by nations through local policies and national strategies.

In addition, the study would discuss SDGs 8, 9, and 10, which are aspirational goals that would be relevant in exploring the barriers to the implementation of Sustainable Development policies. Goal 8 promoted economic growth and the creation of conditions that would allow people to access productive and decent jobs. Goal 9 promoted the development of sustainable and inclusive industrialization in individual nations to facilitate economic growth that would create an annual GDP growth of 7 percent until 2030. Goal 10, on the other hand, promotes the reduction of inequalities, especially for people who are in the bottom 40 percent to receive income that is more than the national average.

Since the introduction of the SDGs in 2016, there has been some progress toward the goals, but serious challenges have remained due to recent economic setbacks. In 2016, the GDP grew by 6.4%, rebounding from a negative 21.5% due to the Ebola outbreak in 2014 (The World Bank Sierra Leone, 2019). The years 2017 and 2018 saw a

decline in GDP growth of 3.8% and 3.7%, respectively. For 2019, current data show that GDP growth remains slightly above 3%.

Sierra Leone faced eminent socioeconomic challenges such as the decline in the nation's GDP to 4.6% in 2014 and 21.5% in 2015, from 15.2% and 20.1% in 2012 and 2013, respectively, due to the outbreak of the Ebola virus and the decline in commodity prices such as iron ore (The World Bank, 2019). When Sierra Leone and other nations adopted the SDGs, individual countries took responsibility for their implementation because they controlled their national development and policy strategies to facilitate Sustainable Development for their people (UNDESA, 2017). The New Agenda 2030 of the UN recognized that proper use of national resources is critical in implementing sustainable development. Therefore, the economic growth agenda developed by the All People's Congress administration in 2016, commonly known as the Agenda for Prosperity, was designed to support the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 of the UN (Sierra Leone: SDGs report, 2016). Also, the socioeconomic development framework developed in Sierra Leone after adopting the SDGs, such as the 2016 national budget, reflected the stipulations of the SDGs of Agenda 2030, such as inclusive growth, environmental protection, and enhanced prosperity for all by 2030 (UNDESA, 2017).

With this study, I intended to expand the understanding of the barriers to implementing sustainable socioeconomic policies in Sierra Leone from stakeholders' perspectives. The key policy issue investigated in this research was the NEP of Sierra Leone. The study also examined other environmental laws introduced to mitigate environmental degradation in the country, such as the New Forestry Act of June 1988, the

Environmental Protection Act of 2008, and the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1972. In addition, the study explores SDGs 8, 9, and 10, which promote sustainable economic development, inclusiveness, minimizing inequality, and the ways Sierra Leone can support the necessary economic growth that would enable the country to fight climate change by adopting the economic growth strategies promoted by the goals. I investigated what stakeholders consider potential conditions for facilitating the successful implementation of public policy in Sierra Leone without multiple serious perspectives.

Moreover, I investigated whether conditions in Sierra Leone were consistent with intergenerational and social equity ideals. Furthermore, the research can contribute to social change by informing readers about the findings, such as the country's progress in addressing human development issues, promoting sustainable economic growth that is consistent with intergenerational and social equity, and garnering citizens' participation in the democratic process and decision making on issues that affected their social, political, economic, and cultural interests. Also, the study examined the strategies that elected officials might adopt to engage stakeholders in the development of policies that affected the interests of members of their communities. The determination of SDGs 8, 9, and 10 is to promote sustainable growth, primarily to improve quality of life through specific targets and indicators that would measure the attainment of the goals.

The design of this research is grounded in the determination to bring positive social change by examining the potential of generating a multistakeholder policy framework that would allow stakeholders to participate sufficiently in discussing policies that benefit lives in their communities. According to Gyam and Ampomah (2016),

stakeholder organizations and groups could influence policies directly affecting their communities' lives. However, the outcome of this circumstance is usually multiple perspectives between stakeholder groups and elected officials. Lemke and Wai (2015) suggested that elected officials collaborate with stakeholders to build consensus. Engaging stakeholders could lead to changes that might address the issue of the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone. Successful stakeholder-supported implementation of sustainable socioeconomic policies might lead to economic growth that would improve quality of life.

### **Problem Statement**

Elected officials in Sierra Leone face serious barriers to successfully implementing the NEP of 1990 due to multiple perspectives from stakeholders affected by the proposed policies. The main policy area that this study focused on was the barriers to the NEP of Sierra Leone, which elected officials passed in the parliament of Sierra Leone in 1990 (Kamara, 2015). The NEP created the framework for protecting the environmental resources of Sierra Leone, such as the preservation of biodiversity and the ecosystem in the country. The parliament of Sierra Leone also passed other environmental laws like the Environmental Protection Act of 2008 and the Land Commission Act of 2004, primarily to promote the security of the natural environment (Kamara, 2015). However, elected officials and unelected government officials faced serious barriers in the implementation of the NEP, primarily due to multiple perspectives on policy implementation in Sierra Leone. For example, elected officials and stakeholder groups operated from competing positions. Elected and unelected government officials

did not fully engage stakeholders in discussing policies that affected the interests of their communities and organizations before implementation (SEG, 2017). Stakeholder groups share common beliefs that enable them to influence government policies, as emphasized by the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) model developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith in 1993. The AFC model assesses conflicts in policy change (Cornelius, 2015). Many researchers, such as Gyam and Ampomah (2016) and Lemke and Harris-Wai (2015), recognized the need to identify the conditions that enable organized groups to influence government policy. Engaging stakeholders sufficiently by elected officials and unelected government administrators to discuss proposed policies before implementation could enable the effective implementation of public policy. Collaboration between elected officials/unelected government officials and stakeholder groups to narrow stakeholder competing positions might lead to the successful implementation of public policies in Sierra Leone. For example, elected and unelected government officials in Sierra Leone might better engage stakeholders through workshops, public meetings, one-on-one meetings, and focus groups (SEG, 2017). These measures might be relevant to gaining the support of the targeted stakeholder groups and avoiding competing positions in their implementation.

Since independence in 1961, elected officials in Sierra Leone have not engaged stakeholders effectively in the decision-making process, which might prevent stakeholder groups from supporting the implementation of the proposed policies. Maclechlán et al. (2014) maintained that in Sierra Leone, only 37% of poverty reduction strategies recognized the inclusion of people with disabilities in the sustainable development

agenda of the nation. This means it might be difficult for people with disabilities to convince those without disabilities to include them in sustainable development in Sierra Leone. Currently, no published data suggests why elected officials in Sierra Leone have not engaged stakeholders effectively. However, elected officials might not have engaged stakeholder groups sufficiently due to several factors, such as the difficulty of identifying people who have interests in the proposed policy and are affected by the policy. Also, the government of Sierra Leone might not have engaged stakeholder groups effectively due to the cost of engaging the targeted stakeholder group of the proposed policy.

According to a report provided by the previous administration in 2017, only 11% of 45 government proposals showed evidence of engagement with stakeholders in 2013 (SEG, 2017). Two percent of the proposals indicated the future engagement of stakeholders (SEG, 2017). The report suggested that if stakeholders were seriously engaged, 56% of proposals would have yielded positive outcomes (SEG, 2017). Stakeholder communities might significantly support the implementation of proposed policies if included in the discussion of such policies.

A lot has been published about the conflict between stakeholders and elected officials in the communities (Gyam & Ampomah, 2016). Studies have indicated that elected officials would face barriers to implementing sustainable development policies if they did not fully include stakeholders before implementing them (Gyam & Ampomah, 2016; Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015; SEG, 2017). However, stakeholders' competing positions with elected officials might be addressed only by developing policy changes that would allow them to participate more in discussing issues that affected life in their

communities instead of just supporting the decisions of elected officials. Although several studies have included discussion about the existence of competing positions between stakeholders and elected/unelected government officials, researchers had not yet explored the barriers to the effective implementation of the NEP passed by the elected government officials of Sierra Leone in the 1990s. This research intended to fill the gap in the existing literature.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to examine the barriers to the effective building of coalitions for the successful implementation of the NEP passed by elected officials in Sierra Leone in the 1990s to promote environmental security in the country. I also sought to understand the multiple perspectives of stakeholder groups that usually function in organized groups with a common system of beliefs, primarily to influence government policy.

The policy issue explored in this research was the NEP, which was designed to promote sustainable development for the country by implementing an effective environmental management policy to protect the natural environment (Kamara, 2015). The NEP was designed to conserve the natural resources and environment to preserve biodiversity and maintain the conditions that enable the ecosystems to continue. Other environmental regulations and laws were introduced by parliament to promote the security of the natural environment in Sierra Leone, such as the Mines and Mineral Act of 1994, the Environmental Protection Act of 2008, the Land Commission Act of 2004, and the National Land Policy Act of 2004. Despite enacting these laws to complement the

NEP, elected government representatives in Sierra Leone have problems implementing sustainable environmental policies and regulations due to conflict with stakeholders who have interests in accessing environmental resources (Jackson, 2015). Using a case study approach, the study explored the lived experiences of stakeholders about (a) the barriers to policy implementation, (b) the impact of competing positions between stakeholders and elected government officials on the economic growth agenda of Sierra Leone, and (c) the benefits of stakeholder collaboration with elected and unelected government officials. I intended to develop a detailed knowledge of the problem of this research in the context of stakeholders' perspectives on the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone.

Moreover, the study explored the purpose, benefits, and significance of engaging stakeholders in designing and formulating sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone. The main research question that this study intended to address was: What were stakeholders' perceptions regarding the barriers to effectively building coalitions to implementing sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone? As Sierra Leone was determined to promote sustainable development policies in the nation's growth agenda, primarily to promote the quality of life of the people, conflict between elected officials and stakeholders would affect that effort. This research was significant in this context because stakeholders' competing positions with elected officials posed serious barriers to the implementation of policies in Sierra Leone. The data for this research were collected from 36 stakeholders in Sierra Leone who lived the experience of the phenomenon of the issues explored in this research.



### **Research Question**

The key research question addressed in this study was: What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the barriers to the effective building of coalitions to implementing sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone?

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The Theoretical Foundation that guided the study was the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) model. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith developed this model in 1993 (Sabatier & Weible, 2007) to assess extreme competing positions or conflicts in policymaking and policy change (Cornelius, 2015). The ACF refers to groups of individuals who have a common system of beliefs and are engaged in a well-organized movement, primarily to change their belief system into the policy (Cairey, 2014). Examples of stakeholders in Sierra Leone are the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, the Women's Forum, and the Campaign for Good Governance in Sierra Leone.

The ACF is a policy framework that has been widely used to describe policy change. Also, the ACF contributed significantly to the policy process domain, primarily to identify the need to spend a considerable amount of time trying to perceive policy change. The model created several analytical constructs, ideas, or concepts representing policy change. In policymaking, ideas play a significant role as actors in coalitions use ideas to define their beliefs and become practically influential in the groups.

The ACF provided this study with an appropriate framework to understand how stakeholder groups' policy objectives and belief systems in Sierra Leone are based on the determination to transform their interests into real policy. Coalitions consist of

individuals who represent diverse interests, such as researchers, elected representatives, public administrators, community leaders from interest groups, and public officials.

Individuals who belong to the coalitions share a common belief system and coordinate over time to achieve their policy objectives.

This Theoretical Foundation is relevant for this research for several reasons. First, the ACF model articulated the belief system of individuals in coalition groups, primarily to influence government policy (Cornelius, 2015). This circumstance is consistent with the opinions of individuals in stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone, such as the Women's Forum. Members of the Women's Forum shared the same belief systems and tried to influence policy change that benefited all women in Sierra Leone (SierraExpressMedia, 2014). For example, the Women's Forum promoted women's human rights, such as eradicating violence and discriminatory practices against women in Sierra Leone (Koroma, 2017; Sierra Leone News: Women's Movement reinforces, 2018). The desire to have equal opportunities like the Women's Forum strongly promoted men.

Second, advocacy coalition groups consist of people who share common policy core beliefs and pursue a well-structured policy goal (Cornelius, 2015). Coalition groups are bounded by a common belief system, which is the key element that strengthens their movements. ACF groups' understanding of policy change is to inform their belief systems (Cairney, 2014; Cornelius, 2015). CSOs such as Friends of the Earth Sierra Leone and the Network Movement for Justice and Democracy advocate for policy change based on individuals' belief systems in their groups (Crossroads Global Hand, 2017; Peace Insight, 2017). The belief systems of CSOs in Sierra Leone, like the NMJD, were

based on promoting the interests of people who shared their values and beliefs. The belief system was about the values of policy actors (Cornelius, 2015). Individuals in stakeholder groups like the NMJD and Friends of the Earth joined those groups to turn their belief systems into concrete or practical actions

The ACF theory was also relevant for this research because it enables the generation of a better understanding of the characterization of stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone concerning the scope of the groups. The scope of stakeholders' groups such as the NMJD was extensive since the policy objective was based on wider goals to influence policy change. For example, the NMJD operates nationally to promote democracy and sustainable development that benefits all Sierra Leoneans.

The ACF model addressed the characteristics of individuals who formed coalition network groups into three categories of belief such as deep core beliefs, policy core beliefs, and secondary systems. Stakeholder groups like the Women's Forum promote the interests of their members nationwide in diverse ways to influence government policy for gender equality.

Finally, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smiths' theory allowed me to understand why the barriers to the implementation of socioeconomic policies often exist in Sierra Leone and the impact of multiple perspectives between stakeholder groups and elected officials. The theory would enable the researcher to explore the perspective of stakeholders and the benefits of engaging stakeholder groups in discussing the proposed policies that might affect their interests before implementing the policies.

### **Nature of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to examine the barriers to the effective building of coalitions for the successful implementation of the National Environmental Policy passed by elected officials in Sierra Leone in the 1990s to promote environmental security in the country. Stakeholders and elected officials in Sierra Leone might have multiple perspectives on implementing sustainable development policies such as the NEP and other environmental laws like the Forestry Act of 1988. The research design that I used was the case study research approach. The Case study research technique was applied in this research to understand the shared experiences of stakeholders about the barriers to the implementation of sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone.

This research technique was based on seeking an understanding of the experiences of individuals about a particular concept, such as the perspectives of stakeholder groups about the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone. The research approach allowed me to gain an understanding from people who experienced the issue that was explored in this research, such as their understanding of the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone, and developed a framework about the significance of those experiences (Deepa & Panicker, 2016). The Case study qualitative research approach was considered more adequate for this study than other research techniques because it enabled me to determine the shared perspectives of stakeholders in Sierra Leone and provide an appropriate response to this research problem.

Case study research allowed an unstructured approach and an open-ended style of interviews (Díaz et al., 2017; Jamshed, 2014; Quad, 2016) to access the necessary information from the participants of this research. Interviewing participants directly to identify their perspectives about the barriers to the implementation of Sustainable Development policies such as Sustainable Goals 8, 9, and 10 allows the generation of detailed information about the phenomenon of interest in the research.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Advocacy Coalition Framework:* The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) is a model used to assess extreme competing positions or conflicts in policymaking and policy change. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith developed this model in 1993 (Cornelius, 2015). The ACF refers to groups of individuals who have a common system of beliefs and engage in a well-organized movement, primarily to change their belief system into the policy (Cairey, 2014). Examples of advocacy coalitions in Sierra Leone are the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, the Women's Forum, and the Campaign for Good Governance in Sierra Leone. The ACF is a policy framework that has been widely used to describe policy change.

*Barriers to policy implementation:* Policy implementation becomes difficult when several stakeholders from diverse agencies or government departments are not involved in the formulation and implementation process. The barriers to the successful implementation of public policy are related to a number of factors, such as concerns of stakeholder groups located in jurisdictions affected by the intended policy (Vancoppenolle et al., 2015). Two, the desire to protect the traditional beliefs of the

targeted stakeholder group could pose serious barriers to the implementation of public policy that contrasts the interests of the individuals of their group (Hupe & Sætren, 2015). If the policy's beneficiaries do not completely accept any proposed policy, such a position could pose a barrier to its successful implementation. Also, if the proposed policy was not transparent and legitimate from the people's perspective, it might be difficult to implement it successfully.

*Deforestation:* Deforestation is a form of environmental degradation, a major environmental issue in Sierra Leone. Deforestation was mostly carried out through indiscriminate logging, land clearing for agricultural purposes, and cutting trees to construct the home and fuelwood. Studies estimated that about 70 percent of the natural forest had been cut, and only 30 percent of the forest was left in Sierra Leone (Munro et al., 2017).

*Environmental degradation:* The natural environment of Sierra Leone was degraded through the exploitation of forest resources, such as cutting trees for firewood and home construction. Environmental degradation also occurred due to mining. Mining of minerals across Sierra Leone posed serious effects on the environment. Also, mining contributes to the contamination and exposure of water sources and plants due to the failure to conduct land reclamation measures after removing the topsoil in areas where artisanal mining was carried out (Kamara, 2015). This circumstance tends to affect the practice of agricultural activities to support the food needs of the people because miners destroyed the productivity, and it was not reclaimed. Environmental degradation affects

biological diversity in the natural environment and could destroy the conditions that facilitate the continued existence of the biosphere.

*Environmental policy:* An environmental policy focuses on implementing the nation's environmental policy. The NEP promotes sustainable development for the country by implementing effective management of the environment. The objectives of the NEP of Sierra Leone were consistent with the concept of Sustainable Development, which related to promoting biological diversity in the natural environment and enhancing and maintaining the conditions that facilitated the continued existence of the biosphere. The NEP also emphasized that all Sierra Leoneans live in a sustainable environment sufficient for their well-being. Also, the NEP of Sierra Leone promotes awareness and education about the relationship between the environment and development and encourages the communities and people to participate in all activities that enhance environmental protection (Newig et al., 2013).

*Intergenerational equity:* Intergenerational equity refers to treating present and future generations equally. This means that the actions of the generations should not destroy the opportunities that would ensure future generations meet their needs. Public officials have a moral responsibility to ensure that the next generations meet their needs.

*Multiple perspectives/Conflict:* Stakeholder conflict or competing positions with elected officials occur due to differences in thinking, needs, and goals (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016). Stakeholder conflict could create serious problems in implementing policies or projects, such as when the targeted groups failed to support the implementation of policies that did not seek their input. Gyan and Ampomah (2016) cited

trust as a significant condition that could improve or disrupt relationships. Another condition contributing to stakeholder conflict was a lack of effective communication between stakeholder groups targeted by the policies and sponsors.

*Policy implementation:* Policy formulation relates to the context whereby public administrators and policy administrators define the exact framework for action. Crofty and Carley (2016) maintained that elected officials are more likely to succeed in implementing policies if they believe that the policies would be effective. Effective communication of the policy's purpose among elected officials and beneficiaries during the policy's formulation could facilitate the policy's adoption and implementation.

*Policy implementation outcome* pertains to the results derived from the policy after the application and contextual factors that would determine the outcome of the policy (Vancoppenolle et al., 2015).

*Stakeholders:* Stakeholders are groups of individuals and organizations such as traditional leaders, local villagers, and CSOS who are usually affected by policy proposals introduced by elected officials. If elected officials failed to seek their opinions, stakeholders directly affected by government policies might influence the formulation and successful implementation of good policies in Sierra Leone (SEG, 2017). Professional groups such as lawyers, doctors, teachers, and the business community are stakeholder groups who could influence the successful implementation of government policy if it affects their interests, but the targeted groups do not fully participate in the design and implementation process.



*Stakeholder engagement:* Stakeholder engagement relates to the action of including individuals of stakeholder groups who might influence specific decisions of proposed policies. Stakeholder engagement with elected officials is critical to ensure the development of sound, transparent, and healthy policies trusted by all (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015). The participation of stakeholder groups in the development of public policies that affect their interests could inform their support for the proposed policies.

*Sustainable development:* This type of development addresses the needs of the present generation and creates opportunities that would enable future generations to address their needs without compromising them (Mensah & Casadevall, 2019). The concept of sustainable development emphasizes addressing the needs of people future generations by ensuring that the actions of the present generation do not affect the needs of future generations.

*Socioeconomic developments:* This is simply the kind of developments carried out in a country to expand opportunities and services for the people. Socioeconomic developments lead to change in people's lives and enhance their quality of life. An example of indicators used to measure socioeconomic developments includes the rate of literacy, life expectancy, poverty level, or rate of employment in the country (UNDP, 2016).

### **Assumptions**

Several assumptions that contributed to the construction of the key conditions supporting this research were used to develop this research. Assumptions were significant because they underpin aspects of the research that the researcher already knew but had no

proof of to be true. A fundamental assumption of my research is that the barriers to the implementation of viable, sustainable policies that would facilitate economic growth would affect the government's ability to address the needs of the people.

I assumed that the implementation of effective, sustainable development policies such as the NEP to address the negative impacts of environmental degradation on the people was a critical policy position that fulfilled the communal obligations of elected officials to the people and organizations in all communities.

In this study, 36 participants willing took part in open-ended direct interviews and voluntarily answered the research questions. The focus of this study was to gather data through a one-on-one approach with participants in their natural settings. Being close to them could allow them to respond to the open-ended questions of this research voluntarily.

After an extensive analysis of the transcribed data collected from respondents' interview transcripts, I obtained six themes from the codes, which included: the perceived role of stakeholders in environmental policy implementation, the perceived benefits of stakeholders' engagement, working collectively to meet the needs of organizations that contribute to policy implementation, perceived challenges in the implementation of environmental policies, empowering stakeholder groups and key stakeholders to participate in the formulation and implementation of environmental policies, and providing the necessary support for the effective implementation of environmental policies. The respondents generally believed that the lack of effective stakeholders' engagement by elected and unelected government officials, including their views and

opinions when discussing environmental policies that targeted their interests before implementation, posed serious barriers to effectively building coalitions for the national implementation of Environmental Policies in Sierra Leone.

Next, I assumed that the participants were honest in responding to the research questions of this research. The reliability of this research was grounded in the honest answers provided by interviewees. I asked follow up questions to generate more responses from the 36 respondents who willingly responded to all the questions

Moreover, I assumed that the respondents would consist of some individuals, such as activists of environmental NGOs, who might not support issues of economic growth that would be explored in this research. This was because these respondents might perceive that capitalism and the extraction of mineral resources were exploitative and inimical to sustainable development. The study's findings indicated that environmental NGOs advocated against activities that are destructive to the security of the natural environment and worked with local communities to implement environmental policies such as the tree planting initiative of the government.

Also, I assumed that elected representatives did not fully recognize the benefits of engaging fully with stakeholder groups who are affected by government policies to address potential competing positions. Gyam and Ampomah (2016) maintained that stakeholder organizations could influence the design and implementation of policies that affect their communities' activities. According to the study's findings, elected government officials in Sierra Leone did not fully involve stakeholders who were the targeted beneficiaries in formulating and implementing environmental policies.

Finally, I assumed that the individuals who took part in this research would be ready to provide me with honest information during the one-on-one interviews. It was hoped that the answers the participants provided would reflect their true experiences with policy implementation in Sierra Leone. I determined that the worldviews of the participants of this research were not different from the issue explored in the research. This study designed open-ended questions that allowed me to interact with respondents better and tried to understand the experiences or meanings that those individuals have about the phenomenon explored in this research. During the research, the study participants willingly responded to the research questions. The information provided by the respondents was consistent with the issue explored in the research, such as the barriers to the implementation of environmental policies in Sierra Leone. Also, during the recruitment process, no specific conditions were identified as potential determinants of respondents' perception or experiences of the barriers to policy implementation, and there was no indication throughout the interviews that such conditions existed.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The ability to fulfill the government's obligations to the people and organizations in communities was determined by the implementation of effective, sustainable development plans in Sierra Leone. This research focused on exploring the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone that appeared to hinder economic growth and the implementation of environmental policy and laws to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change in the country. The scope focused on the NEP because it was the main

research area for this study, and this research intended to fill the gap that existed in the academic literature in that aspect.

The research was delimited to two months. A case study research technique was delimited to explore the research phenomenon through the perspective of the participants' lived experiences of this research, such as the barriers to the effective implementation of environmental policies and laws and sustainable growth policies that would address environmental challenges in the country. The data for this research were collected from participants through open-ended interviews and public documents.

### **Limitations**

One of the constraints of this research related to the Case study research technique used in this research. Using a Case study research approach allowed me to conduct interviews directly with stakeholders in Sierra Leone to explore their perspectives about the lived experiences of the barriers to the implementation of sustainable socioeconomic policies. It might be difficult to gain access to participants to collect information about their perspectives on the phenomenon investigated in this research.

The research was carried out during the most difficult period of COVID-19, wherein there were persistent and long periods of lockdowns in Sierra Leone, which was the setting of the study. The 36 respondents needed for this study accepted to take part after contacting or reaching out to 50 potential respondents. Six respondents did not participate because their offices were closed due to COVID-19, as they required approval from their superiors. Five other respondents did not participate despite their assurance of their willingness to participate in the study. They cited a tight schedule as the reason for

not participating. Three potential respondents did not participate, citing lockdowns and other COVID-19-related issues. Two respondents resided in a remote region of the country where they were experiencing the power and network issues. They had issues charging their phones, and the poor network did not permit calls to go through when they tried to participate in the interview.

Due to the challenges of getting participants from some of the initial organizations where the samples for the study reside, such as the World Bank, the IMF, and Dfid, I used the snowball sampling technique to increase the designated sample size of 36 respondents for the study.

Other limitations associated with this research were potential methodological weaknesses due to the limitation of transferability of the research. This research was conducted using a relatively small number of people in a particular setting, such as Sierra Leone. Although the description of the participants might be detailed to facilitate transferability to diverse settings, generalizing this study to other participants or settings might pose some limitations due to the difference in the social context and time of others (Leung, 2015). The transferability of the data from this research was established by adopting the qualitative research principles of aligning the research problem, selection of research design, theoretical framework, data collection process, the analysis of the data, methodology, selection of a sample, and interpretation of the results (Moon et al., 2016). Researchers in future studies might be able to use the findings of this research if it fits the context of those studies.

The dependability of this research was enhanced by "using an audit trail" to generate a record of how the research was conducted so that people would be able to understand those methods and make a common conclusion (Moon et al., 2016). If the audience of this study had difficulties in making sense of how the research was conducted, it might affect its reliability and trustworthiness.

### **Significance**

This qualitative Case study research would contribute to filling the gap indicated in the problem statement by understanding the barriers and opportunities to implement sustainable development policies in the economic growth agenda of Sierra Leone. This research would be significant because it would examine the conditions that citizens in Sierra Leone see as potential facilitators of an economic growth agenda in Sierra Leone.

This research was directed towards filling a gap by concentrating on the generation of a problem statement about the barriers to the implementation of sustainable development growth policies such as the NEP and environmental laws as perceived by stakeholders in Sierra Leone. The objectives of the NEP were consistent with the concept of sustainable development and the goals of the New Agenda2030 for Sustainable Development, such as the promotion of environmental security and personal security of the people.

This research was significant because it focused on investigating a public policy issue in Sierra Leone, such as the NEP, which has not been widely explored to understand the stakeholders' opinions about the barriers to implementing environmental

policies and laws to address the adverse effects of climate change due to severe environmental degradation in the country.

Furthermore, the research was significant because it investigated whether Sierra Leone's NEP and related laws were consistent with the SDGs and why they have not been fully implemented to promote sustainable growth in the country. If fully implemented, the provisions of the sustainable development agenda in Sierra Leone might benefit present and future generations (Government of Sierra Leone, 2015). Competing positions among stakeholders in Sierra Leone might affect implementation of sustainable growth policies to promote economic growth.

In addition, this research examined the key stakeholders who facilitated the formulation of the sustainable development agenda in Sierra Leone, such as local chiefs, local and international nongovernmental organizations, CSOs, and the government of Sierra Leone. Having a better understanding of organizations and actors who engaged in designing, formulating, and implementing policies in the country is significant for this research. Moreover, the research is significant because it would contribute to social change by exploring the significance of achieving sustainable economic growth and its implication in addressing the socioeconomic needs of the people and the negative impacts of climate change in Sierra Leone.

Finally, the outcome of this research would create the opportunity for scholars conducting future research in sustainable development, particularly the barriers to implementing environmental policies and regulations and the role of sustainable



economic growth policies in addressing the adverse conditions of climate change caused by severe environmental degradation in the country.

### **Social Change Implications**

This study has significant implications for Sierra Leone's policy implementation, primarily for individuals and society. The study examined the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone based on the perspectives of key stakeholders. Lack of effective policy implementation could affect effective, sustainable growth in Sierra Leone, which could seriously impact the people. This study has positive implications for society in Sierra Leone because it discussed relevant policy issues such as the National Environmental Policy, which emphasized implementing policies that would protect the natural environment and promote sustainable development.

This study has positive social change implications for both society and individuals in Sierra Leone because it examined issues from stakeholders' perspectives about the opportunities and barriers to the implementation of sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone currently faces serious public policy challenges such as environmental degradation, food insufficiency, and lack of social services such as adequate healthcare to support the population. These challenges might be fixed or managed through positive social change by different forces such as individuals, market-based organizations, and stakeholder groups (Stephan et al., 2016). This dissertation promoted positive social change at the societal level because it reinforced the discourse of the role that stakeholder groups play in facilitating meaningful change in their communities. Although coalition groups such as the Women's Forum, which advocated

for gender equality in Sierra Leone, promoted the interests of its members because they share common beliefs, coalition groups operated on a broad agenda and promoted the national interests of people outside their groups (Sierra Express Media, 2014). This context related to the external impact of the internal actions of the coalition groups, which promoted the well-being of society because coalition groups like the Women's Forum operated nationally. The activities pursued by coalition groups might stimulate positive social change that could alter people's interests in the population of Sierra Leone.

### **Summary**

The focus of this research was to develop a detailed understanding of the barriers to the implementation of sustainable development policies such as the NEP from the perspectives of stakeholders in Sierra Leone. The research examined the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the barriers to effectively building coalitions for the implementation of sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone. Also, current literature on public policy and sustainable development that are relevant to this research was used. Moreover, the research examined the development of public policies consistent with intergenerational equity to facilitate human development and enhance the good quality of life. The chapter discussed some of the conditions that could affect the successful implementation of public policy, such as lack of collective agreements between key stakeholders and elected and unelected government officials, the loyalty of stakeholders who implemented the policies, failure to communicate the purpose of the policies effectively to the targeted beneficiaries of the policy as well as among policy designers.

In addition, the chapter discussed the key policy issue of this research, such as the National Environmental Policy and laws of Sierra Leone and the challenges that the country faces in implementing them to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change. In addition, the research discussed Sustainable economic growth as determined by Goals 8, 9, and 10 of the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Chapter 2 comprises the relevant literature of the research. Specifically, the chapter consists of an introduction, the theoretical framework, and previous literature on the purpose, theoretical framework, and key research question.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The objective of this literature review was to provide a detailed evaluation of published literature on the perspectives of elected and unelected government officials, stakeholder groups, barriers to policy implementation, and environmental policy issues related to public administration in Sierra Leone. The primary purpose of the literature review was to examine existing scholarly literature and carefully select what was relevant to the topic of the study (Winchester & Salji 2016). The literature examined provided the background information required to understand the issues related to how stakeholder groups could build coalitions with elected government officials to implement sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone and provide a clearer understanding of the topic of this research. The literature provided information that responds to the critical research question of this study. The literature review also enabled the discovery of gaps in the present scholarly literature and increased the understanding of stakeholders' multiple perspectives with elected officials in the implementation of sustainable development policies.

This qualitative case study research was designed to examine the opportunities and barriers to implementing sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone from the perspectives of elected and unelected officials and key non-governmental stakeholders. Public administrators and elected government officials in Sierra Leone faced serious barriers in successfully implementing sustainable socioeconomic policies such as the NEP of the 1990s due to competing positions with stakeholders affected by the proposed

policies (Johnson, 2015; Kamara, 2015). Engaging stakeholder groups to seek the opinions of people affected by the proposed policies could promote opportunities such as trust between elected officials and stakeholders and minimize the barriers to policy implementation.

Since independence in 1961, elected government representatives in Sierra Leone have not engaged stakeholders effectively in the decision-making process, which might have prevented stakeholder groups affected by the proposed policies from supporting their implementation (SEG, 2017). Elected officials in Sierra Leone might better engage stakeholders through workshops, public meetings, one-on-one meetings, and focus groups.

Several studies have been published about the conflict between stakeholders and elected officials in the communities (Gyam & Ampomah, 2016; Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015). While various studies have been published about stakeholders' multiple perspectives, no research has explored the barriers to the effective implementation of sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone from the perspectives of stakeholders. I intended to fill the gap in the existing literature by engaging key non-governmental stakeholders in Sierra Leone to generate information from their experiences about the barriers and opportunities to successful policy implementation in Sierra Leone.

This chapter consists of various parts such as the literature sources, the theoretical framework, the literature review (background study), stakeholder behavior, stakeholder engagement, policy implementation, barriers and opportunities to policy implementation, the national environmental policy of Sierra Leone, the UN Sustainable Development

Goals 8, 9 and 10, sustainable development, sustainable human development in Sierra Leone, limitations of existing literature, and chapter summary. The literature sources represented the search for journals that contained relevant information related to the barriers and opportunities to policy implementation in Sierra Leone.

Also, the chapter consists of the theoretical foundation to guide this study. The theoretical foundation that was selected to guide this study was the ACF model. The ACF is related to groups of people with a common system of beliefs and forms a well-organized movement to change their belief systems into policy. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith developed this model in 1993 (Cornelius, 2015). The women's Forum in Sierra Leone was an example of an advocacy coalition framework.

Another aspect that this chapter examines is the background study of the literature review. The background study discusses the thematic issues of the study, such as stakeholder behavior, stakeholder engagement, policy implementation, barriers and opportunities to policy implementation, the national environmental policy of Sierra Leone, the UN Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9, and 10, sustainable development, sustainable human development in Sierra Leone.

Other aspects examined by the thematic issues of the literature review relate to engaging key stakeholders affected by the proposed public policies, primarily to reduce the multiple perspectives, to identify the conditions that might have led to the barriers to the implementation of policies. Stakeholder conflict usually occurs due to differences in thinking, needs, and goals; and trust-building between elected officials and stakeholder groups, which might contribute to opportunities and minimize policy implementation.

In addition, the chapter discusses the social policy that this study investigated, which was the NEP of Sierra Leone. The NEP was initially passed in 1990 by parliament and revised in 1994 (Kamara, 2015). The key objective of the NEP was to promote sustainable development in Sierra Leone through the implementation of an environmental management framework that allows the management of natural resources and protection of the natural environment in the country.

Further, the chapter also examines the UN Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9 & 10 of Agenda 2030 of the United Nations (UNDESA, 2017). These were aspirational goals that might be relevant in promoting sustainable growth. SDGs 8, 9, 10 & 13 are part of the 17 global goals created by the United Nations in 2015 as a new action plan that promotes inclusiveness, enhances prosperity, combats climate change, and protects the environment.

Sustainable development, sustainable human development in Sierra Leone, and limitations of existing studies are other thematic issues discussed in this literature review chapter. The main focus of the concepts of sustainable development and sustainable human development is on providing services that are accessible to people, such as health care, employment, and education. Also, the concept of sustainable development advocated for development that would address the present generation's needs and create the opportunity to enable future generations to meet their needs.

Furthermore, the chapter examines the limitations of current studies that informed the study's literature review. The discussion presented in the existing studies provided a detailed understanding of recent research and theoretical literature, primarily on the views

of researchers about the barriers to policy implementation. The opinions of researchers are usually similar, yet there were significant differences in the current literature, especially in the discourse of stakeholders' conflict and the strategies needed to engage stakeholders to build trust and gain support from stakeholder groups targeted by specific policies.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The search for relevant information for the study poses significant challenges due to the limitation in accessing articles and dissertations, specifically on developing a sustainable socioeconomic policy framework in Sierra Leone. However, the study used several journals to retrieve articles that contain the required information on *stakeholder behavior, stakeholder engagement, policy implementation, barriers to policy implementation, sustainable development, and sustainable human development in Sierra Leone*.

The research analyzed in the literature review addressed policy implementation, barriers to policy implementation, stakeholder competing positions with elected officials, the impacts of stakeholder competing positions with elected officials to the country, and the benefits of engaging stakeholders when designing and formulating public policy. The literature review provided the context within which to situate the study. Specifically, the literature review provided the findings from the various studies that have been conducted on the subject. In this way, the points of convergence and divergence between the extant literature, on the one hand, and this study, on the other, were established.



The databases used in this study include Google Scholar, ProQuest, EBSCO, ERIC, ProQuest Central, SAGE Premier, ProQuest Dissertations, World Bank Open Knowledge Repository, and Business and Management databases. The search terms that I used were: *advocacy, coalition groups, stakeholder groups, stakeholders' conflicts, multiple perspectives, barriers, policy implementation, stakeholder engagement, elected officials, belief system, public policy, sustainable goals, agenda for prosperity, sustainable development, socio-economic development, stakeholders' perspectives, the World Bank in Sierra Leone, the IMF in Sierra Leone, and advocacy coalition framework*. The study used the names of several theorists and other scholars whose work contributed to the development of the literature review as search terms. These include Sabatier, Jenkins-Smith, Cornelius, Cairney, Lamke and Wai, and Gyam and Ampomah.

This chapter presents the knowledge base of the phenomenon, beginning with the theoretical foundation—the lens chosen to understand barriers to sustainable development policy implementation better. Although several studies have been published from multiple perspectives, no study explored the opportunities and barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone from the perspectives of stakeholders. The gap in this study was in the lack of scholarly literature that discussed the barriers to implementing sustainable policies in Sierra Leone. This study intends to fill the gap by conducting field research to collect relevant information on the opportunities and barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone from the perspectives of key nongovernmental stakeholders.

Elements of the phenomenon addressed in the literature included why stakeholders have multiple perspectives, the impact of the competing positions, and how stakeholders can better collaborate. This chapter examines the current literature and provided relevant information about the benefits of engaging stakeholders to discuss proposed policies in public administration. Also, the study explores the scholarly work that has addressed the barriers to the implementation of sustainable socioeconomic policies. I intended to provide a critical review of the issues discussed in the current literature, primarily to understand better the challenges prevalent in developing a framework that addressed the barriers to policy implementation. Moreover, this chapter provides a review of the theoretical foundation that informed the study. The chapter ends with a summary of the literature review.

### **The Iterative Search Process**

This research used the Boolean operators *AND*, *OR*, and *NOT* to carry out searches. The Boolean operator indicated to the database administrator that using *AND*, in the search allows the researcher to connect two statements and needed results for the terms or statements. The *OR* operator looks for alternative statements or terms available in the database. The search outcome revealed a combination of and the two statements or terms. The *NOT* operator, on the other hand looked for a single statement or term and removed the other statement or term, and the outcome of the search only revealed the single statement or term which the searcher needed. A combination of these keywords allowed using the Boolean operators to carry out the required searches for peer-reviewed literature. The search strategy that was applied in finding key terms used several journal

articles related to this study's topic, such as the barriers to implementing sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone based on stakeholders' perspectives. Using the search key terms allowed the retrieval of several authors who have contributed to the existing literature about the barriers and opportunities to policy implementation, the behavior of stakeholders, stakeholder conflicts, sustainable development, and sustainable human development in Sierra Leone.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical foundation that guided this research was the ACF model. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith developed this model in 1993 to assess extreme competing positions or conflicts in policymaking and policy change (Cornelius, 2015). The ACF refers to groups of individuals who had a universal system of beliefs and engaged in a well-organized movement, primarily to change their belief system into the policy (Cairey, 2014). Examples of advocacy coalitions in Sierra Leone were the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, the Women's Forum, and the Campaign for Good Governance in Sierra Leone.

The ACF is a policy framework that has been widely used to describe a change of policy. Also, the ACF has contributed significantly to the policy process domain, primarily to identify the need to spend a considerable time trying to perceive policy change (Cornelius, 2015). The model created several analytical constructs, ideas, or concepts representing policy change (Cairey, 2014; Cornelius, 2015). In policymaking, ideas play a significant role as actors in coalitions use ideas to define their beliefs and become practically influential in the groups.

This theoretical foundation is appropriate for this research for several reasons. First, the ACF model articulated the belief system of individuals in coalition groups, primarily to influence government policy (Cairey, 2014; Cornelius, 2015). This circumstance was consistent with the opinions of individuals in stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone who shared the same belief systems and tried to influence policy change for the interest of members of their groups.

The main aim of these stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone was to transform a specific belief system into real policy, such as promoting a change of policy that gave equal rights to women, promoting primary education, and advocating for an increase in citizens' participation in governance respectively. For example, the Women's Forum coalition group represented the interest of members of the different women's organizations across Sierra Leone. It consists of women's organizations based in communities and CSOs in all districts in Sierra Leone (Gooding, 2018; Jalloh, 2019). The Women's Forum aimed to change policy to promote the human rights of all women in Sierra Leone, such as equal representation with men at all levels (Sierra Express Media, 2014; UN Women Africa, 2019). The Forum promoted the idea that the rights of women's human rights, as indicated in Chapter 3 of the constitution of Sierra Leone (Culture of Peace News Network, 2018; Womankind, 2014). This coalition of women's organizations in Sierra Leone fought to eradicate violence and discriminatory practices against women in Sierra Leone (Culture of Peace News Network, 2018; Jalloh, 2019). All CSOs in Sierra Leone might have belief systems grounded in promoting the interests of people who share their values and beliefs. A belief system is about the values of policy

actors. People joined politics to turn their beliefs into a system to concrete or practical actions. CSOs like Friends of the Earth Sierra Leone and the Network Movement for Justice and Democracy – NMJD (Koroma, 2017) all advocate for a policy change grounded in the belief systems of actors in their groups.

ACF theory is relevant for this research because it promotes a better understanding of the characterization of stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone about the scope of the stakeholder groups. The scope of stakeholder groups, such as the NMJD, is extensive since the policy objective was based on broader goals to influence policy change (Beever, 2015; Cornelius, 2015). For example, the NMJD operates nationally to promote democracy and sustainable development that benefits all Sierra Leoneans (Koroma, 2017). The NMJD also advocated for policy reform that promotes the human rights of all people in Sierra Leone (Koroma, 2017; Peace Direct, 2017; Zheng, 2019). The ACF model emphasized three characteristics of the belief systems of individual stakeholder groups such as deep core beliefs, policy core beliefs, and secondary systems. The scope of several CSOs in Sierra Leone, such as the Women's Form and the NMJD was broad (Koroma, 2017; Zheng, 2019), which was determined by the belief system of individual stakeholder groups, was diverse, and fit the ACF's characterization of actors of coalition groups.

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's theory provided an appropriate framework for understanding the determination to transform stakeholder groups' objectives and belief systems into real policy in Sierra Leone. Coalitions consisted of individuals who represented diverse interests, such as researchers, elected representatives, leaders from

interest groups, and public officials (Brooks, 2018; Cornelius, 2015). Individuals who belong to the coalitions shared a standard belief system and coordinated over time to achieve their policy objectives.

Also, the ACF enabled researchers to understand better the perception of individuals in stakeholder groups like the Campaign for Good Governance in Sierra Leone. Advocacy coalition groups consist of people who share common policy core beliefs and pursue a well-structured policy goal (Cornelius, 2015). These coalition groups are bound by belief systems, which are the key elements that strengthen those groups (Brooks, 2018). For example, people within the individual organizations of the Women's Forum shared a common belief: the desire to have equal rights as men in every aspect of society in Sierra Leone (Culture of Peace News Network, 2018; Jalloh, 2019). Stakeholder groups like the Women's Forum promoted the interests of their members in diverse ways, such as trying to influence government policy so that women might gain gender equality in Sierra Leone (UN Women Africa, 2019; Womankind, 2014). Elected officials might minimize conflicts in the implementation of public policies that affect women's stakeholders' groups by engaging group members in that process.

Finally, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smiths' theory explained why the barriers to the implementation of socioeconomic policies often exist in Sierra Leone and the impact of multiple perspectives between stakeholder groups and elected officials. The theory explores the perspective of stakeholders and the benefits of elected officials' engagement of stakeholder groups in discussing proposed policies that might affect their interests before implementing them.

## Literature Review

### Background

The competing positions of stakeholders on implementing sustainable development policies such as the National Environmental Policy in Sierra Leone might lead to barriers in implementing policies. Engaging relevant stakeholders affected by the proposed public policies might minimize potential barriers in their implementation (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Hutahaeon, 2016). A flaw such as failure to include the opinions of the beneficiaries of the policy might lead to a barrier to the implementation of that policy (Hupe & Saetm, 2015; Lienert, 2019). Poor implementation structures and failure to develop the policy in a manner consistent with the needs and demands of the designated target groups would affect the implementation of the policy (Salum et al., 2017). Policy implementation became difficult when several stakeholders from diverse community groups, community leaders, and government departments or agencies who might have interests in the proposed policy were not involved in that process (Croft & Carley, 2016; Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Vancoppenolle et al., 2015). Elected officials could address stakeholders' multiple perspectives by including groups affected by the intended policies in discussing them.

Elected government officials in Sierra Leone tried to address issues of environmental degradation by establishing a strong commitment to generate environmental security policies through the NEP enacted by parliament in 1990. The goal of these policies was to protect the natural environment. Examples of these environmental policies included the Environmental Protection Act of 2008, the Mines

and Mineral Act of 1994, 2004, and 2009, and the National Land Policy and Land Commission Act of 2004 (Kamara, 2015). Also, the government of Sierra Leone introduced other environmental laws, such as the New Forestry Act of June 1988 and the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1972 (Kamara, 2015). These environmental policies and laws in Sierra Leone were meant to strengthen the environment's security. However, these environmental policies did not effectively address the environmental goals because of stakeholder conflict in accessing environmental resources, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient public knowledge, and poor environmental management (Kamara, 2015). These challenges posed serious barriers in the implementation of environmental laws that addressed the adverse effects of climate change.

Efforts to conserve the ecosystem and prevent environmental degradation in Sierra Leone might not be successful due to the difficulty in getting relevant stakeholders and leaders of community groups to support the implementation of environmental policies. Environmental degradation leads to air and water pollution, environmental fragmentation, and degradation, which causes the soil to lose its fertility and loss of biodiversity (Kamara, 2015). These conditions made Sierra Leone one of the worst climate-affected nations globally and an impoverished country. The following section would consist of the key variables of the study such as stakeholder behavior, stakeholder engagement, policy implementation, barriers to policy implementation, the NEP of Sierra Leone, Sustainable Goals 8,9, 10, and 13 of Agenda 2030 of the United Nations, sustainable development, and human development in Sierra Leone.



## **Stakeholder Behavior**

Stakeholder groups aim to influence policy and achieve their own goals.

Community development stakeholder groups were interested in being part of the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of development projects in the community (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Liang, Yu & Li Guo, 2017). Stakeholder conflict occurs due to differences in thinking, needs, and goals (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Hutahaean, 2016). Excluding community stakeholder groups in designing and implementing policies that affect their communities usually leads to competing positions with elected government officials (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Hutahaean, 2016). Stakeholder conflict in the implementation of community projects or policies might lead to problems such as cost overruns and time delays, which result in considerable losses in communities (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Taylor, 2019). If stakeholders' interests conflict in implementing community projects with elected officials, the project might fail (Taylor, 2019; Yaro et al., 2017). Conflicts among stakeholder groups ensuring that individual groups' belief systems become dominant might also contribute to projects' failure.

The key question in the discussion of stakeholder conflict is what causes the competing positions between elected officials and stakeholders. Gyan and Ampomah (2016) cited trust between relationships as a significant condition that has the potential to maintain or disrupt relationships. Lack of trust in elected officials could be a critical factor in causing stakeholder conflict (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Rountree & Baldwin, 2018). When community stakeholders are not engaged in the discussion process of proposed policies for their communities, they might not support the implementation of

such policies (Hutahaean, 2016; Rountree & Baldwin, 2018; Taylor, 2019). Trust is significant to sustain the relationships between stakeholders and elected officials. Other factors contributing to stakeholder conflict are the lack of communication between stakeholder groups and elected officials and the imbalance of power relations (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Taylor, 2019). These conditions affect the trustworthiness and transparency of designing and formulating policies, particularly when elected officials exclude stakeholder groups affected by the policies in design and formulating policies.

Community empowerment to enhance the influence of the community over those who provide services to them was crucial in promoting the relationships between different actors who have a stake in public policies. Stakeholder partnerships and collaboration are grounded in the desire to promote the group's goals (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Rountree & Baldwin, 2018). Collaboration among stakeholder groups could create opportunities that could lead to a successful implementation of policies and positive social change to achieve the beliefs of individuals of the group (Liang et al., 2017). Individual group belief systems promote the group's interests through collaboration and participation in community development programs.

Public administrators faced deciding when to involve or engage stakeholders in the policy development process. Lemke and Harris-Wai (2015) and Taylor (2019) indicated in their studies that there is no specific time to engage stakeholders. They emphasized that stakeholders can be involved in all stages of the policymaking process to understand how it works (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015; Taylor, 2019). The main stages of policy development include agenda setting, policy analysis, policy formulation, policy

implementation, and reviewing and analyzing policy (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015; Lienert, 2019). In reality, policymaking does not follow linear stages as developing a specific policy usually skips stages.

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

Stakeholder engagement in Sierra Leone was significant in facilitating the development of sound, transparent, and trusted policies. The participation of stakeholders in the development of policies could inform the successful implementation of policies (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015; O'Rourke et al., 2016). Stakeholder engagement relates to the action of including individuals who have the potential to influence specific decisions and the process of making such decisions (Diaz et al., 2017; Requirements Techniques, 2017). For example, a stakeholder group called Initiative for Democracy and Rule of Law spoke against the removal of all the commissioners of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone and dissolving it without consulting the relevant CSOs or seeking parliamentary approval (Kanu, 2018; Forst, 2018; Sierra Leone News, 2018). Lemke and Harris-Wai (2015) maintained that stakeholders, who might have significant powers in communities where they operate, might support or disapprove of policies designed for their communities if elected officials exclude their opinions in the design and formulation of policies. Failure to support proposed policies posed barriers to the implementation of the policies.

To address the competing positions of stakeholders in implementing public policies in Sierra Leone, elected government representatives might include them in discussing policies that affect their interests using different measures. Lemke and Wai

(2015) and Lienert (2019) discussed some conditions that might facilitate stakeholder engagement, such as the particular circumstance that relates to the policy engagement, availability of resources, and the purpose of engaging stakeholders in discussing the proposed policies. Stakeholders' engagement could be carried out in several ways, such as collaborating, informing, involving, and consulting (Lemke & Wai, 2015; Stakeholder Involvement in Decision Making: A Short Guide to Issues, Approaches and Resources, 2015). Involving stakeholders to seek their input or opinions in developing and implementing policies is significant to build trust and avoiding barriers to policy implementation.

Stakeholder engagement is essential in ensuring that stakeholders participate in discussing policies and avoiding stakeholder conflict. Before engaging stakeholders, elected officials should identify aspects that show agreement and areas that demonstrate challenges (Lemke & Wai, 2015; Taylor, 2019). This circumstance creates the opportunity for elected officials to learn thoroughly the conditions that motivate stakeholders to disagree with elected officials in the implementation of policies (Higuchi & Hogg, 2016; Lemke & Wai, 2015). Elected officials engage stakeholders for several reasons, such as to learn the opinions of members of stakeholder groups, to make better policies that align stakeholders' input with the policy discussion, and to facilitate the trustworthiness and credibility of elected officials (Chepkoech & Waiganjo, 2015; Lemke & Wai, 2015; Taylor, 2019). Stakeholders' opinions are relevant because their belief systems about improving lives or influencing policy represent members' views in their communities.

Stakeholder engagement is relevant because it enables elected officials to identify aspects that lead to multiple perspectives and find the necessary conditions that cause multiple perspectives between stakeholders and elected/unelected government officials. Engaging stakeholders plays a significant role in seeking areas of common interests that allow elected officials to formulate policies consistent with the people's opinions (Lemke & Wai, 2015; Lienert, 2019; Taylor, 2019). When elected officials engage stakeholders, they might have the opportunity to identify the values and views of the community, particularly on issues that affect their community, which stakeholder groups can readily express.

Also, stakeholder engagement is essential to find people's critical needs, values, and opinions in communities affected by policies. Elected officials would be able to align those needs and values with the intended policy. Engaging stakeholders clarify the differences between stakeholders and elected officials and finds a consensus that would allow them to make good policies (Lemke & Wai, 2016; Lienert, 2019; Yaro et al., 2017). Moreover, stakeholders' engagement empowers them and promotes transparency because participating in policy discussions lets them know their opinions about policies that affect their communities' lives (Diaz et al., 2017; Hutahaeon, 2016; O'Rourke et al., 2016). Furthermore, stakeholders are more likely to trust the quality of the policies if they are part of formulating them, and elected officials consider their inputs as relevant before implementing the policies (O'Rourke et al., 2016). This process is essential to address the potential stakeholders' conflicts due to the failure to engage them actively in formulating policies that affect the interests of their communities.

The inclusion of stakeholders in Sierra Leone in the discussion of policies that affect their belief systems might be relevant to seek their support and avoid conflict in the implementation of policies, yet elected officials might face some problems in engaging stakeholders. As Lemke and Wai (2015) maintained, it is difficult to find individuals in communities who might represent the interests of stakeholder groups. Also, current literature in stakeholders' engagement discussed the issue of identifying individuals in communities who are affected by a proposed policy and might have an interest in that specific policy (Lemke & Wai, 2015). Other challenges that relate to the process of engaging stakeholders include a) the difference in the views of people who comprise stakeholder groups; and b) the difficulty that elected officials face in the process of selecting individuals who should participate in discussing the proposed policies. Also, when to engage and engage stakeholder groups when discussing public policies is another challenge (Stakeholder Involvement in Decision Making: A Short Guide to Issues, Approaches, and Resources, 2015; Taylor, 2019). O'Rourke et al. (2016) and Taylor (2019) indicated the conditions that might facilitate the process of engaging stakeholder groups, such as planning and analyzing groups to find the right stakeholder groups to engage for a proposed policy. Lemke and Wai (2015) and Phulkerda (2017) emphasized the issue of differences in stakeholders' cultures and interests that have the potential of reaching a consensus on a specific policy if the targeted stakeholder group is included in the process of implementing such policy. These studies also discussed the need to create a framework based on communicating with stakeholders sufficiently in advance about the

decision to either adopt or reject stakeholders' opinions (Lemke & Wai, 2015; Phulkerda, 2017). The objective, in this case, is to promote transparency and trust.

Stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone, such as the Women's Forum, promoted the notion of gender equity in the country. The role of women's coalition groups in influencing government policy for gender equality in Sierra Leone led to the amendment of laws that prevent women from taking part fully in national development (Equal Features Partnership, 2016). Examples of laws recently amended to allow women to participate in national development include tax laws policies and labor policies (Equal Features Partnership, 2016). To actualize and recognize the role that women in Sierra Leone play in public office, the government introduced the National Policy on the Advancement of Women (Equal Features Partnership, 2016; Koroma, 2017; Sierra Express Media; 2014; The Patriotic Vanguard, 2017). Women participated actively in creating policies that affect their interests across the country. Through coalition groups like the Women's Forum, women were able to campaign actively for better conditions that benefit women in Sierra Leone.

Policy implementers might be influenced by their constituencies to implement public policies that support their interests. The role of leadership is significant in directing the policy implementation process that demonstrates the readiness to create the necessary environment to facilitate support and trust of proposed policies (Campos & Reich, 2019; Koontz & Newig, 2014). The need to identify the conditions that lead to consensus and accommodate stakeholders' views affected by the proposed policies is relevant (Campos & Reich, 2019; Koontz & Newig, 2014). Collaboration among diverse

stakeholders is critical in reaching consensus and developing social capital. Engaging relevant stakeholders could allow elected officials to build collaborative relationships that minimize stakeholders' competing positions (Lemke & Harris-Wai; Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Yaro et al., 2017). Collaborative partnerships adopt a bottom-up approach that involves stakeholders seeking the opinions of individuals in local community groups in discussing policy issues of the general welfare of their environments (Gyan & Ampomah, 2015; Lemke & Wai, 2015; Yaro et al., 2017). Collaboration between elected officials and stakeholder groups affected by the proposed policy is relevant to generating support for the policy from individuals of the communities before the implementation of public policy.

The dichotomy in policy implementation discussed by researchers like Koontz and Newig (2014) relates to the two approaches used by elected officials to implement public policy such as the top-down and bottom-up approaches. In a top-down approach, elected officials direct the implementation process of the policy. On the other hand, a bottom-up approach begins with the targets of the proposed policy and works backward to find out the kind of policy implementation structures that have the potential to influence the change of behavior that might affect the policy (Hutahaeon, 2016; Koontz & Newig, 2014). Elected officials might implement better policies if they focus on identifying stakeholders' groups that benefit from proposed policies (Hutahaeon, 2016; Lienert, 2019; Koontz & Newig, 2014). Engaging stakeholder groups affected by the proposed policies to identify the views of people in their communities about the proposed



public policies is critical in creating opportunities and addressing the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone.

### **Policy Implementation**

Policy implementation relates to introducing measures beyond policy enactment, such as educating and involving individuals who reside in communities affected by the proposed policy (Polaries, 2019; Radioactive Waste Management, 2015; Yaro, Arshad & Salleh, 2017). Policies need to be implemented to succeed. Enacting a policy alone did not guarantee success (Campos & Reich, 2019; Yaro et al., 2017). Several actors and organizations could be involved in implementing public policy, especially the beneficiaries of the proposed policy.

Policy implementation could create barriers and opportunities based on the kind of strategies that elected officials adopt during designing and formulating public policies, such as integrating the opinions of stakeholder groups affected by the proposed policies. Stakeholder conflict occurs due to the difference in thinking, needs, and goals (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Stakeholder Involvement in Decision Making: A Short Guide to Issues, Approaches, and Resources, 2015). Stakeholder engagement is significant to facilitating sound and transparent policies and is trusted by all. There might be fewer barriers and more opportunities if elected officials include stakeholders in discussing public policies before implementing them.

Stakeholders who participate in the policy implementation process could perform functions like the coordination of resources, developing plans that enhance the sustainability of policies, and introducing processes that are better than the existing ones

(OECD, 2015; Polaries, 2019; Requirements Techniques, 2017; Yaro et al., 2017;).

Policy implementation outcomes pertain to the results derived from the policy after application and contextual factors that determined the outcome of the policy. Crofty and Carley (2016) argued that the effectiveness of public policy in public administration relates to the choices that elected officials make in the implementation process. Knowing the choices that could allow the administration of policies that satisfy the preferences of elected officials and the stakeholder groups who are the beneficiaries of the proposed policies might be relevant to minimize competing positions in policy implementation.

Public policy implementation follows a particular structure. A typical policy implementation structure and process include: who participates in that process, the resources utilized, and the rules that guide the application of the policy (Lienert, 2019; Taylor, 2019). The behavior of the groups or programs targeted by the policy is part of the policy implementation structure (Lienert, 2019; Taylor, 2019; Vancoppenolle et al., 2015). The procedures/laws crafted to direct the implementation of the policy, such as the inclusion of the groups targeted by the proposed policy could determine the success of implementing public policy (Liang et al., 2017; Taylor, 2019; Yaro et al., 2017). Seeking the opinions of the beneficiaries of the proposed policy before implementation could promote support for the policy.

### **Barriers and Opportunities to Policy Implementation**

Building trust among stakeholders could be relevant in designing and formulating public policies. Engaging stakeholder groups to seek the opinions of members of their communities might promote trust between elected officials and stakeholder groups and

minimize potential barriers to implementing the proposed policy (Gyan & Ampomah, 2015; Lemke & Wai, 2015). Vancoppenolle et al. (2015) maintained that one could trace the successful implementation of public policy during formulating the policy.

Stakeholders targeted by the proposed policy might support its implementation if elected officials included the opinions of the beneficiaries during the discussion of the policy (Gyan & Ampomah, 2015; Lemke & Wai, 2015; O'Rourke et al., 2016). Hutahaeen (2016) and Phulkerda (2017) discussed several conditions that could serve as barriers to the successful implementation of public policy, such as concerns of local jurisdictions about the intended policy and the views held by people who are affected by the policy.

The desire to protect and perpetuate cultural or traditional beliefs, such as the identity of the people, could pose barriers to the implementation of policies that might contrast the belief system of the group or the identity of the group that is affected by the proposed policy (Hutahaeen, 2016; Lemke & Wai, 2016; Phulkerda, 2017). Suppose the policy's beneficiaries do not accept the policy because elected officials only informed them of the outcome of the policy. In that case, it could pose a threat to its successful implementation.

Other potential barriers to policy implementation discussed by Phulkerda (2017) include if the proposed public policy is not transparent and legitimate from the perspective of the people affected by the policy and if the people who are affected by the policy do not have control over what the policy represents (Gyan & Ampomah, 2015; Phulkerda, 2017).

Basing the formulation of the policy plan on a top-down approach instead of including the people at the local level through a bottom-up approach could lead to competing positions in the implementation of the policy (Diaz et al., 2017; Phulkerda, 2017). Those

conditions might not create the opportunities to allow individuals or stakeholder groups who might be affected by a proposed policy to participate in its implementation.

Sierra Leone has a NEP that was first enacted in 1990 to protect the health of the natural environment and promote sustainable socioeconomic growth in the country. The NEP was not implemented successfully due to insufficient public knowledge and poor environmental management (Kamara, 2015). Another factor that might have contributed to the barriers to the implementation of the NEP is the dependency on the natural environment to support the livelihoods of people (Jackson, 2015). Despite NEP and other environmental laws, such as the New Forestry Act of June 1988 and the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1972, people continue to cut trees for firewood and kill animals for bushmeat (Jackson, 2015). The lack of adequate infrastructure that supports the needs of the people and insufficient public knowledge about the consequences of environmental degradation might have contributed to some competing positions in the implementation of the NEP (Jackson, 2015; Kamara, 2015). This condition could also be true of other environmental laws that elected officials in Sierra Leone did not fully implement in the country.

Sierra Leone's challenges in fully implementing the NEP to protect the natural environment and promote socioeconomic development could be addressed by adopting United Nations Sustainable Goals 8, 9, and 10. Goals 8, 9, and 10 of Agenda 2030 are aspirational goals that could significantly address the conditions that lead to barriers to implementing public policy in Sierra Leone (UNDESA, 2017). Also, adopting these aspirational goals in the socioeconomic growth agenda would be relevant in supporting

sustainable development. The socioeconomic growth agenda of Sierra Leone could be relevant in fixing the barriers to sustainable development in the country.

The next section discusses the NEP of Sierra Leone of 1990, which has been very difficult to implement due to competing positions among stakeholders. Also, the UN Sustainable Goals 8, 9, and 10 of Agenda 2030 are aspirational goals that are significant in supporting the process of addressing the barriers to implementing sustainable development policies. Also, the goals are relevant in supporting the economic growth agenda of Sierra Leone, particularly to address Sierra Leone's environmental issues and serve the needs of the people would be discussed in the next section.

### **The National Environmental Policy of Sierra Leone**

The social policy that this study investigates was the NEP of Sierra Leone. The NEP was initially passed in 1990 by parliament and revised in 1994 (Kamara, 2015). The NEP promotes sustainable development in Sierra Leone by implementing an environmental management framework that enables the management of natural resources and protecting of the natural environment (Kamara, 2015). Also, the NEP seeks to conserve natural resources and the environment, preserve biodiversity, and maintain the conditions that enable the ecosystems to continue to exist (Kamara, 2015). The primary goal of the NEP is to create a quality environment for the people of Sierra Leone.

The NEP consists of sector policies that were relevant in promoting the environmental security of Sierra Leone. Examples of the sector policies that relate to the critical areas of the policy formulation of the NEP include land tenure, land use, soil conservation, water resources management, forestry, and wildlife (Kamara, 2015). Other

sector policies emphasized in the NEP relate to biodiversity and agricultural heritage, sanitation and waste management, mining and mineral resources, coastal and marine resources, gender issues, and the environment (Kamara, 2015). These were the critical components of the NEP designed primarily to promote the health of the natural environment of Sierra Leone.

The objectives of the NEP of Sierra Leone were consistent with the concept of Sustainable Development and the goals of the New Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. For example, it emphasized the idea of living in a sustainable environment that is adequate for the well-being of the people. Also, the NEP advocates for protecting the natural environment and using the natural resources wisely to allow future generations to benefit from them. Moreover, the NEP promotes the notion of biological diversity in the natural environment to maintain the conditions that facilitate the continued existence of the biosphere (Kamara, 2015). In addition, the NEP emphasized promoting awareness and educating the public about the relationship between the environment and development so that people can take part in all activities that enhance environmental protection.

The government of Sierra Leone extensively uses the environment to access the environmental resources needed for sustainable development, such as the generation of foreign exchange earnings. Recent economic growth in Sierra Leone during the administration of President Koroma was attributed to the exploitation of minerals like diamonds, iron ore, bauxite, and rutile (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI, 2016; Kamara, 2015; The World Bank Sierra Leone, 2019). Successive governments depend on mineral

resources for the nation's foreign exchange earnings (Talbot, 2019). For example, 20 percent of the nation's GDP in 2013 came from the mining industry (Kamara, 2015). These natural mineral resources contribute to promoting economic growth in Sierra Leone.

Mining of minerals across Sierra Leone posed severe effects on the environment. For example, mining changed the flow of natural water rates in the areas where mining activities are carried out. Mining caused deforestation and flooding in the lowlands (HARPIS-SL, 2017; Talbot, 2019). Also, mining contributes to the contamination and exposure of water sources and plants in areas where artisanal mining is carried out (HARPIS-SL, 2017; Talbot, 2019). This circumstance affected the practicing of agricultural activities to support the food needs of the people because artisanal miners usually destroyed the productivity of the land and failed to reclaim the land.

Deforestation was a major environmental issue in Sierra Leone. Deforestation is mostly carried out through indiscriminate logging, land clearing for agricultural purposes, and cutting trees to construct homes and fuelwood (HARPIS-SL, 2017; Talbot, 2019). For example, about 70 percent of the natural forest has been cut. Studies showed that only 30 percent of the forest remains in Sierra Leone (HARPIS-SL, 2017; Interim Millennium Developments Goals Report Sierra Leone, 2016). It is not clear whether deforestation has increased due to the growing dependence on environmental resources to support livelihoods.

Given the environmental threats that confront Sierra Leone, the need to identify a clear understanding of what leads to the exploitation of the natural environment and

develop measures that would address those issues is now urgent. According to Kamara (2015), the government of Sierra Leone responds to the threats posed by environmental degradation by developing an environmental framework that generates an understanding of what leads to food insufficiency. For example, the government created mining laws to address the improper mining of mineral resources and environmental degradation in the country (Environmental Protection Agency Sierra Leone [EPASL], 2019). Other examples of the Environmental Protection laws developed to secure the natural environment include the Environmental Protection Act of 2008, the National Land Policy and Land Commission Act of 2004, the New Forestry Act of June 1988, and the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1972 (EPASL, 2019; Government of Sierra Leone, 2016; Kamara, 2015). These laws aim to strengthen the environmental regulations and management framework designed by the government to control the use of the natural environment.

However, the NEP and other environmental laws have not been effective in addressing the environmental goals they were designed to accomplish due to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient public knowledge, and poor environmental management (EPASL, 2019). Elected officials in Sierra Leone have problems implementing sustainable environmental policies and regulations due to conflict with community stakeholders interested in accessing environmental resources to support their needs than supporting environmental protection regulations (HARPIS-SL, 2017). For example, residents in communities around the Western Area Forest Reserves (WAFRs), such as Godrich do not respect the environmental laws designed by lawmakers in Sierra Leone to protect forest resources along the Peninsula of Freetown because they were not



adequately engaged to be part of that process (Jackson, 2015). So, stakeholders' competing positions in implementing environmental policies and regulations contribute to the exploitation of environmental resources, which leads to severe environmental degradation in Sierra Leone.

### **The UN Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9, & 13**

Sustainable socio-economic development is critical in enabling human development and protecting the ecosystems, and natural resources society depends on. Setting specific goals and benchmarks based on addressing the source of the problems of human development and environmental degradation motivated the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 by the United Nations (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2017). SDGs are global goals created by the United Nations in 2015 as a new action plan that would transform the world into a more inclusive, protect the environment, and enhance prosperity for all by 2030 (UNDESA, 2017). Agenda 2030 consists of 17 different but interdependent goals and 169 targets related to the goals as a benchmark representing the accomplishment of the New 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNDESA, 2017). This new initiative focuses on critical environmental, economic, and social issues, which relate to poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, clean water, sanitation, affordable energy, decent work, inequality, urbanization, global warming, the environment, social justice and peace (UNDESA, 2017). The implementation of the 17 Goals since 2016 was the responsibility of individual countries because they have the institutions and actors and

can create national policy agendas and strategies to facilitate the achievement of the 17 goals.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda was designed to address global issues that affected people and the climate and promote prosperity. Agenda 2030 also focuses on promoting peace and security and eliminating extreme poverty globally (Department of Economic and Social Affairs [DESA], 2015). Countries and diverse stakeholders globally have decided to work collaboratively to implement this action plan to fight poverty and save the planet from human destruction. With the notion of no one left behind, the main objective of this action plan is to create the conditions that would enable the world to be in a stable and sustainable direction (DESA, 2015). The stakeholders and countries have adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets to show their determination to support this new global Sustainable Development initiative (DESA, 2015). Individual countries take responsibility for the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development goals using national development and policy strategies to promote sustainable social and economic development in their nations for their citizens (DESA, 2015). Countries were free to implement development policies and showed leadership that focused on promoting sustainable development goals and the eradication of poverty in as much as such policies are consistent with the commitment and laws of the New Agenda. The New Agenda recognized that proper use of national resources, grounded in national ownership, was critical in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sierra Leone adopted the SDGs in 2015 and continues to support their implementation in the country. Sierra Leone implemented the SDGs in 2016 in several ways, such as a) in 2016, the SDGs were integrated into the national budget; and b) Sierra Leone aligned the SDGs to the eight elements that constituted the agenda for prosperity, which was the third-generation poverty reduction strategy paper of the country (Risse, 2016). The desire to ensure that everyone was included in the implementation of the SDGs was significant in promoting sustainable economic growth in the country. Sierra Leone carried out an inclusive approach by launching a national campaign in 2016 to promote awareness of the SDGs through town hall meetings, conducting training of groups like journalists, launching exhibitions, and collaborating with stakeholders across the country (UNFPA, 2016). These developments suggested that the people of Sierra Leone were aware of the SDGs and might continue to play an active role in their implementation in the country.

This study would also focus on Sustainable Goals 8, 9, 10, and 13 of Agenda 2030, which are aspirational goals that might be relevant in addressing the conditions that contribute to the barriers to sustainable development in Sierra Leone. Sustainable Goals 8, 9, 10, and 13 might be significant in the context of Sierra Leone because these aspirational goals promoted conditions that were relevant to the economic growth agenda of Sierra Leone, such as environmental security and economic growth.

Since the introduction of the SDGs in 2016, there has been some progress towards the goals, but serious challenges remain due to recent economic setbacks. In 2016, the GDP grew by 6.4 percent, rebounding from a negative 21.5 percent due to the Ebola

outbreak in 2014 (The World Bank Sierra Leone, 2019). 2017 and 2018 saw a decline in GDP growth of 3.8 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively. Current data shows that GDP growth remains slightly above 3 percent.

### **Sustainable Development**

A Swiss-based organization initially used sustainable development called the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in the World Conservation Strategy report in 1980 to define equitable practice in ecology (2017). Although the IUCN's report emphasized the key theme of interdependence, it was not as popular as the Brundtland Commission Report published a few years later. By 1987, sustainable development became famous worldwide following the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report.

The WCED described sustainable development as a kind of development that addresses the needs of the present generation and creates the opportunity that would enable future generations to meet their needs (Cristina & Diana, 2014). Several scholars like Boyer et al. (2016) and Holden et al. (2014) criticized the concept of sustainable development because it was mostly framed to be consistent with the development and the satisfaction of human needs. However, many organizations and nations that are involved in developmental programs have widely subscribed to the prescriptions of the definition of the WCED in their operations (Cristina & Diana, 2014). A critical examination of the definition of sustainable development presented by the Brundtland report of 1987 focused on alleviating poverty and equal distribution of wealth to benefit current and future generations (Cristina & Diana, 2014).

Developing a better understanding of sustainable development is significant to know how stakeholders in communities, such as leaders, businesses, and citizens, collaborate effectively to achieve the same results (Getting started with the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Stakeholders, 2015). The level of collaboration in communities has increased the number of policies, initiatives, and instruments designed by different private entities and governments to realize sustainable development results in diverse economic areas, regions, and supply chains (Getting Started with the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Stakeholders, 2015).

The United Nations' position on sustainable developments is evident. It promotes socioeconomic developments in member states through its Agencies such as United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Population Fund, and United Nations Economic Social Council. In 2000, the United Nations championed the idea of developing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) primarily to eradicate extreme poverty and expand opportunities and services to developing nations around the world. In 2012, the United Nations held a conference on sustainable development called the RIO+20. Member states pledged to continue to support sustainable development programs and facilitate the collaboration of policies that would enhance the introduction of socioeconomic development. Also, the United Nations has created an office called the Division of Sustainable Development to facilitate the execution of the United Nations' sustainable development programs in developing countries like Sierra Leone. These developmental

programs are grounded in wealth and economic prosperity, a green economy, and policies that address climate change issues.

### **Sustainable Human Development in Sierra Leone**

Human development relates to expanding opportunities, services, and the scope of things that people can do and are accessible to them, such as health care, employment, and education. Human development is grounded in three main conditions: the opportunity to live long and healthy lives, having a decent standard of living and acquiring knowledge (Human Development Report, 2014; Margai, 2017). Focusing on integrating intellectual, ethical, and human sociological development would ensure the efficient operation of sustainable development (Cristina & Diana, 2014). The concept of human development is consistent with the characteristics of the Advocacy Coalition Framework developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, to assess extreme competing positions or conflicts in the process of policymaking and policy change (Cornelius, 2015). The ACF refers to groups of individuals who have a common system of beliefs and engage in a well-organized movement, primarily to change their belief system into the policy (Cairey, 2014). Coalition groups usually emphasize addressing problems that threaten human survival, such as environmental degradation, democracy, gender equity, and human rights, to promote the interests of their groups.

To improve the accuracy of the methods used in assessing human developments globally between countries, UNDP uses parameters like the Human Poverty Index (HPI), the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), and the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) to carry out that process. These indices evaluate the differences between women

and men in the accessibility of public services, poverty, and the level of participation of people in the socioeconomic and political decision-making process (Sierra Leone Human Development Report, 2016).

The United Nations' tool created in 1990 to assess human development globally was the Human Development Index-HDI (Sierra Leone Human Development Report, 2014). The UNDP applies the HDI globally to compare human development between countries. The HDI evaluates average achievements in countries using social and economic indicators such as accessibility to education, based on the number of years which people go to school; living a long and healthy life, evaluated by life expectancy since birth; and having a decent living standard, assessed on Gross National Income (GNI), that is “per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP) calculated in USD” (Sierra Leone Human Development Report, 2014).

Although Sierra Leone became independent from British colonial rule more than 50 years ago, the country is still affected by developmental issues such as poverty, dependency on international partners for support to finance national programs, lack of adequate energy provision, and crumbling socio-economic infrastructure (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). The economy of Sierra Leone is small, and it is highly dependent on external sources of investments and contributions to finance its programs. These structural problems are due to the failure to implement sustainable socioeconomic plans that would create opportunities for the people of Sierra Leone.

Between 2008 and 2013, there were some improvements in socioeconomic development due to increases in socioeconomic performance in areas like construction,

mining, education, health care, transportation infrastructure, and agriculture (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016; International Monitoring Fund, 2018; Sierra Leone Human Development Report, 2014). These moderate developments were consistent with the United Nations Development Program's prescription and the Millennium Development Goals agreed upon by world leaders in 2000 (UNDP, 2016). The IMF validated these developments in their review. In 2013, the IMF projected that the Gross Domestic Product would grow by 13 percent (International Monitoring Fund, 2016). However, there have been some significant setbacks due to global market trends that affect the sale of mineral resources. The outbreak of Ebola seriously affected the country's socio-economic life for two years. In addition to these challenges, the government has not been able to implement effective, sustainable socioeconomic plans based on improving the quality of life of the people. Sierra Leone has continuously remained at the bottom of the Human Development Index. In 2016, Sierra Leone ranked 181 among 187 countries assessed by UNDP.

### **Limitations of Existing Literature**

Researchers in the field of public policy such as Sabatier and Jenkins-smith (1993), Lemke and Harris-Wai (2015), Gyan and Ampomah (2016), Vancoppenolle et al. (2015), Newig (2014), and Crofty and Carley (2016) presented discussions that provided a better understanding of existing research and theoretical literature. The views of these researchers are mostly similar but also represent significant differences in the existing literature, especially in the discourse on stakeholders' conflict and the strategies needed to engage stakeholders. The absence of stakeholder conflict is fundamental in implementing public policy to address the needs of the people. Providing social services to the people



might lead to positive social change, which addresses environmental, economic, social, and political challenges.

The literature review examined several kinds of literature that contributed to the research. This section discussed the limitations or weaknesses associated with the current studies that informed the study's literature review. A fundamental limitation observed in the existing literature relates to Lemke and Wai's (2015) position about the difficulty in identifying individuals who represent the interests of stakeholder groups whose members are affected by proposed government policies.

Lemke and Wai (2015) added that people who are interested in specific policies proposed by elected officials and affected by the policy challenges could not be separated easily from the stakeholder groups. As a result, elected officials might have difficulty knowing members of stakeholder groups affected by the government's proposed public policy (Lemke & Wai, 2015). This position is inconsistent with the prescription of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's Advocacy Coalition Framework model (ACF).

Based on the ACF model, individuals in stakeholder groups share the same system of beliefs. Stakeholder groups typically engage in a well-organized movement to change their belief system into the policy (Cairey, 2014). As a result, it is not difficult to find people interested in a proposed policy that affects people's interests targeted by the proposed policy. Gyan and Ampomah (2016) indicated in their study that people actively involved in community development programs due to perceived trust or due to the potential of experiencing positive relationships grounded in trust. If people in

communities do not trust the relationships, they would not collaborate in the processes of community development projects.

Individual group belief systems promoting the group's interests create the desire to collaborate and participate in community development programs. The primary limitations of this study relate to a) the failure to indicate the necessary measures that should be adopted to engage stakeholders in communities, and b) the study failed to mention the relevance of having a consensus when discussing policy issues that include the views of the targeted stakeholder groups.

Lemke and Wai (2015) discussed a key challenge about when to engage and how to engage stakeholder groups when discussing public policies is limited to some extent. The study emphasized the issue of differences in stakeholders' cultures and interests, which has the potential to reach a consensus on a specific issue. Individuals in stakeholder organizations usually have a collective identity, given that they shared standard belief systems to change public policy in their favor. The position of this study about the existence of a significant difference in culture or interests is not sufficient because people in coalition groups have the same objectives.

Moreover, the development of a framework that determines in advance the decisions to either adopt or reject stakeholders' opinions, as presented by Lemke and Wai (2015), is problematic because the views of individuals of groups affected by government policies are relevant to ensure that communities support their effective implementation. Lemke and Wai (2015) argued that this process promotes transparency and trust. It is insufficient to argue that deciding to reject or adopt the opinions of stakeholders would

promote trust. Elected officials engage with stakeholders to seek their opinions so that the government could make better policies for the people who are usually affected by such laws. Rejecting stakeholders' opinions could lead to trust and transparency issues.

The literature review discussed Sustainable Goals 8, 9, and 10 of Agenda 2030. Sustainable Goals 8, 9, 10, and 13 are aspirational goals that promote economic growth, inclusiveness, and reduction of inequality globally by 2030 (Kattumuri, 2019). Opponents of the New Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development are concerned about the feasibility of achieving the aims of the SDGs first, due to the financial cost to accomplish them; and two, the challenges which countries globally are presently experiencing in the process of implementing the goals (Kattumuri, 2019). Also, Goals 8, 9, 10, and 13 emphasized personal and physical security, economic growth, and environmental security, but less emphasized social issues. Examples of social issues that the Sustainable Goals failed to emphasize include corruption in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), healthy life expectancy, income inequalities, and the freedom to make choices that are beneficial to individuals globally (Kattumuri, 2019). A conservative estimate by the Economist Newspaper of the amount needed annually to eradicate poverty globally is between USD\$2-3 trillion for 15 years (Sustainable Development Goals, 2019). The targets did not indicate who would pay that amount and how long it would take to get it.

Although Sustainable Goal 8 emphasized economic growth to enhance the good quality of life, Goal 8 conflicts with Goals 13 and 15, which discussed adopting measures that mitigate climate change and protect the ecosystem and reverse practices that lead to

environmental degradation, respectively (Kattumuri, 2019). Socioeconomic growth might be challenging to achieve without using resources in the natural environment, affecting the ecology and degrading the natural environment. However, collaboration with stakeholder groups like businesses, community leaders, and citizens could lead to the generation of initiatives and policies that might balance the exploitation of the natural environmental resources and adopt smart decisions to preserve ecology and the natural environment.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter presented the central concepts of the study. The literature review examined scholarly articles that focus on policy implementation and barriers to effective implementation of sustainable socioeconomic policies in Sierra Leone based on stakeholders' perspectives. The literature review discussed the concept of stakeholders' competing positions, emphasizing the impacts of stakeholders' conflict on policy implementation.

Also, the literature review explored scholarly articles that addressed why elected officials should engage stakeholders when formulating public policies that affect life in their communities to build trust and empower members of the communities. Besides, the literature review discussed the necessary strategies to engage stakeholders to seek their opinions on proposed policies that target their communities.

Moreover, this chapter examined the NEP of Sierra Leone, which is the primary social policy issue of this study. Also, the chapter discussed Goals 8, 9, 10, and 13 of Agenda 2030, which were aspirational goals that were relevant in promoting sustainable

socioeconomic growth to minimize the dependency on environmental resources, which caused the adverse effects of climate change in Sierra Leone.

In addition, the chapter examined some of the variables of the theoretical foundations of the study, such as stakeholder behavior, policy implementation, stakeholder engagement, barriers and opportunities to policy implementation, sustainable development, the NEP, Goals 8, 9, and 13 of the UN Agenda 2030, and human development in Sierra Leone.

Next, this chapter provides an overview of the Theoretical Foundation of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith to assess extreme competing positions or conflicts in policymaking and policy change. The ACF referred to groups of individuals who had the same beliefs and engaged in well-organized movements, primarily to change their belief systems into policy. Furthermore, the Chapter discussed the limitation of the literature used in the background of the study.

In Chapter 3, the study will discuss the research inquiry techniques, data collection strategies, and data analysis strategies that the researcher will select for the study.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to examine the barriers to the effective building of coalitions for the successful implementation of the NEP passed by elected officials in Sierra Leone in the 1990s to promote environmental security in the country. I investigated stakeholders' perspectives to understand the adopted public policy measures to minimize the multiple perspectives between stakeholders and elected/unelected government officials. Stakeholders' competing positions with elected government officials affected the effective implementation of public policies. Stakeholder conflict occurs when the thoughts, needs, and goals about the proposed policy conflict (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016). The main objective of the stakeholder group was to influence policy and achieve its policy goal (Cairey, 2014; Cornelius, 2015). Including relevant stakeholder groups affected by proposed policies to seek their opinions minimized multiple perspectives between elected officials and those groups.

Examples of stakeholders who were interviewed in this study were governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders who directly or indirectly influenced the implementation of environmental policies in Sierra Leone, including Agriculture Officers, Environmental Officers, Directors of Government Agencies, Deputy Mayor, Deputy City Council Chairman, EPA Officer, Private Sector Organization, Mining Compliance Officer, Tourism Board officers, Forestry Officers, Permanent Secretary, and Conservation Officers.

Individuals of stakeholder groups shared a standard belief system, primarily to influence government policy (Cairey, 2014; Cornelius, 2015). The main focus of stakeholder groups was to influence public policy decisions in their interests. According to Gyan and Ampomah (2016), community development stakeholder groups were interested in being part of the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of development projects in the community to influence the specific policies that affect life in their communities. When elected officials exclude community stakeholder groups in designing and implementing policies that affect their communities, it usually affects the potential for collaboration with elected government officials for successful policy implementation. For example, the main focus of the Women's Forum of Sierra Leone, which was a coalition of different women's organizations in Sierra Leone, shared the same belief system, primarily based on gender equality (Gender: National Gender Strategic Plan 2010-2013, 2016). The key objective of this coalition group was to influence government policy so that women in Sierra Leone would have equal rights and opportunities as men.

Since stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone had a stake in public policy issues that affected their interests, engaging these groups to seek the opinions of their members while formulating public policies could enable them to support policy implementation. Stakeholder engagement relates to the action of individuals who have the potential to influence specific decisions in the process of making such decisions (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015). Gyan and Ampomah (2016) indicated in their study that people actively involved in community development programs due to perceived trust or potential positive

relationships grounded in trust (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016). If individuals in communities whose interests are affected by the proposed policies do not trust the relationships with elected officials, they might not support the process of community development projects (Gyan and Ampomah, 2016). Individual belief systems, which are based on promoting the interests of their groups, create the desire to collaborate and participate in community development programs.

Engaging stakeholders in discussing proposed policies promote collaboration with elected and unelected government officials. Elected government officials and public administrators engage stakeholders for several reasons, such as allowing them to learn about the views of people in the targeted communities and to include in policy discussions the opinions of stakeholder groups who share common belief systems and views of members in their communities (Lemke & Wai, 2016). Elected and unelected government officials could make better policies by aligning stakeholders' input with the policy discussion. Also, stakeholders' engagement could create trustworthiness and enhance the credibility of elected government officials and allow fewer barriers to the implementation of policies.

In this study, I investigated stakeholders' lived experiences about the conditions that contribute to the barriers to the effective implementation of sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone, such as the NEP of 1990. The key policy issue that this research investigated was the NEP of Sierra Leone to identify the potential barriers and opportunities related to implementing this environmental policy. Other environmental policies and laws introduced to promote environmental security in the country include the



Environmental Protection Act of 2008, the Mines and Mineral Act of 1994, 2004, and 2009, and the National Land Policy and Land Commission Act of 2004. These environmental legislations were relevant in promoting the health of the environment in Sierra Leone, but the process of implementing these laws might have experienced some challenges (Kamara, 2015). Also, this qualitative research design discussed the underlying problem that contributed to the inability to implement viable and sustainable socioeconomic growth policies to address the socioeconomic needs of the people and the adverse effects of climate change in Sierra Leone.

This chapter examines the different strategies employed in the research, such as collecting and analyzing data to seek an extensive understanding of the experiences of key nongovernmental stakeholders about the barriers to the implementation of sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone. This chapter begins with the research design and rationale of the study. The chapter then discusses the study's research methods, the sampling strategy, sample size, the role of the researcher, data collection methods, data analysis issues of trustworthiness, and ethical concerns.

### **Research Tradition and Rationale**

The study's research design was informed by Secore (2017), who advocated for the use of strategies and steps that constitute the research process ranging from a less detailed supposition or thoughts to in-depth strategies for collecting and analyzing data. The critical issue in the research process was to choose a decision about the type of design that was appropriate for the topic of the study (Secore, 2017; Tuffour, 2017). The research design selected for this study was qualitative research. Due to the nature of this

research topic, the research method chosen to respond to the research questions of this study was qualitative research. A qualitative research approach was used to identify the answers posed by the research question for the key policy area explored in this research, such as the NEP of 1990. The qualitative research design allowed the generation of an extensive understanding of the meaning of the main policy area examined in the study, primarily using words, not numbers.

Within the qualitative tradition, the study employed the case study research approach. The inquiry strategy applied in this study and the particular strategies used for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data for the study fit well with the case study approach (Secore, 2017; Tuffour, 2017). The case study approach allowed me to investigate a particular case and its complexities to understand the context (Creswell, 2018; Score, 2017; Tuffour, 2017) within which the investigated issue operates. Using a case study technique allowed me to understand the experiences of the people who took part in the study about how the issue under study affected their lives. This process increased my understanding of the perspectives of the study's participants about the problem that was investigated in this research. In addition, using a case study approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study within a specific time. Furthermore, the case study design was more appropriate for this qualitative research than other research options because this type of research inquiry focused on responding to how and why questions and allowed the researcher to conduct an extensive study of the conditions that influenced the context of the issue under study. Also, the case study research approach facilitated the development of a better understanding of the

phenomenon of the study, such as the barriers to the effective development of a sustainable development plan in Sierra Leone with stakeholders' perspectives than other research inquiries.

Also, applying a case study research approach allowed the exploration, flexibility, and inquiry seeking the knowledge and experiences from participants about the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2018). The case study approach was used to explore the commonality in participants' experiences of the phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2018; Score, 2017; Tuffour, 2017). This enabled the collection of data for this study from multiple sources across the study site (Sierra Leone).

Additionally, the case study research design was more appropriate for the topic of this study because I used a theory upfront, which was consistent with case study research to identify the experiences of people about the phenomenon of the study. Moreover, using case study research allowed me to investigate the experiences of individuals about the phenomenon of the study instead of examining the life stories or experiences of one or few people only (Creswell, 2018; Score, 2017; Tuffour, 2017). Case study inquiry was suitable for this study because it enabled me to use one or more cases within a bounded context. This process allowed me to clearly define the study's scope and use several methods to collect data based on participants' experiences about the issue under study instead of focusing on examining the contextual and structural contexts of participants' experiences only.

This approach enabled me to make sense of the experiences of a small number of participants about the barriers to the implementation of sustainable development policies

in Sierra Leone, such as the NEP, which is the primary social policy area examined in this research. The NEP was passed by elected officials in Sierra Leone in 1990 to promote environmental security in the country. A qualitative research design was adequate because it was relevant in identifying Sierra Leone citizens' perspectives regarding the barriers to the implementation of the NEP to promote sustainable development in the country. Open-ended standard questions were used to collect data for this study from participants in Sierra Leone. Open-ended questions were adequate for the qualitative research method selected for this study. The primary data collection instrument for this qualitative research was the researcher.

The desire to develop an extensive understanding of the phenomenon of this study facilitated the selection of the qualitative research method as the primary approach to examine the research question and a case study research inquiry technique for this study. The qualitative research method followed a research approach different from quantitative research, such as using different philosophical assumptions and inquiry techniques and applying different approaches to collect data, analyze data, and interpret the data collected from the field study (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). The research focused on citizens' perceptions of the barriers and opportunities for implementing the NEP to promote sustainable development in Sierra Leone. A better understanding of this phenomenon was realized using a naturalistic research method, which allowed collecting data from the natural environment of the study participants. I intended to use case study interviews to explore sustainability perceptions and lived experiences in Sierra Leone.

Using qualitative research methods for this study allowed the planning of the research by focusing on identifying the participants of the study, developing the necessary procedures the study adopted, and choosing the tools and materials needed for the collection of the data of the study (Rahman, 2016; Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Sutton and Zubin (2015) emphasized that the qualitative researcher should focus on providing the audience with information about the specific strategies used to collect the data for the study.

The focus of qualitative researchers is to develop knowledge of the context of individuals who take part in the research by placing themselves in their settings to generate information from them directly. Moreover, the opinions and cultural background respondents could determine the interpretation of what qualitative researchers found in the field (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Gathering information about people's feelings generated detailed knowledge of the actual meaning of the participant's study experiences.

Researchers channeled their thoughts and personal belief systems through the study, the type of research strategy related to the investigator's beliefs, and particular kinds of investigations that enabled the research procedure to become practicable (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Researchers usually hide their beliefs when conducting research. However, personal beliefs significantly influence the investigator's opinion in the research process.

In qualitative research, generalizability is not widely used because qualitative researchers do not generalize their findings to individuals and settings beyond those in

the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study was not generalizable because studies were not generalized in the case of qualitative research design. Instead, extensive research was conducted to understand better how collaboration between elected government officials and stakeholders might address their competing positions and facilitate the successful implementation of sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone, such as the NEP. The study focused on an issue specific to Sierra Leone; as a result, the notion of generalizability did not apply in this particular context.

Generalizability is adequate for studies that focus on experimentation and survey research (Mottern, 2015). This study examined a social policy phenomenon (NEP) bounded on a particular context that did not allow generalization.

Doody and Bailey (2016) maintained that research questions are significant in qualitative research because they could determine the selection of the methodology, the data collection instrument, the sample size, and the data analysis techniques. Qualitative questions begin with words like “how” and “why,” and they are written in diverse ways from general to particular questions. Qualitative research questions address the research problem. The key research question is: What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the barriers to effectively building coalitions to implement sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone?

### **Role of the Researcher**

The qualitative researcher interacts with participants to collect the data for the study through one-on-one interviews and observations. Sutton and Zubin (2015) maintained that the qualitative researcher engaged effectively with the participants

in their natural setting to share their experiences and address potential personal and ethical problems that arose in the research process. My role in this qualitative case study research was to actively collect data in the field of the study (Sierra Leone) from respondents who were purposefully selected to generate relevant data that informed my study. In addition to the data collection process, I interpreted, analyzed, and provided the study's findings to the audience. According to Deepa and Panicker (2016), engaging with participants in their natural environment to collect data often leads to a subjective and objective interpretation. I sought permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) before conducting the research. I ensured that participants signed an Informed Consent form before studying and questioning them. Also, I engaged with the respondents in their natural environments to learn more about their perspectives on the phenomenon of this study.

I did not intend to show bias in the study, yet bias is always prevalent when carrying out an investigation. To address potential bias in qualitative research, I needed to acknowledge its existence (Šimundić, 2013). Removing possible biases in a study was difficult, but I was required to explain that biases were present in the study and the necessary measures needed to address them.

Being subjective affects the trustworthiness of the study. Šimundić (2013) maintained that a study is flawed when the selection of the setting of the study and participants, the research questions, and the data collection process are all determined by the personal desires and interests of the inquirer. Conducting a study in an environment where one originated from could lead to ethical issues such as conflict of interest in the

research. In qualitative research, inquirers address issues of subjectivity by ensuring that the research protocols and instruments are properly examined and analyzed, clearly described the terms, and state any liabilities or susceptibilities related to the study.

The purpose of this study was not to satisfy any political interests, and the findings from the field of research would be adequately analyzed and reported objectively. When collecting data for this study, participants' interests were not exploited. The only people who took part in this study were those who were willing to provide information that informed the research. The study participants were informed sufficiently of the nature of the study and signed informed consent forms before collecting data from them. Regarding the issue of giving incentives to participants in the field of research, they were not provided incentives to recognize their time and efforts with the relevant information that informed the study.

I took responsibility for the potential issues and outcomes of the interpretation of the data collected from the field of research. I did not have any personal or professional relationships with the potential participants of this study, and there was no intention to exercise power over them while collecting data in their environment. The selection of the possible participants of the study was carried out purposefully to identify the key people and institutions that were capable of providing relevant information that informed the research.

Given that the researcher's country of origin was Sierra Leone, the philosophical worldviews or personal experiences of the issues in the country influenced the research design of this qualitative study. However, this research was carried out objectively to



fulfill the requirements of the program as designed by Walden University. My personal experiences and findings from field research were analyzed and reported objectively. Potential biases in this study such as culture, values, and personal background were sufficiently identified and reported. However, biases did not influence the interpretation of the research. I managed preferences by making sure that this work was triangulated, sought the opinion of a third party, and followed the standards designed by the University for Graduate Research. I applied reflexivity to take responsibility for the outcome of this study because it related to the researcher. I accepted the advice of others to be conscious and self-aware and take ownership of the perspectives expressed in writing this study (Palaganas et al., 2017; Wilkie, 2015). In this study, I expressed self-awareness, opinions, and feelings. As the principal instrument in the study, I questioned the biases related to the topic and how to protect the study against them. This study intended to remain objective to ensure the credibility of the findings of this research to the audience.

## **Methodology**

### **Participant Selection Logic**

This qualitative inquiry used purposeful sampling to select 36 participants from the research setting (Sierra Leone) because they were more relevant and had the information required to inform the phenomenon of what was investigated in this study. Generalizability is applicable in some instances of qualitative inquiry if the research findings relate to diverse groups or settings that are significant for the study (Mottorn, 2015). However, this study dealt with a limited case of small, not generalizable participants.

The population that was selected for the study consisted of adult Sierra Leoneans. The sample consisted of representatives from government agencies (National Social Security Insurance Trust, EPA, and Sierra Leone Producing Marketing Corporation), government departments (Ministries of Agriculture, Mines, and Natural Resources, and Youth and Development), Local NGOs (Environmental Forum for Africa-Sierra Leone, Environmental Foundation for Africa-ENFORAC-SL, and Conservation Society of Sierra Leone-CSSL), local elected representatives (Deputy Mayor of the Municipalities of Makeni, Northern Province).

The data for this study was collected through field research in Sierra Leone, primarily through in-depth, open-ended interviews with the following representatives of key stakeholder groups:

- Representatives of Government departments such as the Ministries of Agriculture, Mines and Natural Resources, Lands, Trade and industry, and Development Ministry.
- Officials from the following government agencies: National Tourism Board, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Minerals Authority (NMA), and Sierra Leone Producing Marketing Corporation (SLPMC).
- Local Government officials - the Mayor of the Municipality of Makeni, Deputy Chairman of Tonkolili District, Agriculture, Forestry, and Environmental Officers of City and District Councils
- Representatives of Local Nongovernmental Organizations such as Environmental Forum for Africa-Sierra Leone, Environmental Foundation for

Africa-ENFORAC-SL, and Conservation Society of Sierra Leone-CSSL, GEMFAIR, and RESOLVE.

The sample of this study was selected according to the purpose of the research. Stakeholders in Sierra Leone were the key focus of the study. The targeted sample of stakeholders was representative of the population. The sample for this research was drawn from stakeholder groups who are part of the targeted population and were capable of responding to the main research question of this study.

In this qualitative research, the aim was not to test a hypothesis but to generate an understanding of a smaller population about the phenomenon of this study. The sampling type that was most adequate for recruiting participants in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allowed me to judge and recruit the most relevant sample for the research.

Snowball sampling, a purposeful qualitative sampling method, increased the number of samples during the data collection process. This purposeful sampling technique was applied to collect data for this study, primarily to address the potential challenge of accessing the intended samples from the targeted population groups (Ghaljaei et al., 2017). Snowball sampling was a convenient sampling method that was relevant for the research because it allowed me to access more samples from specific population groups that were willing to be interviewed if samples from the targeted stakeholder population groups were not accessible (Ghaljaei et al., 2017). Also, snowball sampling allowed me to inquire from the first samples about individuals who had similar views like them to participate in the research. Sampling continued until it reached

saturation (Ghaljaei et al., 2017). Snowball purposeful sampling was relevant for this research because it consumed less time and enabled the researcher to communicate and get more access to better samples if they related to earlier research samples.

The participants of this research were selected because they met a number of criteria such as the setting where the sample resided, the knowledge of the phenomenon of the study, were all 18 years plus, participated directly or indirectly in designing or formulating policy, and had the ability to provide the information that answered the key research question of this research. Also, the sample for this study was selected from diverse stakeholder groups in the country whose belief system was consistent with the principles of the 1993 ACF model of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith. The sample of stakeholder groups that were selected for this research was capable of providing the relevant information for this research. The sample selected for this research also had different experiences, which allowed gathering a range of data on their experiences about the barriers and opportunities to policy implementation in Sierra Leone.

Participants must be at least 18 years old, and the sample of the study consisted of people who contributed directly or indirectly to the development of public policy in Sierra Leone. This sample informed the phenomenon of the study by providing information about the barriers to the implementation of effective, sustainable development plans in Sierra Leone.

According to Vasileiou et al. (2018), the qualitative inquiry does not have specific rules about the sample size. Vasileiou et al. (2018) added that the sample size is grounded in the purpose of the research, what is significant for the research, what I want to know,

the purpose of the research, and the credibility of the research. However, the sample size for this qualitative inquiry was smaller since my objective was to select a sample that fits with the rationale and purpose of the study, especially on the issue of how the sample supports the purpose of the study.

Boddy (2016) recommended using different types of samples that fit specific conditions during the data collection process, such as knowing the investigated issue and the ability to provide information that would inform the study. The aim was to select the individuals who had relevant information for the evolving theory and knew the phenomenon explored in the study. Boddy (2016) suggested open sampling as an appropriate form of sampling that could be used in advance wherein participants were selected without any preconceived position because, in the beginning, no concepts had been established to provide a theoretically meaningful position. The participants of this qualitative inquiry were selected purposefully from different parts of Sierra Leone, and they consisted of individuals who understood the problem of the study and were capable of responding to the research questions.

Snowball sampling was a convenient sampling method that was relevant for the research because it allowed me access to more samples from specific population groups that were willing to be interviewed if samples from the targeted stakeholder population groups were not accessible (Ghaljaei et al., 2017). Also, using snowball sampling for this research could allow me to inquire from the first samples about individuals who had similar views like them to participate in the research.

In this qualitative case study research, purposeful or criterion sampling would be applied to select a few people capable of providing the required information that answered my research questions (Vasileiou et al., 2018). The purposeful sampling strategy applied in this study was maximum variation sampling, which defined the key themes related to the diverse issues that contributed to the study. Maximum variation was an adequate sample strategy for this study because it allowed me to identify the characteristics that represented the differences of individual cases selected as samples for the study (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Identifying the differences among the samples in advance means different perspectives that existed in the study were identified earlier (Vasileiou et al., 2018), which were significant for this qualitative case study research. To facilitate access to more samples for the study of samples from the selected population groups that were not easily accessible, I used the snowball purposeful sampling technique to access more samples. Snowball sampling was a convenient sampling method that was relevant for me because it allowed me to access more samples from specific population groups that were willing to be interviewed if samples from the targeted stakeholder population groups were not accessible (Ghaljaei et al., 2017). Data reaches saturation point if more information was not needed for me after collecting data from individuals who had similar views like the targeted samples in the population groups who participated in the research.

However, the commonalities of the pattern that emerged from the individual variations were important in selecting the primary experiences of participants and different approaches in the context of the experiences and the concept of the study

(Benoot et al., 2016). Selecting small samples that were completely diverse led to the generation of a high-quality and in-depth description of individual experiences and identified significant patterns that emerged from the participants' personal experiences (Benoot et al., 2016).

The people who took part in the research were experts who provided the information needed to inform the phenomenon of interest of this study. In this case study, the study sample was drawn using criterion sampling, which allowed the selection of participants who fit the criteria for this study (Gentles et al., 2016). Using criterion sampling allowed the selection of participants who had experienced or were knowledgeable of the issue explored in this study. The sample selected for this study met the conditions that led to the generation of information required to answer the research questions selected for the study (Gentles et al., 2016).

The sample size for this study was selected across Sierra Leone, which was the setting of the study. A qualitative inquiry does not have specific rules about the sample size. The sample size for the qualitative inquiry was smaller since the objective was to select a sample that fits with the rationale and purpose of the study, especially on the issue of how the sample supported the purpose of the study (Sim et al., 2018). However, 36 participants were selected for this study. The selected sample consisted of people who were capable of informing the phenomenon of this study. The 36 participants were selected from different parts of the setting of my study (Sierra Leone). This was a rough estimate of the participants of the study. I ended up with the 36 participants during the research.

The relationship between sampling size and saturation was established when the study entered its theoretical significance for sampling. Sampling was carried out to saturate a concept extensively and explore the relationship between the concept explored in the study and other concepts to ensure that it was theoretically significant (Saunders et al., 2017). The process of adding the sample for the study was selective. It was grounded in key variables that emerged from the research to contribute to understanding the phenomenon theoretically (Saunders et al., 2017). At that point, the selection of samples was discriminated because individuals and the site selected for the research consisted of people capable of contributing to the analysis that saturated categories and completed the study (Saunders et al., 2017). Since the purpose of the study was to generate information, the selection of more participants for the study ended when saturation was researched. Sampling was ended if the sample units did not provide new information. Therefore, sampling for this qualitative case study research became sufficient when more interviews did not lead to finding new concepts, which eventually led to data saturation.

In this qualitative case study research, purposeful or criterion sampling was applied to selecting the 36 people who took part in the study. The selected sample consisted of people capable of providing me the information that answered the research questions (Cleary et al., 2014) to identify their lived experiences of the barriers and opportunities to implementing sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone.

The people who took part in the research were experts who provided the information needed to inform the phenomenon of interest of this study. In this case, the study sample was drawn using criterion sampling, which allowed the selection of



participants who fit the criteria for this study (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Using criterion sampling allowed the selection of participants who had experienced or are knowledgeable of the issue that was explored in this study, and they met the conditions that led to the generation of information required to answer the research questions that were selected for the study (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

Purposeful or purposive sampling was the sampling strategy used to carefully select a small sample of individuals to conduct in-depth research on the phenomenon of this study. The participants interviewed for this study were key stakeholders who directly or indirectly influenced the formulation of public policy in diverse areas of Sierra Leone. Since this qualitative case study aimed to generate information about citizens' perspectives in Sierra Leone, the selection of participants for the study ended when saturation was reached. The relationship between sampling size and saturation was established when the study entered its theoretical significance for sampling. According to Saunders et al. (2017), sampling ends if the sample units do not provide new information. The process of adding a sample for the study was selective. It is grounded in key variables that emerged from the research to contribute to theoretically gaining knowledge of the phenomenon examined in this study.

### **Instrumentation**

According to Sanjari et al. (2014) and Chan et al.(2013), immersing in the natural environment under study leads to a better understanding of participants' behavior and attitudes. Taking part actively in communicating with participants, observing people in their natural environment, and collecting data from documents and audio-visual materials

required developing personal relationships with participants and visiting the setting where the people and the issue that was explored were located (Chan et al., 2013; Sanjari et al., 2014). In this qualitative research, I was directly responsible for collecting data using diverse data gathering instruments such as face-to-face interviews, direct observation, videotape devices and archived data (Chan et al., 2013; Sanjari et al., 2014).

The interview protocol was one of the instruments that I used in the data collection process of this study, which consisted of qualitative open-ended standard questions about the experiences of participants with the barriers to the effective implementation of sustainable development plans in Sierra Leone. The interview protocol consisted of various sections (Vasileiou et al., 2018), such as a heading for the date and place of the interviews and instructions that guided I about how the interviews were conducted for all respondents. It also contains the interview questions and a statement that concluded the interview. Also, the interview protocol included probing questions as follow-up questions to ensure that interviewees provided a better explanation of the specific information that they did not provide earlier in their responses (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

Face-to-face interviews with the Representative of Government Departments, officials of government agencies, local government officials, representatives of local NGOs, and representatives of private businesses were a key instrument for collecting data from the questions of this research. Conducting face-to-face interviews with respondents in Sierra Leone provided sufficient information that addressed the research problem. The

study participants lived the experience of the phenomenon under study and were adequate for the study. I intended to recruit the participants by email to request interviews.

At the completion of the interviews, all participants exited the study. If there were gaps in the research, a follow-up study of the site and participants was conducted to collect more data that addressed the gaps (Hoover & Morrow, 2015). This meant that participants were called or contacted again to explain or clarify, provide more information on a previous issue. Also, follow-up was carried out to generate more information that enriched the study. Another data collection instrument for this study included documents provided by participants and public documents which contained relevant information for the study (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Patton, 2002).

To develop a better knowledge of the experiences of my participants regarding the barriers to the implementation of sustainable development plans in Sierra Leone: stakeholders' perspective, I planned on interviewing the participants, mainly representatives of government departments and government agencies, local environmental NGOs, and private organizations that conduct their activities in the natural environment who were directly or indirectly involved in formulating and implementing public policy. The data generated from these diverse data collection instruments (face-to-face interviews, private and public documents, and audiotaping) were adequate to respond to the research questions, address the research problem, and enable the researcher to conduct the study. This study used a qualitative research design to examine a study that was not quantifiable, such as examining the barriers to the effective implementation of sustainable development plans in Sierra Leone.

Content validity was critical in developing the new instrument of the research to provide evidence about the rationality of the instrument. Content validity relates to establishing that the content of the interpretation of the study is valid. However, no new instrument was developed for this study because I was the main instrument for collecting the research data. Content validity was established for this study by ensuring that the content of the interpretations of the research was valid. The data collected for this study was based on answering the key research question of the barriers to effectively building coalitions to implement sustainable development plans in Sierra Leone?

### **Data Collection Methods**

The data for this qualitative case study was collected from Sierra Leone, the natural setting of the individuals who shared the phenomenon's shared experience explored in the study. Unlike quantitative research, where participants either received survey questions or participated in a laboratory experiment, in this qualitative study, the study participants were interviewed directly to respond to standard open-ended questions about the problem under study. In this research, the participants were engaged in the research through telephone conversation while they resided in their natural environment (Oltmann, 2016; Sutton & Zubin, 2015).

Conducting this study directly via telephone conversation with respondents who resided in the research site (Sierra Leone) allowed me to comprehend better the complexity and reality of the phenomenon explored in the study (Oltmann, 2016). Speaking directly to the participants of this study allowed me to develop sufficient information about what was going on in that environment.

The key method used to collect data for this study was interviewed. Direct interviews enabled the gathering of rich and substantive data for the study (Oltmann, 2016). Administering open-ended and probing questions to participants led to diverse responses about the experiences and knowledge of the barriers to implementing effective, sustainable development plans such as the NEP of the 1990s. Conducting one-on-one interviews with participants in their natural settings was relevant to retrieving in-depth data. Interviewing was pertinent to gather more data from participants about their experiences of the issue under study and the circumstances in which the issue influenced the respondents' experiences.

I used an audio recording to record data during the interviews. Given that a large volume of data was collected during one-on-one telephone interviews, an audio recording was an essential way to create a record of what the respondent said (Sutton & Austin, 2015). As a qualitative researcher, the expectation is to record data entirely during interviews to reflect all participants' views.

A tape device was useful in recording the data collected from participants during interviews because tape recorders could neither change what interviewees said nor make their words appear slow when they talked fast during the interviews. The audio recording data was transcribed before analyzing it. Data analysis involved various stages. At stage one of this study, I transcribed the data collected from direct open-ended questions, sorted and organized the data into diverse groups or units, and stored the field notes on different storage devices (Creswell, 2009). When analyzing the data for this study, contemporaneous stages occurred when I made sense of an emerging data or idea while

collecting the data directly from respondents through phone interviews in their natural setting (Sierra Leone). This happened in the beginning stages and closing stages of the data analysis process (Patton, 2002).

A follow-up study of the participants was carried out even during the data analysis phase to collect more data that addressed the gaps and ambiguities identified in the study (Patton, 2002). This meant that participants were called or contacted again to explain or clarify, to provide more information on a previous issue. Also, follow-up was carried out to generate more information that enriched the study.

The data of this study were collected and recorded from the research participants during interviews. Most of the data were captured via audio recording. The data collected through interviews were unstructured and required sorting and organizing so that one could make sense of the data. The process of organizing and sorting data to make sense of it was referred to as transcription. Transcription allowed the development of a text-based format of the initial video or audio recording. Transcription created the first step used to organize the data and analyze it. After transcribing the data of this research, the transcripts were presented to participants to review them for accuracy.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Data analysis was organizing data and conducting an extensive evaluation of the data to make sense of the text collected from the field study through direct interviews, audiotaping, and public documents. Sutton and Zubin (2015) added that data analysis was based on revisiting the inquirer's thoughts about the data and posed probing questions during the writing process. Data analysis for this study was done side-by-side with data

collection. It was an ongoing process as there would be a continuous reflection on the data, and notes were kept.

Data analysis for this study involved various stages. Stage one of this study involved transcribing the data collected from direct, open-ended questions, sorting, and organizing the data into diverse groups or units, and storing field notes on different storage devices. When analyzing the data for this study, contemporaneous stages occurred as one made sense of emerging data or ideas while collecting data either in the beginning stages or closing stages of the data analysis process.

The second stage of the data analysis was developing the whole idea of the information and the general meaning of that information (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). General ideas related to information collected from participants about their thoughts, credibility of the information, and the notes recorded about participants' overall experiences (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). The third stage of data analysis for this study was data coding, which related to arranging the data collected from direct, open-ended interviews, images, and audiotapes into segments before relating meaning to the information (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). The text and audio data were segmented into categories and designated specific names to the categories related to the original language that the participants provided during the one-on-one interviews (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Coding qualitative data involves different approaches. The three strategies that qualitative researchers used to code data related to a) labeling text into categories, b) using descriptive coding for where data was stored, and c) developing new categories that are grounded in emerging issues as a result of reflexivity on the data.

The initial phase of the coding process was hand-coding, which was a traditional process involving manually writing key categories of text. By hand-coding the qualitative data, the data collected from direct interviews and public and private documents were categorized. In this case, the researcher developed ideas of what to do with the diverse sections of the data, such as creating topics and files that represented the data (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). After reading the data several times, indices and codes were developed and written on separate paper or in the margins of field notes. The aim was to generate coding classifications and categories after coding and indexing the interviews and field notes.

Although analyzing data for this study began with manual coding, using a computerized software program to analyze the data collected from respondents via direct phone interviews was more efficient and more manageable. NVivo was the qualitative software program used to analyze the data of this study. NVivo enabled me to code, sort, and organize the relevant information required to locate and write qualitative data for the study. Using NVivo to code, the data collected for this study allowed me to code the data faster and more accurately than traditional hand-coding. Moreover, NVivo was advantageous because it allowed me to easily locate the similarities in participants' responses and differences in the codes (Lewis, 2016). This qualitative software program was sufficient for the study because it enabled me to organize visual data files, audio, and text and code the findings from the study into a project.

Reporting the study results after analyzing the data collected from field research was critical for this study. This process relates to turning a complicated issue into a simple way that the reader can easily understand (Austin & Austin, 2015). The objective



was to provide a detailed description of the study that allowed the audience to feel that they participated in the study. The circumstance that relates to the functioning of the phenomenon and what it represents was sufficiently discussed and presented. Although there was no single way of reporting case study research, the report focused on addressing the earlier propositions, allowing the report to relate directly to the research questions.

Given that I was overwhelmed as the volume of data has the potential to distract my attention, following the propositions of the study guided me and prevented potential problems. A better understanding of what was collected from the field study was realized by contrasting and comparing the findings to current literature and allowing the new data to be related to existing data.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of this study was based on critically investigating the phenomenon under study and providing a report that convinced the audience and accepted that it was trustworthy. Trustworthiness is the original condition that the audience of the study used to judge the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study. The credibility of this study is related to the assessment of the data gathered during fieldwork through interviews and documents, interpretations of the data, and concluding the study (Lorelli et al., 2017). The results of the findings of the study could have credibility issues if they were based on biases and predispositions, whether it was done consciously or not. Instead, the conclusion of the investigations was grounded generally on the views of participants and not my views (Lorelli et al., 2017).

In this study, diverse strategies were adopted to ensure the credibility of the research, such as spending much time reviewing transcript data collected from participants and identifying possible distortions in participants' stories. Prolonged engagement with participants when I was conducting the interviews led to trust and developed knowledge of the culture of the people (Lorelli et al., 2017). During field research, decisions were sufficiently made to select issues that were relevant to the study.

The second strategy that was adopted to establish the credibility of this study was triangulation, which was the process of combining diverse methods of data sources and theories to establish that the evidence was accurate. The focus of this approach was to corroborate the credibility of the data collected from diverse sources to define a particular perspective.

The study adopted member checking to ascertain the credibility of the research. In this case, the opinions of participants about the credibility of the study and its interpretations were sought. Member checking was a fundamental approach for indicating the credibility of this study, which was carried out by presenting interpretations, analysis of the data, and conclusions to participants for them to judge the credibility and accuracy of my account (Lorelli et al., 2017). The significance of this approach was that the participants were consulted because they played an important role in supporting the direction of the study.

Reflexivity was a critical component to establish the credibility of this qualitative research. Reflexivity was the process of being aware of oneself consistently with the researcher's ability to communicate, think, and write (Lorelli et al., 2017). During the

research, a journal was kept to record information about the participants' behaviors, feelings, and thinking.

Transferability relates to transferring the findings of an investigation to fit the context of current and future studies (Lorelli et al., 2017). The transferability of the data of this study was established by adopting the qualitative research principles of aligning the problem of the research, choosing the research design and rationale, methodology, theoretical framework, the procedure for the collection of data, selecting participants, the analysis of the data, and interpreting the results (Lorelli et al., 2017). Proper transferability would enable other researchers to benefit from this study and make the same conclusion. Other aspects of the study that showed transferability were the study's methodology, gathering data, and the analysis of the data.

As emphasized in qualitative research, this study carried out a detailed description of the small sample size that took part in the study in the research setting. By carrying out a thick description of the small number of people selected for the study, it enabled the transferability of the findings to different settings (Lorelli et al., 2017). Conducting a detailed description of the sample of this study led to a better understanding of the issue explored in this research, such as barriers to the implementation of sustainable development plans in Sierra Leone: stakeholders' perspective, which was consistent with social and intergenerational equity. Generating better knowledge of the issue under study enabled me to interpret the study and understand its meaning and significance in the research.

The dependability of this study was grounded in coding the data collected from fieldwork in a manner that allowed the audience to comprehend the key themes of the study and to be able to draw related or common conclusions. The dependability of this study was ascertained by triangulating the data derived from multiple and diverse sources to corroborate the evidence and provide a better understanding of the theory of the study. Moreover, the dependability of this study was enhanced by applying an audit trail to generate a record of how the study was conducted so that people were able to understand those methods and make a common conclusion (Lorelli et al., 2017). The audit trail process is related to providing information on the strategies used to interpret data, synthesize data, analyze the data, and the self-reflexive process employed by me to define the inner feelings. This circumstance referred to potential assumptions and biases, which influenced the nature of the research.

Confirmability was a relevant condition that was adopted to establish the trustworthiness of this qualitative research. Confirmability was grounded in the researcher's reflexivity by demonstrating that the issues presented in the dissertation were an accurate reflection of my experiences. Reflexivity is related to being conscious, self-aware, and taking ownership of the perspectives expressed in my writing (Lorelli et al., 2017). This study allowed the expression of self-awareness, opinions, and feelings regarding the topic. As the key instrument in the study, any potential bias about the topic and how to protect the investigation against potential bias was questioned.

Confirmability of the data was expressed by writing a reflection of the interpretation of the findings of the social, gender, cultural, and personal beliefs. I took

responsibility for the outcome of the results. The best researcher undoubtedly accepted the writing and positioned the study's findings within a specific context and time (Lorelli et al., 2017). The study would be attentive and conscious of my perspective's regarding the cultural, political, social, and linguistic origins and the voices of people who participated in the interviews. Reflexivity relates to being aware of the effect of the writing on the people who took part in interviews. The views of the participants of the study, primarily on the issue of marginalization or feeling that they were offended by the writing, were seriously considered. Reflexivity in this study was about considering how the respondents interpreted the writing and their perspectives about how their views were interpreted (Lorelli et al., 2017). Moreover, in this study, active voice and the third-person singular were used to demonstrate strength in clarity in the structure of the sentences and claim ownership of the work.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Developing a particular set of guidelines to address ethical challenges was crucial in qualitative research. The key responsibility of the qualitative researcher was to behave ethically, such as abiding by the guidelines or standards set by an independent review board-IRB (Sanjari et al., 2014). There specific standards were created by universities for anyone researching human subjects. To ensure that researchers obtained informed consent (Sanjari et al., 2014) before conducting any research, they had to seek approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), a research ethics committee established by universities. The study was required to follow the research guidelines created by Walden University to protect the rights of participants. The study respected all individuals who

took part in my and recognized the possible effects of my actions on the individuals during the investigation. I did not take advantage of participants, and they were treated with respect, especially in preserving their anonymity and privacy.

This qualitative case study research recognized the existence of some ethical issues related to the recruitment of samples and the material for the study. For example, failure to protect the confidentiality of individuals who took part in the study and the issue of whether to reward participants were key ethical issues that were addressed in this research. Other ethical issues that emerged from this study related to the potential risks that the participants were exposed to, being deceptive to participants, and failure to protect participants' privacy (Sanjari et al., 2014). These potential ethical issues were prevented by ensuring that I sought the approval of the IRB before collecting data. Every participant signed a consent form that contained their rights before participating in the research.

The informed consent form indicated that the rights of participants were protected when collecting the data for this study (Sanjari et al., 2014). I respected the rights, desires, and values of all individuals who took part in the study. I protected the interests of participants and built trust between I and participants. The informed consent form enabled people who took part in the study to know how much their rights were valued and decide whether they would be able to accommodate the risks related to the study.

A key ethical responsibility that is critical in this study was the protection of the privacy of participants and the data collected from participants in the study. Participants' data and the data collection instruments such as tape and audio devices were handled with

care by securing them in places not accessible to a third party. No one had access to the laptop, the primary computer where participants' data were stored.

The security of the records that consisted of the information collected from the participants during interviews was significant in this study. Also, all the devices used to generate data during the interviews, such as video and audio devices, were handled with maximum care. They were locked in a safe cupboard, and the fact that the researcher lived alone ensured that no one had access to them. The laptop and other external storage devices that stored participants' information were seriously protected by locking them in a safe place when not in use.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter presented an overview of the design and the rationale for applying a qualitative research design in this study. A qualitative research design was selected for this study to allow an extensive study of the barriers to the implementation of the sustainable development plans in Sierra Leone from stakeholders' perspectives.

The chapter indicated that a case study research approach was used in this study. The analysis of the data was based on this framework. The study employed purposeful sampling to conduct one-on-one interviews and collect data from public and private documents. I purposefully selected a small sample to provide information that informs the study.

This chapter discussed trustworthiness and ethical concerns but provided some measures to address these concerns. For example, following the IRB guidelines that everyone researching at Walden University must follow the IRB's advice before carrying

out the research was an essential strategy to deal with any ethical concern that emerged during the research. Requiring an informed consent form to protect the rights of participants was an appropriate strategy to address the potential ethical issues in this study. Ethical concerns were addressed by ensuring that the study was dependable, transferable, and credible to deal with biases, reflexivity, the generalization of the data, and engaging with participants to identify possible distortion of their stories. Other aspects discussed in this chapter related to the method of data collection, instruments of data collection, the data analysis methods, and the treatment of confidential data.



## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to explore the barriers to the effective building of coalitions to implementing sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone. A qualitative research design and a case study technique were considered adequate research approaches used to examine the barriers to the implementation of the NEP of the 1990s in Sierra Leone. The desire to develop an extensive understanding of the phenomenon of this study facilitated the selection of the qualitative research method as the primary approach used to examine the research question of what were the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the barriers to the effective building of coalitions to implement sustainable development policies like the NEP of the 1990s, in Sierra Leone? The qualitative research design was adequate for this study because it was relevant in identifying the perspectives of the citizens of Sierra Leone regarding the barriers to the implementation of the NEP to promote sustainable development in the country. Also, this approach enabled me to make sense of the experiences of a small number of participants about the barriers to the implementation of sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone, such as the NEP, which is the primary social policy area that was examined in this research.

The chapter begins with a review of the purpose and research question of the study. It also consists of relevant information about the research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results. This chapter also systematically describes the process used to collect data from 36 respondents from

the study setting. The transcripts of the data collected from participants were analyzed using coding and themes to identify the findings derived from audio recordings from the respondents.

### **Data Collection**

Friday, January 29th, 2021, at 6:30 pm, the IRB approved the data collection for this study. The approval # was 01-29-21-0286815. Data for this qualitative case study research were collected via interviews using a research journal to note all details of personal biases, such as my opinion and thoughts during the data collection process. Noting my opinions and thoughts while conducting the research in the field of study addressed the issue of subjectivity in the data collection process. Also, having a research journal allowed me to focus on the key idea derived from the information collected from each respondent. All interviews for this study were conducted via telephone, and the interview for each respondent lasted for an hour. As a result of network issues during the interview process, some interviews lasted for more than an hour, such as 1 hour 20 minutes or 1 and a half hours.

I recruited the respondents of this study from various regions in Sierra Leone via email and telephone. I recommended that respondents found a quiet and comfortable place in their homes or offices for the interviews, and I assured the respondents of their privacy. During the recruitment process, no specific conditions were identified as potential determinants of respondents' perception or experiences of the barriers to policy implementation, and there was no indication throughout the interviews that such conditions existed.

During the interviews, I used the interview protocol form to ensure consistency in how all respondents were interviewed. I administered the Consent Form, which consisted of the interview questions (see Appendix), by e-mail to 36 individual respondents to indicate their willingness to participate in the study. All interviews were recorded, and interview transcripts were shared with each respondent shortly after the interview was conducted to review and give their feedback on the reliability and validity of the study. The 36 respondents needed for this study accepted to take part after contacting or reaching out to 50 potential respondents. Six respondents did not take part because their offices were closed due to COVID-19, as they required approval from their superiors. Five other respondents did not participate despite their assurance of their willingness to participate in the study. They cited a tight schedule as the reason for not participating. Three potential respondents did not take part, citing lockdowns and other COVID-19-related issues. Two respondents resided in a remote region of the country where they were experiencing the power and network issues. They had issues charging their phones, and the poor network did not permit calls to go through when they tried to take part in the interview.

Using the snowball sampling technique, I was able to get more samples for the research. I enquired from the first samples about individuals who had similar views like them to participate in the research. This sampling method allowed me to access more samples and, in the end, obtained the 36 respondents' limit and made an arrangement with each individual to be interviewed for at least an hour. As a result of network issues

sometime during the interview process, some interviews lasted for more than an hour, such as 1 hour 20 minutes or 1 and a half hours.

Respondents did not request changes when the interview transcripts were shared. I obtained the exact words of the respondents to conduct the data analysis from the audiotapes and transcripts generated during the interviews. In this study, I did not use observation as a strategy to collect data.

### **Demographics**

This study applied a purposeful or purposive sampling strategy to select a sample population of 36 individuals from different organizations in the public and private sectors who had the expertise and knowledge of the environmental policies, laws, and regulations in Sierra Leone. Eligibility was based on being an adult of age 18 and over, resided in Sierra Leone, and knowledgeable of environmental issues in Sierra Leone. The respondents of this study were governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders who can directly or indirectly influence the formulation and implementation of environmental policies in Sierra Leone. The demographics of the respondents of the research are in Table 1. The researcher used 36 respondents to reach data saturation and adequately answered the key research question of the study.

**Table 1**

*Demographics of the Participant*

Respondent code	Gender	Status
GA-01	Male	Director
GD-02	Male	Director
CC-03	Male	Deputy Mayor
NGO-04	Male	Director

Respondent code	Gender	Status
NGO-05	Male	Assistant Director
GD-06	Male	Agriculture Officer
GD-07	Male	Director
GD-08	Male	Agriculture Officer
GD-09	Male	Director
NGO-10	Male	Director
DC-11	Female	Senior Environmental Officer
CC-12	Male	Environmental Officer
CC-13	Male	Environmental Officer
DC-14	Male	Environmental Officer
DC-15	Male	Environmental Officer
DC-16	Male	Environmental Officer
DC-17	Male	Deputy Dist. Council Chairman
GA-18	Male	EPA Officer
GA-19	Male	EPA Officer
PSO-20	Male	Private Sector Organization
CC21	Female	Environmental Officer
GA-22	Male	Mining Compliance Officer
GA-23	Male	Tourism Board
CC-24	Male	Environmental Officer
GD-25	Male	Forestry Officer
GD-26	Male	Forestry Officer
DC-27	Male	Environmental Officer
PSO-28	Male	Private Sector Officer
NGO-29	Male	Conservation Officer
GA-30	Male	Environmental Officer
CC-31	Male	Environmental Officer
DC-32	Male	Environmental Officer
DES-33	Female	Dept of Environmental Sciences
GA-34	Male	Director
GD-35	Male	Permanent Secretary
NGO-36	Male	Director

### Data Analysis

Individual respondents answered all three main questions and three follow-up questions. I analyzed the information obtained from individual respondents to get the

actual meaning of the information provided by each respondent during the interview. I examined the initial proposition of the study (Score, 2017) and re-examined the literature review of the study to ensure that the data that addressed the scope of the research question was adequately analyzed. I used Sutton and Zubin (2015) stages of data analysis, such as transcribing the data, developing the whole idea and general meaning of the information collected from participants, arranging the data, and reporting the study results after analyzing the data. These stages collectively allowed data analysis from the interviews and document review for the study.

I put the data collected from interviews and document review in an organized database (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Although the data analysis for this study began with manual coding, I used NVivo, a computerized qualitative software program, to analyze the data collected from document review and interviews. I used NVivo to store the data collected from individual respondents, managed the data, coded the data, and identified the study's key categories and emerging themes. Putting the data into codes allowed me to arrange the transcript data to shorten the description of particular sections of the texts. The data were segmented into categories and designated specific names to the categories (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Using NVivo, I was able to code, sort, and organize the data sufficiently into the database.

After analyzing the data, I reorganized and categorized them into themes. Categories were specifically relevant to the study's research question (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Combining the data and categorizing the themes produced various patterns that sufficiently responded to or answered the research question (Sutton & Zubin, 2015).

When interpreting the ideas/concepts that produced the themes, triangulating various sources of information that gave meaning to the research question transcript data collected from respondents was carried out (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). The respondents' opinions about the barriers to policy implementation were derived from themes that were categorized into a particular order using the emerging themes.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

This qualitative case study research only used textual data to ensure the study's findings' reliability and validity and establish the study's trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of this research was established using four qualitative research constructs: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. In qualitative research, researchers use dependability to assess how participants evaluate the study's findings, interpretations, and recommendations due to the study data. Researchers can confirm the research findings completed by other researchers using confirmability (Lorelli et al., 2017).

### **Credibility**

The credibility of this study is related to the assessment of the data collected from interviews and documents review, interpretation of the data, and conclusion of the study (Lorelli et al., 2017). The results of the findings of the study were not based on my biases and predispositions. Instead, the conclusion of the investigations was grounded on the views of participants and not my views (Lorelli et al., 2017). Before starting the collection of the data for this study, I secured the approval of the IRB (Sanjari et al., 2014).

To ensure the credibility of this study, I used member checking and ensured the data saturation criteria were achieved. Member checking was a fundamental approach for indicating credibility, which was carried out by presenting the interpretations, data analysis, and conclusions to participants to judge the credibility and accuracy of my account (Lorelli et al., 2017). The significance of this approach was that participants were consulted because they played an important role in supporting the direction of the study. Individual respondents received transcripts of recorded interviews for their review and approval. Interviews were conducted via telephone due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Interviews lasted for an hour, and I asked all respondents the same interview questions throughout the interviews. Due to network issues, some interviews lasted for more than an hour, such as 1 hour and a half. Thirty-six respondents were interviewed for the study, and all the interviews were recorded. Respondents received the transcripts of recorded interviews to review and provide their opinions if they wanted to add more information or if there was missing information relevant to the study. Respondents were satisfied because none of them provided responses indicating that there was missing information or requesting that more information should be added to the study.

The second strategy that was adopted to establish the credibility of this study was triangulation, which is the process of combining diverse methods of data sources and theories to establish that the evidence was accurate. The focus of this approach was to corroborate the credibility of the data collected from diverse sources to define a particular perspective.



Reflexivity was a critical component applied to establish the credibility of this qualitative research. Reflexivity was being aware of oneself consistently with the researcher's ability to communicate, think, and write (Lorelli et al., 2017). During the research, I kept a journal to record information about the participants' behaviors, feelings, and thinking.

### **Transferability**

Transferability is related to transferring the findings of an investigation to fit the context of current and future studies (Lorelli et al., 2017). The transferability of the data of this study was established by adopting the qualitative research principles of aligning the problem of the research, choosing the research design and rationale, methodology, theoretical framework, the procedure for the collection of data, selecting participants, the analysis of the data, and interpreting the results (Lorelli et al., 2017). Proper transferability enabled other researchers to benefit from this study and make the same conclusion as this study (Thorne, 2021). Those aspects collectively showed the transferability of the study.

I provided an extensive description of the nature of the research to allow inquirers to benefit from the study and make the same conclusion after analyzing the study. I described the methodology extensively, primarily collecting and analyzing the data. The research findings were analyzed to fit future studies. I ensured that the interview transcripts were the real recorded transcripts. To ensure the accuracy of the data, I used member checking during the data collection process. The study carried out a detailed description of the sample size that takes part in the study in the context of the research

setting. By carrying out a thick description of the people selected for the study, it enabled the transferability of the findings to different settings (Lorelli et al., 2017). Conducting a detailed description of the sample of this study leads to a better understanding of the phenomenon explored in this study. Generating better knowledge of the issue under study enables the researcher to interpret the study and understand its meaning and significance in the research.

Also, I examined research findings that have been published to identify the level of agreement between current and past studies. A lot of research has been carried out on barriers to policy implementation, and the findings of the study can be used in other settings, given that I carried out a thorough description of the findings.

### **Dependability**

Dependability allowed the reader to have a detailed understanding of the research and the process used to collect the data for the study (Moon et al., 2016). To ensure the reliability of this study, I provided a detailed report of the research findings, which allowed the same work to be done in the future. The dependability of this study was ascertained by triangulating the data derived from multiple and diverse sources to corroborate the evidence and provided a better understanding of the theory of the study. Moreover, the dependability of this study was enhanced by applying an audit trail to generate a record of how the study was conducted so that people would be able to understand those methods and make a common conclusion (Lorelli et al., 2017). The audit trail process is related to providing information on the strategies used to interpret data, synthesize data, analyze the data, and the self-reflexive process that I employed to

define the inner feelings. This circumstance refers to potential assumptions and biases that might influence the research's nature. In addition, the dependability of this study was ensured through member checking. These research findings indicated in the study were followed to obtain the findings and arrived at a similar conclusion if future researchers repeat the same study in a similar context and apply the same research methods (Moon et al., 2016).

### **Confirmability (Objectivity)**

Confirmability promotes the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Confirmability demonstrated that the accuracy of the issues presented in the study reflected the researcher's experiences. Confirmability was grounded in the researcher's reflexivity by demonstrating that the issues presented in the dissertation would be an accurate reflection of the researcher's experiences (Moon et al., 2016). Reflexivity relates to being conscious, self-aware, and taking ownership of the perspectives expressed in the researcher's writing (Lorelli et al., 2017). This study allowed the expression of self-awareness, opinions, and feelings regarding the topic. I took responsibility for the outcome of the results.

### **Results**

This qualitative case study research was carried out to explore the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders regarding the barriers to the implementation of sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone. The research question that guided the analysis of this study includes: What are the barriers to the effective building coalitions for the implementation of sustainable development policies such as the NEP in Sierra

Leone? The research question was divided into six constituent parts, and an interview question and codes that supported each part were generated (see Table 2). The emerging themes from the coded data of interview transcripts and document review, presented in Table 2, showed that respondents generally believe that there is a lack of effective stakeholders' engagement by elected and unelected government officials to include their views and opinions when discussing environmental policies that targeted their interests before implementation, posed serious barriers to effectively build coalitions for the implementation of the NEP in Sierra Leone.

**Table 2**

*Constituent Parts of the Research Questions, Interview Question, and Codes*

Constituent parts of the Research Questions	Interview questions	Codes
Stakeholder influence in policy implementation	How can stakeholders influence the implementation of environmental policies and laws in Sierra Leone	A successful environmental policy implementation requires stakeholders' participation
Experiences with the National Environmental Policy and stakeholder's engagement	What do you think of the decision to pass the NEP in the 1990s? What are the benefits of engaging stakeholder groups in the Implementation of environmental Policies and laws in Sierra Leone?	The relevance of the NEP and benefits of engaging stakeholder groups and key stakeholders
Meeting the needs of your organization.	Explain how elected and unelected government officials met the needs of your organization when implementing the NEP of the 1990s and other Environmental laws and Regulations?	Supporting the needs of environmental policy implementers.
Potential conflict for failing to carry out and inclusive process in the environmental policy implementation agenda	What action would your organization take if it is not fully involved in the implementation process of the environmental policies of Sierra Leone?	Lack of support for the effective implementation of environmental policies.
Stakeholder participation In policy implementation	How can elected and unelected government officials engage stakeholder groups to implement Environmental policies and	Strategies to engaging stakeholders
Supporting the	What role do you think your organization	Providing the support

Constituent parts of the Research Questions	Interview questions	Codes
environmental policy implementation process.	can play in the implementation of environmental policies in Sierra Leone?	needed for the effective implementation of environmental policies.

## Themes

The respondents in this study were asked six research questions. I used NVivo to arrange and organize the data collected from respondents into codes, categories, and themes, which came up from the data analysis (Lewis, 2016). Below are the six themes which came from the data analysis and the codes that combined to create the individual themes:

Codes	Themes	Participants	Themes%
A successful environmental Policy implement requires stakeholders' participation.	The perceived role of stakeholders in Environmental policy implementation.	36	100
The relevance of the NEP and the benefits of engaging stakeholder groups and key stakeholders.	Perceived benefits of stakeholders' engagement.	36	100
Supporting the needs of environmental policy implementers.	Working collectively to meet the needs of organizations that contribute to policy implementation.	36	100
Lack of support for the effective implementation of environmental policies.	Perceived challenges in the implementation of environmental policies.	27	75

Strategies to engaging Stakeholders.	Empowering stakeholder groups to participate in environmental policy discussion and implement.	36	100
Providing the support needed for effective policy Implementation.	Act as the main interface between elected officials and targeted beneficiaries of the of the policies to ensure the effective implementation of environmental policies.	27	75

### **Emerging Themes**

#### **Theme 1: The Perceived Role of Stakeholders in Environmental Policy**

##### **Implementation**

The first theme emerged from the analysis of the data collected from direct interviews and document review. Thirty-six respondents, who represented 100% of the sample population, maintained that stakeholders who were the targeted beneficiaries of the environmental policies in Sierra Leone are relevant and should involve in all policy discussions because they were the focal point in environmental policy implementation in the country. Respondent GA-01, GD-02, CC-03, NGO-04, NGO-05, GD-06, GD-07, GD-08, GD-09, NGO-10, DC-11, CC-12, CC-13, DC-14, DC-15, DC-16, DC-17, GA-18, GA-19, PSO-20, CC-21, GA-22, GA-22, GA-23, CC-24, GD-25, GD- 26, DC-27, PSO-28, NGO-29, GA-30, CC-31, DC-32, DES-33, GA-34, GD-35, NGO-36 maintained that key stakeholders like paramount chiefs, councilors, and village heads and stakeholder groups such as CSOs could influence the effective implementation of the policies because people respected their leaders and institutions that operated in their

communities. Respondents GA-01, GA-19, CC-24, and NGO-29 indicated that key stakeholders like paramount chiefs were the custodians of the land that the environmental policies and laws sought to protect. Adding the opinions and contributions of key stakeholders in the policy document before implementation could produce a comprehensive policy document, which would make them feel that the inputs of people in the targeted communities were considered. The 1994 NEP corroborated the responses of the respondents as it clearly stated that all Sierra Leoneans should live in a sustainable environment that was adequate for their well-being and encouraged communities and people to take part in all efforts that led to the protection of the natural environment.

### **Theme 2: The Perceived Benefits of Stakeholders' Engagement**

The second emerging theme was derived from the data analysis via interviews and document review. Thirty-six respondents representing 100% of the sample population maintained that engaging stakeholders to participate in policy discussions could lead to several benefits and prevent potential barriers to building coalitions to implement sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone. Respondents GA-01, GD-02, CC-03, NGO-04, NGO-05, GD-06, GD-07, GD-08, GD-09, NGO-10, DC-11, CC-12, CC-13, DC-14, DC-15, DC-16, DC-17, GA-18, GA-19, PSO-20, CC-21, GA-22, GA-22, GA-23, CC-24, GD-25, GD-26, DC-27, PSO-28, NGO-29, GA-30, CC-31, DC-32, DES-33, GA-34, GD-35, NGO-36 indicated that including the opinions, recommendations, and suggestions of key stakeholders like community leaders, councilors, paramount chiefs and stakeholder groups like CSOs, could build trust between stakeholders and elected and unelected government officials, allowed people in

targeted communities to own and support the policies, as well as getting relevant feedback from the beneficiaries about the potential benefits and flaws of the policies. Respondents GA-01, GD-02, CC-03, NGO-04, NGO-10, DC-15, DC-16, GA-18, GA-19, PSO-20, and GA-22 added that engaging key stakeholders when discussing and implementing the environmental policies, laws, and regulations could allow them to take ownership of the policies, knew why the policies were created, participated in enforcing the environmental bylaws, promoted trust between stakeholders and government officials, and allowed information about environmental protection to filter down to the last person in their communities, especially in forest reserve areas. In addition, the respondents maintained that engaging stakeholders effectively could allow them to be more educated about the policies, especially regarding the dangers of environmental degradation and the benefits of protecting the environment.

**Theme 3: Working Collectively to Meeting the Needs of Organizations that Contribute to Policy Implementation**

The third theme emerged from the data analysis via interviews and document review. Thirty-six respondents represented 100% of the sample population. Respondents GA-01, GD-02, CC-03, NGO-04, NGO-05, GD-06, GD-07, GD-08, GD-09, NGO-10, DC-11, CC-12, CC-13, DC-14, DC-15, DC-16, DC-17, GA-18, GA-19, PSO-20, CC-21, GA-22, GA-22, GA-23, CC-24, GD-25, GD- 26, DC-27, PSO-28, NGO-29, GA-30, CC-31, DC-32, DES-33, GA-34, GD-35, NGO-36 indicated that if elected representatives work collectively with government officials at regional, district, and local levels, and engaged private businesses when formulating and implementing the environmental



policies, their needs would be met, and got more support that could facilitate the successful implementation of policies. Respondents CC-03, GD-06, CC-12, GA-18, GA-19, PSO-20, GA-22, GA-23, and GD-35 maintained that elected government officials did not meet the needs of their organizations because officials in their organizations were not fully involved in the process of formulating the policies. They also cited that the policy instrument was not clearly defined to address overlaps and collision of functions among environmental players. It failed to fully involve nongovernmental stakeholders like private businesses, which conduct their activities in the environmental when formulating the environmental policies. However, respondents indicated that government officials at regional, district, and local levels participated fully in the implementation of the environmental policies and laws by holding meetings with key stakeholders like paramount chiefs to inform them of the environmental laws and working with residents in different communities to discourage them from carrying out negative environmental practices such as sand mining, indiscriminate disposal of refuse waste, charcoal burning, and illegal timber logging.

#### **Theme 4: Perceived Challenges in the Implementation of Environmental Policies.**

The fourth emerging theme resulted from the data analysis gathered via interviews and document review. Respondents GA-01, GD-02, CC-03, NGO-04, NGO-05, GD-06, GD-07, GD-08, GD-09, NGO-10, DC-11, CC-12, CC-13, DC-14, DC-15, DC-16, DC-17, GA-18, GA-19, PSO-20, CC-21, GA-22, GA-22, GA-23, CC-24, GD-25, GD-26, DC-27, represented 75% of the sample population maintained that they were fully involved in the process of formulating and implementing the environmental policies

and laws, which was consistent with the goals of their organizations. They added that if their organizations were not involved in the environmental policy implementation process, it might lead to barriers to successfully implementing the environmental policies, laws, and regulations in Sierra Leone. Respondents CC-03, NGO-04, NGO-05, GD-06, GD-07, GD-08, GD-09, NGO-10, DC-11, CC-12, GA-18, GA-19, PSO-20, CC-21, GA-22, GA-22, GA-23, and GD-35 intimated that their organization were not fully involved in the discussion of the policies and mentioned the challenges that they faced in implementing the environmental laws across the country such as communities alleged of not being well informed or educated of the environmental policies, regulations, and laws, which meant people were stuck in the old way of doing things. Respondents maintained that a lack of alternative sources of livelihood support forest head communities affected by the environmental policies, regulations, and laws designed to prevent deforestation. Unelected government officials like environmental officials needed more manpower and other technological resources to create awareness and sensitization. The lack of basic logistics and equipment poses challenges in implementing environmental policies in Sierra Leone. Respondents added that the environmental sector was experiencing low budget allocations and untimely arrival of funds to support their activities in the field, a collision of functions between or among environmental actors; and governance issues regarding the laws, which were old and needed to be reviewed, strengthen, and modify the penalties for breaking the laws to achieve the desired effect. The 1972 wildlife Act and the 1988 Forestry Act were still in place. The penalty of Le 5.00 (five Leones) for killing an animal and cutting down a tree is still the same in 2021 as it was in 1972 and

1988, respectively. Also, respondent GD-35 mentioned that the environmental policy instrument was not clearly defined to address overlaps of the functions for environmental players, flouting of the provisions of the EPA Act such as EIA by private businesses, and connivance issues practiced by some senior government officials posed barriers to the effective implementation of environmental laws in Sierra Leone.

**Theme 5: Empowering Stakeholder Groups and key Stakeholders to Participate in the Formulation and Implementation of Environmental Policies.**

The fifth emerging theme from the data analysis gathered via interviews and document review represents 100% of the sample population. GA-01, GD-02, CC-03, NGO-04, NGO-05, GD-06, GD-07, GD-08, GD-09, NGO-10, DC-11, CC-12, CC-13, DC-14, DC-15, DC-16, DC-17, GA-18, GA-19, PSO-20, CC-21, GA-22, GA-22, GA-23, CC-24, GD-25, GD- 26, DC-27, PSO-28, NGO-29, GA-30, CC-31, DC-32, DES-33, GA-34, GD-35, NGO-36 respondents maintained that empowering stakeholders who were the targeted beneficiaries of the policies, using diverse engagement strategies was relevant for the successful implementation of the environmental policies such as allowing stakeholders to participate in meetings and training programs for the protection of the environment, conducting outreach programs through radio and TV, disseminating messages in local languages using jingles about the benefits of protecting the environment, and consulting stakeholders to seek their opinions about the policies when discussing them. Respondents NGO-05, GA-19, GA-23, CC-24, GD- 26, PSO-28, and GA-34 indicated other strategies that elected and unelected government officials could use to engage stakeholders in the process of implementing environmental policies like

effective sensitization of the public, creating awareness, promoting environmental education, encouraging people to plant a tree, informing stakeholders about the policies and allowing them to validate them before implementation, providing incentives and alternative sources of livelihood to landowners in forest reserve areas, and engaging key stakeholders like paramount chiefs who are the custodian of the land and are highly respected by people in their communities to enforce environmental byelaws.

**Theme 6: Providing the Necessary Support for the Effective Implementation of Environmental Policies**

The sixth emerging result resulted from the data analysis gathered via interviews and document review representing 100% of the sample population. GA-01, GD-02, CC-03, NGO-04, NGO-05, GD-06, GD-07, GD-08, GD-09, NGO-10, DC-11, CC-12, CC-13, DC-14, DC-15, DC-16, DC-17, GA-18, GA-19, PSO-20, CC-21, GA-22, GA-22, GA-23, CC-24, GD-25, GD-26, DC-27, PSO-28, NGO-29, GA-30, CC-31, DC-32, DES-33, GA-34, GD-35, NGO-36 respondents indicated the role of government officials at regional, district, and local levels in promoting the successful implementation of the policies such as disseminating the environmental policies to all communities, creating awareness, sensitizing the public, and creating environmental education programs in different communities. Respondents GA-01, GD-02, CC-03, NGO-10, DC-11, CC-12, CC-13, DC-14, DC-15, DC-16, DC-17, GA-18, GA-19, GA-23, CC-24, GD-25, and DC-27 added that their organizations promoted the conservation of the forest and the protection of Biological Diversity. Respondents DC-11, CC-12, CC-13, DC-14, DC-15, DC-16, DC-17, GA-18, GA-19, GA-23, CC-24, and DC-27 maintained that they enacted

environment byelaws and enforced those local laws by levying fines on people who violated them. Respondents CC-03, DC-11, CC-12, CC-13, DC-14, DC-15, DC-16, CC-21, GA-23, CC-24, and DC-27 indicated that their local councils carried out solid waste management to maintain a clean and healthy environment. Solid waste was managed in land field sites where waste was disposed of. Respondent GD-08 maintained that their organization help MDAs become efficient in public service delivery. They provide logistics and equipment like computers to MDAs and technical training to personnel of all MDAs, including those in the agriculture sector.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the purpose of this qualitative case study and the research questions that this study intended to address. I provided the demographics of the research respondents and the data collection and data analysis process. In this chapter, I also provided the strategies applied to facilitate the trustworthiness of the research study. I analyzed the data collected from interviews and documents reviewed to enable me to understand the volume of data collected for this study. The data collected for this study was put into categories and eventually placed them into themes. The result of the study was grounded in or based on the responses provided to me by respondents to the research questions and documents reviewed, which related to the barriers to policy implementation, such as the NEP introduced by elected representatives of Sierra Leone, in the 1990s. Based on respondents' responses and the data collected from reviewed documents, it occurred to me that there is a need for the redesigning of policies to allow the participation of and engagement of stakeholders who

are the targeted beneficiaries of the environmental policies in Sierra Leone. Engaging key stakeholders like paramount chiefs and stakeholder groups like CSOs to include their views and opinions when formulating and implementing environmental policies in Sierra Leone would minimize the barriers to implementation, build trust between stakeholders and elected government officials, generate wider support for the policies, and would allow the stakeholders to own the policies. So, this means elected government officials need to create sound and effective environmental policies that include stakeholders' opinions to address the issues of the barriers to environmental policy implementation in Sierra Leone.

Chapter 5 presents an interpretation of the findings of this research, a discussion of the limitations of the study, implications for practice, and social change. Chapter 5 ends with the study's implication for theory.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to explore the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the barriers to the effective building of coalitions for the implementation of sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone. Due to the nature of this research topic, the research method chosen to respond to the research questions of this study was a qualitative method. A qualitative research approach identified the answers posed by the research question for the key policy area explored in this research, which was the NEP of the 1990s. A qualitative research design was considered adequate for this research because it allows the generation of an extensive understanding of the meaning of the main policy area examined in the study, primarily using words, not numbers (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). The key findings of this study showed that respondents generally believe that the lack of effective stakeholders' engagement by elected and unelected government officials, to include their views and opinions when discussing environmental policies that target their interests before implementation, poses serious barriers to effectively building coalitions for the implementation of the NEP in Sierra Leone.

I recruited 36 respondents for the interviews after securing Walden University IRB's approval, as indicated in Chapter 3 of the study. The respondents in this study were asked the same interview questions, and I used respondents' responses to create the emerging themes which answered the research question of this study. In this chapter, I situate the research results within the context of the research literature and examine the

research results to provide the study's findings, the limitations, recommendations, and implications of the study, and the conclusion.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The research question addressed in this study was: What were the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the barriers to the effective building of coalitions for the implementation of sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone? I interviewed 36 respondents who took part in the study and coded the data transcribed from the interview transcripts of the study respondents. I used NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, to organize and arrange transcribed data into specific codes that were combined to create themes that answered the research question of this study. After an extensive analysis of the transcribed data collected from respondents' interview transcripts, I obtained six themes from the codes, which included: the perceived role of stakeholders in environmental policy implementation, the perceived benefits of stakeholders' engagement, working collectively to meet the needs of organizations that contribute to policy implementation, perceived challenges in the implementation of environmental policies, empowering stakeholder groups and key stakeholders to participate in the formulation and implementation of environmental policies, and providing the necessary support for the effective implementation of environmental policies.

The literature that I evaluated for this study maintained that Sierra Leone was experiencing the effects of climate change due to environmental degradation caused by indiscriminate and negative environmental activities in the country, such as sand mining,



illegal timber logging, indiscriminate mining of minerals, bad farming practices, and charcoal burning. Although the parliament of Sierra Leone passed legislation to address the challenges of environmental degradation like the NEPs of the 1990s and other environmental laws and regulations such as the Wildlife Act of 1972 and the Forestry Act of 1988, yet elected and unelected government officials face barriers in the implementation of environmental policies and laws in Sierra Leone (Johnson, 2016; Kamara, 2015). The literature review discussed the significance of including stakeholder groups who are the targeted beneficiaries of the environmental policies when discussing and formulating them because environmental policies and laws affect their interests (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015; SEG, 2017), given that a large part of the population relied on accessing environmental resources to support their livelihoods. Engaging stakeholder groups during the policy implementation process could lead to transparency and better decision that could facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the environmental policy goals (Gyam & Ampomah, 2016; Johnson, 2016; Kamara, 2015). Also, engaging stakeholders built trust between stakeholder groups and key stakeholders, and government officials (Gyam & Ampomah, 2016; Munro et al., 2017). The SEG (2017) indicated that engaging stakeholders strengthened the relationship between elected and unelected government officials and stakeholders regarding the successful implementation of the environmental policies in Sierra Leone. Trust and transparency allowed stakeholders to take ownership of the policies and support their implementation (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015). Stakeholder conflict occurred due to differences in thinking, needs, and goals (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Hutahaeen, 2016). Excluding community

stakeholder groups in designing and implementing policies that affected their communities led to competing positions with elected government officials (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Hutahaean, 2016). To establish the relationship between published literature and the themes generated in this study and enhance the research structure, I clustered or placed them with the findings generated/obtained from the theoretical framework and the literature review, as indicated in Chapter 2. The themes from this study provided the answers to the key research question. Below is the analysis of the six themes that emerged from the transcribed transcripts of respondents' interviews and document review.

### **Alignment of Findings to the ACF Theory**

The main findings of this study related to the role of stakeholders in policy implementation, perceived benefits of stakeholders' engagement, the perceived challenges in the implementation of environmental policies, working collectively to meet the needs of organizations that contribute to policy implementation, empowering stakeholder groups and key stakeholders to participate in the formulation and implementation of environmental policies, and providing the necessary support for the effective implementation of environmental policies. I discovered that key stakeholders and stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone, like paramount chiefs and community leaders, Private Business Organizations, and CSOs that were the targeted beneficiaries of the policies, were not sufficiently engaged in formulating and implementing the environmental policies. The environmental policy process was not inclusive of the beneficiaries of the environmental policies who shared common beliefs and standards and

had the potential to influence government policies. For example, stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone like the Women's Forum shared common belief systems and had well-organized movements based on influencing public policy. The failure to include the views and opinions of the targeted beneficiaries of the policies created by elected government representatives in Sierra Leone created serious obstacles to implementing the environmental policies.

The findings of this study extended the ACF model and closely aligned with the ACF theory because the stipulations of the ACF theory, such as its reference to stakeholders as groups of individuals who had a common system of beliefs and engaged in a well-organized movement, primarily to change their belief system into the policy (Cairey, 2014), was representative of the actions of the Women's Forum in Sierra Leone. Like the Women's Forum, stakeholder groups in Sierra are well-organized groups with common belief systems that seek to influence public policy. As indicated in the ACF model, the aim of the stakeholder groups like the Women's Forum was primarily to change their belief system into the policy (Cairey, 2014). Another development that showed close alignment of the findings of this study and the ACF model that guided the study related to the issue of competing for positions and the existence of extreme conflict between stakeholder organizations and elected and unelected government representatives when implementing the environmental policies. Because the environmental policy implementation process was not inclusive enough to include the targeted beneficiaries, stakeholders did not fully support or participate in the implementation of the policies.

This ACF model assessed extreme competing positions or conflicts in policymaking and policy change (Cornelius, 2015). So, leaving out the views and opinions of non-governmental stakeholders and some governmental stakeholders when formulating and implementing the environmental policies created conflict and competing positions between the beneficiaries of the policies and the elected government representatives who created the policies. So, the findings of this study extended the ACF model and closely align with the ACF theory because of the conflict between stakeholders and elected government officials for the lack of inclusiveness of the beneficiaries in the formulation of the policies and the desire of stakeholder groups that shared common beliefs to influence public policy as discovered in this study, were boldly defined by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith in 1993 (Sabatier & Weible, 2007) to assess extreme competing positions or conflict in the process of policymaking and policy change (Cornelius, 2015).

### **The Perceived Role of Stakeholders in Environmental Policy Implementation**

Theme 1 was obtained from analyzing data gathered via interviews and document reviews. I discovered that stakeholders were instrumental in the implementation of environmental policies. Key stakeholders like paramount chiefs, village heads, and councilors were influential in their communities.

The idea of involving stakeholders' views in the discussion of environmental policies was consistent with the provisions of the NEP introduced in the 1990s. The NEP suggested the participation of Sierra Leoneans in all efforts that led to the protection of the natural environment. Paramount chiefs were the custodians of the lands in the rural

areas, and people in their communities respected them. Their subjects accept the local laws that they pass in their communities. Stakeholders should be consulted for them to validate the environmental laws before implementation (Yaro et al., 2017). As targeted beneficiaries of the environmental policies, key stakeholders' opinions, views, and contributions were relevant (Yaro et al., 2017). Also, stakeholder groups like CSOs and NGOs could influence the successful implementation of environmental policies, laws, and regulations through direct advocacy on TV and radio discussions to gain access to elected and unelected officials when the designated policies did not address the interests of their communities.

In addition, key stakeholders could influence the effective implementation of environmental byelaws if elected, and unelected government officials did not sufficiently involve them in discussing environmental policies to prevent negative environmental agricultural practices in their communities, such as overharvesting of timber across the country (Sierra Leone Environment-Current Issues, 2021), sand mining, and charcoal burning. As the voice of the people in the targeted communities at district and local levels, key stakeholders like paramount chiefs and community leaders, and stakeholder groups such as CSOs and local NGOs, could influence the successful implementation of environmental policies, laws, and regulations because they were respected in their communities and were capable of supporting government officials to implement the policies successfully (Diaz et al., 2017; Requirements Techniques, 2017). According to Lemke and Harris-Wai (2015), stakeholders had great power in their communities, and they might disapprove of or support policies that included their views in the discussions.

Lack of support for the policies poses barriers or challenges to their successful implementation.

### **The Perceived Benefits of Stakeholders' Engagement**

Theme 2 was obtained from analyzing data gathered via interviews and document reviews. I discovered the perceived benefits of stakeholders' engagement, which elected and unelected government officials could derive when stakeholders were involved in implementing environmental policies and laws in Sierra Leone. Stakeholder engagement in Sierra Leone was significant because it could facilitate the introduction of environmental policies that were sound, effective, and generally accepted by the people who were directly targeted by the policies (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015; O'Rourke et al., 2016). According to Gyan and Ampomah (2016) and Hutahaeon (2016), engaging relevant stakeholders affected by the proposed public policies might reduce potential barriers to implementing the policies. Consulting with the people affected by the environmental policies could better understand the policies, appreciate, and accept them (Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015; Salum et al., 2017). Trust was significant to sustain the relationships between stakeholders and elected and unelected government officials. Gyan and Ampomah (2016) and Rountree and Baldwin (2018) maintained that a lack of trust in elected officials could be a critical factor in causing stakeholder conflict. The successful outcome of policy implementation is dependent on the support that the beneficiaries of the policies give to that process, especially when government officials sufficiently engage them to include their opinions and views (Salum et al., 2017). Engaging stakeholders could enable elected and unelected government officials to learn about stakeholder

groups' opinions and make policies that align with the opinions of stakeholders with the policy document. Including stakeholders' inputs in the policy document could facilitate the trustworthiness and credibility of elected and unelected government officials (Chepkoech & Waiganjo, 2015; Lemke & Wai, 2015; Taylor, 2019).

Engaging stakeholders in Sierra Leone, such as traditional leaders, local villagers, CSOs, and youth development organizations to include their views in the final policy document was significant to avoid conflict between elected officials and stakeholders who were directly affected by the proposed policies (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; SEG, 2017). Also, engaging stakeholders that were targeted by the environmental policies when discussing them was relevant to minimize competing positions between beneficiaries like the business community and elected and unelected government officials, private businesses, which have vested interests in exploiting environmental resources like minerals and timber, focused more on profitability than environmental protection. So, engaging them sufficiently to educate them about the danger of environmental degradation and the benefits of protecting the environment is relevant, and conflict could be minimized or avoided (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; SEG, 2017). Engaging stakeholders could lead to changes that might address the issue of the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone. Successful stakeholder-supported implementation of sustainable development policies could lead to economic growth that could improve quality of life.

### **Working Collectively to Meeting the Needs of Organizations that Contribute to Policy Implementation**

Theme 3 emerged from the analysis of data gathered via respondents' interviews and document review. I discovered that working collectively to meeting the needs of organizations that contribute to policy implementation was relevant for the successful implementation of the policies. The inclusion of stakeholders in Sierra Leone in the discussion of policies that affect their belief systems might be relevant to seeking their support and avoiding conflict in the implementation of policies; yet elected officials might face some problems in the process of engaging stakeholders (Lemke & Wai, 2015; Taylor, 2019). Some respondents maintained that the needs of nongovernmental stakeholders like local government councils and agencies were not met by elected representatives during the formulation of the environmental policies, laws, and regulations in Sierra Leone, such as allowing them to provide their views and opinions during the discussion of the policies. The EPA, which had the authority to lead the implementation of the environmental policies and protect the environment, did not have sufficient regulatory authority (Phulkerda et al., 2017) to implement the policies. As a result, it was unable to include the views of all relevant institutions when formulating the policies. The EPA might not have had sufficient governance to support efforts to facilitate inter-organizational cooperation (Phulkerda et al., 2017) between the EPA and governmental entities at national and local levels directly related to the environmental sector. Phulkerda et al. (2017) maintained that a limited reach that did not involve all stakeholder groups affected by the policies creates barriers to implementing policies.



### **Perceived Challenges in the Implementation of Environmental Policies**

Theme 4 emerged from the analysis of data gathered via respondents' interviews and document review. I discovered that elected and unelected government officials in Sierra Leone experienced barriers in implementing environmental policies passed by parliament. Elected and unelected government officials experienced barriers in implementing environmental policies because they did not sufficiently engage stakeholders who were the targeted beneficiaries when discussing the policies. According to a 2017 report provided by the previous administration in Sierra Leone, only 11% of the 45 government proposals in 2013 showed evidence of engagement with stakeholders (SEG, 2017). The report added that if stakeholders were sufficiently engaged, 56% of proposals would have yielded positive outcomes (SEG, 2017). Failing to include stakeholders' views during policy discussions led to trust issues, eventually affecting stakeholders' support for the policies (Kamara, 2015). Sierra Leone did not have a sustainable energy policy that addressed the demand for fuelwood by most people for cooking and drying fish. Wood and charcoal come from forest trees (Jackson, 2015). Deforestation increased severely because of fuelwood, charcoal, and timber demand. According to Munroe et al. (2017), the annual level of deforestation between 1990 and 2010 is 20,000 hectares. According to Bertelsmann Stiftung (2018), the economy of Sierra Leone was not diversified. Successive governments depended on loans and aid to carry out capital infrastructural development projects. Lack of economic growth and the absence of viable and sustainable development strategies that could provide public services to the people, such as food security and nutrition (Barr et al., 2019; Bertelsmann

Stiftung, 2018), forced most of the population to exploit environmental resources like timber through illegal logging and mining minerals like diamond and gold to support their livelihoods (Johnson, 2015; Kamara, 2015). The exploitation of the environment led to environmental instability that affected biological diversity, the ecosystem, weakening of the soil that contributes to erosion, and deforestation (Kamara, 2015). These developments pose serious challenges to the successful implementation of environmental policies.

### **Empowering Stakeholder Groups and key Stakeholders to Participate in the Formulation and Implementation of Environmental Policies**

Theme 5 emerged from the analysis of data gathered via respondents' interviews and document review. I discovered that stakeholders' empowerment by elected and unelected government officials in Sierra Leone could contribute to the country's successful implementation of environmental policies and laws. Current literature suggested that environmental policy implementation faced serious barriers, primarily because of a lack of sufficient engagement of the targeted beneficiaries of the policies (SEG, 2017). Based on a government report in 2017, only 11% of the 45 government proposals in 2013 showed evidence of engagement with stakeholders. According to Hughes (2019), some CSOs expressed concerns that the Open Government Partnership Secretariat, which framed commitments with multi-stakeholders and CSOs, did not represent the general views of civil society. Lack of stakeholders' engagement when making decisions that affected their interests in diverse communities contributed to the challenges that the elected and unelected government in Sierra Leone faced in

implementing environmental policies. According to Salum et al. (2017), including stakeholders in discussing policy issues could develop meaningful collaborative relationships mutually beneficial to stakeholders and elected and unelected government officials.

Key stakeholders and stakeholder groups could feel empowered if they were allowed to participate in discussing environmental policies. Stakeholders could trust government officials more and minimize conflicts between them when they felt their views were included in the policies (Gyan & Ampomah, 2016; Lemke & Harris-Wai, 2015; Salum et al., 2017). Community leaders like paramount chiefs had significant power in their communities and could influence the implementation of environmental policies if their opinions were included in policy discussions (Lemke & Wai, 2015). Elected and unelected government officials could empower stakeholders, especially key stakeholders who greatly influenced their communities by collaborating with them to build consensus (Wai, 2015). So, stakeholder empowerment is about including people like councilors and paramount chiefs who have the capacity to influence specific decisions in their communities and the process of making such decisions (Diaz et al., 2017; Requirements Techniques, 2017). Allowing stakeholders to participate in discussing issues that affected life in their communities instead of just supporting decisions of elected officials could empower them and allowed them to have a sense of ownership of the policies. Elected and unelected government officials can empower stakeholders by collaborating, informing, involving, and consulting them during the formulation and implementation of the policies (Lemke & Wai, 2015; Stakeholder

Involvement in Decision Making: A Short Guide to Issues, Approaches and Resources, 2015) so that they could feel their opinions, views, and suggestions were included in the policy goals of the final document. Empowering stakeholders builds trust, minimizes conflict, and avoids policy implementation barriers.

**Providing the Necessary Support for the Effective Implementation of Environmental Policies.**

Theme 6 emerged from the analysis of data gathered via respondents' interviews and document review. I discovered that elected and unelected government officials could play significant roles in ensuring the effective implementation of the environmental policies, laws, and regulations in Sierra Leone. The main implementers of the environmental policies were elected and unelected government officials of various ministries, government agencies, and local government administrations. One key role that elected and unelected officials could play to ensure that environmental policies in Sierra Leone were successfully implemented was through consultation with stakeholders who were the targeted beneficiaries of the policies (SEG, 2017). Consultation with stakeholders could be carried out once, like in the beginning when they were developing the policies, or it might also be a continuous process. Consultation with stakeholders could allow government officials to obtain relevant information regarding the views and opinions of stakeholders. They were able to create a policy document that included the targeted beneficiaries of the policies (SEG, 2017). Also, elected and unelected government officials could facilitate the effective implementation of environmental laws in Sierra Leone by allowing the full participation of stakeholders in policy discussions

(SEG, 2017). Participating in policy discussions could allow stakeholder groups to play an active role in drafting policies or contributing to the policy proposals' details before the final document was discussed by the cabinet or elected officials (SEG, 2017). When stakeholders participated in policy discussions, government officials offered them roles in the policy development process to enforce the policies. Stakeholders' participation could allow them to gain ownership of the policies and remain committed to the implementation of the policies, especially when elected and unelected officials did not have the capacity to successfully implement the policies without the support of key stakeholders who had a lot of power in their communities (SEG, 2017).

Moreover, elected and unelected officials could collaborate with stakeholder groups like local communities, business organizations, and local governments to facilitate the effective implementation of policies. Through partnerships, elected and unelected government officials could obtain relevant information regarding the support, inputs, or contributions of stakeholders affected by the proposed policies. Building partnerships with stakeholder groups whose interests were affected by the proposed policies could allow them to work collaboratively and be committed to implementing the provisions of the policies (SEG, 2017). In addition, elected and unelected government officials could hold public meetings or hearings to discuss the proposals of the policies with stakeholder groups that were affected by the policies and were interested in participating in the meetings (SEG, 2017). Public hearings allow stakeholders to meet directly with government officials. During the meetings, participants could have the opportunity to

express their opinions or views and ask relevant questions about the nature of the policies and their benefits to the communities.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This qualitative case study research was limited to employees of government departments, government agencies, local NGOs, and local governments who reside in different parts of Sierra Leone. Those employees were knowledgeable of the key social issue explored in this study and could directly or indirectly influence the implementation of environmental policies in Sierra Leone. My data in this study was the actual opinions and views of the respondents and was based on their perceptions/beliefs only. The sampling technique that I used to select the respondents from different government departments and agencies, local government institutions, private businesses, and local NGOs that provided the data for this study was purposeful sampling. Given that I was the main instrument of the data collection and purposeful sampling was used to select the respondents of this study, there might be some elements of subjectivity. The results of this study did not represent the opinions of all employees of government departments and agencies, local NGOs, private businesses, and local government institutions in Sierra Leone. The results of the research study could not be generalized to the entire population of local government institutions, local NGOs, business institutions, and government departments and agencies who were related to the environmental sector in Sierra Leone. I ensured the academic integrity of the study by following the established guidelines and procedures in the interview protocol and data collection. This was carried out through member checking to ensure the reliability and validity of the study and verified that the

actual statements and words obtained from the respondents were used within a limited period.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation for Research**

This case study was carried out to explore the perceptions of the experiences of stakeholders of government departments and agencies, local government institutions, local NGOs, and private business organizations about the barriers to effectively build coalitions for the implementation of sustainable development policies like the NEP in Sierra Leone. The results of this study showed that stakeholders, especially paramount chiefs and other community leaders who were the beneficiaries of the environmental policies, had the significant authority to influence the successful implementation of environmental policies. Also, the results of this study revealed the perceived benefits of stakeholders' engagement in the implementation of environmental policies in Sierra Leone and the relevance of working collectively to meet the needs of organizations that could contribute to policy implementation.

Additionally, a review of the literature revealed that stakeholders had not been sufficiently engaged when discussing and implementing environmental policies; as a result, the elected and unelected government officials faced challenges in the implementation of environmental policies. Moreover, the study results showed the significance of empowering stakeholders to participate fully in the formulation and implementation of environmental policies; and the role elected, and unelected

government officials played in providing the necessary support to stakeholders for the effective implementation of environmental policies in Sierra Leone.

Future research could expand the study by focusing on why elected officials did not sufficiently engage with stakeholders who were the targeted beneficiaries of the environmental policies to seek their views and opinions through public hearings and consultations when discussing and implementing the policies. Current literature on Sierra Leone did not indicate any conditions related to why elected government officials did not sufficiently collaborate and include the views of stakeholder groups in discussing the environmental policies at different stages of the implementation process. Future research could also be carried out to explore the collision of functions of the environmental players and the role those multiple perceptions of environmental actors played in the barriers to environmental policy implementation in Sierra Leone. Also, future researchers should consider the time when conducting similar studies. Future researchers might use a quantitative study and use more respondents to cut down on time. I hope to publish and carry out presentations of the study in conferences, public discussions, and workshops to expand the discourse on the barriers to environmental policy implementation to inspire and raise awareness among stakeholders and policymakers regarding this topic/subject.

In this study, 36 respondents participated in the research. Future researchers could increase the sample size to ensure that more respondents, such as elected members of parliament, local representatives of the intergovernmental organization like the IMF and World Bank, paramount chiefs, and women, participate in the research. Increasing the sample size that includes board members, directors, permanent secretaries, departmental



heads of academic institutions, lawyers, and mayors to cover more areas and allow more information to be obtained regarding the barriers to environmental policy implementation in Sierra Leone, stakeholder engagement, multiple perceptions among stakeholders, and why stakeholders have not been able to sufficiently include stakeholders in the discussion of policies that affect their interests.

### **Recommendation for Theory**

Future research on the Advocacy Coalition Framework theory can explore a further aspect of extreme competing positions or conflict in Poland's policy change. The barrier to implementing environmental policies in Sierra Leone was The ACF is a policy framework that has been widely used to describe the policy change. Also, the ACF has contributed significantly to the policy process domain, primarily to identify the need to spend a considerable amount of time trying to perceive policy change (Cairey, 2014). In theme 3 of the research findings, respondents maintained that some stakeholders were not included in the discussions of the environmental policies. In theme 4, the respondents maintained that multiple perceptions exist among environmental actors, especially when dispensing their functions. More research could be conducted to identify why elected government officials did not sufficiently include key stakeholders, stakeholder groups, and some governmental stakeholders in environmental policy discussions before implementation. Also, using the ACF theory, future researchers could explore the conditions that contribute to collisions of functions among environmental players like EPA, NPAA, Forestry Division, and Ministry of Lands, and the potential solutions to addressing those competing positions. Knowing the conditions that affect the

participation of stakeholders in policy discussions and the key factors that facilitate multiple perceptions and competing positions among stakeholders would make the ACF theory relevant.

## **Implications**

### **Implication for Practice**

Formulating and implementing policies that include the opinions of the targeted beneficiaries to protect the environment can lead to a successful implementation of the policies. Policy implementation relates to the introduction of measures beyond the enactment of policy, such as educating and involving individuals who reside in communities affected by the proposed policy (Polaries, 2019; Radioactive Waste Management, 2015; Yaro et al., 2017). Policies needed to be implemented to succeed. Enacting a policy alone did not guarantee success (Campos & Reich, 2019; Yaro et al., 2017). Several actors and organizations, such as stakeholder groups, especially the targeted beneficiaries of the proposed policy, should be involved in implementing public policies for them to succeed. Stakeholder engagement is significant to facilitating sound and transparent policies and is trusted by all. There might be fewer barriers and more opportunities if elected officials include stakeholders in discussing public policies before implementing them. Crofty and Carley (2016) argued that the effectiveness of public policy in public administration relates to the choices that elected officials make in the implementation process. Knowing the choices which could allow the administration of policies that satisfy the preferences of elected officials and stakeholder groups that are the beneficiaries of the proposed policies might be relevant to minimize competing positions

in policy implementation. The procedures/laws crafted to direct the implementation of the policy, such as the inclusion of the groups targeted by the proposed policy could determine the success of implementing public policy (Liang et al., 2017; Taylor, 2019; Yaro et al., 2017). Allowing stakeholders of communities targeted by the policies to participate at different stages of the policy development process could generate support for the proposed policy. Some of the significant issues that emerged in this study are stakeholder influence and the benefits of stakeholders' engagement in implementing environmental policies. Including the opinions of key stakeholders like paramount chiefs who have significant authority in their communities in policies, discussions could promote individual and societal social change because the beneficiaries of the policies could take ownership of the policies and support their implementation. Collaborating, informing, and educating stakeholders could enable them to feel that they are part of the development of the policies, which minimizes the potential barriers to the implementation of the environmental policies in Sierra Leone.

### **Recommendation for Practice**

The findings of this study can be fully implemented by ensuring that elected and unelected government officials collaborate with stakeholders and allow them to participate in public hearings or meetings when discussing environmental policies. The environmental policy process should be inclusive to allow key stakeholders like paramount chiefs and leaders of stakeholder groups like CSOs to express their views and opinions about policies that targeted people's interests in their communities, instead of just telling them of the decisions that elected government officials have agreed on.

Including the voices of the people in the final policy, the document could make them feel that their opinions were considered in the objectives of the final policy goals. As indicated in themes 1, 2, and 5, stakeholders had significant authority in their communities, and they could facilitate the successful implementation of environmental policies if elected officials collaborated with them, trained, educated, and allowed them to participate in policy hearings or meetings at all stages of the policy development process. Stakeholder organizations like the Women's Forum campaigned strongly to ensure that women in Sierra Leone have equal opportunities in all aspects of society as men (Sierra Express Media (2017). In 2015, they scored a great victory when the government passed the Land Policy that gave women the right to ownership and inheritance of land like their male counterparts (National land policy of Sierra Leone Version 6, 2015). The implementation of International Conventions for the protection of the environment, which were signed by the governments of Sierra Leone, was relevant to ensure that the country's environmental protection agenda and climate justice were consistent with international standards. On the other hand, the implementation of international conventions in Sierra Leone must be localized or consider the local context and traditions or the indigenous way of life of the people for them to succeed.

Deforestation has severely increased in Sierra Leone due to the dependency of a large population on environmental resources to support their livelihoods (Jackson, 2015; Munro et al., 2017). Lack of sustainable economic growth was a key factor responsible for the reliance on the resources of the environment by many people. According to Munro et al. (2017), the annual level of deforestation between 1990 and 2010 was 20,000

hectares. Deforestation has seriously affected the biodiversity and the ecosystem in Sierra Leone. Elected and unelected government officials need to engage stakeholders fully, review and reform old laws, and introduce environmental policies consistent with the local needs of the people. Also, elected government officials should identify alternative sources of livelihood for the people and introduce sustainable development measures consistent with Agenda 2030 and the economic growth agenda of the country to improve the quality of life of the people. The barriers to the implementation of environmental policies could be avoided or minimized if stakeholders were fully involved in discussing the environmental policies, there were alternative sources of livelihood, and there was economic growth that addressed the social and economic needs of the people who were affected by the environmental policies such as those who resided in the reserved forest areas which were not allowed to use forest resources like bushmeat or carry out timber logging to support their livelihoods.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This study has significant implications for Sierra Leone's policy implementation, primarily for individuals and society. The study examined the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone based on the perspectives of key stakeholders. Lack of effective policy implementation could affect effective, sustainable growth in Sierra Leone, which could seriously impact the people. This study has positive implications because it discussed relevant policy issues, such as the National Environmental Policy in Sierra Leone, which emphasized implementing policies that protect the natural environment and promote sustainable development.

The economy of Sierra Leone was not diversified, and successive governments depended on loans and aid to carry out capital infrastructural development programs. The citizens lack public services, and most people rely on environmental resources to support their livelihoods. The study provided relevant information such as the reasons for the negative environmental activities which contributed to environmental degradation like sand mining, charcoal burning, and illegal timber logging; lack of sufficient stakeholders' engagement by elected and unelected government officials in discussing environmental policies that affected their interests, and the challenges/barriers that elected and unelected government officials faced in implementing environmental policies in Sierra Leone.

This study has positive social change implications for both society and individuals in Sierra Leone because it examined issues from stakeholders' perspectives about the opportunities and barriers to the implementation of sustainable development policies in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone faced serious public policy challenges such as environmental degradation, food insufficiency, and lack of social services such as adequate healthcare capable of supporting the population. These challenges might be fixed or managed through positive social change by different forces such as individuals, market-based organizations, and stakeholder groups (Stephan et al., 2016). This dissertation promoted positive social change at the societal level because it reinforced the discourse of the role that stakeholder groups could play to facilitate meaningful change in Sierra Leone.

Elected and unelected government officials can use the information provided in this study to improve the policy implementation process to address the issue of barriers when implementing environmental policies in Sierra Leone. The opinions, views, and

suggestions of stakeholders targeted by the proposed policies should be accommodated by elected and unelected government officials so that stakeholders could claim ownership of the policies and support the implementation of the policies in their communities.

Elected officials should provide alternative sources of livelihood to stakeholders. Also, elected officials needed to fulfill their commitment to compensating landowners who lost their lands to protect biodiversity and the ecosystem. The introduction of viable and sustainable development strategies, sustainable economic growth, and public services could address the demand for environmental resources to satisfy residents' livelihoods in different communities.

### **Implication for Theory**

The Theoretical Foundation that guided this study was the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) model. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith developed this model in 1993 (Sabatier & Weible, 2007) to assess extreme competing positions or conflicts in policymaking and policy change (Cornelius, 2015). The ACF refers to groups of individuals who had a common system of beliefs and engaged in a well-organized movement, primarily to change their belief system into the policy (Cairey, 2014). The ACF is a policy framework that has been widely used to describe policy change. Also, the ACF has contributed significantly to the policy process domain, primarily to identify the need to spend a considerable amount of time trying to perceive policy change (Cairey, 2014). Examples of stakeholder groups in Sierra Leone included the Women's Forum and Campaign for Good Governance (CGG) in Sierra Leone.

The findings of this study were consistent with the ACF theoretical framework, which could be useful to elected and unelected government officials and stakeholders who were the targeted beneficiaries of the policies, primarily to protect the environment from degradation. The findings of this study provided significant information that would be useful/relevant for professional practice, policy implementation, and advancing the current discourse in environmental policy implementation in Sierra Leone regarding the benefits of collaborating, educating, involving, and allowing stakeholders to participate in discussing environmental policies that affected the interests of people in their communities. Stakeholders' participation could influence the successful implementation of the environmental policies. Future researchers of barriers to environmental policy implementation should focus on conducting their research on stakeholder influence, lack of stakeholder engagement, and multiple perceptions and competing positions among environmental players and their impact on successful policy implementation. Elected and unelected government officials could benefit significantly from the findings of this study because it would allow them to review and reform old environmental laws like the Wildlife Act of 1972 and the Forestry Act of 1988; increase the level of stakeholders' engagement to include the views and opinions of the targeted beneficiaries in the final goals of the policy objectives, ensure that the provisions of environmental conventions are consistent with the local context, and address conflict of interests that led to the collision of functions among environmental players in Sierra Leone.



## **Conclusion**

This qualitative case study was conducted to explore respondents' perceptions of government departments and agencies, local NGOs, private businesses, and local government organizations' employees regarding the barriers to policy implementation in Sierra Leone. The topic of this study was: The Barriers to the Effective Implementation of Sustainable Development Policies in Sierra Leone: Stakeholders' Perspectives. The main findings of the study relate to the role of stakeholders in policy implementation, perceived benefits of stakeholders' engagement, the perceived challenges in the implementation of environmental policies, working collectively to meeting the needs of organizations that contribute to policy implementation, empowering stakeholder groups and key stakeholders to participate in the formulation and implementation of environmental policies, and providing the necessary support for the effective implementation of environmental policies. This study's results would facilitate the introduction of better policies that would include stakeholders' opinions, views, and suggestions; improve stakeholders' participation in policy discussions; and introduce viable and sustainable development strategies that might address the dependency on environmental resources. Sustainable economic growth can lead to the provision of public services that would improve the social and economic lives of the people and decrease environmental degradation in Sierra Leone.

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## Appendix: Interview Protocol

The data gathering for this study consists of 3 (three) standard open-ended and 3 (three) follow-up questions. The interview would take approximately 1 hour to complete. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. Your decision would be respected if you decide to withdraw from the interview. You can stop the interview if you feel stressed at any moment. The information that the researcher would collect in this interview would be handled as confidential data and would be used for the purpose of this study only.

### **Open-Ended Questions**

1 - How can stakeholders in Sierra Leone influence the implementation of environmental policies and laws?

**INTERVIEWEE:**

2 – What do you think of the decision to pass the National Environmental Policies in the 1990? What are the benefits of engaging stakeholder groups in the implementation of environmental policies and laws in Sierra Leone?

**INTERVIEWEE:**

3 – Explain how elected and unelected government official in Sierra Leone met the needs of your organization when formulating and implementing the National Environmental policy of 1990 and other environmental laws and regulations?

**INTERVIEWEE:**

### **Probe Questions**

1-What action would your organization take if it is not fully involved in the implementation process of the National Environmental Policies and laws, which affect the interests of people in your community?

**INTERVIEWEE:**

2-How can elected and unelected government officials engage stakeholder groups to implement environmental policies and laws enacted by the parliament of Sierra Leone?

**INTERVIEWEE:**

3- What role do you think your organization can play in implementing environmental policies in Sierra Leone?

**INTERVIEWEE:**