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The quest for CSR: Mapping responsible and irresponsible practices in an intra-organizational context in Ghana's gold mining industry

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the positive and negative social impact of business relationships in the Ghanian gold mining industry. We adopted an in-depth longitudinal case study approach to explore the responsible and irresponsible behaviour of dominant stakeholders in Ghana's mining sector. Exploiting unique primary data collected from various stakeholders allowed us to identify and map the evolution of CSR behaviour through the theory of planned behaviour over three distinct time periods since Ghana's independence of 1957. Findings from our study suggest that the state and multinational enterprises as key stakeholders in the network of business relationship played a critical role in paving the way for the indigenous people to participate more fully in the mining business. We argue that local participation in the industry's activities has direct social impact, but there is further need to explore the dynamics underpinning a network of relationship.

1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, the mining industry has attracted substantial attention from scholars, practitioners, and international development agencies. It has also been under increasing scrutiny by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media. The focus of this interest has been on the corporate socially responsible (CSR) and irresponsible behaviours and practices of large mining multinational corporations (MNCs), particularly those operating in developing countries (e.g., Dashwood, 2014; De George, 2001; Eweje, 2009; Kolk & Lenfant, 2010; Mutti, Yakovleva, Vazquez-Brust, & Di Marco, 2012; Yakovleva & Vazquez-Brust, 2018). Many studies have explored and shed light on the various effects of the mining industry on the environment and socio-economic developments of the host and indigenous communities in which they operate (e.g., see Freudenburg, 1992; Hilson, 2012; Patnaik, Temouri, Tuffour, Tarba, & Singh, 2018; for a review). These studies have highlighted how the creation of wealth from mining activities has had detrimental effects and costs, such as the displacement of local communities for mining projects (Lodhia, 2018), the denial of economic livelihoods to indigenous people through the re-appropriation of farmlands (Assan & Muhammed, 2018), the pollution of the environment affected by mining, and the destruction of aquatic lives (Hilson, Hilson, & Pardie, 2007; Kpan, Opoku, & Gloria, 2014), among others. Global industry trends, standards, and higher expectations from their various stakeholders have thus been pressuring mining MNCs to minimize the many conflicts that have resulted from their operations, affecting communities socially, economically, and environmentally (Kemp, Owen, Gotzmann, & Bond, 2011; Zandvliet & Anderson, 2009). Against this backdrop, the nexus of the social and structural relationships among the key stakeholders (Ford & Mouzas, 2013; Mitrega, Henneberg, & Forkmann, 2018; Mller & Halinen, 1999) in the mining sector assumes significance, considering the nature of the 'messy problems' that need addressing in order to achieve social impact (Patnaik et al., 2018; Savage et al., 2010).

The extant literature has identified various ways in which mining MNCs have responded to the increased scrutiny placed on their activities

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and have highlighted numerous CSR activities aimed at minimizing their negative impact on host communities and society at large (Böhling, Murguía, & Godfrid, 2019; Owen & Kemp, 2012). Mining MNCs continue to invest significant resources in project sustainability, as evidenced through the periodic sustainability reports issued to stakeholders (Landrum & Ohsowski, 2018). Even though the various MNCs' refer to these sustainability activities differently, they serve the common goal of communicating their environmental footprints to their stakeholders. These activities, for example, focus on the either reducing or mitigating factors that are put in place to minimize the devastating impacts of environmental factors. In other words, there is evidence of 'responsible' activities, behaviours, and practices being pursued by the concerned MNCs.

At the supranational level, the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have challenged the normative proliferation of business and capitalist ideologies across a range of industry sectors. These SDGs present an important lens and a tool to bring about change in government, business, and informal sector policies and practices. The 17 SDGs (Platform, 2018) cut across all aspects of conducting business responsibly (Storey, Killian, & O'Regan, 2017) and in a manner that protects fundamental human rights and equalities (Arnold, 2010; Haller, van Staden, & Landis, 2018). This paper's focus is on SDG 8, *decent work and economic growth*; SDG 12, *responsible consumption and production*; and SDG 16, *peace and justice and strong institutions*. More specifically, it focusses on SDG 12′s sub-target 6, which pertains to "…*large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle*". Such a focus is critical to this research because large MNCs have paid little concern and attention to upholding the SDGs and often sideline small and local indigenous miners in developing countries (Muthuri, Moon, & Idemudia, 2012). Despite the global importance of the SDGs and an expectation of MNC CSR behaviours, the evidence for such behaviours is far from compelling (e.g., Aguilar-González, Navas, Brun, Aguilar-Umaña, & Cerdán, 2018; Kolk & Lenfant, 2013; Yakovleva & Vazquez-Brust, 2018). A greater understanding is needed of why and how CSR practices manifest themselves in both responsible and irresponsible behaviours being enacted by the dominant actors in our focal research case—the Ghanaian gold mining industry.

Ghana's gold mining sector presents an exciting and relevant site to study the 'social impact' emanating from the responsible and irresponsible actions and behaviours of its dominant stakeholders, which comprise the local and indigenous people, the sovereign government and administrative institutions of Ghana, global mining MNCs (which are predominantly from industrialized countries), local communities, tribal leaders, and non-government organizations (see Patnaik et al., 2018). Therefore, exploring the host country's mining industry and its social impact on local regions necessarily entails adopting the stakeholders' perspective. In this paper, we argue that the nexus and the nature of the power relationship among the stakeholders mentioned above underpin the overarching behaviours and actions undertaken by the dominant actors towards the most socially marginalized ones in the mining sector. In essence, we conceptualize the responsible and irresponsible behaviours of key stakeholders as a form and manifestation of the potential social impact on the local and larger communities. Therefore, in our paper, we particularly pay attention to the responsible and irresponsible behaviours enacted by the dominant actors over three distinct time periods—namely, the colonial era (up to the 1960s); the post-independence era (1960 s-1980s); and post-structural adjustment era (the 1980s and onwards)—towards the artisanal miners, who represent one of the most marginalized community among the stakeholders. We aim to establish that the social impact of the mining industry affects the inter-organizational relationships/interactions played out by the various stakeholder organizations.

Based on qualitative interview data sourced from several key stakeholders in the Ghanaian mining industry in general, and the gold mining sector in particular, we analysed and explained the engagement in responsible and irresponsible behaviours by the dominant actors and their relationships through the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). We considered CSR practices as a form of manifest behaviour that is influenced by various stakeholder attitudes and intentions. As a consequence, we posited that the core values and beliefs held by the key crucial stakeholder organizations in the Ghanaian mining industry noted above, and by the gold mining sector, affect the attitudes and intentions, thus acting as predictors of any manifest responsible/irresponsible CSR practices in which these organizations engage while interacting or within their inter-organizational relationships. We argued that the TPB, which extends the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), is a robust theoretical framework (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992; Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988) suited to analyse the responsible and irresponsible behaviours enacted, since the early 1960s, by critical stakeholders as the sector was undergoing structural changes following the country's independence. Our data provided us with solid support for specific values and beliefs driving the stakeholder organizations' attitudes and, subsequently, their intentions to engage in an action or behave in a particular manner. We argued that specific values held by the core stakeholder organizations had led to the emergence of favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards MNC miners and their indigenous Ghanaian counterparts, which had affected their intention to engage in certain CSR practices (or manifest behaviours). We highlighted the nature of these values and beliefs in explaining attitudes, intentions, and manifest behaviours.

Overall, our findings contribute to the ongoing debates on social impact in the following three key ways: First, by mapping the evolution of CSR by identifying the responsible and irresponsible practices of the organizations operating in Ghana's gold mining industry over three distinct eras (in other words, *the what*). Second, by investigating the factors influencing change in CSR and in the responsible and irresponsible practices of the organizations operating in Ghana's gold mining industry (in other words, *the why*). Third, by comparing and contrasting the multiple levels at which the CSR and responsible and irresponsible practices of these organizations have evolved (in other words, across time, size, and ownership structure—*the how*).

The three distinctive contributions made by our study (the *what, why* and *how*) provide an understanding of the values and belief systems of a specific group of stakeholder organizations and of how these have evolved and persisted over time in perpetuating certain attitudes towards both the indigenous and multinational mining firms, leading to such organisations' intentions to engage in specific responsible and irresponsible CSR practices (the manifest behaviours). Apart from the contributions mentioned above, we also developed a conceptual model suited to analyse the behaviours and to develop future research areas. The collective influence of the values, attitudes, behaviours, and actions—in the form of responsible and irresponsible practices—enacted by a dominant coalition towards a community in an emerging market context is a key gap and our distinctive contribution.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. We begin by presenting a critical review of the extant literature and our development of a theoretical framework suited to underpin our study. This is followed by the methodology employed and analytical procedures utilized. Next, we provide a contextual background of the Ghanaian gold mining industry and its evolution. We then present and discuss our findings and their critical contribution, and end with a broad conclusion.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

The African continent has seen mining activities for centuries. For many countries, this sector has accounted for the most significant share of the overall economic output and for the input for other industries, and, in many ways, has enabled the generation of enormous wealth and of livelihood sustenance. However, the extraction of precious metals and minerals involves enormous costs to the many involved, who are directly affected and indirectly impacted via devastating externalities. Bird (2016) outlined the issues confronted by mining communities; ranging from pollution to safety concerns, to political rent-seeking behaviours. He argued that, despite global efforts to monitor MNC excesses, local government efforts to enact improved legislation, and individual mining companies' actions aimed at reducing the harmful side effects, there is still a long way to go. More sustained efforts are needed to achieve sustainable mining and inclusive wealth generation and economic development (i.e., increasing the responsible and decreasing the irresponsible behaviour/practices in which critical stakeholders engage).

There has been a longstanding debate on the responsibilities of MNCs and a growing opposition against irresponsible practices and activities and demand for responsible ones (Reddy & Hamann, 2018; Kapelus, 2002; Szablowski, 2002; Cragg & Greenbaum, 2002). Against this backdrop, CSR is conceptualized as a framework and a bridge (see arguments such as '*CSR as a problematic response to critics*' by Kapelus, 2002, p. 278) between MNC responsibilities, practices, and activities and the opposition they face from governmental and non-governmental agencies, which act as moral and ethical gatekeepers. Another debate within this body of literature concerns who constitutes a 'community' or a 'society', as stakeholders, and why? Further, it becomes imperative to get answers to crucial questions such as how the 'rent' and 'proceeds', or 'costs' and 'benefits' should be apportioned among its key stakeholders (Cragg & Greenbaum, 2002); in regard to what and to what extent should MNCs be responsible in relation local community development (Idahosa, 2002) (what Amartya Sen—the Nobel laureate—called the 'capability approach to development' [see Sen, 1999]); and how this should then impact public policy alongside the development of CSR strategies by the MNCs. In relation to the mining sector, these questions get compounded, especially in developing countries.

Globally, mining companies are increasingly coming under public scrutiny for both their responsible and irresponsible practices and activities, particularly in less developed countries characterized by institutional voids (Luiz & Ruplal, 2013). In this respect, Africa has emerged as the new frontier for mining operators and, accordingly, recent studies on mining company operations in many African countries have been considered as an affluent and evolving avenue of research. For example, see recent work on mining, CSR, and the community conducted through a case study of Richard Bay Minerals, a subsidiary of the global giant Rio Tinto operating in South Africa on the one hand, and the local South African community, represented by the Mbonambi tribe, on the other (Kapelus, 2002), where CSR is viewed as likely to effectively address the developmental concerns of local communities. Szablowski (2002) examined the displacement of the local communities and the World Bank's role through the case of the Compania Minera Antamina mining company's operations in Peru, where there is an inevitable conflict with the local communities. This case portrays how the World Bank's directive 4.30 on involuntary resettlement has a regulatory impact on policy and on the relationships between the mining companies and local communities. Szablowski (2002) argued that such directives emanating from supranational organizations such as the World Bank tend to have a 'legitimation effect' that dictates the specific standards and benchmarks that then "*certify a degree of responsible behaviour*" (p. 247).

The above debates and arguments led us to believe that the prime motive of mining MNCs is to exploit developing countries by plundering their soil for precious metals and minerals without having any overarching positive impact on local communities. In the process, the critical question from the perspective of 'social impact' is: do the dominant actors amongst the stakeholders undertake operations in these natural resource-rich countries responsibly or irresponsibly? The responsibility found in the literature is towards local indigenous miners, mining workers, and the local community, who we argued need to be seen as inclusive stakeholders. To answer this question, we utilized and framed the following theoretical lens to underpin our study.

2.1. Theoretical underpinning

While we could have employed one of several competing theories, we opted for the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), a mid-range theory, with strong explanatory and predictive theoretical attributes, that is a successor of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1988). The theory of reasoned action was built on several psychological theories, drawn from the learning domain, that predict and suggest that people will evaluate a suggested behaviour as positive (attitude) if the collectivity or a group of individuals believe that they should engage in it (subjective norm); in other words, it is acceptable to perform these behaviours, it creates in the minds of these group of individuals a greater intention to engage in such behaviours, which translate into specific actions and practices, especially if there is a strong common and shared belief and value among these people. The TPB has been tested and applied to explain several adverse choices made by individuals and groups, such as in healthcare contexts of binge-drinking (Norman, Bennett, & Lewis, 1998), smoking (Godin, Valois, Lepage, & Desharnais, 1992) and condom use (Yzer, Siero, & Buunk, 2001). While other theories may represent rich analytical lenses suite for analysing the influence of group membership on behaviours, such as noted in the key arguments of the social identity and social categorization theories, our limited access to the data did not allow us to explore the phenomenon fully.

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that specific values and beliefs drive the attitudes and intentions that drive individual actions and behaviours. In the context of our study, we argued that the relationship between values and attitudes held by stakeholders towards indigenous and multinational mining firms will predict their behavioural intentions to engage in responsible or irresponsible business practices, which will finally manifest themselves in the form of CSR practices (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The relationship between the attitudes towards and intentions to engage in a specific behaviour has been extensively researched (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Azjen & Fishbein, 1977; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this context, the attitudinal element is the culmination of the beliefs pertaining to the behaviour in question (i.e., the implementation of responsible or irresponsible CSR practices). Each stakeholder's value and beliefs are weighed by assessing their impact (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Based on the above theoretical framework, the relationships between the fundamental elements of the theory is reproduced in Fig. 1 through the manifest engagement in responsible and irresponsible corporate social practices. Through our data, we identified and mapped the stakeholders' attitudes and intentions concerning the target behaviour (i.e., responsible and irresponsible corporate social practices), which we argued to be manifestations of social impact. We defined the variables in our model as follows. In terms of values, we classified and identified the nature of the values held by the key stakeholders (i.e., those who wielded power) that had driven the formation of their attitudes towards their less influential and less powerful counterparts—such as the local indigenous miners, small mining firms, mineworkers and communities (e.g., displaced farmers)—including self-interest, conservation, and openness to change. In regard to attitudes, we referred to those held by the key stakeholders towards economic growth and rural development, and towards the lesser influential and powerful stakeholders described above. Lastly, we defined the intentions wherein stakeholders typically require providing resources, such as training resources that lead to motivations in carrying out the act/behaviour. In this context, we considered those aspects of motivations and resources that would support the engagement in a behaviour by an agent/stakeholder.

3. Research methodology

We adopted the case study technique (Halinen & Törnroos, 2005; Yin, 2003) and took a 'narrative approach' (Makkonen, Aarikka-

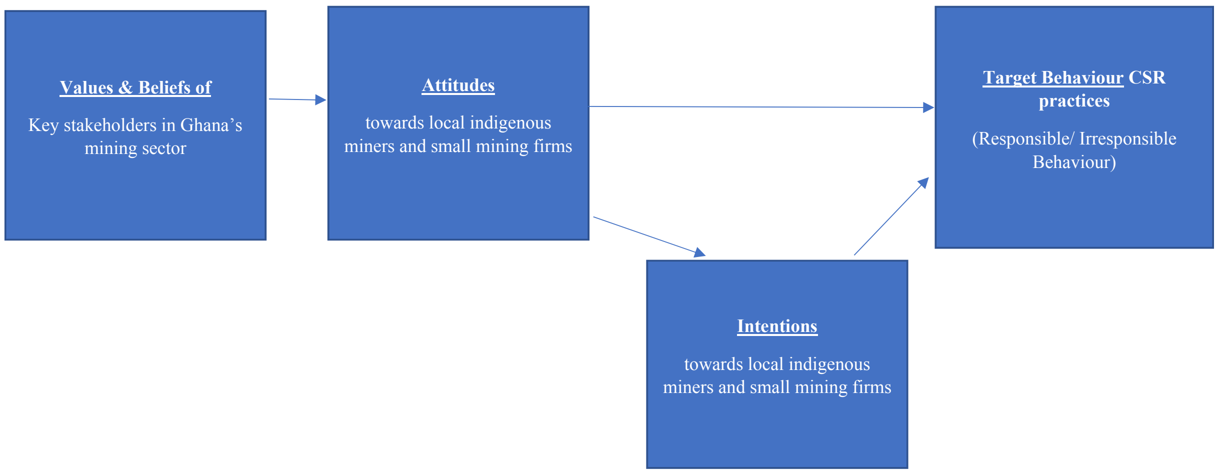

Fig. 1. Guiding Theoretical Model: Values, Attitudes, Intentions and Target Behaviour underpinning social impact.

Stenroos, & Olkkonen, 2012) to identify and examine the responsible and irresponsible behaviours of dominant stakeholders stemming from the institutional changes occurring in Ghana's gold mining industry over the last eight decades, particularly following the independence of the country in 1957. Our approach was consistent with those adopted by other scholars who had studied institutional changes in various fields (see, e.g., Simadjuntak, 2014; Akoum, 2012; Mwaura, 2007). We collected data from multiple stakeholder groups, including senior public servants at both the local and national levels, mining operators, policy think-tanks, and members of communities affected by mining activities. These respondents broadly constituted the interest groups of the gold mining sector in Ghana (see Table 1 for details). The advantage of adopting the qualitative technique is its ability to present a thoughtful perspective and insights into the research participants' information, rather than being limited to predetermined assertions.

The primary data were complemented with information drawn from secondary sources, which included reports from the Ghana Chamber of Mines, Government of Ghana policy papers, reports of public committees/commissions, and annual reports of mining companies. Drawing data from different sources enabled us to authenticate our findings and understand them better (Yin, 2003), and assured us of our data's credibility and reliability (Thurmond, 2001).

In general, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the informants, who were thus deliberately chosen based on the qualities they possessed (Yin, 2003). We carefully selected experienced and knowledgeable actors from institutions the activities of which had been affected by changes in mining policies. The basic qualifications for our potential participants were the longevity of their active service and their occupancy of senior or managerial offices in their respective institutions. The highest and lowest levels of experience of the participants were 35 and 12 years, respectively. This enabled us to draw information from people who had witnessed and could verify historical events relating to policy reforms in the mining industry. However, informants from unregistered small-scale mining groups were introduced to the researchers by confident opinion leaders in two mining communities. The artisanal miners are the most side-lined stakeholders in the mining sector and issues pertaining to their marginalisation have been well documented elsewhere (see, e.g., Banchirigah, 2006; Hilson, Goumandakoye, & Diallo, 2019; Orleans-Boham, Sakyi-Addo, Tahiru, & Amankwah, 2021). It was difficult to identify miners belonging to this category, who are predominantly 'informally' engaged in mining, through a purposive sampling technique; hence, the assistance of certain known members of the mining communities was critical.

The interviews were conducted in 2015 and 2017. The prospective interviewees were formally invited to participate in our study by letter. In total, 31 people eventually took part in the process: 14 in 2015 and 17 in 2017 (see Table 1). The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and the interviewer also took notes; these were helpful as they served as a source of reference for follow-up questioning and further clarification on any significant themes identified. Finally, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and were anonymized.

The 31 interviewees were drawn from four stakeholder groups which we had classified as follows: senior public servants at the national and local levels; mining operators, represented by top management members of two global MNCs and other small-scale miners (formal and informal); non-governmental organizations and policy think-tanks; and communities affected by mining activities, represented by some traditional chiefs and opinion leaders. The in-depth interviews thus provided us with insights into the nature and orientation of the evolution of Ghana's mining sector since the country's independence in 1957.

Table 1
Interviews with members of various stakeholders in Ghana's mining sector, 2015 and 2017.

MINING INDUSTRY ACTORS	2015	2017
Government Departments/Agencies		
Senior Policy Makers - national offices	3	5
Local Government Officials/Representatives		3
Miners		
Large-Scale Multinational Enterprises	4	
Small-scale Miners (Registered)		2
Small-scale Miners (Unregistered)		2
Mining Industry Associations		2
Policy Think Tanks/NGOs	2	3
Traditional Authorities/Local Opinion Leaders	5	
Total	**14**	**17**

3.1. Data analysis

The nature of our research enquiry, research questions, and research setting (Ghana's gold mining sector) required greater emphasis on contextualisation (Rousseau & Fried, 2001; Shapiro, Von Glinow, & Xiao, 2007; Tsui, 2007) and contextualised explanations (Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki, & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, 2011). Cappelli and Sherer (1991) defined context as the "[social and structural] *surroundings associated with phenomena, which help to illuminate that phenomena* [sic]" (p.56). We argued that the responsible and irresponsible behaviours of the dominant actors in Ghana's gold mining industry have to be considered in relation to other actors, particularly the most marginalised ones. Thus, as a starting point, we first developed an historical account that captured the evolution of Ghana's gold mining sector and, accordingly, we divided such evolution into four time periods: (a) the

Colonial Era (pre-1957); (b) the Neo-Colonial Era (1957–1980); (c) the Liberalization Era (1980–2000); and (d) the Post-Liberalization Era (2000-onwards). Fig. 2 depicts the four eras as well as the dominant actors during each of them.

For the purposes of our study, we decided to focus on the later three eras only; we did so because we were interested in exploring the changes that had occurred in the behaviours of the key stakeholders of Ghana's gold mining sector following the country's independence in 1957. Consistent with our research focus, we thus specifically paid attention to identifying the dominant actors during each of the three eras under consideration. We detected and grouped some of their practices as either (a) responsible or (b) irresponsible. In undertaking our analysis, we concurred with the view that the dominant actors in an open system exercise considerable power over other stakeholders in general; in Ghana's mining sector this is particularly true in relation to the artisanal (small scale) miners, which have historically been marginalised (see Hilson, 2002; Patnaik et al., 2018). Our approach to delineating the dominant actors and critically exploring their practices in respect to artisanal miners was consistent with those taken in the extant literature to develop contextualised explanations, wherein the actions of social actors reflect not only their intentions, but also their social position within the social structure (see, for instance; Tsang, 2013; Welch et al., 2011). Focussing our attention on the relatively few dominant actors' responsible and irresponsible practices—in respect to their implications for the marginalised artisanal miners—enabled us to critically evaluate how such practices had positively or negatively impacted others and, hence, whether they had been 'responsible' or 'irresponsible' in terms of their social impact.

4. Research setting: Ghana's gold mining industry

Ghana's extractive industry involves quarrying, mining precious minerals and metals (including gold, diamond, bauxite and manganese), and extracting oil and gas. Whether on a small or large scale, mining has had a significant social impacts, including on local communities. These impacts have included environmental degradation, increased crime rates, disruption of the social structure, and economic hardships (Yakovleva & Vazquez-Brust, 2018). Over the years, the social impacts listed above have accounted for conflicts between mining enterprises and their stakeholders in the host communities. Such conflicts can have a significant impact on returns on investment; in fact, considering the mining industry's capital intensity, the impact of any community-corporation conflicts on its value creation can arguably be devastating. Notably, such conflicts can tarnish the relationship between an enterprise and its stakeholders and, in the long-term, affect the enterprise's image (Pfajfar et al., 2019). This is particularly critical because corporate reputation has a long-term impact on an enterprise's future expansion programmes. For example, Newmont, the world's gold mining giant, was locked in a continued conflict with its stakeholders in Indonesia, which eventually led to its exit from the Southeast Asian market. Interestingly, in 2008, when Newmont attempted to enter the Ghanaian gold market, some local stakeholder groups raised its poor record in Indonesia and protested against its entry into the African market. Therefore, a poor corporate-stakeholder relationship can damage the former's reputation, both in the long- and short-term (Van der Laan, Van Ees, & Van Witteloostuijn, 2008).

The economies of Ghana and of many other sub-Saharan African countries depend heavily on the proceeds accrued from the extraction and export of natural resources. Thus, the contribution made by the mines to regional economic development is significant. For example, Halland, Lokanc and Nair (2016) estimated that between 75% and 80% of the West African states' tax revenues are associated with the mining industry. Thus, on average, in most case, more than half of the revenue to the public purse emanates from the mines (ibid). However, some commentators have raised concerns about the mines' low contribution to the economic development of African states (see Bourgouin, 2011). Against this backdrop, some scholars, such as Amponsah-Tawiah and Dartey-Baah (2011) and Van der Ploeg (2011), have argued that mining could either be a blessing or a curse for nations due to its impact on society. Often, mining has been a major contributory factor to the growing economic inequalities found in rural communities (Eduful et al., 2020; Hilson & Banchirigah, 2009). For example, settlers of mineral-rich lands can lose their economic livelihoods to mining. There have been many instances in which small-scale indigenous farmers have been relocated from their farmlands in exchange for one-off compensations that did not take into consideration the future cash flows from their investments (Crawford & Botchwey, 2017).

Critically, Ghana's gold mining sector, in particular, has witnessed significant reforms in its ownership and regulatory structures. These changes have been influenced by monetary and fiscal policies introduced in the 1980s. Although some research has been conducted on these economic reforms (see Banchirigah, 2006; Hilson, 2004; Loxley, 1990), it has been dominated by the programmes' success or failure stories. No substantial research has hitherto been undertaken in regard to the responsible and irresponsible practices that emanated from these profound institutional changes. Even though the activities of Ghana's extractive industry are documented, most of the extant studies are piecemeal and have focussed on environmental degradation and the sources of such degradation, thereby suggesting practical ways of resolving industry-stakeholder conflicts (see Gamu & Dauvergne, 2018; Yakovleva & Vazquez-Brust, 2018; Hilson, 2004; Szablowski, 2002). At the same time, little empirical research has been conducted on the responsible and irresponsible practices emanating from rigorous institutional reforms, which have predominantly led to changes in the power dynamics among the numerous stakeholders in the mining sector, penalising the most marginalised stakeholders, namely the artisanal or small scale miners. Put simply, the social impact on artisanal miners of the institutional changes that have occurred in Ghana's mining sector has not attracted any significant attention.

Neo-liberalism profoundly influenced Ghana's 1983 Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). For example, the programme included the withdrawal of government subsidies on utilities, high productivity, and the cutting down of government spending on state-owned enterprises and their privatization (Campbell, & Loxley, 1989; Fan, Yu, & Saurkar, 2008). More specifically for the context of our study, it led the government to privatize the country's mining sector, which then spiralled into policies that attracted foreign direct investments to it. However, one could argue, as Adam Smith would (the invisible hand), that mining activities have contributed significantly to Ghana's economy.

On the other hand, in regard to deontological questions, should the state have upheld its obligations and duties when engaging in decision-making, especially when ethical issues were at play? For example, did it think of and act on the various stakeholders' relevant responsible and irresponsible practices? And, did it consider that mining activities would cause social problems, such as the dislocation of people, loss of farmland, and environmental and health issues? Furthermore, what CSR practices were to be considered in the aftermath of its decisions? Some scholars have argued that Ghana became the World Bank's favourite country because of the successes achieved through the implementation of the SAP (Easterly, 2005; Jeffries, 1993). The extensive reforms enacted in the industry during the period under study make it critical to study the evolution of ethical (responsible and irresponsible) practices, especially within a weak institutional set-up (Patnaik et al., 2018).

To answer the questions, we used primary data drawn from multiple stakeholders within the Ghanaian gold mining sector to identify and examine responsible and irresponsible practices enacted by the dominant stakeholders between Ghana's independence in 1957 and the implementation of the SAP in the 1980s, following its implementation, and, finally, during the post-liberalization era—the period after the year 2000. We mainly focussed our attention on how the responsible and irresponsible behaviours of the dominant stakeholders had impacted the

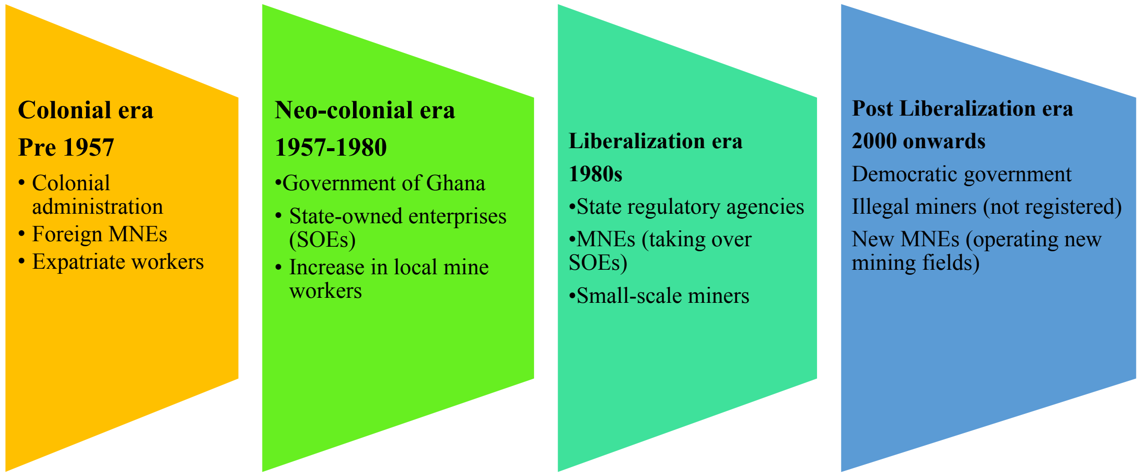

Fig. 2. Historical evolution of Ghana's Gold Mine Sector.

country's artisanal mining community. Historically, the artisanal miners, who are essentially indigenous people, have been among the most vulnerable stakeholders in Ghana's gold mining sector, being excluded and exploited by dominant stakeholders since the colonial period. In contrast to the period following the country's independence in 1957, the SAP paved the way for the indigenous people to fully participate in gold mining. The 1989 legitimization of small-scale artisanal mining operations was a reversal of the criminalization of the practice enacted by the former colonial administration (Hilson & Pardie, 2006) in favour of investments from the colonial home country. This paper contributes to the emerging body of literature focussed on the social impact emanating from dominant stakeholders' responsible and irresponsible behaviours, particularly on their most vulnerable counterparts in the same industry. Our study further contributes to the literature on institutional change in Africa's extractive industry by identifying the ethical practices that have emerged due to changes in ownership structure and regulations. Specifically, the forces driving CSR during periods of change have been identified.

5. Findings and analysis

As stated above, we focussed our attention on three major phases following Ghana's 1957 independence: (a) the era preceding the implementation of the SAP, which we labelled as the neo-colonial era; (b) the liberalization era in the 1980s, which saw the implementation of the SAP; and the post-liberalization era, which witnessed the influx of a great number of MNCs in Ghana's mining sector. These three phases are critical for the achievement of the study's aims because the mining industry did witness institutional changes in the areas of ownership and regulations, and yet the implications of such changes on artisanal miners have not been positive.

5.1. Mining in the neo-colonial era: 1957–1980

In 1957, the Gold Coast gained political independence from British rule and was later incorporated into the newly established country of Ghana. In the period that preceded the independence, the mining industry had been dominated by the private sector, mainly investors from the colonial homeland. Giving the indigenous people control over the management of the region's natural resources had been a prominent slogan during the struggle for independence (Hilson, 2002; Tsikata, 1997). Hence, one of the new Government's post-independence tasks was to take ownership of the mining industry, including the gold mining sector (Tsikata, 1997). In essence, the state thus became the central actor—being both the owner and the regulator of the mining industry.

The 1950–1980 period is often characterized by developing countries declaring permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, which empowered mineral-rich nations to nationalize and expropriate the existing mining concessions based on public utility, security, or the national interest.[1] It was thus natural for the actions of the first Government of Ghana (GoG) to reflect this trend. The nationalization of core sectors was viewed as the catalyst for the provision of strategic raw materials for industrialization programmes (Gess, 1964). Another reason and driver that underpinned the GoG's decision to take over the ownership of the mines was the financial shape or position of the mines themselves. Most of the mines, at the time, were incurring huge losses and were threatened with closure. The industry employed many youths, was the mainstay of the livelihood of many families, and critically underpinned the economies of local mining communities. Should the government have closed down the mines, the socio-economic issues that would have arisen in the wake of the inevitable and massive nationwide job cuts would have debatably been likely to make the newly formed first post-colonization government unpopular. To avert these challenges, the state nationalized five major mining companies (Ariston, ABA, Ghana Main Reef, Bremang, and Bibiani) and organized them under the State Gold Mining Corporation (SGMC) (Hilson, 2002). The Konongo mines joined the SGMC in 1965 with the only profitable private mining company, the Ashanti Goldfields (ibid).

These changes notwithstanding, we noted that one of the practices retained by the new government post-independence had pertained to the criminalization of small-scale mining by the indigenous people. Historically, small scale mining by local people had been banned by the colonial state for reasons of self-interest and exploitation. The explanation given for this ban by a GoG authority is quoted below:

> '*Artisanal mining was banned by the colonial administration for large-scale commercial mining to take place. The biggest of the mines was Obuasi, which has been in operation for the past 100 years. The motivation for the ban was to push the labour force to work in the foreign mines rather than in local ones. These were the times when the sector's activities were labour-intensive and the indigenous people did not want to work for foreign investors' (GoG 1, 2015)*.

The Mercury Ordinance of 1933, passed by the colonial government to regulate the purchase and prohibit the sale of mercury to local people, had more or less triggered the process of criminalization of small-scale miners (see Terray, 1974). It had also created conditions that weakened the local chiefs' control over the mineral-rich areas in the country

[1] 1 UN Charter: General Assembly Resolution 1803 (XVII) of 14 December 1962, Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources.

(Tsuma, 2010).[2]

The continuation of the criminalization of small-scale mining by the government of the newly independent country was attributed to the ideology of nationalization, wherein the overall sovereignty over a country's natural resources remains with the government. Thus, in essence, the first post-independence government embraced the colonial mining legislation that ensured that mineral-rich land would remain in its hands.[3]

In 1966, the Nkrumah-led government was overthrown by the military and the police amid accusations of dictatorial rule, corruption, and the Ghanaian economy's deterioration (Austin & Luckham, 2014). Several successive governments, both military and civilian, were then ousted from power through military coups d'état. The mismanagement and alleged corruption that accompanied the military governments was massive and had a significant impact on the mining industry's performance (Hope, 2000). Just a decade after their incorporation, the SGMC was already hugely in debt to the tune of US$30 million (Anin, 1987). Arguably, factors such as the high cost of production and the local people's unpreparedness to manage such complex operations had contributed to such poor performance. According to one of the respondents, a senior government official at a regulatory agency,

> '…*after independence* [when the state had nationalized the activities of the industry]*, the local people did not have adequate competencies to mine gold on a commercial basis because there had been limited knowledge transfer from the foreign operators to the local workforce…' (GoG 3, 2017)*

In 1969, the military handed over power to a civilian government under the administration of Prime Minister Busia. The new government encouraged the return of the foreign companies, an initiative that had been started by the military-police regime that had overthrown Nkrumah's government (Hutchful, 1979).

In 1972, the Acheampong-led military government decreed that the mining companies should restructure their ownership and that the state be allocated a controlling interest of 55% (Akabzaa & Darimani, 2001). Additionally, all the companies were to relocate their headquarters to Ghana (ibid). From a foreign investor's perspective, this governmental intervention was unethical and unsustainable because it contradicted the principle of fairness.

The neo-colonial era differed from the previous colonial one in terms of its underpinning governing values; however, it retained some of the previous incumbent's practices. Ghana's nationalization of natural resources mirrored the developmental policies adopted by many other newly independent countries from different regions. The central tenet of nationalization was that government should assume sovereignty and take control of the natural resources (and the economy at large) to ensure that the benefits would be equitably distributed. In other words, the creation of mass employment and the generation of full access to foreign exchange from the proceeds of mining were used to justify the nationalization process, which was in contrast to the overarching objectives of the previous colonial governments. However, under the new government, the criminalization of small-scale miners continued with the same rationale employed by its colonial predecessors—to wield sovereignty over natural resources and weaken the local chiefs' hold over the population. Although some minor changes followed the coups, broadly, the state remained the central and dominant actor as an owner of mines and regulator of the industry, as had been the case with the colonial government. Figs. 3 and 4 depict the irresponsible and responsible behaviours enacted by the central actor (the state).

5.2. Mining in the economic reform era (liberalisation): 1980–2000

The 1970s witnessed significant changes in Ghana's mining industry. The neo-colonial era, characterized by state ownership of the mining industry, had significantly contributed to the deterioration of Ghana's economic condition. The protectionist policies of the civilian and military governments that had followed each other during the post-independence period had strangled investments in the mining industry. The gross domestic product had consistently dwindled to around 2% per annum for the decade preceding 1970 (Loxley, 1988; Rothchild, 1991). Likewise, inflation between 1970 and 1983 had risen from 5% to over 120% (Boamah, 2010; Islam & Wetzel, 1991). These poor indicators had influenced the Rawlings-led Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government to embark upon major economic reform programmes aimed at putting the national economy back on the right track (Collier & Gunning, 1999).

Of all the mining sectors, gold was considered to be the worst-performing. By 1982, gold output had dwindled to a quarter of that of 1960—from 900,000 to 230,000 oz. The deterioration of the performance of the gold mining sector was also highlighted by one of our respondents. He asserted:

> *'…the non-gold mineral companies were profitable after the nationalization policy. In fact, the manganese sector made reasonable profits after it was wholly taken over by the government' (PTT 2, 2017).*

The gold mining sector had suffered massively during the previous era due to many governments' failure to provide the SGMC with much needed financial and technical resources to reinvest in new mines. One senior public servant contended that:

> *'In mining, it is important to continuously invest in new fields so that, when the old mines' resources are depleted, minerals can be exploited from* [these] *new fields (GoG3, 2015).*

In 1983, the Government of Ghana thus embraced the neo-liberal agenda and adopted the SAP (Benhin & Barbier, 2001; Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, 1992). Within a decade, several other African states followed by also embracing this monetary policy in order to overhaul their economies (refer to World Bank, 1994). The SAP's focus was to restructure the economies of those developing countries that were dominated by state control (Easterly, 2005).

> *'The programme* [the SAP] *was intended to identify those sectors* [of the economy] *with high potential for growth in order to turn them around to support the economy. The mining industry was identified as one of the critical sectors of the economy that could put it on the right track.' (PTT 1, 2015).*

As part of the SAP, the Government of Ghana established a Minerals Commission to regulate the industry, liberalize its regulations, and extend significant benefits to private enterprises.

> *'The Minerals Commission was set up to promote the development of the* [mining] *industry and ensure that* [the actors would] *adhere to best practices and industry standards' (GoG 2, 2015).*

On many occasions, President Rawlings met the representatives of foreign business communities and invited them to invest in the mining industry[4]. Following the many reforms that had been implemented

[2] Interestingly, in passing the Mercury Ordinance Law, the colonial government had cited the impact of mercury on the environment. However, as Tsui (1997) noted, the passing of the law had been facilitated by British mining companies, which had pressured the colonial office in London and the governor of the Gold Coast to create opportunities for their entry into the colony.

[3] Also see the Mineral Act 1962 (Act 126), which vested the ownership of minerals in '…the President on behalf of the Republic and in trust for the People of Ghana (Tsui, 1997:10).

[4] The New Mining Law, 1986, provided a number of tax incentives to foreign investors. Prominent among them was a capital allowance that permitted the writing off of 80% of the initial investment.

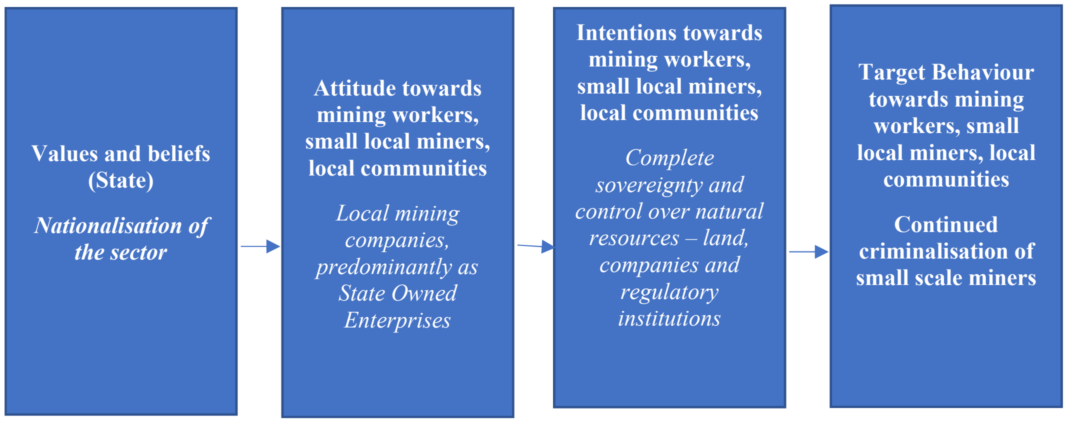

Fig. 3. Irresponsible practices by the State.

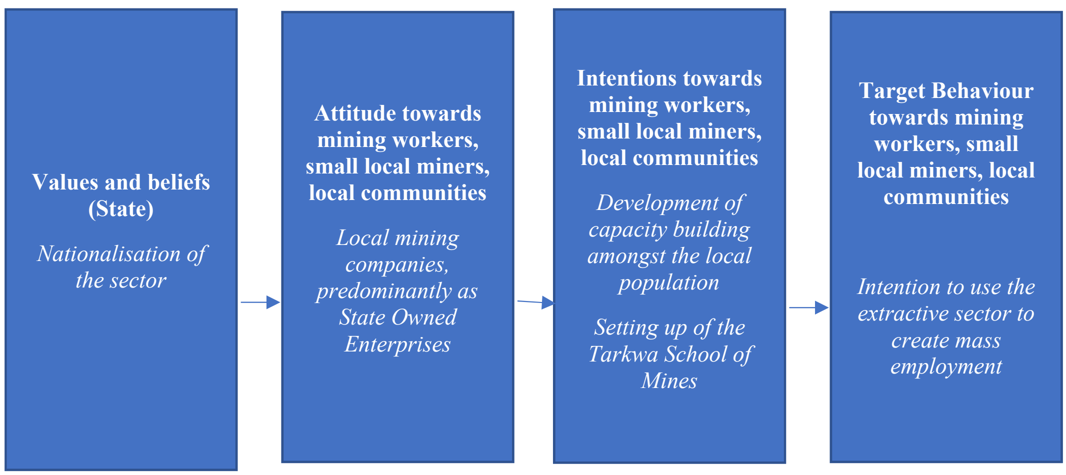

Fig. 4. Responsible practices by the State.

through the SAP, the response was favourable. The fiscal regime was reformed to do away with many taxes and with government control over the forex market. The resultant deregulation was explained by one of our respondents as:

> *'Once the foreign currency was deregulated, many of the loss-making mines were turned into profit-making businesses. The Ashanti Gold-Fields Ltd., for instance, benefited hugely from the deregulation* [of the Forex] *policy (MIA 2, 2017).*

One of the most significant consequences of the new economic policy was the increasing foreign company interest in the Ghanaian mining industry and the gold mining sector in particular. The SGMC, which had been incorporated in 1961 to take over the operations of the existing gold mines, was operating at a loss and, in 1986, following the economic restructuring polices, the Government of Ghana embarked in divesting itself of the mines by selling them to the private sector while maintaining a statutory 10% free equity share in all new mines. Between 1986 and 1990, more than 55 gold prospecting licences were granted by the government (Campbell, 2003, cited in Hacthful, 2002), and gold exports increased from 22% to 45% between 1984 and 1995 (Tsuma, 2010). These anti-nationalization and pro-privatization sentiments were summarised by one respondent as follows:

> *'By the mid-1980s, the government's nationalization drive was reversed. Gradually, the state's interest in the mining industry was transferred to private investors. The government's role in the industry changed from owner to regulator.' (MNC 2, 2015).*

This surge in investments in the mining sector had two significant consequences. First, there was a shift from underground to surface mining, which requires the acquisition of land and sparked confrontations between mining companies and residents. The second consequence pertained to the lack of employment of local people in the mining economy, which is characterized by the capital intensive nature of large-scale mining. As a consequence, a significant number of protests were triggered among the dissatisfied mining communities.

The Government of Ghana responded to the conflicts between the mining companies and their host communities and to the lack of employment generation in the industry by bringing artisanal gold mining into the formal economy. As part of the SAP reforms, the Small-Scale Gold Mining Law, the Mercury Law, and the Precious Minerals Marketing Law were passed to legalize small-scale mining.

As depicted in an earlier sections, having gained political independence, Ghana and many other African countries had nationalized the private companies owned and controlled by the erstwhile colonial investors (see Sklar, 1988; Rood, 1976). As the result of this nationalization, the 1960s had seen a massive portfolio of government business in Africa (Ashcroft, 2013; Hopkins, 1976). The natural resources industry had probably been the most affected, especially where the GoG had left little room in which the private sector could operate (Akabzaa & Darimani, 2001). Many other African countries had implemented similar policies. For example, just like as Ghana's mining industry had been organized under the SGMC in 1963, Nigeria and Zambia had nationalized their petroleum and copper mining sectors during the same period (Lungu, 2008; Omorogbe, 2001; Simutanyi, 2008). The nationalization agenda came with its challenges—consistent poor performance of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) (Luiz, 2009), many of which had begun to bleed cash shortly after the changes in their ownership structures.

Analysts have argued that the rampant political interference in the management of SOEs in Africa had been the leading cause of their failure (Garvin, 2009; Addy, 1998). Lack of skilled personnel, inadequate recapitalization, and failure to swiftly respond to market dynamism have been identified as major contributing factors for the SOEs' poor performance (Appiah-Kubi, 2001). For example, in the Ghanaian gold mining industry, four decades after independence, the government had not made any substantial investment in finding new mineral deposits to replace the depleting ones (Aryee, 2001). Similar reports exist in regard to the mining of uranium, copper, aluminium, and bauxite in Niger, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and Guinea (see Africa Africa Union, 2009; Reed & Miranda, 2007; Morisset, 1999).

As a result of the SAP's implementation, some of the major world producers of gold took over the assets of poor performing SOEs in Ghana's gold mining industry. In the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation, for instance, the GoG gradually loaded its interests on the stock exchanges in London, New York, and Accra. Aryee (2001) reported that, after the implementation of the liberalization policies, Ghana's gold mining industry had attracted some US$3 billion. These investments were significant because, three decades after independence, no new mine had been established (ibid). Similarly, bauxite was majorly owned by the state until the early 90 s, when the government reduced its interest from 55% to 20%. Based on our above narrative and discussion, Figs. 5 and 6 depict the irresponsible and responsible behaviours pursued by the powerful and influential MNCs in this era.

Thus, in this era (economic reform – 1980–2000), as the power shifted to the MNCs- through privatization, the corporate profit maximization of the MNCs, their negligible contribution to the national exchequer, their lack of engagement in any significant developmental activities in the local mining communities, and the inability of the state to counter any irresponsible behaviours enacted by these dominant stakeholders emerged as the critical issues. Though the MNCs did engage in some responsible practices and behaviours, such as creating employment and establishing training and developmental activities for local workers, these had minimal social impacts in relation to the those resulting from their irresponsible behaviours.

5.3. *Mining in contemporary times: the period following the structural adjustment programme (post-liberalisation)*

Today, gold accounts for about 90% of the minerals mined in Ghana (Chamber, 2015), and it is estimated that 70% of all West African gold output is mined in Ghana (Hilson & Potter, 2005). The results of the liberalization policy adopted by the GoG started to show by 1990. The SAP's implementation pushed for the privatization of SOEs and the deregulation of specific strategic sectors of the economy, including mining. The annual production output of gold had reached one million ounces, the highest on record in over two decades (Hilson, 2002). Debatably, the mining reforms introduced as part of the SAP were a major contributing factor for this significant growth. The industry has persistently recorded appreciable growth since 1990 (Initiative, 2014), making Ghana a major player in the industry. The significant rise in gold production recorded over the last two decades could also possibly be associated with improved governance structures and the continuation of the liberalization reforms enacted by successive governments, primarily in the area of tax administration (Ayee, Søreide, Shukla, & Le, 2011). The significant growth of Ghana's gold mining sector highlights the success of foreign private mining companies (Kumah, 2006). The following quote by a respondent sheds light on these aspects.

> *'In 1992, when a new political dispensation was adopted, the privatization policy was not reversed, as it had been by previous governments* [in 1966 and 1972]. *The Rawlings-led PNDC* [that had introduced the SAP] *transitioned to a civilian system and continued with the* [implementation of] *SAP……. In 2000, there was another transition of power from one political party to the other.* [Desoite having a different political ideology] *the new government headed by Kufuor did not reverse the privatization policy* [introduced] *by the PNDC government. Under Kufuor's administration, fresh investments were made into new mines by Multinationals* [Corporations]*, including the Newmont Group.' (MIA 1, 2017).*

The 1986 Mining Law was replaced in 2006. This was brought about on the advice of international financial institutions, including the World Bank, to become more investment-friendly. The 2006 Mining Act reduced corporate tax from 35% to 25%, and the windfall tax of 35% was scrapped altogether. The 2006 Mining Act was described by the World Bank (2008: 32) as "*more investment friendly in line with international best practices*". Booming commodity prices characterized the period between 2006 and 2012. However, that did not result in a significant increase in revenue to the national exchequer, on which the following interesting quote throws more light:

> *'The issue, with mining, is about a fair and transparent sharing of the benefits and windfall gains from the exploitation of the country's precious and irreplaceable natural resources…During the recent global financial crisis, the prices of gold, cocoa, and oil reached their highest ever peak levels. Yet, the country did not benefit at all from the price hikes…The government has, therefore, taken the bold step of critically reviewing the fiscal regimes and mining agreements, with the view to ensuring that the country would benefit adequately and fairly from the gains in the mining sector' (MIA 2, 2017).*

Consequently, the Mining Act was amended to institute a 5% fixed

Fig. 5. Irresponsible practices by MNCs.

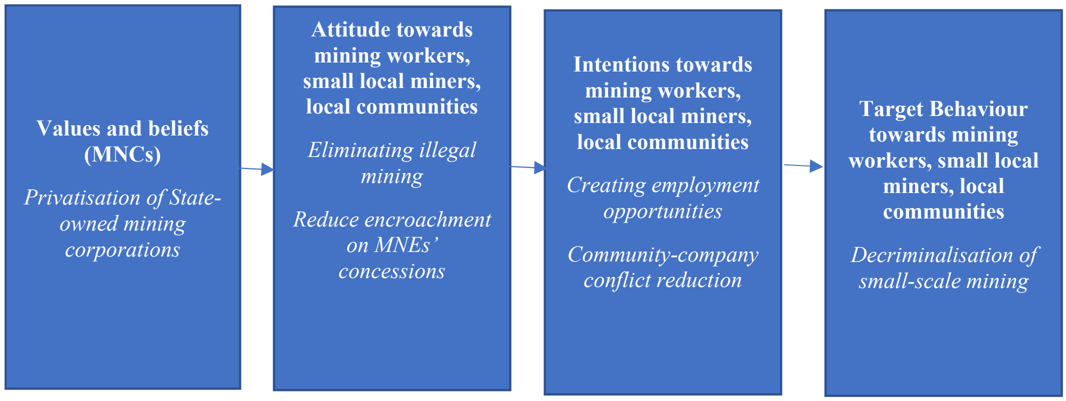

Fig. 6. Responsible practices by MNCs.

royalty rate across the board and, in 2012, the Finance Minister proposed a 10% increase in corporate tax. The National Democratic Congress (NDC) government also established a seven-member Mining Review Committee to assess all those mining agreements it deemed to be detrimental to the national interest. The actions of the GoG and the support it received from the World Bank and the IMF in particular highlight the more active role taken on by the state in exploring avenues to generate revenue from and overseeing regulations in the mining industry in general and in the gold mining sector in particular (Quandzie, 2011). The NDC's approach was consistent with its position that emphasizes the need to redefine the mining sector's role in facilitating national development objectives.

The Mining Act of 2006 focussed on and possibly addressed one of the two key aspects underpinning MNC operations in Ghana, and it contributed to increasing revenue for the state exchequer, particularly between 2012 and 2015, when the global prices of gold dipped. However, it is critical to highlight that the GoG could only manage to implement the 10% increase in corporate tax, but had to suspend the windfall fax due to the MNCs' threats to lay off workers and take their operations elsewhere. The amendments made to the 2006 Mining Act, which increased the corporate tax rate by 10% highlighted the 'return of the state' compared to the previous era, when the MNCs, with the IMF's and World Bank's backing, had been the central actors. At the same time, the MNCs' resistance to the windfall tax, which led to its suspension, also highlighted the state's limitations. So, we argue that the state and MNCs' co-existence as the two dominant stakeholders characterize this era.

Apart from perceived fairness and transparency, the second issue that pertains to the MNCs' gold mining operations in Ghana is related to their interaction and conflicts with the local population. In this specific context, we note that the MNCs have started to localize their CSR strategies. For instance, focussing on the CSR strategies adopted by Newmont Gold Ghana Limited (NGGL), Patnaik et al. (2018) concluded that the establishment and continued functioning of the Newmont Ahafo Development Foundation (NADeF) had enabled the company to attain legitimization among the local community. The NADeF was established by NGGL, working closely with the local community, as an instrument to oversee the implementation of developmental projects it funds.

The evidence of the CSR activities increasingly undertaken by MNCs notwithstanding, some issues need to be addressed. For instance, MNCs have invested minimally in capacity building amongst the local population, as explained by one of our respondents below:

> *"…the local content regulations are needed now, as there is less evidence of companies investing in developing local capacity…. local content regulations deal with areas like human resources. Companies can bring in expatriate staff when they cannot find adequate local expertise… Successive plan agreements need to be signed between the companies and the regulator. If the company does not follow the succession plan, their expatriate staff will not have their work permit renewed by the Ghana Immigration Service. This would compel the companies to employ locally in the medium to long-term (GoG official 3).*

As depicted in Figs. 7, 8 (irresponsible and responsible state behaviours, respectively), and 9 (irresponsible MNC behaviours), during this third era, both the key actors/stakeholders—i.e., the state and the MNCs—have exhibited dominant behaviours by complementing each other. On the one hand, the state has attempted to force the MNCs to pay their fair share of their revenues, whereas the MNCs, not surprisingly, have behaved irresponsibly by not only not complying with the responsible behaviours prescribed by the state, but also going to the extent of resisting a few state-mandated CSR policies.Fig. 9

6. Discussion

Ghana's Gold Mining industry has undergone significant institutional and structural changes since the country attained independence in 1957. Consequently, the nature and composition of the sector's stakeholders has also undergone drastic changes. However, the implications or social impact of the nature of relationship between the various stakeholders in general and of the status of the most marginalised group amongst the stakeholders—namely, the artisanal or small scale miners—has remained negative per se (see Banchirigah, 2006; Hilson et al., 2019; Orleans-Boham et al., 2021). The activities of indigenous small scale miners are still criminalised, as was the case when the sector was controlled by the colonial rulers.

Our study set out to contribute in three distinct ways against this backdrop. First, by identifying 'the what', wherein we traced and mapped the ownership structure changes that have occurred in Ghana's gold mining sector. In the process, we mapped the evolution of the CSR behaviours of the dominant stakeholders in the three distinct eras of institutional changes vis a vis the attitudes held towards the artisanal miners, as the most marginalised stakeholders in the sector. Second, in undertaking our mapping exercise, we further investigated the factors that influenced the CSR behaviours of the dominant actors and, in this regard, we identified the responsible and irresponsible CSR practices enacted in Ghana's gold mining sector. The neo-colonial era, which followed Ghana's independence from British colonial rule in 1957, highlighted the dominant role played by the state in the country's economy, including in the extractive industry. This era was also characterized by the withdrawal of MNCs from the country. However, as had been the case under colonial rule, the first government of the newly independent Ghana also criminalised the small scale mining in which the local indigenous population engaged. However, whereas, by criminalising the artisanal miners, the colonial rulers had aimed at ensuring the availability of sufficient numbers of workers for the mines owned by foreign mining companies, the rationale underpinning the new government's actions was to essentially enforce its absolute ownership on

Fig. 7. Irresponsible practices by the State.

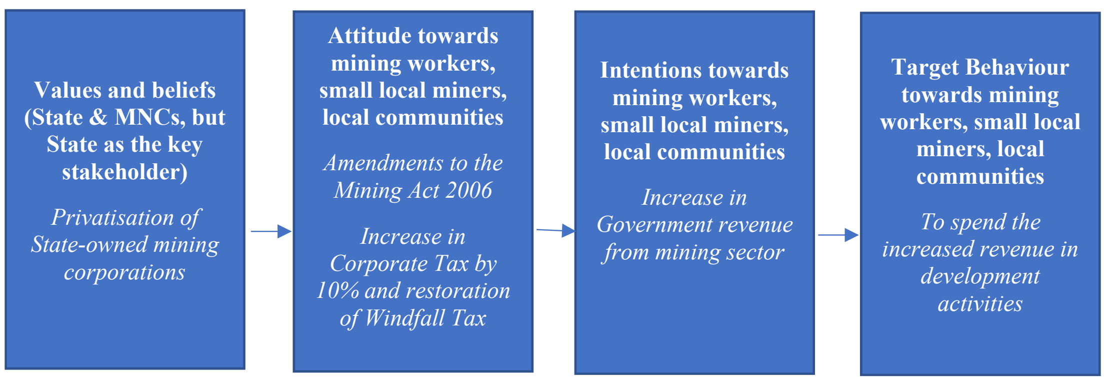

Fig. 8. Responsible practices by State.

Fig. 9. Irresponsible practices by MNCs.

mining as an activity. The liberalization era was underpinned by the SAP, which led to the privatization of loss-making state-owned enterprises and the deregulation of the mining industry. This era was characterized by the return of foreign MNCs, backed by the IMF and World Bank, as the dominant stakeholders. In fact, the GoG actively pursued a policy of inviting and attracting MNCs to become the dominant actors in the sector and, in doing so, it changed its role to that of regulator. We termed the period starting from the beginning of the millennium (2000) as contemporary times, which coincide with the post-SAP period. This era has been characterized by the state taking back the power to amend the mining agreements and regulate the sector. At the same time, the MNCs have attempted to localize their behaviours (Patnaik et al., 2018) and familiarise themselves with the local communities' expectations.

In identifying the dominant actors in the three eras, we adopted the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) to identify and evaluate the specific values and beliefs that underpinned the actions and behaviours of the dominant stakeholders. In order to analyse the dominant stakeholders' responsible or irresponsible business practices, which ultimately manifest themselves in the form of CSR practices (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), we specifically focussed on the relationship between stakeholder values and the attitudes of the dominant stakeholders towards indigenous and small scale miners.

For example, in the first era, the state, as the dominant actor, had shown no intention to bring the small-scale miners into the mainstream. Instead, it had embraced the erstwhile colonial policy of criminalization of this community. As the power had shifted to the MNCs in the second era, the focus had accordingly shifted to maximising corporate profits and minimising the contributions to the national exchequer or the developmental activities in the local mining communities. In the third era, both the state and the MNCs have exhibited dominant behaviours in one respect or another, wherein the state has engaged in some responsible behaviours by attempting—albeit with only partial success—to force the MNCs to pay their fair share on their revenues.

Our study's third contribution is an overarching theoretical model through which we illustrate the responsible and irresponsible CSR practices enacted within Ghana's gold mining industry amid evolving institutional changes. Overall, our findings suggest that, in the context of Ghana's gold mining industry, CSR has come full circle. The mining industry, as discussed in our literature review, has always been rent and profit-seeking; we uncovered that successive dominant stakeholders had continued to accumulate power and resources and to perpetuate the principle of exploitation for self-interest. Our crucial objective was to investigate and map both the responsible and irresponsible practices enacted over three eras; interestingly, our findings suggest that, even though the actors have changed and the industry has evolved, the quest for CSR persists. This leads us to ask a deeper question: is CSR, in its purest sense, percolating down to all stakeholders, is it merely a window-dressing exercise (Freeman, 1994), or is it because it makes good business sense?

From a more practical perspective, we argue that the ban imposed on small-scale mining by the colonial government and retained by the its post-independence successor (until 1989) was unfair on the indigenous people. This policy reduced local investment and development in the industry. Many people were denied legitimate economic livelihoods, causing them to become impoverished them and deteriorating their standard of living. On the other hand, many foreign mining enterprises benefited economically from this policy, especially through the exploitation of cheap labour. We also suggest that the mining companies did not adequately compensate farmers (especially cash-crop ones) for taking over their land for mining operations.

Through our findings, we make a theoretical contribution by suggesting that different values and attitudes were upheld in terms of the key stakeholders intentions that manifested responsible and irresponsible CSR behaviours. Furthermore, this suggests that, on balance, there was a greater incidence of MNCs continuing to engage in irresponsible—or very superficially responsible—CSR practices in each of the three eras. This would suggest that, despite pressures from supranational bodies such as the UN, MNC subscription to genuine, authentic, and meaningful CSR and to a global code of conduct remains no more than an unrealized aspiration. At best, minimalist and rather irresponsible CSR behaviours will continue to dominate unless and until both awareness and a positive nexus between business and policymakers are significantly enhanced.

7. Conclusions

This paper contributes to the ongoing debate on the positive and negative social impact of business relationships by focussing on the responsible and irresponsible behaviours enacted by stakeholders in the industry sector, which we explored within the specific context of Ghana's gold mining industry. The implications of social impact are most profound in the mining sector, particularly in the African context. As this could be seen as a limited context, others should be investigated, compared, and contrasted in future research in order to gain richer and more generalizable findings and outcomes. For example, would gold mining and other mining industries in emerging countries yield similar findings?

We adopted an in-depth longitudinal case study approach to explore the responsible and irresponsible behaviours of stakeholders. We collected data from multiple stakeholder groups, including the government—represented by senior public servants at both the local and national levels—mining operators, policy think-tanks, and communities affected by mining activities. We complemented our primary data with secondary sources and, by doing so, we specifically contributed to the ongoing debate by identifying and mapping the evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) behaviours through the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). Although ours was an exploratory study, our reliance on purely qualitative research methodologies could be seen as a limitation. Future research could explore richer data sets, possibly by designing a questionnaire and conducting a survey using quantitative methods.

In terms of our key findings, we argue that CSR behaviours—both responsible and irresponsible—are influenced by the various stakeholders' attitudes and intentions, which exist in a nexus of open relationships. This is an exciting finding as it fits the call for papers aimed at establishing whether the social impact of the mining industry is an effect of inter-organizational relationships/interactions. Here too, a deeper investigation of more micro-foundational aspects would add greater value to future studies.

Our analysis and findings encompass three distinct eras ('the what'): the neo-colonial era (1957–1980), the liberalization era (1980–2000), and the post-liberalization era (2000-present day). We inductively analysed the key values and attitudes that influenced the changes observed in the identified CSR behaviours ('the why'). We further compared the evolution of CSR and of responsible and irresponsible behaviours at multiple levels to highlight future ways whereby irresponsible mining practices could be minimized and responsible ones enhanced ('the how'). Although we tried to explore and investigate the quest for CSR amid the institutional changes occurring in Ghana's gold mining industry, any more nuanced aspects we missed could be the subject of future research together with the same aspects in different contexts. This would yield findings that can be generalized by comparison and contrast.

In conclusion, our study's findings suggest that critical drivers or actors in networks of relationships—be they state or corporate actors—can play a critical role in paving the way for indigenous people to fully participate in the mining business. We propose that local participation in the industry's activities would have a direct social impact; hence, the dynamics underpinning networks of relationship should be further critically explored. That said, there is still a quest for responsible CSR practices amid the evolving institutional changes occurring within Ghana's gold mining industry, which could also be representative of the global mining industries across developing countries.

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