 

# *The Quest for CSR*: Mapping Responsible and Irresponsible Practices in an Intra-Organizational Context in Ghana's Gold Mining Industry

**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.

**Keywords:** Gold Mining, CSR, Responsible Practices, Irresponsible Practices, Social Value, Small-scale Mining.

# 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 behaviour and practices of large mining multinational corporations (MNCs), particularly operating in developing countries (e.g. Dashwood, 2014; Yakovleva & Vazquez-Brust, 2018; Mutti, Yakovleva, Vazquez-Brust, & Di Marco, 2012; Kolk & Lenfant, 2010; Eweje, 2009; De George, 2001). Many studies have explored and shed light on the various effects of the mining industry and on the environment and socio-economic developments of host and indigenous communities where they operate (e.g., see Patnaik, Temouri, Tuffour, Tarba, & Singh, 2018; Freudenburg, 1992; Hilson, 2012 for a review). These studies have highlighted how the creation of wealth from mining activities has created and had detrimental effects and costs such as the displacement of local communities for mining projects (Lodhia, 2018), denial of economic livelihood to indigenous people through re-appropriation of farmlands (Assan & Muhammed, 2018), pollution of the environment affected by mining, and the destruction of aquatic lives (Hilson, Hilson & Pardie, 2007; Kpan, Opoku, & Gloria, 2014), amongst others. Mining companies have thus been under pressure from global industry trends, standards and higher expectations of mining MNCs from the various stakeholders to minimize the many conflicts that have emanated from their operations, affecting communities socially, economically and environmentally (Zandvliet & Anderson, 2009; Kemp, Owen, Gotzmann, & Bond, 2011). It is in this backdrop that the nexus of social and structural relationships amongst the key stakeholders (Ford & Mouzas, 2013; Mitrega et al., 2018; Mller & Halinen, 1999), in the mining sector assume significance, considering the nature of 'messy problems' that needs addressing to achieve social impact (Savage et al., 2010; Patnaik et al., 2018).

Extant literature has identified various ways in which mining MNCs have responded to the increased scrutiny put on their activities and have highlighted numerous CSR activities that are aimed at minimizing the negative impact on host communities and the larger society (Owen & Kemp, 2012; Böhling, Murguía, & Godfrid, 2019). Mining MNCs continue to invest significant resources in projects' sustainability, as evident through periodic sustainability reports to stakeholders (Landrum, & Ohsowski, 2018). Even though the MNCs' refer to these sustainability activities differently, they serve a common goal of communicating to the stakeholders the MNCs' environmental footprint. These activities, for example, focus on either reducing or mitigating factors that are put in place to minimize the devastating impacts of environmental factors. In other words, there is presence of 'responsible' activity, behaviour and practices 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 (Sustainable Development Knowledge 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). Meanwhile, 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, SDG 12's sub-target 6, which focuses on "…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 as such 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 SDGs and an expectation of MNCs' responsible behaviour, the evidence of MNC's CSR behaviour is far from compelling (e.g. Aguilar-González, Navas, Brun, Aguilar-Umaña, & Cerdán, 2018; Yakovleva & Vazquez-Brust, 2018; Kolk & Lenfant, 2013). A greater understanding is needed of why and how CSR practices manifest themselves in both responsible and irresponsible behaviours of dominant actors in our focal research case – the Ghanaian Gold Mining Industry.

The focus on Ghana's Gold Mining sector presents an exciting and relevant site to study 'social impact', emanating from responsible and irresponsible actions and behaviour of dominant stakeholders who make up the sector. The main stakeholders in Ghana's mining sector comprise the local and indigenous people, the sovereign government and administrative institutions of Ghana, and the global mining MNCs, 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 the local region's social impact necessarily entail adopting stakeholders' perspective. In our paper, we argue that the nexus and nature of power relationship amongst the stakeholders mentioned above underpin the overarching behaviour and actions of dominant actors towards the most socially marginalized actors in the mining sector. In essence, we conceptualize the responsible and irresponsible behaviour of key stakeholders as a form and manifestation of social impact, potentially impacting the local and larger community. Therefore, in our paper, we particularly pay attention to the responsible and irresponsible behaviour of dominant actors over three distinct eras, namely colonial era (before the 1960s); post-independence era (1960-1980s); and post-structural adjustment era (1980s-) towards the artisanal miners, who are amongst the most marginalized community amongst the stakeholders. We aim to establish that the mining industry's social impact here affects inter-organizational relationships/interactions played out by the different stakeholder organizations.

Based on the qualitative interview data from several key stakeholders in the Ghanaian mining industry in general and the Gold Mining sector in particular, we analyze and explain the presence of responsible and irresponsible behaviours of dominant actors and their relationships through the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). We consider CSR practices to be a form of manifested behaviour influenced by various stakeholders' attitudes and intentions. As a consequence, we posit that the core values and beliefs held by key crucial stakeholder organizations in the Ghanaian mining industry noted above and the Gold Mining sector affect the attitudes and intentions to predict the manifested behaviour– of responsible/irresponsible CSR practices by these organizations whilst interacting or within their inter-organizational relationships. We argue that the TPB, which extends the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), is a robust theoretical framework (Sheppard, Hartwick & Warshaw, 1988; Madden, Ellen & Ajzen, 1992) to analyze responsible and irresponsible behaviour of critical stakeholders as the sector has undergone structural changes since the early 1960s following the independence of the country. Our data provide us with solid support that specific values and beliefs drive stakeholder organizations attitudes towards an object and, subsequently, their intentions to cause an action or behave in a particular manner. We argue that specific values in the core stakeholder organizations lead to the emergence of favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards MNC miners and indigenous Ghanaian miners, which affects their intention to engage in certain CSR practices (or manifested behaviours). We highlight the nature of these values and beliefs in explaining the attitudes, intentions and manifest behaviours.

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

The three distinctive contributions from our paper (the *what*, *why* and *how*) offers us to understand the values and belief systems of a specific group of stakeholder organizations and how these have evolved and persisted over some time in perpetuating certain attitudes towards indigenous and multinational mining firms leading to their intentions to engage in certain responsible and irresponsible CSR practices by these organizations (the manifested behaviours). Apart from the contributions mentioned above, we also develop a conceptual model for analyzing the behaviours and developing future research areas. The collective influence of a dominant coalition's values, attitudes, behaviours and actions in the form of responsible and irresponsible practices towards a community from an emerging market context is a key gap and our distinctive contribution.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. We begin by critically reviewing the extant literature and develop a theoretical framework to underpin this 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 our findings, discussion on the same, critical contributions and a broad conclusion.

## 2. Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

The African continent has been the host of mining activities for centuries. For many countries, this sector has been the significant share of the overall economic output and input for other industries and in many ways provided enormous wealth generation and livelihood sustenance. However, the extraction of precious metals and minerals has enormous costs to many involved directly affected and indirectly impacted via devastating externalities. Bird (2016) outlines the issues confronted by mining communities, ranging from pollution, safety concerns and political rent-seeking behaviour. He argues that despite a global effort to monitor MNCs' excesses and local government's efforts to enact improved legislation and individual mining company's actions to reduce 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 responsible behaviours/practices and decreasing irresponsible behaviour/practices by critical stakeholders).

There has been a longstanding debate on MNCs' responsibilities and a growing opposition against the irresponsible and demand for responsible practices and activities (Reddy & Hamann, 2018; Reed, 2002; Kapelus, 2002; Szablowski, 2002; Cragg & Greenbaum, 2002). CSR, in this backdrop, is conceptualized as the framework and bridge (see arguments such as 'CSR as a problematic response to critics' by Kapelus, 2002, p. 278) between MNCs responsibilities, practices and activities and the opposition they face through governmental and non-governmental agencies who act as moral and ethical gatekeepers. Another debate within this body of literature concerns who constitutes as 'community' or 'society' as stakeholders and why? Further, it becomes imperative to understand answers to crucial questions such as what should be the apportionment of the 'rent' and 'proceeds' or 'costs' and 'benefits' among its key stakeholders (Cragg & Greenbaum, 2002)?; what and how much should be the responsibility of MNCs be when it comes to local community development (Idahosa, 2002)? (what Amartya Sen - the Nobel laureate calls as the 'capability approach to development', [see Sen, 1994; 1999]); and how should this then impact public policy alongside the development of CSR strategies by the MNCs. These questions get compounded when it comes to the mining sector, 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 that are characterized by institutional void (Luiz & Ruplal, 2013). In this respect, Africa has emerged as the new frontier for mining operators, and likewise, recent studies on mining companies' operations have been considered in many African countries as an affluent and evolving site for research. For example, see recent work on mining, CSR and the community through the case study of Richard Bay Minerals, a subsidiary of the global giant Rio Tinto, 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 seen to likely address effectively the development concerns of local communities. Szablowski (2002) examine the displacement of the local communities, and the World Bank's role through the mining company's case - *Compania Minera Antamina'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 relationships between the mining companies and local communities. Szablowski (2002) argues that such directives by supranational organizations such as the World Bank tends to have a 'legitimation effect' that dictate specific standards and benchmarks that then 'certify a degree of responsible behaviour' (p. 247).

The above debates and arguments led us to believe that these mining MNCs' prime motive is to exploit developing countries through exploiting their soil for precious metals and mineral at the expense of 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 their operations in these natural resource rich countries responsibly or irresponsibly? The responsibility we see here in the literature is towards local indigenous miners, mining workers and the local community, whom we argue are need to be seen as inclusive stakeholders. To understand this question, we utilize and frame the following theoretical lens that underpins this study.

### *2.1 Theoretical Underpinning*

While there are several competing theories that we could have employed, such as the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980), we employed the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), a mid-range theory with strong explanatory and predictive theoretical attributes, which is a successor of the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980). The theory of reasoned action was built on several psychological theories from the learning domain that predict and suggest that people will evaluate the suggested behaviour as positive (attitudes) wherein if the collective or a group of individuals believe that they should perform that behaviour (subjective norms) or 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 that individuals and groups of individuals have exercised, 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 yield a rich analytical lens for analyzing the influence of group membership on behaviours, such as noted in the key arguments of the social identity and social categorization theories (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the 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 attitudes and intentions that affect individual actions and behaviours. In the context of our study, we argue that the relationship between stakeholder values and attitudes towards indigenous and multinational mining firms will predict their behavioural intentions to engage in responsible or irresponsible business practices, which will finally manifest in the form of CSR practices (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The relationship between attitudes and intentions to achieve a specific behaviour is extensively researched in the literature (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Azjen & Fishbein, 1977; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Smith & Diane, 2007). The attitudinal element in this context is a culmination of beliefs about the behaviour in question (i.e. implementation of responsible or irresponsible CSR practices). Each stakeholder’s value and beliefs are weighed through assessing its impact (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Based on the above theoretical framework, the relationships between fundamental elements of the theory is reproduced in Figure 1 through the manifested behaviour of responsible and irresponsible corporate social practices. Through our data, we identify, and map stakeholders’ attitudes and intentions concerning this target behaviour (i.e. responsible and irresponsible corporate social practices), which we argue are manifestations of social impact. We define the variables in the model as follows. In terms of values, we classify and identify the nature of values key stakeholders (that hold power) have that is driving the formation of their attitudes towards the less influential and less powerful stakeholders such as the local indigenous miners, small mining firms, mineworkers and communities (e.g., displaced farmers), including self-interest, conservation, openness to change. When it comes to attitudes, we refer to key stakeholders’ attitude towards economic growth, rural development, and attitudes towards the lesser influential and powerful stakeholders described above. Lastly, we define intentions wherein stakeholders typically require providing resources, for example, training and resources and a motivation to carry out the act/behaviour. In this context, aspects of motivation and resources that would support the execution of an agent/stakeholder's behaviour are considered.

**(Insert Figure 1 here)**

## 3. Research methodology

We adopt the case study technique (Yin, 2003; Halinen & Törnroos, 2005) to identify and examine the responsible and irresponsible behaviour of dominant stakeholders that emanated from institutional changes in Ghana's gold mining industry over the last eight decades, particularly following the independence of the country in 1957. Our approach is consistent with approaches adopted by other scholars who have studied institutional changes in various institutional fields (see e.g. Simadjuntak, 2014; Akoum, 2012; Mwaura, 2007), and we also followed a 'narrative approach' (Makkonen et al., 2012). We collected data from multiple stakeholder groups, including senior public servants at both the local and national offices, mining operators, policy think tanks and members of communities affected by mining activities. These respondents broadly constitute 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 instead of limiting them to predetermined assertions.

The primary data was complemented with information from secondary sources. Secondary data sources include reports from the Ghana Chamber of Mines, Government of Ghana policy papers, reports of public committees/commissions, and annual reports of mining companies. Data usage from different sources enabled us to authenticate our findings and understand them better (Yin, 2003). This approach assured us of data credibility and confidence (Thurmond, 2001; Yakovleva & Vazquez-Brust, 2016).

Generally, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the informants. Thus, participants were deliberately chosen, considering the qualities they possess (Yin, 2003). We carefully selected experienced and knowledgeable actors from institutions whose activities are affected by changes in mining policies. The basic qualifications for potential participants were the longevity of active service and senior or managerial office occupancy 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 that witnessed historical events relating to policy reforms in the mining industry and that they have the potential of verifying the same. However, informants from unregistered Small-Scale Mining group were introduced to the researchers by confident opinion leaders in two mining communities. The artisiminal miners are the most marginalised stakeholders in the mining sector and issues pertaining to their miginalisation has been well documented elsewhere (see e.g., Banchirigah, 2006; Hilson, Goumandakoye & Diallo, 2019;  Orleans-Boham, Sakyi-Addo, Tahiru, & Amankwah, 2021). For this category of miners, who were predominantly engaged in mining 'informally', it was difficult to identify them through a purposive sampling technique and hence assistance of certain known members of the mining communities was critical..

The interviews were conducted in 2015 and 2017. Prospective interviewees were formally invited via letters to participate in this study. In total, 31 people participated in this process: 14 in 2015 and 17 in 2017 (see Table 1). The interviews were recorded after the consent of participants was sought. The interviewer took notes alongside with audio recording. This particular exercise was helpful as it served as a source of reference for follow-up questioning and further clarification on significant themes identified. Finally, the audio recording was transcribed verbatim and anonymized, referring to the notes taken.

**(Insert Table 1 here)**

The 31 interviewees were drawn from four stakeholder groups which we have classified under 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). The remainder are advocacy groups – non-governmental organizations and policy think tanks; and communities affected by mines, represented by certain traditional chiefs and opinion leaders. Thus, the in-depth interviews with these respondents, belonging to various stakeholder organisations, provided us insights into the nature and orientation of the eviolution of Ghana's mining sector since its independence in 1957.

### *3.1 Data Analysis*

The nature of our research enquiry, research questions and the research setting (Ghana's Gold Mining sector), necessitate greater emphasis on contextualisation (Shapiro, Von Glinow and Xiao, 2007; Tsui, 2007; Rousseau and Fried, 2001) and contextulised explanation (Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki and Paavilainen – Mantymaki, 2011). Cappelli and Sherer (1991) define context as "*(social and structural)* surroundings associated with phenomenon, which help to illuminate that phenomena (sic)" (*italics added:* p.56). The responsible and irrespobsible behaviour of dominant actors in Ghana's Gold Mining industry, we argue, has to be considered in relation to other actors, particularly the most marginalised actors. Thus, as a starting point, we first developed an historical account capturing the evolution of Ghana's Gold mining sector and accordingly we categoried them under four eras, namely: (a) the Colonial Era (pre-1957); (b) Neo-Colonial Era (1957-1980); (c) Liberalization Era (1980 – 2000); and (d) Post-Liberalization Era (2000-onwards). Figure 2 depicts the four eras as well as the dominant actors during each of the four eras.

**(Insert Figure 2 here)**

For the purpose of our paper, we decided to focus on the later three Eras only, since we were interested to explore the changes in the behaviour of key stakeholders in Ghana's Gold Mining sector following the country's independence in 1957. Consistent with our research focus, we specifically paid attention to identify domiant actors during each of the three eras under consideration and identify and categosied some of their practices under two categorises, namely (a) responsible practices; and (b) irresponsible practices. In undertaking our analysis, we concur with the view that dominant actors in an open system, such as Ghana's mining sector, exercise considerable power over other stakeholders in general and more so over the artisanal miners (small scale miners) which have historically been marginalised (see Patnaik et al., 2018; Hilson, 2002). Our approach to delinate dominant actors and critically explore their practices, in respect to artisanal miners, is consistent with extant approach to develop contextualised explanations, wherein actions of social actors not only reflect their intions but also their social position within the social structure (see for instance; Welch et al., 2011; Tsang, 2013). Focusing our attention on dominant actor's responsible and irresposiuble practices in respect to their implications on the marginalised artisanal miners, allowed us to criticallty evaluate how the actions of few (dominant actors) had positive or negative impact on others (e.g. artisanal miners) and hence, whether the practices were 'responsible' or 'irresponsible' in terms of their social impact.

## 4. Research setting: Ghana's Gold Mining Industry

Ghana's extractive industry comprises quarrying, mining precious minerals and metals (including gold, diamond, bauxite and manganese) and the extraction of oil and gas and mining, either on a small or large scale, had a significant impact on the society, including in the local communities. These impacts include environmental degradation, increased crime rates, disruption in the social structure, and economic hardships (ibid). Over the years, the above social impacts have accounted for conflicts between mining enterprises and stakeholders in their host communities (Yakovleva and Vazquez-Brust, 2018). The conflict between corporations and their host communities could have a significant impact on returns on investment. Arguably, the impact of community-corporation conflict on the mining industry's value creation is devastating, considering its capital intensity. Noticeably, the conflict 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 more 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, had continued conflict with their stakeholders in Indonesia, leading to their exit from the Southeast Asian market (Kemp et al, 2008; Welker, 2009). Interestingly, in 2008 when Newmont attempted to enter the Ghanaian gold market, some local stakeholder groups raised the poor records in Indonesia and protested their entry into the African market. Therefore, the poor corporate-stakeholder relationship could damage one's reputation, both in the long and short-terms (Van der Laan, Van Ees, and Van Witteloostuijn, 2008).

In Ghana and many other sub-Saharan African countries, the economy depends majorly on proceeds from natural resources (Gylfason and Zoega, 2003; Baumiah and Appiah-Adu, 2016). Thus, the contribution of the mines to economic development is significant in this region. For example, Halland, Lokanc and Nair (2015) estimate that between 75% and 80% of the West African States' taxation is associated with the mining industry. On average, 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, Akabzaa, 2009; Bourgouin, 2011). It is in this backdrop that some scholars, such as Amponsah-Tawiah and Dartey-Baah (2011) and Van der Ploeg (2011) argue that that mining could either be a curse or a blessing to nations due to their impact on society. Often, mining has been a major contributory factor for the growing economic inequalities in rural communities (Hilson and Banchirigah, 2009; Eduful et al., 2020). For example, settlers of mineralized lands lose their economic livelihood to mining. There have been many instances where indigenous small-scale farmers have been relocated from their farmlands in exchange for a one-off compensation, not considering the future cash flows from the farmers' investments (Hilson and Nyame, 2006; Crawford and Botchwey, 2017).

Critically, Ghana's gold mining sector, in particular, has witnessed significant reforms in ownership and regulatory structures. These changes have been influenced by monetary and fiscal policies introduced in the 1980s. Although some studies have been conducted on these economic reforms (see Banchirigah, 2006; Hilson, 2004; Loxley, 1990), they have been dominated by the programme's success or failure stories. No substantial research has been undertaken regarding 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 studies are piecemeal and have focused on environmental degradation and the sources and practical ways of resolving industry-stakeholder conflicts (see Gamu, & Dauvergne, 2018; Yakovleva, & Vazquez-Brust, 2018; Hilson, 2004; Szablowski, 2002). Meanwhile, there is less empirical research on the responsible and irresponsible practices emanating from rigorous institutional reforms, which has predominantly led to changes in the power dynamics amongst the numerous stakeholders in the mining sector, on the most marginalised stakeholders, namely the artisanal miners or the small scale miners. Put simply, the social impact of institutional changes in Ghana's mining sector on artisanal miners, has not attracted significant attention.

The influence of neo-liberalism on Ghana's SAP was profound. For example, it included the withdrawal of government subsidies on utilities, high productivity, and the cutting down of government expenditures or spending on state-owned enterprises and the privatization of same - to name a few (Fan, Yu, B, & Saurkar, 2008; Campbell, & Loxley, 1989). More specifically, this initiative led the government to privatize Ghana's mining sector in the context of our study. This spiralled into policies that then attracted foreign direct investments into Ghana's mining industry. Though one could argue, as Adam Smith would (the invisible hand), that mining activities contributed significantly to Ghana's economy.

On the other hand, and arguing deontological questions, such as should the State have adhered to their obligations and duties when engaged in the decision-making, especially when ethical issues are at play? For example, did they think of and act on various stakeholders' relevant responsible and irresponsible practices? And, did they consider that these mining activities would cause social problems, such as the dislocation of people, loss of farmlands, and environmental and health problems? Furthermore, what CSR practices were to be considered as an effect of such a decision? Some scholars argue that Ghana became the favoured country of the World Bank because of the successes achieved by implementing the SAP (Easterly, 2005; Jeffries, 1993). The extensive reforms in the industry within the period under study make it a critical case to study the evolution of ethical (responsible and irresponsible) practices, especially within a set-up with weak institutions (Patnaik et al., 2018).

To bridge this gap, we use primary data from multiple stakeholders within the Ghanaian Gold Mining sector to identify and examine responsible and irresponsible practices of dominant stakeholders following the period of Ghana's political independence in 1957 to the era of the implementation of the economic reform programme in the 1980s, and finally, the post-liberalization era – the period after the year 2000. We mainly focused our attention on how the responsible and irresponsible behaviour of dominant stakeholders impacted the artisanal mining community in the country. Historically, the artisanal miners, who are essentially the indigenous people, are amongst the most vulnerable stakeholders in Ghana's Gold Mining sector, who have been 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 participate in gold mining fully. The legitimization of small-scale artisanal mining operations in 1989 was a reversal of the criminalization of the practice by the colonial administration (Hilson & Pardie, 2006) in favour of investments from the colonial home territory. Thus, this paper contributes to the emerging body of literature that focuses on social impact emanating from dominant stakeholders' responsible and irresponsible behaviour, particularly towards the industry structure's most vulnerable stakeholders. Our paper further contributes to the literature on institutional change in Africa's extractive industry by identifying the ethical practices that have emerged and have come about due to changes in ownership structure and regulations in the mining business conduct. Specifically, the driving forces of CSR during the periods of change have been identified.

## 5. Findings and Analysis

As stated above, we focused our attention on three major phases, following Ghana's independence in 1957. The three eras are: (a) the era preceding the implementation of the economic reform programme, presented as the neo-colonial era; (b) the liberalization era in the 1980s that saw the implementation of the SAP; and the post-liberalization era, which witnessed influx of greater number of MNCs in Ghana's mining sector. These three phases are critical for achieving the study's aims as the mining industry witnessed institutional changes in the areas of ownership and regulations are concerned and yet the implications of these changes on artisanal miners has not been positive.

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

The Gold Coast gained political independence from British rule in 1957 and was later renamed Ghana. In the period preceding political independence, the mining industry was dominated by the private sector, mainly investors from the colonial territory. Gaining control over the management of natural resources by the indigenous people was a prominent slogan during the independence struggle (Tsikata, 1997; Hilson, 2002). Hence, one of the new Government post-independence tasks was to take over the ownership of the mining industry, including the gold mining sector (Tsikata, 1997). In essence, the State, thus became the central actor – being the owner of the mining industry and the regulator.

The period from 1950–1980 is often characterized by the declaration of permanent sovereignty over natural resources by developing countries that empowered mineral resource endowed nations to nationalize and expropriate existing mining concessions based on public utility, security, or the national interest[1]. Thus, it was natural that the actions of the first Government of Ghana (GoG) reflected this trend. The nationalization of core sectors was viewed as the catalyst for providing strategic raw materials for industrialization programmes (Gess, 1964). Another reason and driver that underpinned the Government of Ghana's decision to take over the ownership of the mines was the shape or position of the mines themselves. Most of the mines, at the time, were running huge losses and threatened closure. This industry employed many youths, and it was the backbone of livelihood for families, and that the economy of local mining communities dearly depended on this industry. If the government were to close down the mines, debatably, the socio-economic problems that arose after massive job cuts nationwide were likely to make the newly formed first post-colonization government unpopular. To avert these challenges, the State nationalized five major mining companies (namely Ariston, ABA, Ghana Main Reef, Bremang and Bibiani) and organized them under

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

the State Gold Mining Corporation (SGMC) (Hilson, 2002). The Konongo mines later joined the SGMC in 1965, with the only profitable private mining company, the Ashanti Goldfields (ibid).

Notwithstanding the changes, we noted that one of the practices that the new government retained, post-independence, pertained to the criminalization of small-scale mining by the indigenous people. Historically, small scale mining by local people was banned by the colonial State by criminalizing it 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 turn the labour force to work in the foreign mines rather than local ones. These were the times where the sector's activities were labour intensive and the indigenes did not want to work for the 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 the local people, more or less triggered the process of criminalization of small-scale miners (see Terray, 1974). It also created conditions that weakened local chiefs' control over the mineral-rich areas in the country (Tsuma, 2010).[2]

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 the 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 remains in the central government's hand[3].

In 1966, the Nkrumah-led government was overthrown by the military and the police. There were accusations over the dictatorial rule, corruption, and the Ghanaian economy's deterioration (Austin, & Luckham, 2014). Several other governments, both military and civilian, were ousted from power through military coup de tats. The mismanagement and alleged corruption that accompanied the military government was massive and had a significant impact on the mining industry's performance (Hope, 2000). Just a decade after their

[2] Interestingly, the colonial government cited impact of mercury on the environment in passing the Mercury Ordinance Law. However, as Tsikata (1997) notes, passing the law was facilitated by British mining companies, who pressured the colonial office in London and the governor of 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 (Tsikata, 1997:10).

incorporation, the SGMC was hugely in debt to the tune of $30 million (Anin, 1987). Arguably, factors such as the high cost of production and the local people's unpreparedness to manage such complex operations contributed to the poor performance of the SGMC. According to one of the respondents, a senior government official at a regulatory agency,

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

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

In 1972, the Acheampong-led military government decreed that the mining companies 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 as it contradicts the principle of fairness.

The neo-colonial era, which began with the first post-independence government's installation, differed from the colonial government in terms of underpinning governing values yet, it continued some of the colonial government's practices. The nationalization of natural resources mirrored developmental policies adopted by many other newly independent countries from different regions. The central tenet of nationalization was that government must assume sovereignty and control of the natural resources (and the economy at large) to ensure that the benefits are equitably distributed. In other words, creating mass employment and generating full access to foreign exchange from the proceeds of mining were used to justify the nationalization process. This is in contrast to the overarching objectives of the colonial governments. However, the criminalization of small-scale miners continued under the new government for the same reasons as the colonial government – sovereignty over natural resources and weakening the local chiefs' hold over the local population. Although there were some minor changes with government changes due to coups, broadly, the State remained the central and dominant actor – as an owner of mines and regulator of the industry, as was the case with the colonial government. Figures 3 and 4 depict irresponsible and responsible behaviour respectively of the central actor (the State).

**(Insert Figure 3 here)**

**(Insert Figure 4 here)**

### *4.2 Mining in the Economic Reform Era (Liberalisation): 1980 – 2000*

The decade before 1980 witnessed significant changes in Ghana's mining industry. The neo-colonial era, characterized by State ownership of the mining industry, significantly contributed to the deterioration of Ghana's economic condition. The protectionist policies of civilian and military governments in the post-independence period strangled investments in the mining industry. Gross Domestic Product had consistently dwindled around 2% per annum for the decade preceding 1970 (Rothchild, 1991; Loxley, 1988). Likewise, inflation between 1970 and 1983 had risen from 5% to over 120% by 1983 (Boamah, 2010; Islam and Wetzel, 1991). These poor indicators influenced the Rawlings-led Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government to embark upon major economic reform programmes to back the national economy on the right track (Collier and Gunning, 1999).

Of all the mining sectors, the gold mining sector was considered to be the worst-performing. By 1982, gold output had dwindled to a quarter of 1960's output - from 900,000 to 230,000 ounces. 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 suffered massively during the previous era due to many governments' failure to provide the SGMC much needed financial and technical resources for reinvestment into new mines. One of the senior public servants contends that:

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

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

> *'The programme [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 the economy on the right track.' (PTT 1, 2015).*

As part of the SAP, the Government of Ghana established the Minerals Commission to regulate the industry, liberalize the mining industry 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 [actors] adhere to best practices and industry standards' (GoG 2, 2015).*

President Rawlings, on many occasions, met foreign business communities and invited them to invest in the mining industry[4]. The response was favourable after several reforms had been undertaken through the SAP. The fiscal regime was reformed to do away with many taxes and government control over the forex market. The resultant deregulation, which was explained by one of our respondents as:

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

One of the most significant implications of the new economic policy was increasing interest among foreign companies in the Ghanaian mining industry and the gold mining sector in particular. The State Gold Mining Corporation (SGMC), which was incorporated in 1961 to take over the operations of existing gold mines, was operating at a loss and in 1986, following economic restructuring polices, the Government of Ghana embarked on a complete divestiture of the state-owned mines to the private sector with the government maintaining a statutory 10% free equity in all new mines. Between 1986 and 1990, more than 55 gold prospecting licences were granted by the government (Campbell, 2003, cited in Hacthful,

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

2002). Gold export 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 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).*

The new surge in investments in the mining sector had two significant implications. First, there was a shift from underground mining to surface mining. Surface mining requires the acquisition of land, which resulted in confrontations between mining companies and residents. The second implication pertains to the lack of employment to local people in the mining economy that is characterized by the capital intensive nature of large-scale mining. As a consequence, the significant number of agitations arose within dissatisfied mining communities.

The Government of Ghana responded to these challenges – the conflict between mining companies and their host communities and 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 earlier sections, Ghana and many other African countries, after political independence, nationalized private companies owned and controlled by investors from their colonists (see Sklar, 1988; Rood, 1976). The decade after 1960 saw a massive portfolio of government business in Africa – the result of nationalization (Ashcroft, 2013; Hopkins, 1976). The natural resources industry was probably the most affected, especially where the GoG had left little room for the private sector to operate in (Akabzaa, and Darimani, 2001). Many other African countries implemented similar policies. For example, as Ghana's mining industry was organized under the SGMC in 1963, Nigeria and Zambia nationalized petroleum and copper mining within the same period (Omorogbe, 2001; Lungu, 2008; Simutanyi, 2008). The nationalization agenda came with its challenges – consistent poor performance of State-owned enterprises (SOEs) (Luiz, 2009). Many SOEs began to bleed cash shortly after the changes in their ownership structures.

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

For instance, in Ghana's gold mining industry, some of the major world producers of gold took over the assets of poor performing mining SOEs through SAP's implementation. In the AGC, for instance, the GoG gradually loaded their interests on the stock exchanges in London, New York and Accra. Aryee (2001) report that Ghana's gold mining industry has attracted some US$3 billion after the implementation of these liberalization policies. These investments in Ghana 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 90s when the government divested its interest from 55% to 20%. Based on our above narrative and discussion, Figures 5 and 6 depict irresponsible and responsible behaviour pursued by the MNCs in this era, powerful and influential during this time period.

**(Insert Figure 5 here)**

**(Insert Figure 6 here)**

Thus, in this era (economic reform – 1980-2000), as the power shifted to the MNCs-through privatization, corporate profit maximization of the MNCs, their negligible contribution to the national exchequer or undertaking any significant developmental activities in the local mining communities and in capacity of the State to regulate the irresponsible behaviuour of these dominant stakeholders emerged as the critical issues. Though there were some responsible practicesn and bahaviour of MNCs, such as creating employment and training and developmental activities for local workers, such practices had minimal social impact in relation to the impact resulting from their irresponsible behaviour.

***4.3 Mining in contemporary times: the period after the structural adjustment programme (Post-liberalisation)***

Today, gold accounts for about 90 per cent of the minerals produced in Ghana (Ghana Chamber of Mines, 2015). It is estimated that 70 per cent of West African gold output is mined in Ghana (Hilson and Potter, 2005). The results of the liberalization policy adopted by the GoG started to manifest by 1990. The SAP 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 by 1990, the highest 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, the period after 1990 (GHEITI, 2014), making Ghana a major player in the industry. Possibly, the significant rise in gold production over the last two decades could also be associated with improved governance structures and the continuation of the liberalization reforms by successive governments, primarily in the areas of tax administration (Ayee et al., 2011). The significant growth of the gold mining sector in Ghana highlights the success of foreign private mining companies (Kumah, 2006). The following quote by a respondent throws light on these aspects.

> *'In 1992, when a new political dispensation was adopted, the privatization policy was not reversed, as did previous governments [in 1966 and 1972]. The Rawlings-led PNDC [that 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. The new government headed by Kufuor [though had different political ideology] 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 International Financial Institutions' advice, including the World Bank on becoming 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, which the following interesting quote throws more light on:

> *'the issue with mining is about 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, prices of gold, cocoa and oil*

> *reached their peak levels ever. Yet, the country did not benefit at all from the price hikes…The government has, therefore, taken a bold step to critically review the fiscal regimes and mining agreements, with the view to ensuring that the country benefits adequately and fairly from the gains in the mining sector'* (MIA 2, 2017).

Consequently, amendments were made in the Mining Act to institute a 5% fixed Royalty rate across the board and in 2012, the Finance Minister proposed a 10% increase in the corporate tax. The National Democratic Congress (NDC) government also constituted a seven-member Mining Review Committee to review all mining agreements it deemed detrimental to the national interest. The actions of the GoG and the support received from the World Bank and the IMF in particular highlights a more active role of 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). This NDC approach is consistent with its position that emphasizes the need to redefine the mining sector's role in facilitating national development objectives.

The Mining Law of 2006 focused on and possibly addressed one of the two key aspects underpinning MNCs operations in Ghana and it contributed to increasing revenue for the State exchequer, particularly between 2012-2015, until 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 it had to suspend the windfall fax due to the MNCs' threats to lay off workers and take the operations elsewhere. The amendments made to the Mining Act 2006 increasing the corporate tax rate by 10% highlights the 'return of the State' compared to the previous era, where the MNCs with the IMF and World Bank backing were the central actors. At the same time, MNCs' resistance to the windfall tax, leading to its suspension, also highlights the State's limitations. So, we argue that the State and MNCs' co-existence as the two dominant stakeholders characterize this contemporary era.

Apart from perceived fairness and transparency, the second issue that pertains to gold mining MNCs operations in Ghana is related to their interaction and conflicts with the local population. In this specific context, we note that MNCs have started to localize their CSR strategies. For instance, Patnaik et al. (2018), focusing on CSR strategies adopted by the Newmont Gold Ghana Limited (NGGL), concluded that the establishment and continued functioning of the Ahafo Development Foundation (NADeF), allowed the company to attain legitimization amongst 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.

Notwithstanding evidence of CSR activities increasingly undertaken by MNCs, some issues require addressing. For instance, the 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 since 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 agreement needs 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 within the medium to long-term (GoG official 3).*

During this third era, as is depicted in Figures 7, 8 (irresponsible and responsible behaviour by the State, respectively) and 9 (irresponsible behaviour by MNCs), both the key actors/stakeholders, i.e. the State and the MNCs, demonstrated dominant behaviour by complementing each other. On the one hand, the State attempts to force the MNCs to pay their fair share of their revenues, whereas the MNCs, on the other hand, and not surprisingly, show irresponsible behaviour by not only not complying with responsible behaviour as prescribed by the State but also going to the extent of resisting a few CSR policies, initiated by the State.

**(Insert Figure 7 here)**

**(Insert Figure 8 here)**

**(Insert Figure 9 here)**

### *4.4 Discussion*

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

Thus, in this backdrop, this paper set out to contribute in three distinct ways. First, “the what,” wherein we traced and mapped ownership structure changes in Ghana’s gold mining sector. In the process, we mapped the evolution of CSR behaviour of dominant stakeholders in the three distinct eras of institutional changes vis a vis towards the artisanal miners, as the most marginalised stakeholders in the sector. Second, in undertaking the mapping exercise, we further investigated the factors that influenced the CSR behaviour of dominant actors, and in this context, we identified responsible and irresponsible CSR practices in Ghana’s gold mining sector. The neo-colonial era, which followed Ghana’s independence from the British colonial rule in 1957, highlights the State’s dominant role in the country’s economy, including in the extractive industry. This era also characterized the withdrawal of MNCs from the country. However, as was the case with colonial rules, the first government of the newly independent Ghana also criminalised small scale mining by local indigenous population. Although the aim of the colonial rulers in criminalising mining by artisanal miners was ensure that there are enough work force available to work in mines owned by foreign mining companies, the rationale underpinning the new Government’s action to essentially enforce its absolute ownership on mining as an activity. The liberalization era was underpinned by the structural adjustment programme, which led to the privatization of loss-making state-owned enterprises and deregulation of the mining industry. This era characterizes foreign MNCs’ return, backed by the IMF and World Bank, as the dominant stakeholder. In fact, the Government of Ghana actively pursued inviting and attracting MNCs to become dominant actors in the sector and in doing so, it occupied the role of the regulator. We have termed from the beginning of the millennium (2000) as contemporary times, which coincides with the post structural adjustment programme. This era was characterized by State regaining powers to amend the mining agreements and regulate the sector. Simultaneously, the MNCs have attempted to localize their behaviour (Patnaik et al., 2018) and familiarise themselves with the local community’s expectations.

In identifying the dominant actors in the three eras, we adopted the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) to identify and evaluate specific values and beliefs that underpinned the actions and behaviours of domiant stakeholders. We speciofically focused attention on the relationship between stakeholder values and attitudes of the dominant stakeholders towards indigenous and small scale miners so as to analyse their (dominant stakeholedrs') responsible or irresponsible business practices, which finally manifest in the form of CSR practices (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

For example, in the first era, where the State is the dominant actor, there were no changes in its attitude to bring the small-scale mining community into the mainstream. Instead, it embraced the colonial policy of criminalization of this community. As the power shifts to the MNCs in the second era, the focus was on corporate profit maximization and negligible contribution to the national exchequer or undertaking developmental activities in the local mining communities. In the third era, both the State and the MNCs demonstrate dominant behaviour in one respect or another wherein the State attempted some responsible behaviour by attempting to force the MNCs to pay their fair share on their revenues, but then, the MNCs have also resisted some of the state policies.

Our third contribution is the overarching theoretical model through which we illustrate the mapping of responsible and irresponsible CSR practices manifested through behaviours within Ghana's gold mining industry amidst evolving institutional changes. Overall, our findings suggest that CSR in the context of Ghana's gold mining industry has come full circle. The mining industry, as discussed in our literature, has always been rent and profit-seeking. We uncover that whoever was the dominant stakeholder continued with accumulating power and resources and continuing the principle of exploitation for self-interest. Our crucial question was to investigate and map both the responsible and irresponsible practices over three eras. Interestingly, our findings suggest that, even though the actors changed and the industry has evolved, the quest for responsible CSR remains. This leads us to ask a deeper level question, i.e., CSR in its purest sense percolating down to all stakeholders or is merely a window-dressing exercise (Freeman, 1994), or it has done because it makes good business sense?

From a more practical perspective, we could argue that the ban on small-scale mining by the colonial government, continued by the state post-independence (up until 1989), was an unfair competition against the indigenous people. This policy reduced local investment and development in the industry. Many people were denied their legitimate economic livelihood, impoverishing them and deteriorating their standard of living. On the other hand, many foreign mining enterprises benefited economically from this policy, especially from cheap labour. We suggest that mining companies did not adequately compensate farmers for taking-over farms (especially those into cash-crop farms) for mining operations.

Theoretically, we contribute through our findings that suggest that different values and attitudes were held when affecting the intentions that manifested responsible and irresponsible CSR behaviours. Furthermore, this suggests that on balance, and in probability, there was a greater incidence noted of MNCs continuing to engage in irresponsible CSR or very surface-level responsible CSR practices in each of the three eras. This would suggest that despite pressures from Supra-national bodies such as the UN, the MNCs subscription to genuine, authentic and meaningful CSR and a global code of conduct remains an elusive journey and an unrealized aspiration. At best, this minimalist and rather irresponsible CSR behaviour will continue unless and until further awareness, and a positive nexus between business and policy-makers are significantly enhanced.

## 5. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research Directions

This paper contributes to the ongoing debate on the positive and negative social impact of business relationships by focusing on stakeholders' responsible and irresponsible behaviour in the industry sector. We explore these aspects within the specific context of Ghana's gold mining industry. Implications of social impact are most profound in the mining sector, particularly in the African context. This could be seen as a limiting context. However, similar contexts should be investigated and compared and contrasted for richer and more generalizable findings and outcomes in future. For example, are the findings similar to other gold mines and other mining industries in emerging countries? If not, what are the more indigenous findings elsewhere?

We adopted an in-depth longitudinal case study approach to explore the responsible and irresponsible behaviour of stakeholders. We collected data from multiple stakeholder groups, including the government, represented by senior public servants at both the local and national offices, mining operators, policy think tanks, and communities affected by mining activities. We complemented the primary data with secondary sources, and by doing so, we specifically contribute to this ongoing debate by identifying and mapping the evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) behaviour through the theory of planned behaviour

(TPB). The reliance on purely qualitative research methodologies could be seen as a limitation here, albeit this was an exploratory study. Future research can explore richer data sets, including designing a questionnaire and conducting a survey using quantitative methods.

In terms of our key findings, we argue that CSR behaviour – responsible and irresponsible – is influenced by various stakeholders' attitude and intentions, who exist in a nexus of open relationship. This is an exciting finding as it fits the call for papers in that we establish that the social impact in the mining industry here is an effect of inter-organizational relationships/interactions. Here too, delving deeper into more micro-foundational aspects would add greater value in future studies.

Our analysis and findings are spread over three distinct Eras ('the what'). We have termed them as the neo-colonial era (1957-1980), the liberalization era (1980 – 2000) and the post-liberalization era (2000 - current). We inductively analyze the key values and attitudes influencing change in the identified CSR behaviours ('the why'). We further compare the evolving CSR and responsible and irresponsible behaviours at multiple levels to highlight future ways of minimizing irresponsible behaviour and enhancing responsible mining practices ('the how'). Though we have tried to explore and investigate what we term in our title "The quest for CSR amidst institutional changes: Mapping the responsible and irresponsible practices within Ghana's gold mining industry", in future more nuanced aspects missed here should be researched, as also the same aspects in newer contexts so that these findings are generalized through comparing and contrasting.

In conclusion, our study's findings suggest that critical drivers or actors in the network of relationship, be it the State or Corporate actors, as organizations, play a critical role in paving the way for the indigenous people to participate in the mining business fully. We propose that local participation in the industry's activities would have a direct social impact, and hence, the dynamics underpinning network of relationship must be further critically explored. That said, there is still a quest for responsible CSR practices amidst the evolving institutional changes within Ghana's gold mining industry, and this could be representative of the global mining industries in developing countries.

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**Figure 1: Guiding Theoretical Model: Values, Attitudes, Intentions and Target Behaviour underpinning social impact**

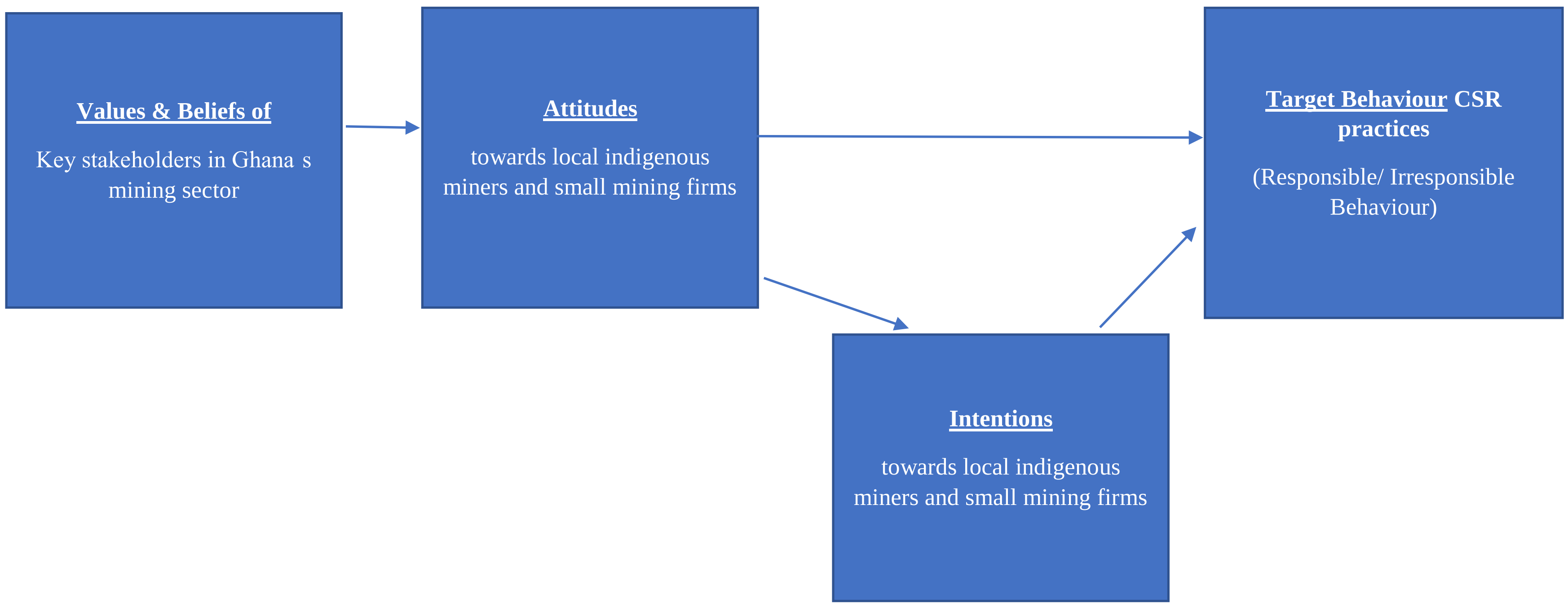


**Figure 2 – Historical evolution of Ghana's Gold Mine Sector**

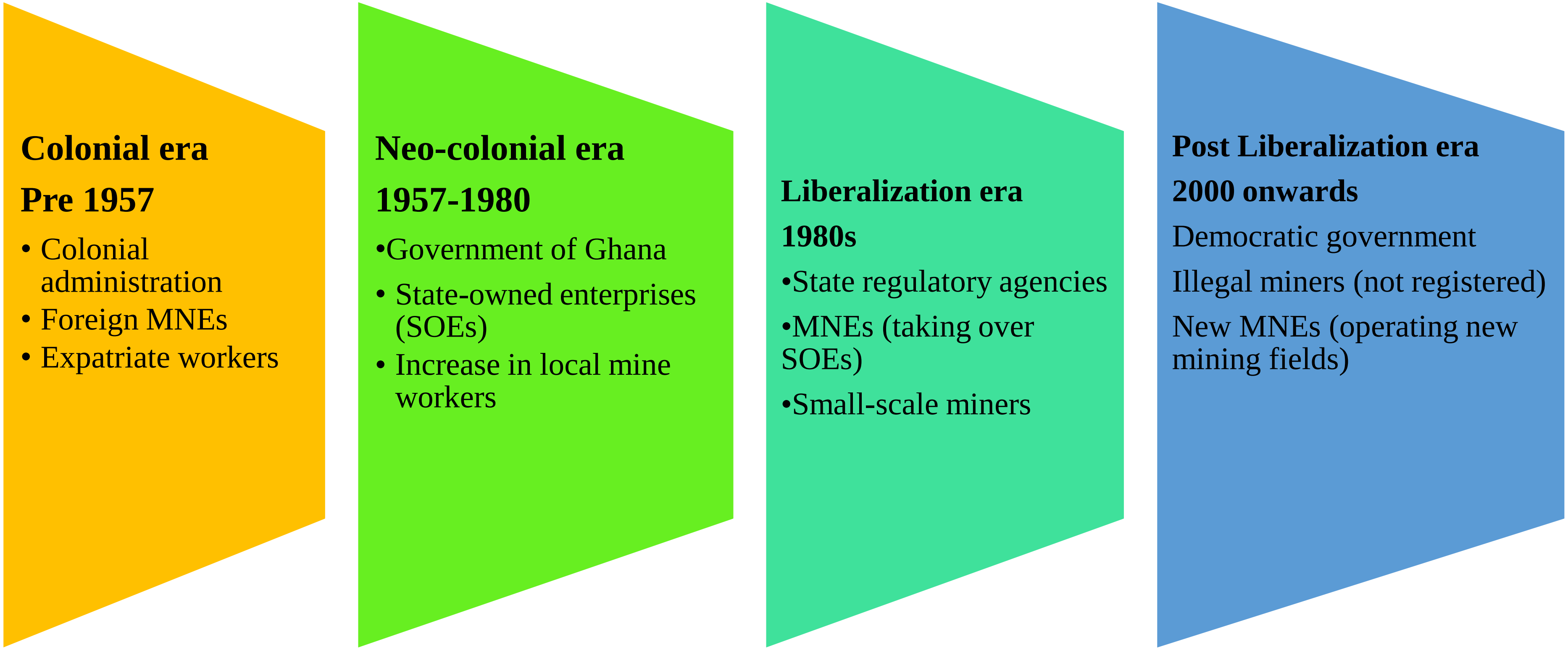


**Figure 3: Irresponsible practices by the State**

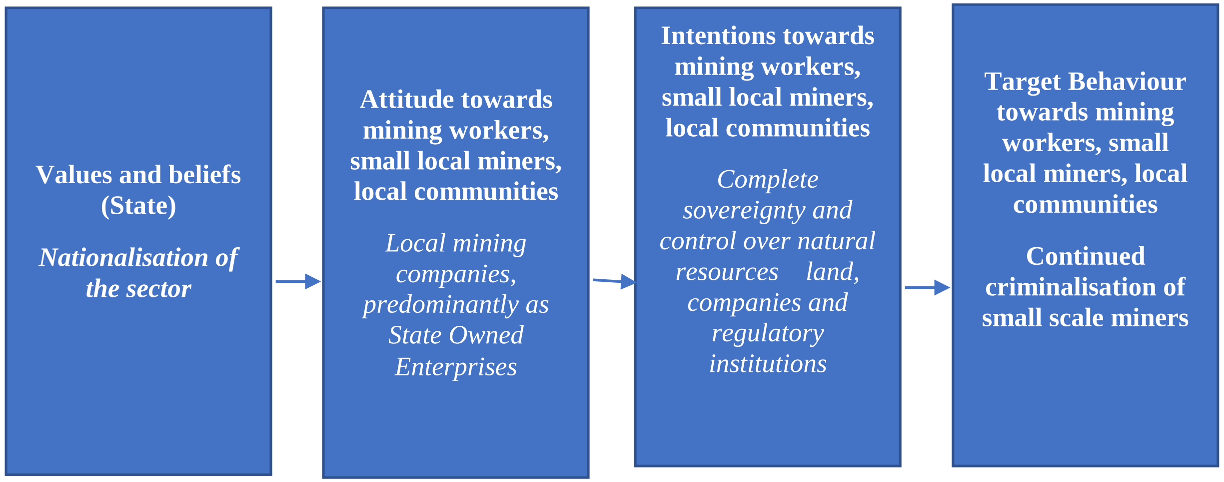



**Figure 4- Responsible practices by the State**

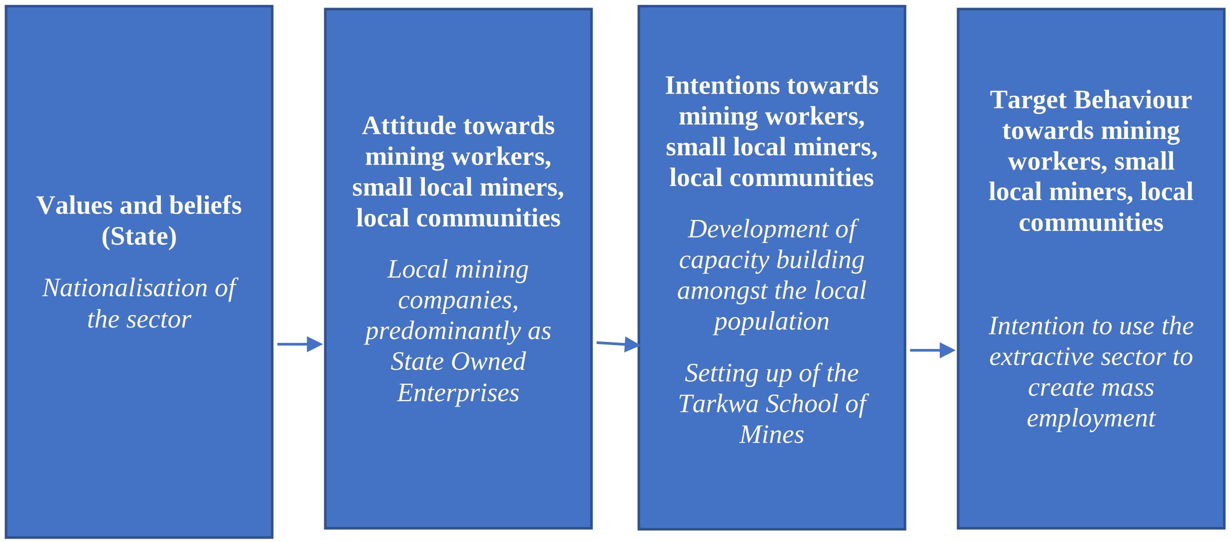
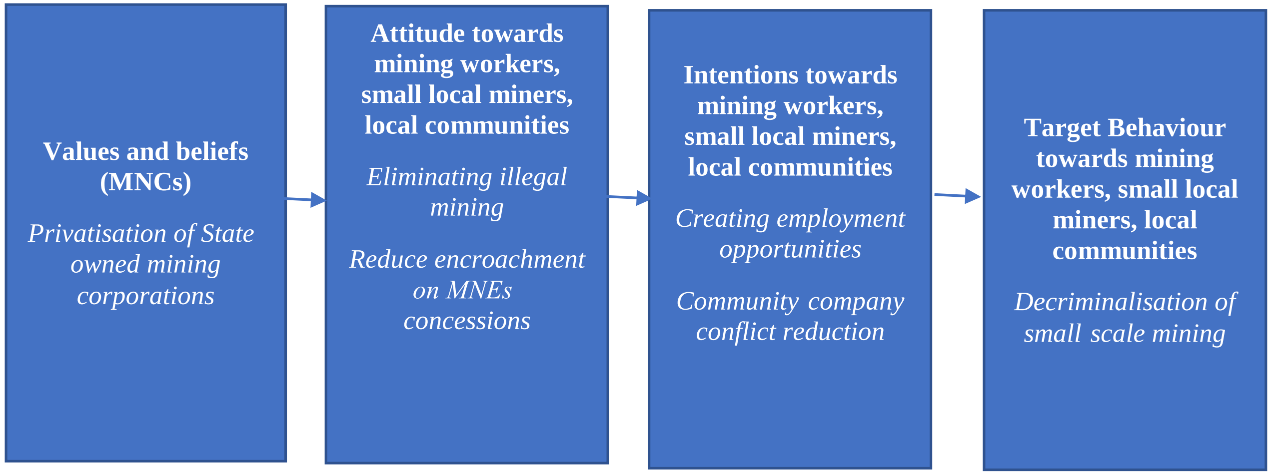


**Figure 5- Irresponsible practices by MNCs**


**Figure 6- Responsible practices by MNCs**



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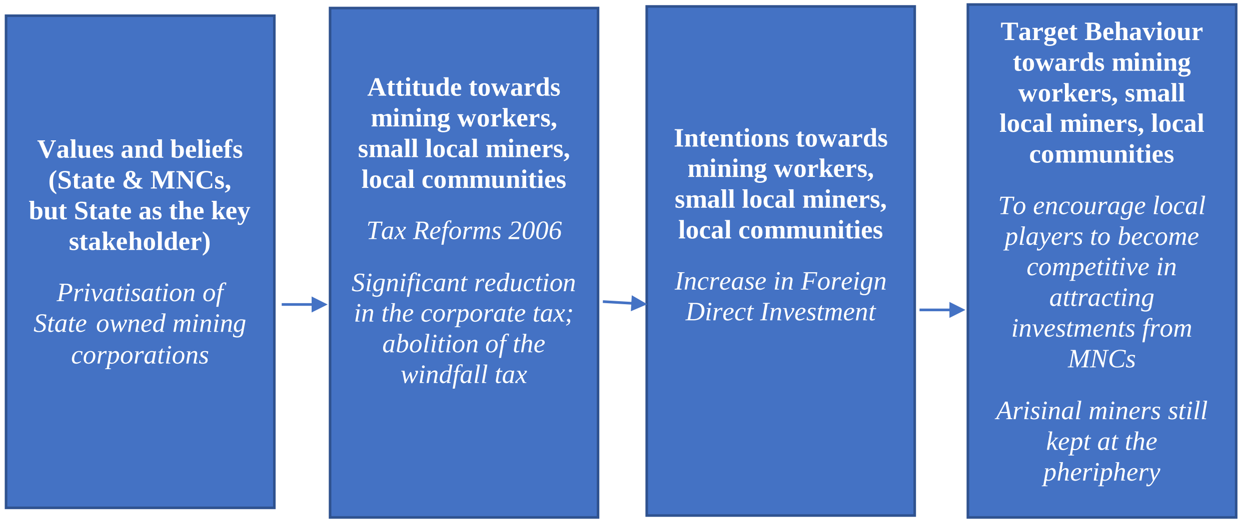


**Figure 8- Responsible practices by State**

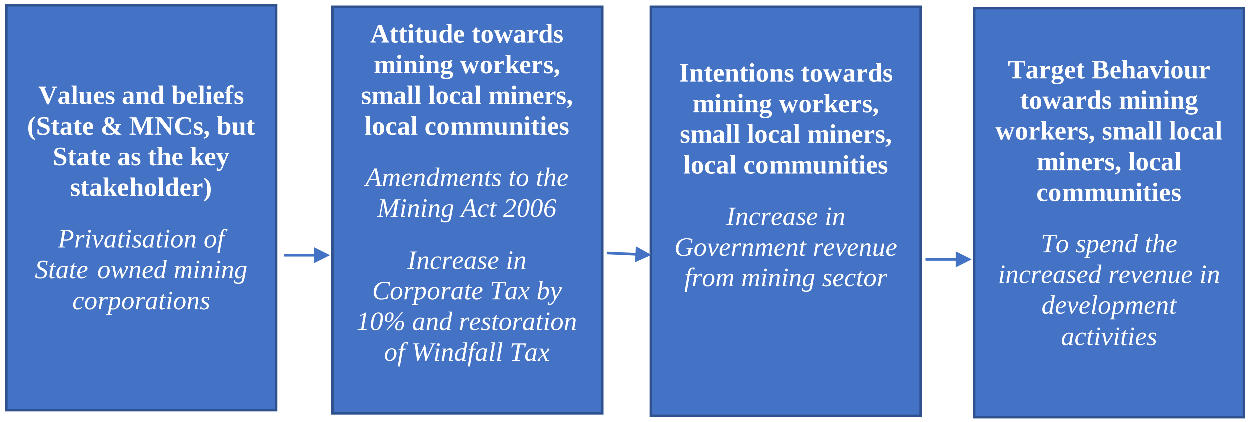

**Figure 9- Irresponsible practices by MNCs**

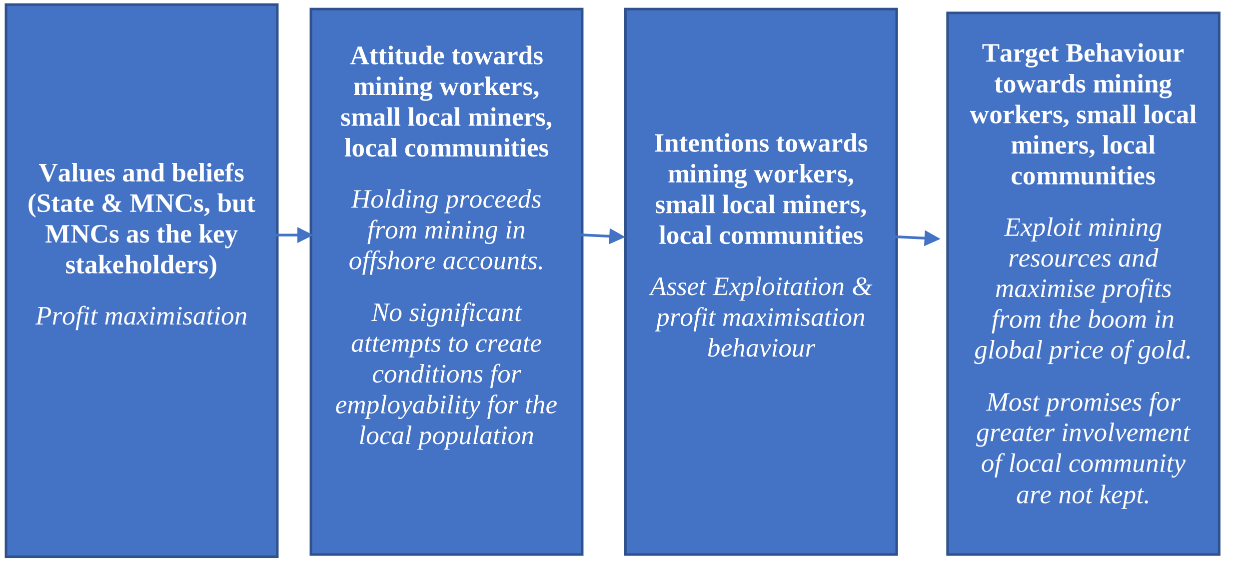

**Table 1: Interviews with members of various stakeholders in Ghana's mining sector, 2015 and 2017**

| **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** |