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Corporate Social Responsibility and Canadian Mining Companies in the Developing World: The Role of Organizational Leadership and Learning

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Corporate Social Responsibility and Canadian Mining Companies in the Developing World: The Role of Organizational Leadership and Learning*

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ABSTRACT This paper explores the role of firm-level dynamics in order to explain the extent to which mining companies show a commitment in policy and practice to the principle of corporate social responsibility (CSR). The authors argue that attention must be given to organizational variables, including the role of leadership and learning. As theorizing on CSR in the developing country context remains underdeveloped, this paper tests the applicability of existing organizational behaviour concepts to a case study of a Canadian, mid-tier mining company operating in Ghana by exploring the mechanisms by which mining companies come to recognize and act on their CSR obligations.

RÉSUMÉ Cet article explore le rôle des dynamiques d'entreprise afin d'expliquer le degré d'engagement des compagnies minières, à travers leurs politiques et leurs pratiques, au principe de la responsabilité sociale d'entreprise (RSE). Les auteurs allèguent que l'attention doit porter sur les variables organisationnelles, dont le rôle de la direction et de l'apprentissage. Comme les analyses théoriques sur la RSE demeurent lacunaires dans le contexte des pays en développement, cet article examine l'applicabilité des concepts existants relatifs aux comportements organisationnels à l'étude de cas d'une entreprise minière intermédiaire en exploitation au Ghana, en explorant les mécanismes par lesquels les compagnies minières parviennent à reconnaître leurs obligations en matière de RSE et à s'y conformer.

* This paper is part of a larger collaborative research project that employs a multi-perspective approach to case studies of Canadian mining companies in developing countries. The authors are co-investigators in this larger project, and Dr. Kernaghan Webb, Ryerson University, is the principal investigator. This research was supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Canada under its International Opportunities Fund. The authors are grateful for the research assistance of Isaac Odoom, Nathan Andrews, and Davida Borquaye.

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, considerable attention has been devoted to the activities of Canadian mining companies, and their operations in Canada and around the world. Much of the academic attention has focused on major multinational mining companies, understood as companies with operations in two or more countries. Although NGOs and other civil society actors have focused on "junior" mining companies as well, little effort is made to differentiate them from the "big" players. This paper seeks to address this gap by analyzing the influences and processes by which junior Canadian mining companies respond and adapt to pressures to improve their social and environmental performance. Specifically, this paper analyzes the internal organizational attributes likely to make a junior mining company committed to corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The term "junior" mining company has tended to be used rather loosely, often lumping what are actually mid-tier companies into the category of "junior." The term "junior" generally refers to mining companies that are primarily involved in exploration, and this study henceforth uses the term "mid-tier" to denote companies engaged in mining.[1] There are about half a dozen mid-tier, Canadian mining companies engaged in gold mining in Ghana. While they tend to be the subject of NGO activism, there has been little academic attention paid to them in a way that differentiates them from the major mining companies. To explore the internal attributes that explain a company's commitment to CSR, the authors have conducted a case study of a mid-tier, Canadian mining company operating in Ghana. A single case study approach allows the authors to examine in detail the company's policies and practices vis-à-vis CSR, in order to better understand how and why the company has sought to improve them.

The research findings strongly point to the critical importance of organizational leadership and learning as attributes necessary for sustainable CSR practices. These findings are consistent with other research that identifies internal corporate attributes as essential to understanding a firm's commitment to CSR (Howard-Grenville 2006). Although it is often assumed that mid-tier companies lack the incentives, resources, and capacity to effectively implement policies to meet their social responsibilities, the research findings suggest otherwise. As is the case with mining multinationals, junior and mid-tier companies are faced with similar constraints and incentives, and it is necessary to look at the specific conditions in which they operate, and internal organizational variables, in order to explain why companies are more or less committed to

1. This study follows the Metals Economics Group's classification of junior, mid-tier, and major mining companies. A junior company is one engaged primarily in exploration, a mid-tier company is one with annual revenues of at least US$50 million, and a major company is one with annual revenues of more than US$500 million. (See Metals Economics Group, *Special Report on World Exploration Trends*, http://www.metalseconomics.com/pdf/PDAC%202009%20World%20Exploration%20Trends.pdf, p. 2.) Any company, regardless of size, that operates in two or more countries can be understood as a multinational company, although the term has generally been reserved for major companies. See Hill (1998).

CSR. In so doing, the analysis moves away from a blanket assumption that CSR is a mere public relations exercise by identifying the internal mechanisms by which mining companies come to recognize and act on their CSR obligations.[2]

In order to understand the larger external environment in which the company under study operates, the first section of this article identifies the global, Canadian, and Ghanaian contexts in which the CSR policies of the company have evolved. Research findings suggest that this mining company has been influenced by developments at the global level (such as initiatives to promote global standards applicable to mining, for example), as well as developments in Canada and Ghana. The second and third sections will outline the theoretical literature and methodological approach that inform this analysis, and will explicate the research questions. The fourth section will outline the case study findings, identifying the key organizational attributes under analysis and relating them to the empirical observations. The final section will assess the theoretical implications of the research and identify questions for future research.

For the purposes of this paper, CSR is defined as going beyond the legal-regulatory obligations companies have toward those parties affected by their operations with respect to human rights, labour standards, and the environment. CSR expects that organizations engage in a combination of self-regulation, active promotion of the public interest, and an awareness of their fiduciary responsibility to stockholders, as well as to society and the natural environment (Carroll and Buchholtz 2006). The authors recognize that there is considerable debate as to what constitutes CSR in the developing country context, and address this debate in the theoretical literature section.

Global, Canadian, and Ghanaian Contexts

In the past 10 to 15 years, large mining companies with global operations have begun to demonstrate a greater awareness of, and commitment to, their social and environmental responsibilities. Efforts to improve the industry's bad reputation stemmed from the tightening of environmental regulation and NGO pressure in the advanced industrialized democracies, and from the global push to promote better practices. Global initiatives that have directly or indirectly affected mining companies include the ILO labour standards, the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises (revised 2000), the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Policy and Performance Standards on Social and Environmental Sustainability (IFC 2005), and the ISO 14,001 environmental management standards.

2. The focus of this paper is on a company's perceptions of its CSR obligations and what it has done internally to meet them. The paper does not seek to make claims about community perceptions of the company's efforts. Doing so would raise difficult conceptual and methodological issues that are beyond the scope of this paper, though they are a central concern of the larger research project of which this paper is a part.

Due to the fact that they must operate where the ore is, and because of the huge up-front capital costs associated with opening a new mine, mining companies are vulnerable to community opposition to their operations. Mining companies must seek a "social license" to operate, and they cannot simply pick up and leave in the event of community opposition (Gunningham, Kagan, and Thornton 2003). In response to these external pressures, in the late 1990s the major mining companies took steps at the global level to improve the mining industry's reputation. A key outcome of these efforts was the creation in 2001 of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), which superseded the International Council on Mining and the Environment (Dashwood 2005). The ICMM seeks to promote best practices in the mining sector through a variety of endeavours, with a view to improving the industry's reputation (for details, see McPhail 2008).

More recent global developments continue to attempt to influence the policies and practices of mining companies such as the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (in which Ghana participates), the UN Global Compact, and the initiatives of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Business and Human Rights (UN Human Rights Council 2008). These various global developments have had an impact on the mining company under study.

Canada is a major player in the global mining industry. Hard-rock mining remains an important source of GDP, accounting for about 3.7%, and minerals and mineral products exports account for approximately 17.5% of domestic exports (Natural Resources Canada 2007). Canada is a repository of significant legal, technical, and financial expertise for the global mining industry. It is home to a large number of junior to low-mid-tier mining companies, many of which have operations around the world. In 2006, more than 800 Canadian companies were involved in international exploration projects, and 62% of all mining companies involved in exploration projects are Canadian (ibid.; Lemieux 2005). Not surprisingly, Canada has a major mining presence in Africa.

In the face of growing public pressure to respond to concerns about the activities of Canadian mining companies abroad, the Canadian government has preferred to facilitate voluntary initiatives to promote CSR. As reports surfaced about the bad practices of Canadian mining companies abroad, the voluntary initiatives favoured by the Canadian government became the subject of much criticism (Mining Watch Canada, Halifax Initiative; see Coumans, this issue). A particularly significant development was the tabling in June 2005 by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT) of a report on mining in developing countries and CSR (SCFAIT 2005). The report argued that junior companies often lack the resources, knowledge, or incentives to adequately address issues arising from the social, cultural, political, or environmental context in developing countries. The report expressed concern about the lack of Canadian laws to regulate the activities of Canadian mining companies in developing countries, and called for legislation to hold companies accountable for their activities overseas (SCFAIT 2005).

In its response to the SCFAIT report, the government agreed to a number of the recommendations but shied away from enacting legislation that would entail the extraterritorial application of Canadian law in foreign jurisdictions.[3] The government prefers to lend its support to voluntary initiatives like the Mining Association of Canada's Towards Sustainable Mining initiative, which was launched in 2004. The National Round Tables on Corporate Social Responsibility and the Canadian Extractive Sector in Developing Countries launched in 2006, resulted in the government's announcement in February 2007 of its support of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Two years later, in March 2009, the government announced its strategy for promoting CSR in the Canadian extractive sector. In the strategy paper "Building the Canadian Advantage," the government sets out initiatives it proposes to take to promote CSR in the extractive sector and commits resources to that end (Government of Canada 2009). Acknowledging the special constraints encountered by junior mining companies, the government announced initiatives to help strengthen the capacity of junior mining companies to meet their environmental and social obligations.

The description above of developments at the Canadian and global levels provides a snapshot of the broader context in which Canadian mining companies operate. We now turn to the specific institutional context in Ghana, in which the company under study is operating.

Ghana is a West African country that boasts one of the most successful transitions to multi-party democracy on the continent (readers interested in more detail on Ghana's political and economic history may consult Amenumey 2008; Aryeetey and Kanbur 2008; Puplampu 2004a, b). However, Ghana's socio-economic development does not yet match its political growth. Although recent GDP growth has averaged 6% over the past four to seven years, per capita income is about US$500 and poverty remains pronounced in rural areas. Structurally, the economy is still heavily reliant on cocoa, timber, and raw mineral (mainly gold) exports. Annual budgetary shortfalls average around US$1billion, leaving Ghana reliant on foreign bilateral and multilateral donors, and the remittances of the Ghanaian diaspora. Foreign direct investment (FDI) still features by 2006–07 estimates at a low 1.15% of GDP,[4] although the country is experiencing a rising trend in FDI. (See map on p. 193.)

The mineral resources of the country (gold, industrial diamonds, timber, and bauxite) are concentrated in the rich forest areas of the west, central, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, and eastern regions of the country. The actively mined minerals include bauxite, gold, diamonds, and manganese. There are over 20 active mining firms in Ghana. The 2007 Annual Report of the Ghana Chamber of Mines lists the following mining firms as active: **Gold:** Abosso Goldfields Ltd; AngloGold Ashanti Ltd; Chirano Gold Mines; Goldfields [Ghana] Ltd; Golden Star Resources; Newmont Ghana Ltd; **Bauxite:** Ghana Bauxite Company Ltd; and **Manganese:** Ghana Manganese Company Ltd. The sector contributes 5% of GDP with annual revenues in excess of US$1 billion. On average,

3. Government of Canada, *Government Response to the SCFAIT 14th report on "Mining in Developing Countries and Corporate Social Responsibility,"* 2005. http://www2.parl.gc.ca/House Publications/Publication.aspx?DocId=2030362&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=38&Ses=1.

4. World Bank, MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency), 2007, http://www.miga.org/quickref/index_sv.cfm?stid=1586.

it contributes 10% to government revenue each year. In 2006, total government IRS receipts were about US$523 million. The mining sector contributed about US$53.5 million from income tax as well as royalties[5] (CHRAJ 2008; Aryeetey and Kanbur 2008).

A range of junior, mid-tier, and major mining companies are operating in Ghana. The large-scale global multinationals have a significant mining footprint on more than one continent, and command considerable resource and market clout. The Ghanaian mining industry also has small-scale artisanal miners. Mining is regulated by the Minerals Commission. Those who have purchased licenses from the Minerals Commission and the Precious Metals Marketing Corporation (PMMC) are considered legal. The PMMC also licenses buyers of artisanal outputs. Those without licenses are illegal and referred to as "galamsey." Figure 1 below details the governance, administrative structures, and stakeholder interlinkages of mining in Ghana.

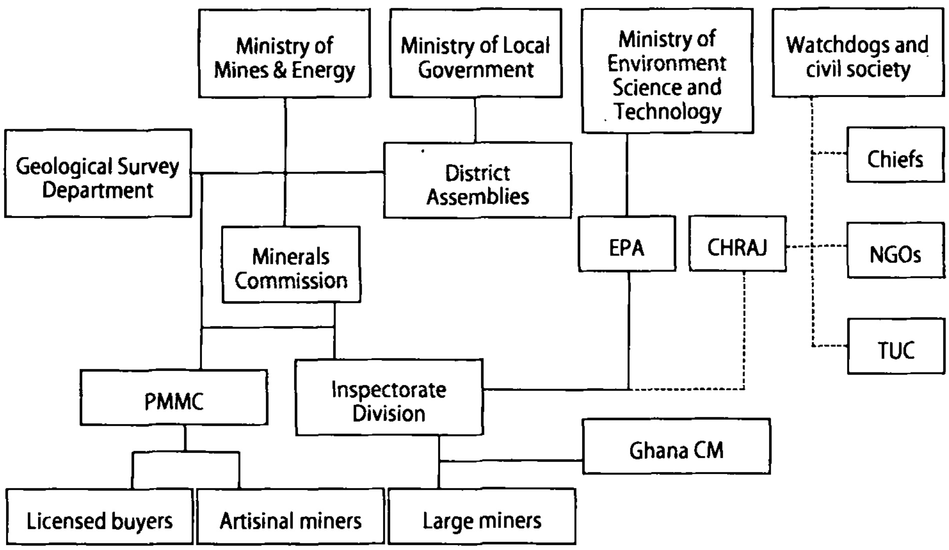

Figure 1. Institutions in the structure of mining in Ghana

Source: Authors' compilation of variety of sources

Background Literature: CSR and Developing Countries

Despite the obvious impacts that major firms and their activities have on developing countries, Ofori (2007a) notes that the CSR literature in relation to developing economies like those in West Africa remains underdeveloped. One reason for this situation is that the application of CSR practices in developing countries is a relatively new phe-

5. Ghana Chamber of Mines, Annual Report and Financial Highlights. "Life without Mining is Impossible," Accra, 2007, http://www.ghanachamberofmines.org.

nomenon (Idemudia 2007). Indeed, the latest wave of interest in CSR in the "West" can in part be attributed to the now discredited neo-liberal agenda that sought to minimize the role of the state in the economy through deregulation and privatization.

Idemudia (2007, 369) argues that there is a disjuncture between local priorities in the South and the delivery of CSR because the CSR agenda has largely been driven by northern actors whose priorities are more attuned to the concerns of Western societies. This situation has led Ofori (2007a) to conclude that there is a gap in our understanding of the "nature, content and intent" of CSR interventions in Ghana, a country with a long history of CSR activity by both large and small companies, which until recently consisted of companies engaging in what Ofori (2007a, 67) describes as a "haphazard indulgence in corporate good works". Such strictly philanthropic activities often tend to address the symptoms rather than the causes of abiding institutional, systemic, and national limitations and weaknesses.

The notion that CSR activities can be reduced to philanthropic initiatives that firms choose to undertake in a discretionary manner has been discredited in the mainstream CSR literature (Ofori 2007a, 2007b). Stakeholder theory, for example, acknowledges that firms have obligations toward a range of stakeholders—including employees, the environment, local communities, suppliers, and governments—that, while not always legally mandated, move beyond the realm of discretionary voluntarism (Donaldson and Preston 1995). Recognition of a firm's obligations to society constitutes a measure of mutual responsibility that is neither gift based or voluntary (one chooses to) nor optional (by not engaging in said responsibility, nothing much is "lost"). Rather, it represents a statement of human responsibility toward humankind in the bid for sustainable mutual co-existence, captured by the Akan-twi motto *asetena pa*, which means "proper/acceptable co-existence."[6] Idemudia (2007, 2009) picks up on this theme in his analysis of ongoing community dissatisfaction in the Niger Delta, noting that communities expect "good neighbourliness" on the part of oil and gas multinationals. We situate the CSR challenge in Ghana's mining sector within this context.

Lately, the debate on CSR in the context of the developing world has turned to the question of whether CSR can contribute to economic development and/or sustainable development. Conventional arguments that foreign mineral and oil and gas investments enhance social and economic development are countered by others who argue that extractive activities exacerbate poverty and conflict (the "resource curse") (Sagebien et al. 2008). There are also different expectations or understandings of what CSR can accomplish. The growing literature on CSR in Africa is largely critical, and this can be explained in part by differences in perspectives on the role and purpose of CSR. For example, Hilson (2007, 43), in his critique of mining companies in Ghana, argues that "companies are generally implementing ... programmes that are incapable of alleviating rural hardship." Such an argument seems to assume that mining companies alone are responsible for rural development.

This study takes as a starting point the understanding that while firms can and should be expected to contribute more effectively to socio-economic development

6. See WACAM Ghana website, http://www.wacamghana.com/index.php/.

(Blowfield 2005, 2007; Jenkins 2005), there are limits as to what CSR can accomplish. Mining companies alone cannot guarantee sustainable development; they cannot, nor should they, take on the role of government. The extent to which firms can enhance social and economic value in the countries in which they operate depends on the enabling or disabling dynamics resulting from a range of interactions with actors outside the boundaries of the firm (Sagebien et al. 2008; see also Idemudia, this issue). While firms cannot be expected alone to foment sustainable development, they can be expected to add economic, social, and ecological value to the communities in which they operate (Bird and Herman 2004). Bird and Herman argue that in their dealings with developing areas, international business actors must address three fundamental questions: economic development of the nation gauged by growth in local commerce, institutional growth, and capacity development; value addition and asset development; and attention to just exchanges. Although firms may be engaged in actions that could be described as socially responsible (e.g., building schools and giving grants), if they fall short in other areas like protecting the environment, then their responsibility as a company in using, maximizing, and enhancing the endowed natural capital is not being realized. This is the core of the CSR challenge in the developing world.

The questions that energize this research can be summarized as follows: What drives local and/or international firms' CSR practices in developing countries? What are firms' understandings of CSR in the developing country context, and to what extent are CSR efforts a reflection of attempts to respond to the needs of local communities in poor countries? To answer these questions, we explore internal, firm-level dynamics that point to a commitment to CSR. In this way, the paper contributes to the larger literature on CSR in the developing country context by taking a multidisciplinary approach that brings organizational factors into the analysis.

Internal Organizational Attributes of Companies

When organizations go through numerous transitions and when they operate in environments where their actions and inaction have significant consequences for the communities and peoples among whom they operate, it is important to understand the internal factors that enable them to navigate both the transitions as well as the dynamics of community concerns and nuances. The organization that is the subject of this case study has been through many transitions and is operating in a sensitive community area: a developing country. Some scholarly writings suggest that there is still debate about the role of leadership in organizational performance (Svensson and Wood 2007). However, other researchers have noted its critical place in managing transitions, determining the emotive tone and value framework of the organization, and ensuring that the organization actually achieves its goals (Cooksey 2003; Lakomski 2001).

Variation in managerial perceptions and interpretations (Hoffman and Ventresca 2002; Sharma 2000) and different mindsets about a company's obligations toward society (Howard-Grenville 2006; Welford 1997) produce differing responses to external pressures to improve environmental and social performance. This study concurs with findings that point to the critical role of managerial leadership in promoting CSR within the firm (Dashwood 2007; McGuire and Hutchings 2006). Furthermore, it acknowledges the research that shows that leadership and organizational learning are intimately linked and interdependent processes (Cooksey 2003).

Organizational learning processes are important in explaining how mining companies respond and adapt to societal pressures to become more environmentally and socially responsible. A learning organization has been defined as an organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights (Garvin 1993). Grappling with CSR entails responding to shifting societal expectations, to the emergence of new issues, and to shifting constellations of stakeholders. Learning is an ongoing, dynamic process that requires the ability to adapt to evolving societal norms.

In an important and enlightening article, Antal and Sobczak (2004, 81) identify the multiple types of learning processes that are most relevant to CSR. Part of the learning process around CSR involves improving on current ways of doing things ("single loop learning"). Given that as recently as the mid-1990s many mining executives remained skeptical about the merits of CSR, some "unlearning" has been necessary in order to change old mindsets and meet society's shifting expectations (ibid, 82). Among some companies there has been a substantial change in thinking about CSR, whether for strategic or normative reasons. Such companies have had to rethink their internal procedures and introduce new measurement techniques to reflect environmental and social obligations ("double loop learning"). We argue that the company under study has attempted to undergo all three of these learning processes.

Analytical Framework

This study draws on insights from rational choice institutionalism, the "new" institutionalism in organization theory, and historical institutionalism to explain why the firm under study adopted CSR policies, and the extent and nature of its commitment to them (Campbell 2006). Rational choice institutionalism assumes that firms are instrumental actors motivated by the self-interested desire to maximize profits and shareholder value. Since rationalist approaches take interests as given, analysis focuses on the external constraints that firms are encountering to explain their CSR policies. Rationalist approaches provide an important part of the explanation as to why firms would adopt CSR policies, but are silent on how institutional context can mediate the instrumental, agent-driven choices of individual firms. Historical institutionalism provides a useful corrective to this problem because it questions how institutional structure conditions responses to external constraints. The institutional context in a developing country like Ghana influences the CSR policies of firms based on local conditions.

The "new" institutionalism in organization theory, which emphasizes cognitive processes and the normative environment, enhances our understanding of how managers interpret their external environment, identify problems, and address challenges. The approach allows considerable room for agency by recognizing as critical the support of senior management for internal CSR initiatives. Drawing on March and Olsen (1999, 306), an "institution" is defined here as a "relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behaviour for specific groups of actors in specific situations." This definition permits us to consider how norms (standards of appropriate behaviour) might influence firm behaviour around CSR. While the behavioural logic behind firms' adaptation to CSR is material/instrumental, it is also driven by considerations of what is the appropriate or right thing to do. Given the dynamic and shifting nature of societal norms, firms must ask not only how they will benefit from adopting CSR policies, but also what is the appropriate response given conflicting rules and norms.

Methodological Approach and Case Study

To tease out the internal leadership and intra-organizational variables central to understanding the extent and nature of a firm's commitment to CSR, a single case study was conducted of Golden Star Resources (GSR), a mid-tier, Canadian mining company with extensive operations in Western Ghana. Consistent with the approach taken in the larger research project of which this investigation is a part (see footnote 1), GSR agreed to participate in this study.[7] Although a single case study limits the extent to which research findings can be generalized, detailed analysis of a single case enabled the researchers to observe the internal organizational changes and policy initiatives undertaken to improve CSR performance, thereby addressing the gap noted earlier in relating organizational attributes to CSR. The study relied on secondary sources as well as company documents to gain insights into GSR. To get a sense of the role of leadership and learning processes around CSR, in-depth, open-ended yet structured interviews were conducted with senior management and managers responsible for various aspects of CSR delivery in the firm. The identities of interviewed officials are kept confidential, in keeping with standard ethical conventions governing research in the social sciences. These were carried out in Ghana in March and April 2009 at the mine sites of Bogoso and Wassa as well as through telephone interviews carried out from Canada.

Overview of Mining Legacy

To begin with the mine sites, the Bogoso/Prestea area has been affected by mining (as well as forestry and agricultural) activities for over 120 years, and the local environment has therefore been subject to varying degrees of degradation. The latest wave of mining investment that began in the late 1980s after the *Mining Act* was liberalized has brought with it a tsunami of difficult issues. The switch from deep shaft to the more profitable surface mining generated social conflict: because fewer people are employed in surface mining, there were substantial lay-offs, and many laid-off people resorted to galam-

7. Mining companies are often reluctant to participate in such projects, and it could be inferred that GSR was prepared to participate because it wished to showcase its CSR initiatives. The authors are aware of this limitation, but felt the opportunity to conduct an in-depth study of the company's organizational attributes with respect to CSR outweighed the limitations.

sey work. Furthermore, the switch to surface mining resulted in the displacement of farmers from their land, since mining increasingly came into conflict with agricultural activities. By the late 1990s, more than 70% of the land surface in the Tarkwa-Prestea-Bogoso-Abosso-Nsuta axis was under concessional licenses to mining companies operating in the area (Akabzaa 2000, 75). Six new surface gold mines came on stream in the mid- to late 1990s in the area, creating the largest concentration of mines in the African continent (Akabzaa 2001, 147).

The sharp rise in the number of foreign mining companies operating in Ghana led to a spate of human rights abuses in the 1990s. As local communities reacted to environmental degradation, deteriorating health, and allegedly forced displacements and loss of livelihood, state security personnel were employed to harass and forcibly move local communities opposed to new mines.[8] According to Ayine (2001, 96–99), central and local government authorities were complicit in failing to respect the rights of local communities because they saw local communities as obstacles to mining operations rather than as rights-bearers.

While pockets of communities negatively affected by mining sought to resist the wave of new mines in the 1990s, there was at the same time extreme concern over the loss of jobs in the mining sector. The sale of inefficient and poorly managed, state-owned mining companies to private companies resulted in the retrenchment of many workers as part of cost-cutting measures (Akabzaa 2001, 76). In the absence of programs to assist retrenched workers (such as were implemented in South Africa), having lost their livelihoods, many of them resorted to galamsey activities. This has produced conflict with mining companies as galamsey operators encroach on company concessions.

Local NGOs, such as the Third World Network and the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining (WACAM), have documented the abuses and advocated on behalf of local communities. Reporting on research conducted in 2006, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), documents the significant negative social, environmental, and economic problems associated with surface mining. Their efforts to document alleged abuses have provided a baseline against which to measure the efforts of mining companies to improve their practices. The economic, social, environmental, health, and spatial (migration) impacts of mining have been documented elsewhere and need not be repeated here (see, for example, Akabzaa and Darimani 2001; Akabzaa 2000, 2001; Akpalu and Parks 2007; Ayine 2001; CHRAJ 2008; Garvin et al. 2009; Hilson 2002; Nyame, Grant, and Yakovleva 2009).

Case Study

We now turn to the case study in order to address the questions and propositions raised above. Golden Star Resources is an international gold mining and exploration company focused on mining, mine development, and exploration along the Ashanti Gold Trend in the western region of Ghana. The company is registered in Canada and, although technically a Canadian company, its headquarters are in the United States and its min-

8. "Fear, panic grip Tarkwa and environs," *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 28 May 1998.

ing activities are concentrated in Ghana. Until 1999, the company focused on exploration in West Africa and the Guiana Shield of South America. In 1999, a major strategic decision was made to transform the company into a gold producer. It then purchased the Bogoso Gold Mine, and in 2001 it acquired the Prestea underground mine and Prestea surface rights. These properties now form Golden Star (Bogoso/Prestea) Ltd. In 2002, GSR further acquired the Wassa mine, incorporated as Golden Star (Wassa) Ltd., and is currently developing the Hwini-Butre and Benso (HBB) properties, which were purchased in 2005. (See map on p. 193.) The company owns a 90% interest in Bogoso/Prestea and Wassa while the government owns a 10% carried interest; GSR also owns 80% of Prestea Underground, and the Ghanaian government owns a 20% interest. The company's revenues from gold in 2008 were US$257.4 million (GSR 2009a). Thus, GSR has a sizeable presence in Ghana, and although it works alongside major mining multinationals along the Ashanti Trend, including Newmont Mining Company, AngloGold Ashanti Ltd., and Gold Fields Ltd., it has become the largest holder of mining properties in the area. The Bogoso lease is 95 km^2 and the Prestea lease is 129 km^2, and they are close to the towns of Bogoso and Prestea. There are about a dozen communities in the Bogoso/Prestea concession, and half a dozen in the Wassa/HBB concession.

As the above brief account attests, the mining legacy that GSR inherited was marred by a history of mistrust between communities and mining companies (Garvin et al. 2009), as well as between communities and local and central authorities. The Prestea underground mine that GSR purchased in 2001, for example, was the subject of much discontent because the previous owner, Barnex, laid off 1,400 of its 1,800 workers in the face of major losses due to declining gold prices in 1998 (Public Agenda 1998, quoted in Akabzaa 2001, 120, Appendix B). Lack of sensitivity to community concerns regarding human rights and the environment earned GSR a bad reputation by the mid-2000s, a fact acknowledged by company officials (Executive 1, Executive 2, Manager 1, Manager 4, Manager 5, Manager 6, Manager 9).

Allegations made against GSR include human rights abuses stemming from the resort to state security personnel and damage to the environment. Media reports from the mid-2000s cited complaints about the "violations of community rights" at Bogoso, and criticized GSR for being "irresponsible and arrogant."[9] As described by WACAM, "the human rights violations and environmental problems of Bogoso Gold Ltd. have been a source of conflict between the communities and the company for a long time."[10] A major tailings spillage in 2004 caused particular discontent as the community remembered an earlier cyanide spillage in 1991 when the Bogoso mine was managed by Billiton Bogoso Gold.

In 2005, senior management of GSR began to make a concerted effort to improve the company's policies and practices. One key driver of this process was the pressure exerted by the advanced, industrialized democracies on mining companies to pursue such improvements. In the Canadian context, this pressure can be understood in light

9. "Mining communities decry destruction of their livelihood," *Ghana News Agency*, 13 August 2005; and "Stop BGL's irresponsible and arrogant mining," *Ghana News Agency*, 24 August 2005.

10. "EPA Investigates Cyanide Spillage at Bogoso," *Ghana News Agency*, 25 October 2004.

of the SCFAIT report and ongoing efforts on the part of NGOs to hold Canadian mining companies to account. The second key driver was the recognition on the part of senior management that GSR needed to improve relations with the local communities affected by company operations (Executive 3, Manager 4, Manager 6, Manager 9). In response to these pressures, GSR has sought to improve its relations with the local community, to acquire a "social license to operate," and to adopt best practices pertaining to environmental and social issues. Part of this process involved major organizational changes which were initiated in 2005–06.

By 2005, GSR had experienced considerable expansion, having added Wassa and HBB to its original acquisition of Bogoso in 1999 and Prestea in 2001. Senior management decided it was necessary to increase GSR's competency across the board, in finance, project development, and technical services. The decision was also made to create the position of VP, Sustainability, which was filled in 2006. There are five people in senior management, including the CEO.

Bogoso and Wassa each have a general manager, plus five or six sectional managers. Each mine has a community affairs/sustainability department and an environmental affairs department. The community affairs department at Bogoso was established in 2005 and is led by a community affairs manager. The environmental department at Bogoso was created in 1999, the year GSR acquired the mine, and has an environmental manager (Executive 1). At Wassa, the community affairs functions were tacked onto the Human Resources Department in 2003, so there is a manager of human resources and Community Relations. Wassa did not have a separate environment department until 2009, when the environment function was split off from a department that was responsible for environment, health, and safety. The position of environmental superintendent was created in February 2009, at the time of the split (Manager 8, Manager 9). In 2009, GSR created a Group Safety Manager position, with responsibility for safety at all its mining operations

GSR's Response to Environmental and Social Challenges

In a significant step, GSR first began releasing annual sustainability reports in 2007 (for the 2006 reporting year). These reports do not provide a definition of sustainability, but mining is understood as an essentially unsustainable activity, and the company is of the view that the community understands this (Executive 1). Sustainability is understood as the contribution GSR makes to a sustainable economy. Golden Star Resources adds economic and social value through the provision of training, jobs, career opportunities, income tax, and the payment of royalties. The company provides extensive training to both its own employees and inhabitants of the larger catchment area. It considers this training to constitute a lasting contribution to the local and national economy (Executive 3).

A lack of jobs was identified by company officials as a (if not the) major concern of the communities (corroborated by meetings with community opinion leaders). As of 31 December 2008, GSR had approximately 2,400 full-time employees and 400 contract employees, a 30% increase over the previous year. Although most of the executive-level positions are held by expatriates, the VP, Operations is Ghanaian, as is most of the in-country management. The difficult reality is that less than 10% of jobs in large-scale mining are unskilled, which has implications for companies' ability to hire people from local communities. Characteristic of rural areas, these communities suffer from low education levels, and the lack of senior schools means that many never make it past the primary level. Still, the fact that over 50% of site managers are Ghanaian should not be discounted, since the need for skilled labour means the aspirations of well-educated Ghanaians can be met.

The following is a selective discussion of key CSR initiatives that demonstrate the important role of organizational leadership and learning (see GSR 2008b and GSR 2009c, the reports for 2007 and 2008, for more detailed information).

Earlier it was noted that GSR underwent major institutional change in order to foster a greater commitment to CSR. Senior management was clearly critical in driving the process forward. The former CEO's decision to improve the company's capacity in the area of CSR by establishing the position of VP, Sustainability created the competence at senior management level to move forward with CSR initiatives. Since the establishment of that position, senior management has continued to drive the company's efforts to improve upon its performance and address the CSR challenges it faces. Organizational changes continue to be made to ensure that the company has the capacity to meet its CSR commitments.

In the early 2000s, a Sustainability Committee of the Board was created that has helped ensure that the decision-making process on CSR is integrated into everyday business. As one executive noted, the relatively small size of the company means that there are no silos ("everybody does everything"), so executive and senior management see CSR as part of standard operating procedure (Executive 1). The absence of boundaries is reinforced by internal reporting procedures, where the VP, Sustainability includes a sustainability component in his monthly reports to the board. Quarterly reviews on sustainability issues are prepared by the VP, Sustainability as a means for tracking whether internal targets are being met and for ensuring continual improvement (Executive 1). Monthly reports from the mine managers form the basis of the annual sustainability reports.

Although GSR publishes sustainability reports and has a Sustainability Committee of the Board, by all appearances the leadership uses the terms "sustainability" and "CSR" interchangeably. Interviews with senior management reveal that GSR understands that its CSR practices are obligatory and not discretionary. Despite the company's mid-tier status, CSR is seen as a "long-term commitment that is driven independently of a company's financial situation" (Executive 1). It is understood as the "right way to manage a business," reflecting a "social conscience" where compliance with the law "constitutes the minimum of what CSR entails" (Executive 1). It was further noted that GSR's commitment to CSR entails ensuring that its business benefits all stakeholders by "not degrading the environment, working with people in the community, maintaining a good image, and treating employees well" (Executive 2). Finally, CSR is understood as "where you place your value; value should be placed on people ... CSR is about how to treat people ... about having an interest in the communities" (Executive 4).

GSR has been on a very steep learning curve since it began its efforts in 2006 to improve its reputation and relations with the local communities. For GSR, its efforts to bring about change entailed not merely improving on extant ways of doing things (single loop learning) but also rethinking its internal procedures and introducing new practices and management systems (double loop learning). These learning processes had to come from the top and, as argued above, the role of senior management has been critical in promoting CSR within the company.

GSR has demonstrated its willingness to engage with local communities and track the concerns of NGOs in order to adapt to shifting constellations of stakeholders and new issues as they emerge. Evidence suggests that GSR's CSR initiatives are now more community relevant and community led, compared to the situation prior to 2005–06. Evidence that GSR has introduced mechanisms to promote greater responsiveness to community needs is reflected in the creation of community mine consultative committees (CMCC). The CMCCs serve as the "eyes and ears" of the company, and when attending various meetings the authors of this article observed no hesitation on the part of community leaders to criticize the company (suggesting that these forums are genuinely for voicing concerns and grievances over such issues as resettlement and compensation). GSR attempts to respond to the specific needs of poor communities in a developing country context. Through the CMCCs, people are invited to make requests for development funding, which are locally driven according to community priorities. GSR invests US$1 per ounce of gold produced, and in 2008, US$295,900 was invested in building and repairing schools, building decent housing to attract teachers, providing vocational training, and providing up to 20 scholarships a year to allow children from the communities to advance their education beyond the primary level.

Perhaps most importantly, GSR has sought to address the pressing need for employment in the area of its operations by providing sustainable livelihood options for local people. The Golden Star Oil Palm Plantation (GSOPP) is a major alternative livelihoods project launched in 2006. It is a subsidiary of GSR, but its mandate is social, not economic. The fact that GSOPP runs according to a viable business model does not detract from its social objective. It is likely to ensure the long-term viability of the project, because it will ensure sustainability even as mines close. The mandate of GSOPP is to provide alternative livelihoods to people needing to be resettled as a result of GSR's operations, and to provide employment to youth and people who might otherwise be engaged in galamsey mining. As of February 2009, US$1.65 million had been invested in the project, and 692 hectares had been planted (GSR 2009b). Beneficiaries include those who have been resettled, farmers in nearby communities, women who can grow produce between the plants, and casual labour that is hired to maintain the plantations, all helping ease the chronic unemployment in the area.

The Golden Star Oil Palm Plantation represents an important positive step that reflects the priorities of the local communities: "GSR had a problem before ... It was not socially responsive ... choosing instead to suggest initiatives to the local community people rather than listen to them" (Executive 2). "We tried with tie-and-die as well as snail farming (I think) and silk worm breeding ... but the people did not patronize these efforts ... We had offered these to them" (Manager 1). The palm oil project, on the other hand, is appropriate to the region, since many farmers already grow oil palms and there is an internal market for processing oil palm fruits (Manager 5).

Senior management has played a key role in promoting learning within the organization, and they show greater sensitivity to both environmental and social issues. As one executive noted, "The previous regime created the impression in the minds of the people that the company could exist without the people," but that has changed (Executive 2). Another manager noted that "the leadership did not use to pay much attention to environmental issues ... even if staff wanted to raise these matters, they had no avenue or voice for that ... the situation has changed now" (Manager 1).

Training is a key means of sustaining CSR within an organization, and GSR has ongoing and extensive training programs in place to ensure that its environmental and social policies are actually implemented. Management noted that although commitment to CSR is strong at the managerial level, it is weaker further down the line. One manifestation of this problem is that safety is considered something "white guys do" (Executive 3). Another manifestation of the problem is that of interdepartmental collaboration, where some departments (especially mining and metallurgy) not directly responsible for the environment and the communities still require ongoing sensitization to the issues (Manager 1). In short, it "takes time to bring about change" (Executive 4), and although GSR is moving in the right direction, transformative change of this kind takes years to implement.

There are many national and international standard-setting initiatives from which GSR has learned. Although the company may be a junior-mid-tier enterprise with limited resources, it has nevertheless been able to participate in and/or apply these standards. For example, on the initiative of the former CEO, in 2006 GSR began to provide annual reports under the United Nations Global Compact. Participation in the UN Global Compact has helped foster learning about such issues as child labour (the need to ensure that it is not used in the company's supply chain). In 2007, GSR updated its environment, health, and safety and community relations, and human rights policies so as to reflect the Global Compact Principles. In 2008, training was provided to ensure that the updated policies are implemented.

In another example, GSR adheres to the International Cyanide Management Code (ICMC) and was seeking certification in 2008 (as of March 2009, Wassa had not yet received certification). Cyanide is flown to Tarkwa and trucked in pellet form from Tarkwa to the processing plants. In accordance with the ICMC, stakeholder communities along the transport route are provided with training in emergency response to any potential cyanide transportation incidents (86 trained in 2007). Internally, 165 employees and third-party contractors were trained on emergency response to cyanide incidents, including the symptoms of cyanide exposure, health effects of cyanide, and first aid procedures associated with cyanide poisoning. Golden Star Resources considers the IFC's Performance Standard 5 an example of the best practice for community resettlement, and it has provided training to the community affairs departments to ensure that resettlement projects are completed in accordance with that standard. At the national level, GSR applies the Mining Association of Canada's Sustainability Performance Levels in evaluating its performance in such areas as community consultations, the environment, and safety (GSR 2008a). The mining company also reports its annual royalty payments under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in which Ghana participates. From January 2005 until the end of March 2009, a total of US$11.8 million was paid in royalties from the Bogoso/Prestea mine and a total of US$10.2 million from the Wassa mine.[11]

These are examples of the learning potential of global and national-level voluntary CSR initiatives.

Conclusion

The above reveals that the mid-tier, Canadian mining company Golden Star Resources has the incentive, capacity, and resources to meet its CSR obligations. The incentive comes largely from the direct correlation between the need for a social license from the local communities and the company's ability to operate its mines. The capacity has come from the major organizational innovations that provided the leadership needed at the senior managerial level to move the company's CSR agenda forward.

The evidence suggests that the leadership of GSR is open and committed to learning about best practices and engaging with the local communities to learn what their concerns and priorities are. The creation of the Community Mine Consultative Committees and the process in which requests for development projects are made by the community to GSR's Development Foundation demonstrates that GSR is not merely dictating initiatives to the community. In this respect, the company's vision of its responsibilities is in line with the consensus in the broader theoretical literature on CSR in the developing country context, which argues that CSR must contribute to the socioeconomic development of the countries in which company operations take place.

The assumption that financial constraints prevent junior and mid-tier mining companies from meeting their CSR obligations is not borne out by the evidence from this case study. Admittedly, junior and mid-tier mining companies are disadvantaged in that they lack the resources to pay the membership fees to organizations such as the ICMM and the Mining Association of Canada. For example, GSR is developing an environmental management system that will conform to the ISO 14,001 standard, but it is not seeking certification because of the considerable expense involved. This is a disadvantage because GSR cannot benefit from the credibility afforded by an external certification program. On the other hand, GSR has benefited from the availability of the ISO 14,001 standard, and is seeking to improve its environmental management system by conforming to an internationally recognized best practice. In addition, although GSR cannot afford to join the ICMM, senior management has acknowledged that it fol-

11. "Golden Star Resources pays $22 million in royalties," *Daily Graphic*, 18 May 2009.

lows what the "big boys" are doing, and applies best practices where they are applicable to GSR's operations (Executive 1).

Given the Ghanaian institutional context in which GSR is operating, the need to undertake CSR initiatives that are appropriate to the needs of the local community is a major challenge GSR has sought to address. In providing sustainable livelihood projects for the benefit of people displaced by mining, existing research and the experiences of other mining companies have helped GSR learn what works and what does not (Hilson and Banchirigah 2009). After some trial and error experiences, the company arrived at the oil palms project as one appropriate to the needs of local communities. It seems to have been well received.

Since GSR launched its CSR policies and organizational changes only three years prior to this study, it is arguably too soon to assess the extent to which these initiatives have resulted in improved outcomes for the community, but further research can explore this question.

Again, the ability of GSR to take advantage of national and international standard-setting initiatives contradicts the proposition that junior and mid-tier companies are severely constrained. As one official noted, "One doesn't need a lot of money to promote CSR; what is needed is time and initiative" (Executive 4). What appears to be far more critical than resources is the commitment of senior management. Learning plays an important role in this process. This points to another aspect of learning: the ability to cast off old mindsets and bring about a change in attitude necessary for a company to commit to CSR ("unlearning"). As the discussion on leadership and learning above attests, creating a culture of commitment to CSR is a difficult process that cannot be accomplished in a few years. As senior management in GSR confirmed, creating that culture is a work in progress (Executive 3, Executive 4). There are still areas where improvement is needed, including aspects such as safety, community health, and addressing the problem of galamsey. The fact that senior management is prepared to acknowledge that more needs to be done suggests that GSR has shed the "arrogant" attitude it was alleged to have held five years ago. The role of senior management in bringing about change in this case confirms arguments in the larger theoretical literature that leadership plays a critical role in bringing about transformation in any organization (for example, Cooksey 2003; McGuire and Hutchings 2006).

This research demonstrates that when assessing a company's commitment to CSR principles, it is important to "unpack" the firm and analyze its internal dynamics. The findings suggest that smaller firm size is not necessarily a major detriment to developing capacity around CSR, and further research focusing on the organizational attributes of mid-tier as well as major mining companies would shed more light on this question. Greater understanding of these internal dynamics could potentially inform policy relevant initiatives that tap into the internal leadership and learning potentials of firms to improve their CSR performance. Further research on firm-level processes in other companies that are both leaders and laggards would make it possible to identify gaps in leadership and learning mechanisms where improvements could be made. More research is also called for on the sorts of global and national CSR voluntary initiatives that promote leadership and learning around CSR.

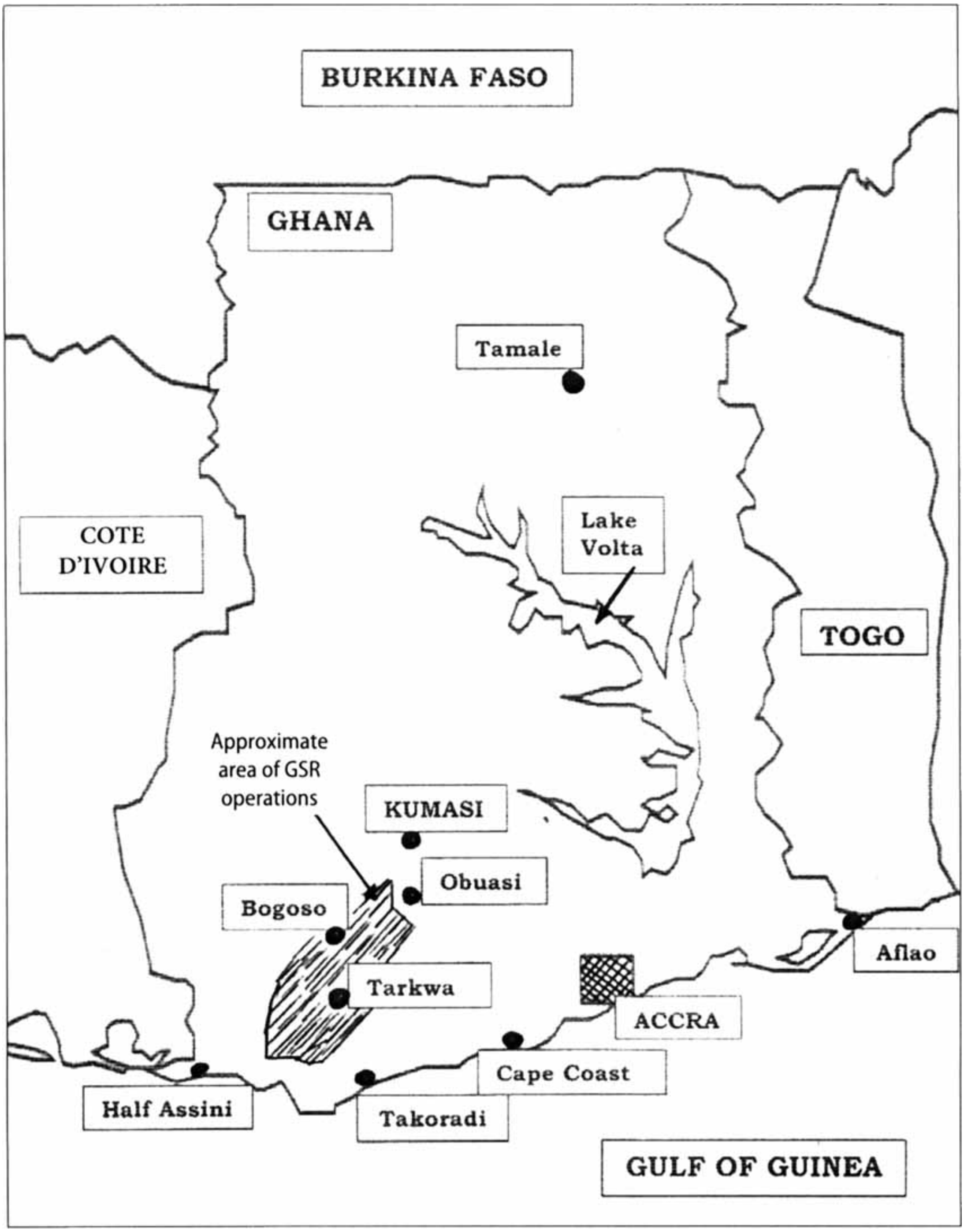

Figure 2. Map of Ghana showing approximate area within which GSR operates mines.

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