

GENDER MAINSTREAMING FOR SUSTAINABLE MINING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is richly endowed with precious stones and metals (such as diamonds, gold, silver, and gemstones), base metals (such as aluminium, copper and bauxite), industrial minerals (such as limestone, sand, clay and soda ash) and hydrocarbons (such as oil and natural gas) (Ericsson and Lof, 2019). According to the 2017 Resource Governance Index, the SSA's mineral resources account for about 30 percent of the world's total mineral reserves with Africa contributing about 42 percent of gold, 80-90 percent of chromium and platinum group of metals, 10 percent of oil, and 8 percent of natural gas (see UNECA, 2013; NRGI, 2017). Nigeria, Angola and Libya are among Africa's major exporters of oil in the world (Onyisi, 2016). According to Venables (2016), nine of the twelve resource-rich countries in the world with significant new discoveries are in Africa: for example, oil has recently been discovered in Uganda and Kenya, titanium in Mozambique and South Africa, among others. The mining sector is a significant export revenue earner for most resource-rich African countries (Chuhan-Pole et al., 2017). According to Business for Social Responsibility (BSR, 2017), mining remains the backbone of the economies of Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Ghana and South Africa (see also NRGI, 2017; Ericsson and Lof, 2019). While agriculture and livestock continue to be the backbone of communal livelihood and food security in SSA, traditional mining activities offer valuable alternatives to raise cash income and increase household purchasing power. This has enabled women and their households to participate in economic activities and access necessary health and education services (Pokorny et al., 2019). The mining sector is a large source of employment in many SSA countries. Even though women are increasingly entering its labour force with others even owning mining

concessions (Yakovleva, 2007; Perks and Schulz, 2020), the mining sector remains a male-dominated industry and one of the worst performing in the world (BSR, 2017). Today, the number of women pursuing work in the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sub-sector is higher than that in the large-scale mining (LSM) sub-sector (BSR, 2017; Hilson et al., 2018). However, their participation and contribution is often dismissed as inconsequential because mining has for a long time been perceived as a uniquely male world (Hirons, 2011; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). These perceptions persist to date, but they continue to be challenged as state and non-state actors question the role of the mining sector in advancing gender equality and its contribution towards a more prosperous world (Hilson et al., 2018). This is a welcome development as earlier academic scholarship adopted a “*gender blind*” approach on the extractive sector (Benshaul-Tolonen and Baum, 2019) with gendered impacts of mining ignored, considered negligible, and/or of second-order importance (Pimpa, 2017).

There seems to be some consensus in the industry, policy, and academic circles that gender equality is a necessary foundation to build a more resilient and sustainable mining sector as envisaged in the Africa Vision 2063 (AMV, 2009) and the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (de Haan et al., 2020). Buss et al., (2017), BSR (2017) and Yakovleva (2007) argue that gender mainstreaming in mining regulation, laws, standards, and policies (at national, industry and organisational levels), have the potential to bring economic benefits to women and their dependants, as well as contribute to the long-term positive health, cultural and social outcomes in communities. In the last decade, research has showed strong evidence that both the ASM and LSM positively and negatively impact on, and are impacted by, gender issues at macro, meso, and micro levels (BSR, 2017; Hilson, et al., 2018; Benshaul-Tolonen and Baum, 2019; Bashwira and van der Haar, 2020). Despite this, evidence on the progress towards gender equality in practice and policy continues to be hampered by a lack of quality and reliable gender-disaggregated data on mining in sub-Saharan Africa (Chuhan-Pole

et al., 2017). The lack of data continues to significantly hinder good resource governance and the appropriate design and implementation of gender policies and programs in mining organisations globally (World Bank, 2019; Perks and Schulz, 2020).

Mining and gender equality present numerous challenges, opportunities, and risks to sustainable development. Thus, gender equality can no longer be considered as a ‘side’ business and policy issue (Pimpa, 2017; Buss et al., 2019). Indeed, the growing social, economic, and regulatory pressures for the mining sector to address their negative impacts especially on women is driving changes in the industry practice. Although companies are beginning to respond to these pressures by mainstreaming gender in their systems, operations, and processes across the value chain (World Bank, 2019), most do not adopt an integrated and holistic approach to gender equality (Lauwo, 2018). Therefore, the impacts of the gender equality policies remain questionable (Pimpa, 2019) as mining companies are still “enmeshed with the patriarchal logic of the contemporary capitalist system” that silences the voice of women (Lauwo, 2018, p.689).

This chapter brings to the fore the experiences of women in a unique context – sub-Saharan Africa - that is often less prominent in the mainstream gender in mining academic literature. The chapter is structured as follows: we discuss in the next section the concept of gender, the nature of mining work and the gendered impact of mining in the SSA context. In the third section, we examine gender and governance issues, and conclude with reflections on how multi-sectoral actors might collectively work together to advance gender equality in the SSA’s mining sector.

Gender and Mining in Sub-Saharan Africa

The term “gender” is erroneously used interchangeably with the term “sex” which refers to the biological differences between men and women (Fischman, et al., 1999; Mavin and Grandy,

2012). Gender refers to those characteristics of men and women that are socially and culturally constructed (Buss et al., 2017). This broadly relates to the different behaviours, roles, expectations, and responsibilities that all men and women learn in their interactions with others, and in the context of their own societies. Gender is an ongoing social process and as such the assigning of gender roles and responsibilities is not static (McCarthy and Muthuri, 2018) but changes with time depending on the political, economic, legal, and cultural forces at play (Ibrahim et al., 2020). Similarly, what society considers appropriate for men and women is context specific. The experiences of men and women varies in scale and depth across cultures and regions (Buss et al., 2019; Ibrahim et al., 2020), the type of work and mining operations and the degree of mining informality (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Lauwo, 2018).

Women experiences in ASM workspaces may be different from those of LSM. The informal ASM is heavily populated by women compared to the more formal LSM sub-sector (Hilson et al., 2018). A larger number of women work as wage workers, diggers, processors, and traders in informal mining (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015), compared to administrative and auxiliary roles occupied by those in more formal large-scale mining (Jenkins, 2014). A unique feature of ASM is its seasonality. Thus, women's participation in mining activities will often fluctuate with commodity prices. The seasonality of work is problematic because most ASM women experience rural poverty and lack opportunities to generate alternative income (Buss et al., 2017). Women in ASM face more risks than those in LSM partly because governments pay more attention to LSM where policies, laws and regulations are continuously refined in a bid to attract foreign direct investment and reduce economic risks for mining corporations; this often ends up making artisanal mining nominally illegal in some instances, passively tolerated in others and adjudged outright criminal in others (Buss et al., 2017). In the next sub-section, we discuss the manifest of gender inequalities in mining work, and why gender gaps in mining persist to date in SSA.

The Gendered Impact of Mining in Sub-Saharan Africa

The world continues to experience a rapid growth in the extractive industry due to increased demand for natural resources with the total net output of the mining sector growing by 1.7 percent in 2013 (Franco and Kunkel, 2017). However, this growth has reportedly not benefited women in resource-rich SSA regions (Mugo et al., 2020). According to Parks and Orozco (2018), women continue to bear the burden of mining activities but receive the least benefits of resource extraction. Women have fewer economic and employment opportunities compared to men (World Bank, 2019) and they experience disproportionately unequal treatment with regard to access, control over, and governance of mining resources (Pimpa, 2019). Women who live in communities adjacent to extractive operations are also adversely impacted by mine development including the loss of land with women unable to engage in farming and other viable income generating activities (Franco and Kunkel, 2017).

Although the number of women working in mining is increasing (Chuhan-Pole et al., 2017), the gender gaps in employment and wages is still astounding (BSR, 2017). On one hand, women in the LSM companies globally constitute only 1 percent of top executive position and only 10 percent of management positions. They have limited opportunities for career progression and struggle to ascent to top management and executive positions. On non-managerial positions, Khan et al. (2013) notes that only 10 percent female are employed in LSM companies globally with less than 5 percent of these roles located in service support functions with women missing out. On the other hand, the ASM sub-sector provides work to tens of millions of individuals in sub-Saharan African and of these women constitute a significant proportion of its labour force (Hilson and McQuilken, 2014). Although “precise workforce data are unavailable” (Hilson et al., 2018), the Business for Social Responsibility estimates that across different sub-Saharan countries, women make up between 40-90 percent

of ASM workforce (BSR, 2017, p.6) although this seems to be a higher estimation compared to the 25-50 percent cited by Buss (2017).

Thus, ASM remains an important source of employment and economic livelihoods for women because of its relative ease of entry compared to experiences in the large-scale mining. Working in artisanal and small-scale mines requires no formal education or skills, and, little or no capital (Hayes and Perks, 2012). However, ASM work is less mechanised making it more physically demanding, unsafe and insecure (Mwakumanya et al., 2017). The working conditions are dangerous and stressful, with perpetual fear of falling rocks and accidents, and long-term health risks (Benshaul-Tolonen and Baum, 2019). Despite these challenges, women are more willing to take the risks of employment for financial gains as evidenced by Hilson et al., (2018) while reporting on women experiences in Zambia and Sierra Leone.

Women are often the most affected by the adverse damage of the local ecology by mining activities. The environmental degradation arising from mining affect their well-being and their livelihoods (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). The pollution of land and water reduces access to clean water and safe food and affects other rural livelihoods such as farming and fishing. Due to their roles in the household, women are forced to travel far in search of clean water and food depriving them of quality time to undertake other important tasks like schooling, engaging in alternative income generating activities, self-grooming and general family health care (Oxfam, 2017). The mining camps are very dusty and the women, men, and children living there inhale vast quantities of dust, which causes persistent respiratory infections, and puts the majority of them at risk of contracting silicosis, bladder and urinary tract infections (Mpagi et al., 2017).

Determinants of gender and labour force inequality in mining

Historically, the low participation of women in mining is due to a range of individual (e.g., physiological), organisational (e.g., technical), and external (e.g., legal) factors as summarised

on Table 1. In this sub-section, we discuss these factors in turn and explain that some arguments of the gendered division of labour (*e.g., mining work is more dangerous for women*) are not “absolute truths” but gender stereotypes, myths, superstitions, and prejudices in the informal and formal gendered social institutions in SSA.

Table 1: Determinants of gender and labour force inequality in mining

Levels		Examples
Micro	Individual factors (e.g., psychological, family interactions)	Work considered dangerous for women
		Personal traits of women – women considered too weak for such strenuous work
		Women low level of education to pick up specialised jobs in the mining sector
		Isolation and loneliness away from their families
Meso	Organisational factors (e.g., technical, organizational culture)	Women viewed as bringing bad luck on mines
		Women must be protected from such ‘hard jobs’
		Institutionalised discriminatory cultures that widens gender pay gap, stifles promotions, and provide unequal workplace opportunities.
		Poor working conditions
		Poor living conditions
		Sexism and sexual harassment at workplace
		Work-life balance pressures (e.g., managerial versus caring roles)
Macro	Societal external factors (e.g., financial, political, legal, socioeconomic, religious)	Legislative restrictions/challenges
		Socio-cultural norms elevating men over women e.g., prejudice attitudes towards women in leadership and decision-making roles.
		Lack of access and/or limited access to credit and finance
		Lack of access to business contracts
		Lack of control over their income

		Limited ownership and control of assets including land
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Source: Authors' own

At the micro (individual) level, psychological, family relations and interactions influence the extent women participate in mining. First, the physical demanding nature of the mining work might disadvantage women. Historically, mining was viewed as a dangerous, risky, and hazardous job that only men could engage in. This shaped earlier perceptions of mining as jobs where men go down the mineshafts every day, endangering their lives so as to feed their families. Women were only considered as appendages of this group through their ties with the male miners (Lahiri-Dutt, 2007). According to Perks and Schulz (2020) the nature of work in the mining sector continues to be gender segregated with men doing the heavy lifting or working as machine operators, and women working in administration, cleaning and catering, and providing other essential services around mining towns. This stereotypical patriarchal culture cuts across the LSM and ASM sub-sectors as evident in Tanzania's multinational mining companies' workplace practices that reveal the extent of masculine nature of mining jobs with very few women participating in its labour despite the fact that technological advancement requires employees with more specialised training and skills as opposed to their physical strengths (Lauwo, 2018).

Second, low levels of education, technical skills and pursuits of STEM-related (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects contribute to low percentages of women's access to skilled labour force in formal mining in SSA (World Bank, 2019). The exception is in the ASM sub-sector where women are more represented compared to the large-scale mining because the former applies low levels of technology which require minimum knowledge and skills to operate. Moreover, the women lack gemmological, market and financial literacy skills essential in the marketing and management of mineral resources (Mwakumanya et al., 2016).

Third, LSM and ASM mining is often in remote areas and this can lead to isolation, loss of social networks and alienation (Sharma and Rees, 2007). More so, non-standard work schedules of mines increases psychological stress which in turn negatively affect marital relationship and increases instances of domestic violence, broken families and high divorce rates (Buss et al., 2017). Evidence from gemstones mining in Kenya points to the sudden income from the sale of gemstones, and conflicts over how money is spent, triggers family tensions, incidences of domestic violence and broken families among miners (see www.sustainable-asm.com). The quality of marital and intimate relationships is a significant factor in determining a person's mental health and psychological well-being. The influx of men working in mines far from their families coupled with the stressful nature of informal mining may result to some miners suffering from stress disorders (Benshaul-Tolonen and Baum, 2019). The stressful nature of work in the mines and the ready access to cash can lead to their reckless engagement in high-risk behaviours such as promiscuity, drug use and unprotected sex increasing sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Research conducted by Benshaul-Tolonen and Baum (2019) revealed that women in Swaziland and Lesotho with partners who are migrant mine labourers are eight times more likely to be HIV positive compared with women with non-mining working partners.

At the meso (organisational) level, organisational cultures and systems, technical factors influence the extent women participate in mining. First, most African cultures are patriarchal in nature. These entrenched societal norms, values and beliefs end up influencing organisations culture and depriving women of their voice and agency in resource governance and organisational decision-making processes (BSR, 2017). Additionally, cultural superstitions, gender stereotypes and perception about women creates a discriminatory and unwelcoming environment for women to meaningful participation in mining work (Lauwo,

2018). For example, in some cultures, women are expected to be protected from ‘hard jobs’ (Popoitai and Ofosu-Amaah, 2013) whilst in others, they are kept away from mines during their menstrual periods lest they anger the gods, pollute the mines, or bring bad luck (Hinton et al., 2003). In Tanzania, there is the belief that the spirits of the precious minerals are more attracted to the male than to the female gender. Few women are able to challenge or navigate this discrimination arising from retrogressive cultural beliefs. For example, a Tanzanian woman fooled her male counterparts for about ten years by dressing like a man and going down the mining shafts with them. But in 2017, she was forced to reveal her true sexuality when another female within the mining camp accused her of rape (see <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-39705424>).

Second, the socio-cultural norms influences employment and remuneration practices in the sector (Oxfam, 2017). Lauwo (2018) demonstrates how training opportunities within LSM organisations in Tanzania favour men over women. These women suffer in silence as their human rights are violated for fear of losing their jobs. Additionally, women in both ASM and LSM lack access to role models and mentors to support their career-development goals (Mugo et al., 2020). The gender pay gap persist in the industry with employed women receiving less wages than their male counterparts. Further, the gender-blind policies creates working conditions that encourage exploitative labour practices and sexual harassment in the mining sector (Popoitai and Ofosu-Amaah, 2013). Income disparities between men and women persist as evident in the Kenya’s gemstone ASM sub-sector (Mugo et al., 2020).

Third, ASM miners often work in confined spaces with minimal ventilation and use less protective gear. This disproportionately increases the occupational, health and safety risks women face in mining. Women working in mining processing activities, for example in the gold sector, experience greater health risks arising from exposure to harmful chemicals such as mercury that is used in the extraction of mineral from the raw ore (Mpagi et al., (2017).

Notably, some of these mineral processing occurs in the confines of their homes. Women especially those of childbearing age and children are more susceptible than men to health risks from some of these agents. Women are known to be severely affected by methylmercury poisoning which is easily transmitted to foetuses causing severe developmental problems in infants and children (Khan et al., 2013). Panning also leads to back pain, cracked palms, loss of nails when women pan with their bare hands. They also suffer from swollen feet from standing in pools of water for long period.

Fourth, the living conditions around mines and mining towns can be discriminatory. Social institutions in some mining towns do not provide an acceptable or favourable social environment for women to interact freely in public. Men frequently decide as to whom their wives or girlfriends may socialise with, and where to visit. This reflects the inequality of power in relationships and the relative powerlessness of women (Sharma and Rees, 2007, p. 4). The forced sharing of living quarters with men result to women abandoning mining (Popoitai and Ofosu-Amaah, 2013). In a study in Papua New Guinea, Moretti (2006) observed that there was limited support provided for women with families with some companies required women to live without their families in the mine camps. The women who contravened the ‘no family rule’ were charged a high daily fee for bringing their families to visit or live in the camps. On the contrary, there was less concern if male miners brought their female partners into the camp. Paradoxically, the camp may not provide a secure haven for women who move to mining camps to escape violent relationships (Mpagi et al., 2017). According to Botha (2016), the gender-based violence in mining camps in South Africa demonstrates women’s inability to protect not only their bodies but also their belongings. Indeed, gender-based violence was used for control over both women and natural resources by men in Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana (Camey et al., 2020). Sexism and harassment further exclude women from seeking or enduring employment in the ‘male-controlled’ working environment (Buss et al., 2017).

Entertainment spots in mining towns are a male domain with the ‘public masculinity’ of binge drinking in pubs acting as a deterrent for women to freely socialise (Carrington et al., 2010, p. 104).

At the macro (societal) level, the legal, political and socio-economic factors negatively affect women participation in mining. Lauwo (2018) decries the contemporary patriarchal logic of the capitalist system that perpetuates historical gendered power relations both at societal and organizational contexts. First, legislative restrictions intended to address health and safety concerns in some countries advertently reduce the opportunities for women to find employment (Popotai and Ofosu-Amaah, 2013). For instance, in some countries, there existed laws that prohibited women from working underground. Before the Kenya Factory Act Cap 414 was repealed, women were prohibited from working at night or under dangerous conditions specifically where fumes were generated. The law might perhaps have been written in ‘good faith’ but it inadvertently discriminated against women. The current Kenyan Occupational Safety and Health Act no.15 of 2007 makes no special provision for women working under the said conditions. The revised Ugandan Mining Act of 2003 (section 114) made specific provisions to allow women to work in underground mines. In South Africa, before the enactment of the more inclusive Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (No. 28 of 2002) and the Broad-based Socio-economic Empowerment Charter for the South African Mining Industry (the Mining Charter), women were prohibited from going down the mines (Botha, 2016). Although some of these laws have been repealed, their impacts persist to date. Women are not involved in decision making processes and are often overlooked in the payment of compensation and royalties (Mugo et al., 2020).

Second, limited access to credit and finance, limited ownership and control of assets, lack of access to business contracts, as well as the lack of access to and control over their income

renders it difficult for women to pursue entrepreneurial activities along the value chain. The inability to access financial resources impacts on the women's abilities to invest in formal education, vocational mining-focused education, purchase of mining-related educational resources, or even meet fees for the registration of official mining title (World Bank, 2019; BSR, 2017). Women end up becoming dependent on men and are unable to empower themselves economically; in turn, this increases their vulnerability and exposes them to gender-based violence (Perks and Schulz, 2020). All in all, the marginalisation of women in the mining sector is deeply rooted in societal norms and practices. As a consequence, families, communities, and countries are unable to fully benefit from the meaningful participation of women in mining (Camey et al., 2020). In the next section, we explore what is being done to reverse gender inequality in the sector.

Gender Mainstreaming in African Mining: A Collective Action Approach

Formal and informal institutions continue to influence how society perceive women often as the weaker and poorer sex. This perception is slowly being reversed as there is growing evidence pointing to both the business case and the development case for gender mainstreaming in the mining sector (Onyisi, 2016). For instance, women with access to employment and household finances are more likely to invest in education, health, and the nutrition for their families (World Bank, 2013, as cited by Pimpa and Phouxay, 2017, p. 146). Despite the persisting challenges, the sector is forging forward to bridge the gender gaps. For example, the *Community Development Toolkit* of The International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) suggests that companies should put greater attention to the gender dimension of mining operations (ICMM, 2012). Similarly, Rio Tinto, a global leader in mining with operations in sub-Saharan Africa, in 2009 published a guide to explain “Why Gender Matters” in its global operations (Rio Tinto, 2009). A number of external and internal factors are driving

these changes, namely; i) the locational shift of large-scale mining industry to the Global South; ii) the radical transformation of the nature of mineral production through the rise of informal mining, iii) the establishment of a number of multi-sector initiatives aimed at bringing changes at the global, local and organizational levels, and iv) the integration of the gender mainstreaming approach to policy making at the international and national level (Caglar, 2013; Jenkins, 2014; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; AU, 2018; Hilson, 2019).

Gender mainstreaming refers to the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any policy initiative including legislation, policies, and programmes across the entire value chain (United Nations 1997 as cited by Lahiri-Dutt, 2006). Despite gender mainstreaming being advocated at a policy level, there is limited recognition and discourse of the issue in organisations. Arguably, this has resulted in a limited number of practitioners and organisations directly addressing gender in their internal policies. For example, women are often responsible for the household well-being and survival through providing essential needs and caring for the children. However, these unpaid caring roles are often not formally recognised by any company policies and initiatives. Therefore, advancing greater equality requires a robust policy framework facilitating the disruption of gender stereotypes that reinforce occupational segregation, differences in income, disparities in care responsibilities, as well as discriminatory practices in general. It also requires that women's voice and agency are enhanced, while at the same time engaging men and boys. The next section discusses examples of policy actors and mechanisms for mainstreaming gender across the sector.

The Role of Actors and Mechanisms for Mainstreaming Gender

A system of governance aiming at addressing gender inequality can help us to think through the changes that are required, and how to go about these changes, at the macro, meso and micro-levels.

i) *The role of global multi-stakeholder governance systems*

Back in 1992, the World Bank in its landmark report *Strategy for African Mining* (World Bank, 1992), recognised the role of effective governance as key determinant for the development outcomes of extractive industries activities in sub-Saharan Africa. In this respect, governance can be understood as the process of setting the rules for the exercise of power and for determining who can legitimately exercise it. According to Detomasi (2007) effective governance systems share at least four characteristics: legitimacy, accountability, capacity, and enforcement. Legitimacy implies that who exercises governance authority possesses the acknowledged right to do so. Accountability means that mechanisms exist whereby those who exercise power are accountable for the consequences of what they do. Capacity comprises that the institutions entrusted with the governance function possess the resources and specialised technical knowledge necessary to exercise governance effectively. The final element is enforcement which covers normative and/or not punitive sanctions for those transgressing established rules.

At the national level, the governance role is associated with governments. However, the decreased ability of national governments to exercise effective governance in any of these four dimensions has prompted the emergence of a global multi-stakeholder governance system or transnational governance (Lepoutre et al., 2007; Besada and Martin, 2015). Transnational governance has enhanced the international community's ability to address complex issues such as gender quality by focusing on smaller pieces of multifaceted problems and filling regulatory gaps where national governments are unable or unwilling to set rules (Auld et al., 2018). In this context, Castells (2008) proposes that governments have transformed themselves to be more effective by three main mechanisms. Firstly, states associate with each other forming networks of states. Some of these networks are multipurpose and constitutionally defined (e.g., African Union); others focus on a set of issues generally related to trade (e.g., African

Continental Free Trade Agreement and the Southern Common Market); while others are spaces of economic coordination and debate (e.g., Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation). Secondly, states may build an increasingly dense network of international institutions and supra-national organisations to deal with global issues. Examples of these are the United Nations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank. Finally, states may also decentralise power and resources through local or regional governments, the private sector and to civil society organisations.

With a perceived decline in the authority and capacity of governments to govern the mining sector, and the need to supplement the shortcomings of previous of mining regulatory efforts in SSA, a variety of non-governmental governance initiatives have emerged to promote greater responsibility and accountability in the sector, as well as facilitate markets, states and civil society cooperation (Besada and Martin, 2015). With an increase national interest to attract international investment in large scale mining (Hilson, 2019), these initiatives are not constrained to one country or region. This is the case of, for example, the mining principles promoted by the ICMM across its company members (www.icmm.com).

A great deal of governance in specific areas related to business and gender equality has been exercised at the international level. Concerns about women's position in society have led to both the development of international treaties and conventions, the inclusion of non-discriminatory clauses in trade agreements, and the creation of women offices within countries and international organisations. Intergovernmental bodies such as the UN, the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) and the OECD have established women's issues as a priority among their member states through gender mainstreaming policies. The African Union recently published its ten year and first continental strategy for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment during the 2018-2028 period recognising that "extractive industry projects put women's livelihoods and food security in jeopardy" (AU, 2018, p. 27).

As such, suggestions have been put forward by intergovernmental bodies on how mining in Africa can be engendered. A joint report by the UN Environment Programme, the UN Women, UN Peacebuilding Support Office and the UN Development Programme offers a four-strand recommendation (UNEP, UN Women, PBSO and UNDP, 2013). First, women's participation in formal and informal decision-making structures and governance processes related to natural resource management in peacebuilding should be promoted. Secondly, players in the extractive sector should adopt proactive measures to protect women from resource-related physical violence and other security risks. Third, governments should remove barriers and create enabling conditions to build women's capacity for productive and sustainable use of natural resources. Last, within international bodies, especially those in the United Nations, there should be an increase in inter-agency cooperation to pursue women's empowerment.

In this context, global public policy networks (GPPN) have emerged as key global governance instruments. These networks are loose alliances of government agencies, international organisations, corporations, and civil society representatives such as nongovernmental organisations, professional associations, trade unions, or religious groups that join to achieve what none can accomplish on its own (McNutt and Pal, 2011). A common characteristic of these global governance initiatives is the design, development, and implementation of rules that transcend national borders without having sovereign authority. This global system sees governments as engaged in a horizontal inter-organisational network of societal actors, where public policy is both formed and executed by the interacting and voluntary efforts from a multitude of stakeholders (Auld et al., 2018; Perez et al., 2019). One well-known GPPN is the UN Global Compact with more than 600 companies and other stakeholders in Africa (www.unglobalcompact.org). Regarding gender issues, the Global Compact in partnership with the UN Women promote the Women's Empowerment Principles offering guidance to business on how to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace

(www.weeps.org). According to UN Women (2018), South African companies have been particularly active at engaging with these principles. For example, De Beers Group, the world's leading diamond mining company, committed in 2017 to achieve gender parity in senior managerial positions, and support women entrepreneurs in its operations in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. Another example of a well-established GPPN is the Gender Equality Seals promoted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This is a national certification programme that supports the private sector to address gender gaps in critical areas of their operations through the adoption of excellency standards in their management. More than 16 national certification programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa have been created over the last decade, through which over 600 companies have been certified, impacting directly and indirectly more than 1.5 million female and male workers (www.genderequalityseal.org). Since 2016 companies in Uganda and Rwanda have joined the Gender Seal Programme. However, the mining sector is still underrepresented in this initiative (www.africa.undp.org).

ii) The role of national governments

Gender-responsive and rights-based public policies are central at enabling the realisation of people's rights and opportunities, and for many governments in SSA, more radical regulatory and institutional reforms are necessary to bridge the gender gap (Lauwo, 2018). Governments play a key role at enacting these policies and overseeing their realisation on the ground. However, it has not been always clear how this role should be implemented. The debate has frequently focused on the question of whether governments should concentrate on enacting laws (Albareda et al., 2008). It is expected that national regulations are aligned to international human rights standards as well as gender-related policies such as the Beijing Declaration and

Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Oxfam, 2017).

Regarding gender issues, governments have passed hard laws mandating equal treatment of men and women at work (World Bank, 2020). In this respect, governments have undertaken regulatory efforts to recognise and formalise the ASM sector. Hilson (2019) suggests that formalization of the sector would lead to positive changes such as the recognition of the role of women in ASM and facilitate the enactment of appropriate policies and laws that would protect and promote women engagement in the field of mining. However, formalisation pose an additional challenge for ASM because while the legal regulations frequently include environmental and safety regulations and the policy implementation usually revolve around the recognition of mineral tenure rights (Hilson, 2019), the women's contribution in the labour force is threatened, as their contribution is often omitted due to the informal nature of their labour which is often not recorded or recognised (Lahiri-Dutt, 2008; Verbrugge and Besmanos, 2016).

In addition, where government agencies lack the capacity to enforce those regulations, ASM-operators have limited incentives to comply because the government is unable to offer them anything in return. Mpagi et al., (2017) indicates that while governments would be interested in legalising and regulating the artisanal gold mining industry, the artisanal miners themselves are usually reluctant to formalise this industry because of the associated costs that come with such formalisation such as mine licensing, paying of annual fees, rents, and taxes. Governments have therefore been accused of taking a highly technocratic approach to formalization that includes cumbersome licensing processes, high levies, and demands that local miners must form cooperatives, among others, which has only led to the ASM sector to further go underground (Buss et al., 2019). Section 92-98 of the revised Kenyan Mining Act 2012 provides for this formalisation with the undesirably permits, fees and administrative processes. In this respect,

a pure mandating role of the government where decision-making is hierarchical can make governance inefficient, expensive and/or inadequate (Lepoutre et al., 2007). The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Business and Human Rights recognised this by saying that "the debate about business and human rights would be far less pressing if all Governments faithfully executed their own laws and fulfilled their international obligations" (UN, 2006, p. 20). The actual context is one in which governments are not always able to exercise the level of governance that is expected or needed as discussed in the previous section.

The debate about the role of governments has therefore evolved from the purely legal view to a broader role as mediators, facilitators, and partners. Softer forms of regulations have been recognised as supplementary to legal or hard regulation. Soft regulation begins once legal arrangements are not effectively implemented, are unclear, or are of interest for key stakeholders (Abbott and Snidal, 2000). Examples of soft regulation are economic or financial initiatives (e.g., subsidies and awards), informational resources (e.g., guidelines, training, and websites), partnerships (e.g., public-private partnerships, negotiated agreements, stakeholder forums), and a combination of the previous ones (e.g., platforms/centres and national strategies) (Steurer, 2013). Many of the regulatory reforms promoted by governments in Sub-Saharan Africa have follow a softer form (Besada and Martin, 2015). They have been directed towards attracting more foreign investment through reducing hard regulation, easing labour policies, and private sector-friendly ownership and taxation schemes. A key distinction between soft and hard regulation is in terms of enforcement (Steurer, 2013). While hard regulation relies on sanctions, soft regulation enforcement can be done by, for instance, monitoring and feedback, transparency, peer group audits, benchmarking, joint studies, etc. By complementing hard regulation with softer forms, governments have a more strategic role to play by facilitating engagement and multi-stakeholder collaboration. From this perspective, governments should act as sponsors enabling multi-stakeholder engagement (Uwafiokun, et

al., 2020; Simon and Tang, 2012). Midttun proposes that softer regulatory initiatives such as those within the corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework should be systematically integrated with the governmental agenda in a “joint partnered governance” (2008, p. 409). Partnered governance implies “the cooperation of diverse social actors in regulation – in particular, various private agents and sometimes, public agents” (Nikoloyuk et al., 2010, p. 60). By assuming a relational role, governments can promote a greater sense of co-responsibility and shift corporate attention towards addressing the great economic and political challenges at the national level (Leonard, 2017).

iii) The role of organisations

Governance institutions play an important role encouraging multi-stakeholder collaboration at addressing gender issues in the labour market. However, public policy action alone will not be enough if gender mainstreaming efforts are not made at both the macro and micro levels. Promoting change within the organisational boundaries seems particularly achievable compared to the broad policy environment and, therefore, is an important context in which to address key inequalities. While organisations in the private sector may not see themselves in the role of social change agents (unless activists and NGOs), they certainly are key places through which gender inequities can either be perpetuated or diminished. Certainly, they can invest more towards breaking the barriers that contribute to few women from entering the mining workforce, and the discriminatory beliefs that women are not suitable workers. (Lauwo, 2018).

In this respect, one of the most pressing challenges for the development of LSM is the access to a qualified labour force (Salinas and Romani, 2014). By overlooking women, extractive companies have unknowingly driven up the cost of labour for what may already be a very small pool of skilled workers. From a business case perspective, including women in mining expands

the pool of talent and can drive down cost of labour (BSR, 2017). A research by PricewaterhouseCoopers concluded that mining companies with mixed gender boards perform at a higher level of return on capital employed (12.6 vs 12.4), dividend yield (1.5 vs 0.75), and lesser negative earnings per share (-0.07 vs -0.91) than those with all male boards (PwC, 2015). Onyisi (2016) further argues that expanding business opportunities in the communities where women are engaged in the extractives is a business case in itself as this lessens production costs, provide continuity of supply and distribution outlets for goods and services, enhance social license to operate, and mitigate risk and potential conflict.

As a response to stakeholders' criticisms that the mining sector continues to perpetuate gender inequality (Lauwo, 2018), many companies are showing some commitment to engendering CSR (McCarthy and Muthuri, 2018). The institutionalising of gender in organisations differs between ASM and LSM. According to BSR (2017), LSM companies often employ global best practices around gender equality and diversity. Many of these large firms have sustainability and CSR departments that are mandated to address, in a structured and systematic manner, the negative gendered social, economic, and environmental impact of mining (see Muthuri and Gilbert, 2011). The institutionalising of gender in sustainability and CSR in the ASM may vary depending on its formal or informal organising.

Mainstreaming gender in mining implies that organisations' managers must consider the gender dimensions of their decisions. Applying a gender mainstreaming perspective at the organisational level suggests organisations consider intervening in at least five key areas (Torres and Hassard, 2021): (1) assuring equal opportunities, (2) providing training opportunities, (3) valuing diversity, (4) implementing a gender infrastructure, and (5) and facilitating collaboration. These five areas are briefly elaborated below:

- Assuring equal opportunities focus on breaking structural barriers to women's recruitment and advancement. The goal is to create equal opportunities for men and

women in the organisation by dismantling these structural barriers (Pimpa, 2019). Men and women's opportunities can be widened here by putting in place affirmative/positive action, transparent promotion policies, alternative careers paths, and work and family benefits, among others.

- Providing training opportunities focuses on women's skills to compete in the labour market. It is based on the idea that socialised sex differences have made women to have a lack of skills or attributes that are valuable to compete in the world of businesses. Women's opportunities in the labour market can be strengthen by any intervention that focus on helping them to develop the skills and styles considered as requisite for success. They can include executive training programs, leadership development courses, empowerment workshops and networking opportunities (Salinas and Romani, 2014; Mwakumanya et al., 2016).
- Organisations place a higher value on behaviours traditionally associated with men (Ely and Meyerson, 2000; Salinas and Romani, 2014). Valuing diversity, which refers to the chance that everyone has to be valued in terms of their differences, is critical in organisations. Possible interventions include consciousness-raising aiming at making people (especially men) aware of the differences, and related benefits, between women's and men's styles, skills, and perspectives
- Gender infrastructure refers to the development of formal policies and procedures aiming. It suggests that organisations should put in place a basic infrastructure for gender equality typically including an organisational gender policy, a budget for its implementation, a gender unit of technically skilled change agents, and evaluation of performance (Rao and Kelleher, 2003).
- Facilitating collaboration refers to the opportunity that individuals outside the organisation have to benefit from the organisational efforts for gender equality. This

perspective links internal organisational commitment and actions to the broad range of efforts aimed at women's mobilisation, citizenship, and voice (Rao and Kelleher, 2003; Benschop and Verloo, 2012). Typical initiatives include the integration of the family in the company activities, financing gender related projects in the community, facilitating women's mining associations, working with suppliers, and partnering with local governments and NGOs.

Formulating and implementing a strategy based on facilitating collaboration can be particularly effective considering the increasing number of women-led associations and the impact of mining in the community. The role of these associations is evident in the form of collective efforts for women's empowerment within the industry and the community, as well as organised resistance to mining.

Conclusion

The mining sector in SSA has the potential to positively impact on the sustainable development of the African continent (Chuhan-Pole et al., 2017). But in order for the “mining industry to become a vehicle of inclusive economic growth, gender considerations and women's economic empowerment must be integrated into every phase of mining projects. It is also essential that companies work with stakeholders to address the entrenched inequalities that hold women back from achieving their potential in the industry, in its supply chain, and in mining communities.” (BSR, 2017, p. 4). The sector has an obligation to protect, respect and promote the rights of women (Hill et al., 2016).

The extant literature on gender and mining has revealed diverse negative impact of mining to the women and the wider society: for example, women find it extremely difficult to cope with the social, economic, and cultural changes brought about by mining expansion. Resettlement

and rehabilitation often mean the loss of a livelihood base for the poorest families where women have the least power to stand up and express their difficulties. Oxfam (2017) has called for the implementation of gender justice systems in the mining sector that would help address those mining activities (such as planning and benefaction processes) that have for long neglected women's rights.

Many of these practices were built on the assumptions that leadership by men automatically improved the condition of women. The sector can reduce both societal and organisational risks as well as increase its social license to operate by proactively seeking to reduce mining companies-stakeholders expectations gap by supporting women's participation in employment, economic activities, stakeholder consultation and decision-making processes, as well as invest more in gendered social development initiatives.

Mining and women are not diametrically opposed. Mining companies have argued that 'the local culture' prevents them from including women in employment, consultations, and decision-making process. Engendering mining will require a change of the cultural make-up of communities, especially those that categorise work into 'male' or 'female' jobs which then brings about undesired occupational segregation (Moretti, 2006). Lahiri-Dutt (2006) offers that change in cultural beliefs can only come about when there is goodwill and support from company leadership. She proposes the need for a gender audit within the mining sector which would highlight the magnitude of the gender gap. This would ignite in players the desire and urgency to develop policies and strategies to promote change, both in legal way, and through social engineering. Oxfam (2017) on its part also supports the call for social engineering that would lead to changes in societal culture that would bring in new norms that promote gender equality.

In conclusion, there is a role for all societal actors to offer counter-narratives and co-create frames, norms, and cultures towards a more gendered society. A paradigm shift in gender and

mining scholarship that interrogates women's experiences using more contemporary theories such as (postmodernist feminism; intersectionality theories) and theoretical frameworks can help provide a good guide in the formulation of gender sensitive policies in the mining sector.

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