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**FORGIVE US OUR SINS:**

A critical perspective of Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR), insights from the case of  
the Samarco mining dam collapse in Brazil

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A Dissertation submitted to the São Paulo School of Business Administration Fundação Getulio Vargas, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Research Line:  
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In honor of God, I dedicate this PhD dissertation to my family.

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*“The backcountry will turn sea  
It is the sea turning into mud  
The bitter taste of Rio Doce  
From Regency to Mariana.  
Dead under the mud, died under the train?  
Was he someone’s son or had a kid or wife?  
That nobody wants to know and nobody cares about  
It seems that these people are born already dead.*

Free translation

Source: Flamansa (2015) Cacimba de Mágoa

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation consists of a set of three articles on the social-environmental disaster caused by the Samarco mining dam collapse, in Brazil. These articles take arguments and constructs based on management history, memory and forgetting to problematize the veiled dimensions of Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR). Over the past years, we have seen many ethical scandals in organizations, becoming more frequent. Since the early-2000s, studies on CSiR have been gathering more attention in management and organization studies. We already know about its negative impact on society and business. However, we still have a limited understanding of what exactly CSiR is. Analyses that consider contradictory versions, facts, and conditions of CSiR are still scarce. I investigate how can companies shape future perceptions of their involvement in CSiR. Through empirical research, I observe relationships between mining companies and local communities in areas impacted by CSiR. In the first article, I investigate why some of the victims and stakeholders began to minimize their criticism of companies, after an incident involving corporate irresponsibility. In the second article I question, how companies may strategically deploy misinformation around an episode of corporate irresponsibility. Finally, in the third article, I discuss how some versions of the past appear more powerful, legitimate, and credible than others. My results show that due to the strong economic role that the extractive industry plays in the region, (1) the mining company has developed a quasi-parental relationship with the municipality, generating employment, contributing to the economy, improving access to consumer goods, and culture, among others, thereby driving the municipality to one of the highest GDP per capita in the state of Minas Gerais, ranking among the 100 municipalities with the highest GDP per capita in Brazil - in the year before the dam collapse. In contrast, (2) the mining company has also manipulated information concerning the security of its operations, ignoring risks and community safety. This situation caused chaos, uncertainty, controversy, and a lack of information in the worst affected city. I conclude my argument by pointing out that due to the concentrated power of the extractive industry in the region, (3) the mining company has been trying to articulate a new version of the narrative for its future. For the company and pro-company stakeholders the collapse is a kind of blessing and everything will be better in the future. Nevertheless, uncertainty and doubt remain on how the company will compensate the victims for all their losses, and for some of them, this is an unfulfilled promise. By showing these results, I am generating insights to inform a theory of Corporate Social Irresponsibility. With a historically oriented analysis, I am contributing to a deeper understanding of the strategic uses of the past by organizations in their narratives.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Irresponsibility; History; Memory; Samarco Mining Company; Affected communities.

## RESUMO

Esta dissertação consiste em um conjunto de três artigos que têm o mesmo contexto de pesquisa, o desastre socioambiental causado pelo rompimento da barragem da Samarco, no Brasil. Esses artigos tomam argumentos e construtos baseados na história, memória e esquecimento no campo da gestão para problematizar dimensões veladas da Irresponsabilidade Social Corporativa (IrSC). Nas últimas décadas, vimos muitos escândalos éticos em organizações se tornando comuns. Desde o início da década de 2000, os estudos sobre IrSC vêm ganhando adesão nos estudos de gestão e organização. Já sabemos de seu impacto negativo na sociedade e nos negócios. No entanto, ainda temos um entendimento limitado do que é IrSC. As análises que consideram versões, fatos e condições contraditórias sobre a IrSC ainda são escassas. Investigo como as empresas podem moldar as percepções futuras de seu envolvimento em RSI. Por meio de pesquisa empírica, observo relações entre empresas de mineração e comunidades locais em áreas impactadas pela RSI. No primeiro artigo, pergunto “Por que algumas das vítimas e stakeholders começaram a minimizar suas críticas às empresas, após um evento de irresponsabilidade corporativa?”. Por sua vez, no segundo artigo, questiono: “Como as empresas podem mobilizar estrategicamente a desinformação sobre um evento de irresponsabilidade corporativa?”. Finalmente, no terceiro artigo, estou discutindo “Como diferentes versões do passado parecem mais poderosas, legítimas e confiáveis do que outras”. Meus resultados demonstram que devido ao forte papel econômico que a indústria extrativa desempenha na região, (1) a mineradora desenvolveu uma relação quase parental com o município, gerando empregos, contribuindo para a economia, melhorando o acesso aos bens de consumo, cultura, entre outros. Levando o município a um dos maiores PIB per capita do estado de Minas Gerais, ficando entre os 100 municípios com maior PIB per capita do Brasil – no ano anterior ao rompimento da barragem. Em contrapartida, (2) a mineradora também manipulou uma série de informações sobre a segurança de suas operações, ignorando os riscos e a segurança da comunidade. Tal contexto gerou caos e incerteza, falta de informação e polarização na cidade mais afetada. Concluo meu argumento apontando que devido às estruturas de poder concentradas pela indústria extrativa, (3) a mineradora vem tentando articular uma nova versão para o seu futuro. Para a empresa e os stakeholders pró-empresa o colapso é uma espécie de bênção e tudo ficará melhor no futuro. No entanto, ainda há incertezas e dúvidas sobre como a empresa vai compensar todas as perdas e, para alguns deles, essa é uma promessa não cumprida. Ao mostrar esses resultados, estou gerando insights para a teoria da Irresponsabilidade Social Corporativa. Com uma análise historicamente orientada, estou contribuindo para uma compreensão mais profunda dos usos estratégicos do passado pelas organizações em suas narrativas.

**Palavras-chave:** Irresponsabilidade Social Corporativa; História; Memória; Samarco; Comunidades afetadas.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

CS – Corporate Sustainability

CSiR – Corporate Social Irresponsibility

UN – United Nations

BP – British Petroleum

BHP – BHP Billiton

PoEMAs - Núcleo Política, Economia, Mineração, Ambiente e Sociedade

MG – Minas Gerais

ES – Espírito Santo

MNCs - Multinationals

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I am offering a critical perspective of Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR) in which I am investigating how companies can shape future perceptions of their involvement in CSiR. Through empirical research, I observe relationships between mining companies and local communities in areas impacted by CSiR.

Particularly in developing countries such as Brazil, mining companies have a questionable reputation for responsibility. Recent cases of dam failures in Brazil motivated this PhD student to understand and theorize on aspects of CSiR that remain unknown about this phenomenon. My PhD dissertation is being developed through three-articles — each has a qualitative approach toward analyzing the Samarco dam disaster that occurred on November 5th, 2015. I take an empirical and inductive approach to construct a theoretical model to help studies of management and organization understand the phenomenon of CSiR.

In the **first** article, where the research question is "Why do some of the victims and stakeholders begin to minimize their criticism of companies after an event of corporate irresponsibility?" I analyze how communities with an economy strongly based on the extractive industry can develop a relation of affection with companies of this type. Through a theoretical reference on Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Social Irresponsibility and a Social License to Operate, I am contributing theoretically to CSiR literature, highlighting a social and emotional community engagement with the company through the concept of "affective license to operate".

In the event of catastrophic Corporate Irresponsibility, the affective bond starts to become weak resulting in a process of less social and emotional attachment. These ties are characterized by emotions such as affection and trust. However, CSiR has a negative impact on the trust relationship generating distrust, misinformation, and chaos in the social structure. Misinformation appears following the trust crisis. Thus, through the Samarco Dam Collapse case, we observed that the first reaction of the company was to try to prevent any sanctions by passing liability to another agent.

In the **second article**, whose research question is "how can companies strategically deploy misinformation about an event of CSiR?" I am building a theory to understand cases of organizational irresponsibility in which the company is trying to deflect attributions of culpability and blame. I am doing so by examining the relationship between Corporate Irresponsibility and strategic ignorance. While corporate social responsibility is widely diffused in the context of policymakers, managers, practitioners, and scholars, actions within corporations still do not reflect that. Cases of corporate irresponsibility may illustrate common

elements of organizational daily life that are treated as non-standard, when, in fact, they are a standard. In this context, organizations can use strategic ignorance to avoid being blamed for accidents and irresponsible actions. They can do it by enunciating, for instance, that it was an accident, and the company could not have anticipated the event. Similarly, the company claim that they had not known about the risk of failure or collapse, and the event starts to be understood as an accident, with neither bad acts nor bad decisions and, therefore, no guilt.

Facing distrust, misinformation, and chaos in the social structure, the company showed concern about its future and how this story would be told by future generations. Consequently, the company is trying to control the situation, mobilizing narratives for the future.

In the **third article**, whose research question is “how do different versions of the past appear more powerful, legitimate, and credible than others? I discuss that, among the different versions of the past, some appear more reliable than others because there is a promise of a better future for the people, the company, the city, and its environment. Due to the context of chaos, uncertainty, and a lack of information, some people wait, desperately, for a savior while others try to resist it by being the protagonists of their own story. The idea of a savior comes from an affective license that the company Samarco created in Mariana, MG, Brazil. Due to the big economic power that a mining company may develop in an extractive city, this relation of power granted it a quasi-parental license.

This research has **five central contributions**. First, it contributes to the understanding of the social, affective, and emotional factors that should be considered in a CSiR incident. Second, advancing the CSiR theory indicating strategies of misinformation and manipulation of knowledge about possible causes. Third, it extends the understanding of the past as relevant. Fourth, it presents advances in methods of online data gathering. I described the huge task of data collection and the management of online data such as participant observation in netnography groups. Five, it allows managers, administrators and public policy makers to rethink the systems of privilege that embody the current vision of CSR (see Conclusion).

This dissertation is structured in seven chapters. In **chapter 1**, which is this introduction, I state about the research motivation, research questions, overall objectives, and the importance of empirical context.

In **chapter 2**, I state about two streams of literature – research on Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Social Irresponsibility. I identify classic, exemplary, and contemporary work on CSR and CSiR. In the topics of mapping CSR and the evolution of CSR, for instance, I identify to the key authors and studies about the theme. Moreover, in the topic of

CSiR for whom, I establish the extent and limitations of the literature, recognizing gaps and controversies in the theory of CSR and CSiR. In doing so, I situate in which conversation in the literature of CSiR I am addressing my work. Finally, on the topic of mining companies in Brazil and their relations of power, I provide a critical and analytical understanding of the theory, then, connecting it to the context of research.

In **chapter 3**, I explain the research method I am using in this investigation. First, I write about my journey into the empirical field, describing how I conducted the data gathering. Second, I write about the adoption of a reflexive practice during the data gathering and analysis. Writing about it helped me to understand the context and be sensitive during the analysis process.

In **chapters 4, 5, and 6**, I present the three papers, respectively. In doing so, I situate my findings in the broader conversation about CSR and CSiR, recognizing the interdependency and interconnections between that literature and also presenting tensions, controversies, and new concepts. Finally, in **chapter 8**, I present the conclusion of my dissertation.

### **Research Motivation**

I am offering these analyses to attend the call from scholars in Critical Management Studies (CMS) and Management History (MH) for a more transdisciplinary approach, one that builds new theories and compelling models in the field (Langley, Tsoukas, Smallman, & van de Ven, 2013). I am compiling a robust contribution to the idea of Corporate Social Irresponsibility as a construct that:

1. CSiR is much more than doing wrong disregarding the CSR guidelines (B. Jones, 2013). Therefore, it is also more than just conducting business operations in an evil or good manner.
2. CSiR is composed of sequences of conditions and events, and, thus, the interactions of different factors (Küberling-Jost, 2019). These combinations lead to a socially irresponsible manner to conduct business operations (Lange & Washburn, 2012).
3. Irresponsibility puts companies in the spotlight of permanent blame for a scandal. That includes a variety of harm and losses for the company and society.
4. CSiR events have the capacity to arouse the observers of an organization, both for and against, as well as confusing stakeholder expectations regarding social responsibility (Lange & Washburn, 2012).

5. A socially irresponsible manner of operating ignores the broad role of organizations as transformational agents of society - that produce goods, services, and wealth that, in theory, should be fairly distributed.

A rebound effect of all this appeal for corporate responsibility is that the growing focus on social responsibility provides further space for corporations to influence politics around the world through lobbying. In some societies, this has weakened state supervisory and regulatory power because big companies have been acting directly in taking decisions about their responsibility regarding sustainability and safety issues. To explain this argument empirically, let us take the Brazilian "bancada da mineração e bancada ruralista" as examples. The agribusiness and mining lobby wields a lot of power in the Brazilian Congress, they have been pushing to explore off-limits, indigenous lands and hindering projects to inspect the mining sector (Rocha, 2020).

Unfortunately, companies are influencing the mechanisms (politics) that judge their irresponsible actions. We have seen big enterprises changing the relationship of humans with the natural environment, consequently affecting policy formulation around the limits of fossil fuel exploitation and uses of land, emissions mitigation, climate change, and nuclear/chemical or mining accidents. Moreover, big enterprises are affecting rules to prevent any socio and environmental disasters they cause, as well as the way in which organizations are punished for their wrongdoing.

The following topic describes the overall research question and the objectives of this dissertation.

### **Research Questions and Overall Objectives**

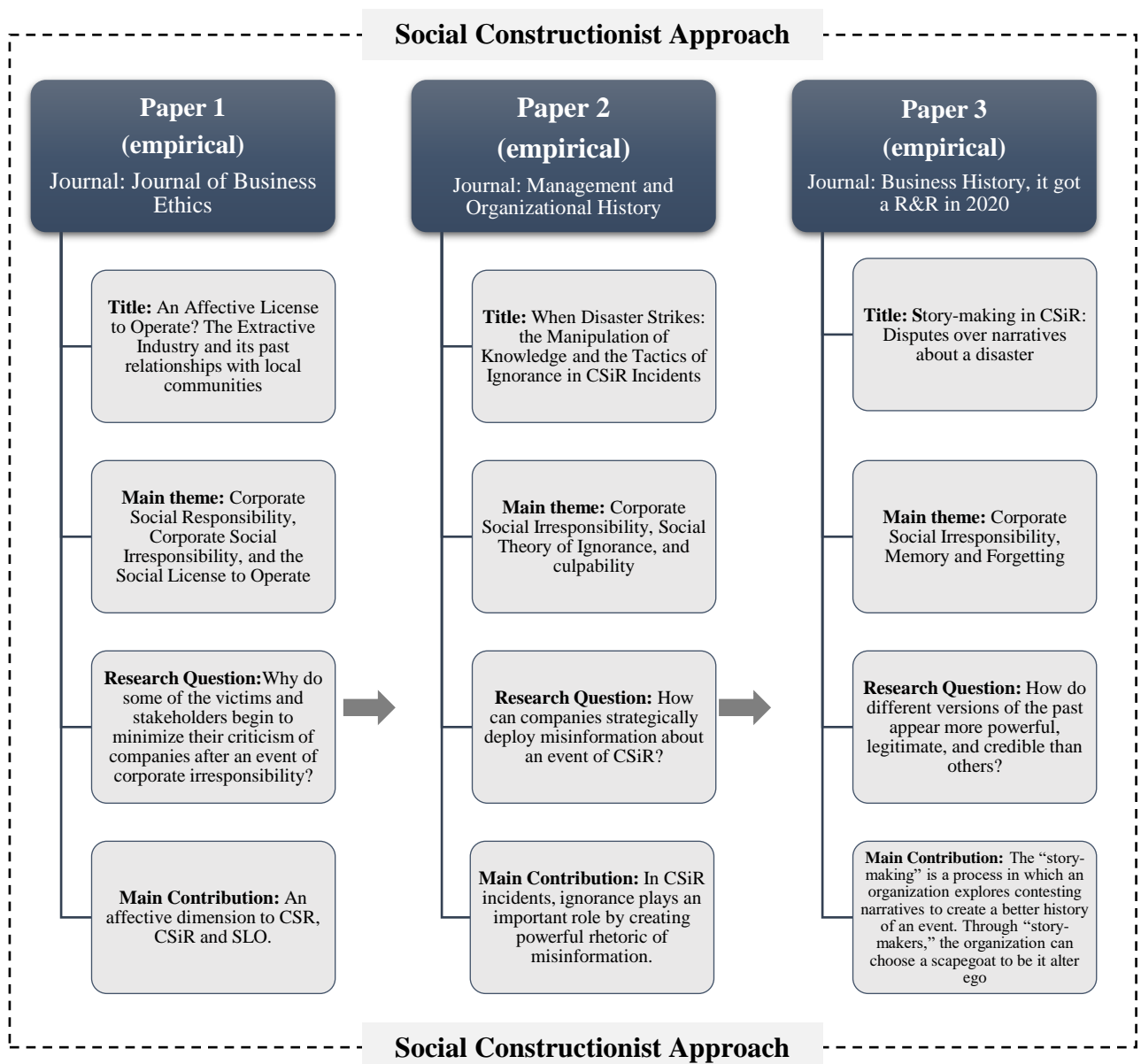
A collection of three papers comprises this PhD dissertation. In those papers, I combine concepts such as history, memory and forgetting, to outline an integrative approach to understanding CSiR. We already know that, from studies in the CSiR field, a sequence of conditions interacting with triggering factors will lead to businesses conducting their operations in a socially irresponsible manner. Therefore, a successive pattern of human rights violations in company operations and then, contradictory acts to the social order will culminate in social irresponsibility. However, we still know little about how companies that have been involved in CSiR events are mobilizing their past, present, and future in a strategic way to be persuasive in the narrative that they would like to tell. Next, I summarize the guiding question of this research.

This dissertation has the following question: **“How can companies shape future perceptions of their involvement in CSiR?”**

Specifically, my **objectives** are:

- To build a theoretically informed argument about the uses of past relationships to shape future perceptions of a CSiR incident.
- To provide deep empirical research on a CSiR incident.
- To provide an integrative view of CSiR, exploring its links with temporal sources such as history, memory and forgetting.

Figure 1 summarizes the main arguments of each article and highlights the possible journals and audience.



**Figure 1.** The articulation of research questions.

The results of my dissertation show how the Samarco company has managed public perception of its irresponsible performance since the beginning of the disaster and the resulting crises. In doing so, the company is shaping present narratives into ambitious projects for the future – favorable to the image of the organization. They are using pieces of history to influence memories of an event, engendering a more favorable view of them.

We already know that in developing countries, mining companies have a questionable reputation regarding social responsibility (Kapelus, 2002). Nevertheless, we still know little about how they are managing their questionable reputation. Due to this lack of research, this dissertation is relevant as it seeks to highlight the fact that organizations start to manage past memories of an episode of CSiR in the present, thereby influencing the future.

A recent study showed that social identification with the Samarco mining company, arising from its economic benefits, have reduced the punitive intention and the attribution of guilt for the Samarco Dam Collapse. In contrast, the perception of economic benefits provided by the company in the cities of Anchieta-ES, Guarapari-ES e Mariana-MG, did not negatively affect the attribution of blame over the Cevent (Pires, Mourão, Oliveira, & Puppim de Oliveira, 2020).

The company is working hard on the management of its public perception, blame and responsiveness in the context of the event. It is preparing, in the present, a narrative for the future, aiming to better qualify its degree of guilt and responsiveness. However, few studies have aimed to understand just how the company has mobilized and managed the recent past, in the present, and on a daily basis.

There is an emergent movement from academics in organization and, for more than two decades, they have pointed to “the need for more and better research that recognizes the importance of the past in shaping the present and influencing the future (Kieser, 1994, Zald, 1993)” (Mairi Maclean, Harvey, Suddaby, & Clegg, 2020, p. 1). To aim for new directions, integration of history and organization studies has been gaining space in the European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS) and the Management History (MH) division of the Academy of Management.

### **The Importance of Empirical Context**

Social and environmental conflicts have frequently been associated with the economic activities of big enterprises, putting the ability of the company to respond to such conflicts on the political agenda. Many disasters, scandals and corporate crimes can empirically

aid Organization Studies to develop a more structured analytical approach to building robust CSiR literature, especially when they consider the negative impacts of the operations of the company on society, neighborhood communities, and stakeholders.

The BP Deepwater Horizon oil catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico of 2010 brought questions relating to CSR, CSiR and ethics in organizations to the forefront, in particular, large corporations (Balmer, Powell, & Greyser, 2011). Moreover, the oil disaster has highlighted the questionable corporate practices of BP. Controversially, the corporate brand was positioning and emphasizing their ethical and CSR credentials but this attitude of companies positioning themselves as a CSR company without actually being one has been found to have been insufficient in the case of the (Balmer, 2010) Matejek & Gössling (2014), for example, demonstrate the power of the communications of British Petroleum (BP) to build, lose and repair environmental legitimacy in the case of the oil spill.

In a similar way, Banerjee (2008, p. 62) illustrates that “large transnational corporations responsible for major environmental disasters and negative social impacts in the Third World (Union Carbide, Nike, Exxon, Shell to name but a few)” had the power to maintain their social licenses to operate and become stronger and more powerful by restructuring their relationships with the public.

From another point of view, based on “forgetting work”, Mena, Rintamäki, Fleming, & Spice (2016) recall some cases of corporate irresponsibility to explain this process. According to the authors forgetting work “involves manipulating short-term conditions of the event” and is a process. This is done by silencing local members and undermining traces of collective memories that would sustain a version of the past. Consequently, “this process can result in a reconfigured collective memory and collective forgetting of corporate irresponsibility events”. Some examples are the HealthSouth and their accounting scandal as an opening example. (S Mena et al., 2016, p. 720).

On the other hand, from a point of view based on organizational learning through disasters. In the context of the U.S. Coal Mining Disaster, Madsen (2009, p. 872) observed that organizations can “reduce their likelihood of future disaster through direct experience with disasters, direct experience with minor accidents, and vicarious experience with disasters”.

Bringing these reflections to the Brazilian context and the companies settled here; the Samarco dam collapse case becomes interesting as it opened a space for questions, reflections, and learning about the responsibilities of the company. The Fundão dam collapse (Sarmarco) is known as the biggest Brazilian socio-environmental disaster, and it has been studied through various perspectives. Studies that come from the management field,

highlighting the sensemaking process in the work of firefighters and rescue volunteers (Ribeiro, Boava, Macedo, & Pereira, 2019), or corporate crime and critical thinking in management (C. M. Saraiva & Ferreira, 2018, 2019). Studies on natural resources and the impact of mining companies on the environment summarizing similarities between tailings dam spills in Canada and Brazil (Marshall, 2018). Studies on extractive industries and human rights violations (Gonçalves, Milanez, & Jardim Wanderley, 2018; Milanez, Santos, & Pinto, 2016), such as those from the PoEMAs group - group in politics, economy, mining, environment and society - among others.

On November 5, 2015, the Fundão Dam operated by Samarco collapsed. Samarco S.A is a privately owned company from the Brazilian mining sector. BHP Billiton and Vale S.A. control the company. The tailings dam failure caused damage to communities downstream from the dam and a huge environmental catastrophe ensued. Furthermore, approximately 34 million cubic meters of mining tailings went into the River Doce (Brasil, 2016).

This research is important to society, theory, and practice. For the first, because it features macro-social considerations in the relationship between the local community and the company. For the second, because it contributes to management theory in two ways. First, exploring the ambiguities in the relationship between the community and the mining company, emphasizing an affective dimension of the relationship between them. Secondly, by expanding the notion of CSiR through the mobilization of the recent versions of the past, the use of willful ignorance, and the company responses before and after the catastrophe. For the third, practitioners and researchers, considering that affective relationship has been used to manipulate versions of the past and minimize criticism of companies.

Having pointed out the research motivation, questions, and objectives of this dissertation as well as the importance of the empirical context, the following chapter states about the theoretical foundations of this dissertation.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

In this section, I conducted a comprehensive review of the literature beginning with CSR and proceeding to the notion of CSiR. Moreover, I found a link between mining company relations of power in extractive communities and the case of the Samarco dam collapse. I begin with the premise that CSR is socially constructed, political and historically specific (situated).

### **Mapping how CSR Became a Concern of the 21st Century**

Corporate Social Responsibility is a topic that has garnered increased attention from the academic, practitioner, and political spectrums. Both academics and practitioners have been seeking models, concepts, and understanding of CSR. Moreover, on the political spectrum, CSR has become a concern of many societies around the world. Consequently, there has been a shift toward a more sustainable and socially responsible model of development, and companies need to adapt.

Although corporations are positioning themselves as “responsible organizations” through ethical and CSR credentials, these initiatives are considered highly insufficient. Cases of tragedy, catastrophe, scandal, and crime in the corporate context have emphasized how business operations can violate public health and security, and, more broadly, human rights and the socio-environment. Therefore, there is general skepticism around CSR. Critics from the media, industry, and academia are highlighting the fact that CSR still lacks a generally accepted definition. This lack of confidence in CSR is due because, in many cases, companies that have had CSR credentials for a long time are still involved in successive irresponsibility events, with catastrophic proportions.

“There is a clear and systematic pattern in terms of the actions of these huge corporations around the globe, and especially in the South that violate and commit human and socio-environmental rights everywhere they act. Yet currently they are ensured impunity: Samarco, the holder of many corporate social responsibility awards, is trying to resume its activities soon and its new environmental license requests are already underway” (Viana Arthur, 2018).

In this part of my thesis, I will discuss how CSR became a concern in our society, as well as in management research. After that, I will discuss why there is a certain skepticism and mistrust with the current CSR models, thereby putting a discussion on CSiR on the agenda. In order to do so, I searched for Corporate Social Responsibility studies in Management and Organization Studies that helped me to build this comprehensive review. To illustrate my argument, I used literature reviews which had already been present in the academic field such as “*A Literature Review of the History and Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility*” from

2019 and “*Corporate Social Responsibility Theories: Mapping the Territory*” from 2004. I also used events, books, research articles, and policies among other things considered important for the emergence of socially responsible concerns in business. I also searched for CSR Syllabus Courses on Google, analyzing the recurrent literature in management courses and common foundations for a CSR course.

A significant point that I found in the syllabus courses that helped me to understand the role of CSR in contemporary society were the learning objectives. They were calling students attention to drives that are leading society toward a sustainable and responsible mindset around the operations of companies. The legal, ethical, and economic responsibilities of business leaders, particularly when considering emerging regulations around social and environmental issues. The key areas were related to the examination of the debate around the potential public responsibilities of corporations within the global community. Moreover, those syllabuses intended to explore how corporations were attempting to engage in issues beyond the conventional role of entities. Consequently, these socially responsible initiatives are also being presented in marketing strategies in key industries, making the discussion fruitful.

### **The Evolution of CSR**

Since the early 21st century, business practitioners, academic researchers, and society have drawn attention to the issues of Corporate Social Responsibility. However, the notion of corporate responsibility to society, beyond responsibility for shareholder value, gained notoriety years earlier, in the 1950s and 1960s (Wang, Tong, Takeuchi, & George, 2016). Considered to be the beginning of modern literature on CSR, the book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* by Bowen (1953) raised important issues about how the actions of firms affect the lives of citizens (Archie B Carroll, 1999).

In 1953, Bowen emphasized that the term “[the] social responsibility of the businessman” would become frequently used. Therefore, the author provided four main definitions and assumptions to the reader to explain what he termed “social responsibility”.

First, it refers to the obligations of the businessperson to pursue policies, to make decisions, or to follow rules of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society. However, this does not imply that businesspersons, as members of society, do not have the right to criticize its values and to work toward the improvement of society. Indeed, considering the great power and influence of businesspersons, they may, and should have an obligation to the development of society. Some synonyms for social responsibility are "public responsibility," "social obligations," and "business morality."

Second, what Bowen called the "doctrine of social responsibility" expressed a voluntary assumption of social responsibility by businesspersons that might be a practicable way toward improvement of the economic system.

Third, Bowen was primarily concerned about the social responsibilities of large corporations. The author used the term business to qualify and refer to large corporations that collectively form big business. Moreover, he used the term businesspersons to refer managers and directors of these large corporations.

Fourth, the discussion refers exclusively to the capitalistic economic system, focusing especially on the United States context, in which there are predominantly large areas of private initiative and enterprise. Therefore, it pertains to the role of businesspersons in making the capitalist system operate more successfully. Thus, the book pays no attention to possible alternative systems.

The Bowen definition of "social responsibility" in the context of business considers reflectiveness - from a Christian perspective - about moral values. His assumptions are based on the Protestant doctrine on economic affairs, private property, and endorsement of the capitalist system. In the protestant view, "property is not an absolute or inherent right, and it can be justified only to the extent that the welfare of the community is served by permitting material things to be owned and administered by private individuals" (Bowen, 2013, p. 33). Moreover, the property of land and natural resources are "gifts from God, intended for the use of all mankind including unborn generations" (Bowen, 2013, p. 34), therefore, it involves special responsibility for owners or special regulation. On the other hand, the property also confers freedom and independence upon the owners and should be encouraged.

To summarize, the Bowen definition considers reflection upon moral values (in a Christian way), propriety, power and freedom, improvement of the economic system and social welfare, responsibility in the context of large corporations, and improvement of the capitalist economic system.

In 1960, Davis (1960) raised a couple of questions that helped the management field in the understanding of the social responsibilities of business. First, can the business afford to ignore social responsibilities? Second, why do businesspeople have social responsibilities? Third, how does a businessperson know where his social responsibilities lie? Fourth, if a businessperson fails to accept social responsibilities incumbent upon them, what are the expected consequences? Social responsibility is a nebulous idea and, hence, difficult to define in a straightforward manner.

There are at least two ways of understanding social responsibility within a management context. The first one considers the CEO's decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the economic and technical interest of the firm. The second one considers that the CEO recognizes that since they are managing an economic unit in society, they should have a broad obligation to the community regarding economic development, which consequently, affects public welfare, including employment, inflation, and encourages competition. Nonetheless, according to Davis' view, a quite different type of social responsibility would be those in which there was a businessperson's obligation to nurture and develop human values such as morale, cooperation, motivation, and self-realization at work.

Based on Davis' argumentation, when a businessperson is making decisions that involve social responsibilities, they should keep in mind the three basic ground rules. These value systems were referred to by Davis as the technical (based upon facts and scientific logic), economic (based upon market values and consumers), and the human (based upon social-psychological needs).

At that time, the increasing interest in the social responsibility of businesses raised doubts about the real limit for such responsibility. Moreover, when the Business Roundtable announced a value shift from the shareholder to the stakeholder, for some there was a mix of applause and skepticism.

In 1970, Friedman (1970, p. 32) stated in *The New York Times Magazine* that "a corporation is an artificial person and, in this sense, may have artificial responsibilities, but "business" as a whole cannot be said to have responsibilities". Considering a free market, a private property system, the corporate executive is an employee of the owners of the business; hence, the corporate executive has direct responsibility to his employers. According to Friedman's view, the social responsibility of business was to increase its profits. Thus, such a responsibility would be to conduct the business in accordance with the owners' desires, which generally would be to make as much money as possible "while conforming to the basic rules of society, both those embodied in law and those embodied in ethical custom." Imbued with a certain skepticism Friedman believed that those discussions were a true doctrine of the social responsibility of business and the first step toward clarity in examining the doctrine was to ask precisely what it implied and to whom.

According to Friedman (1970) only people have social responsibilities, and this should not be applied to corporations (an artificial person), but to its directors and CEOs. In this context, there are two views of the responsibilities of corporations in a social context. The first one is a classical view, in which a company is committed solely to increasing the wealth of its

shareholders. The second one is the socioeconomic view, in which a company must also consider others and society in its allocation of resources. To explain the main perspectives of social responsibilities in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, I present Table 1, summarizing those differences.

<b>Differences between the views of Bowen (1950), Davis (1960) and Friedman (1970) on Corporate Social Responsibilities</b>		
	<i>Classical view =&gt; Friedman</i>	<i>Socioeconomic View =&gt; Bowen and Davis</i>
The commitment of companies	The commitment of a company is solely to increase the wealth of its shareholders	A company must also consider others and society in its allocation of resources. Therefore, large corporations must have a doctrine of responsibilities
Reason of companies' existence	A corporation is an artificial person and therefore cannot be socially responsible	There is a voluntary assumption of social responsibility by businesspersons that might be a practicable way toward economic system improvement.
What "social responsibility" is caring about?	Social responsibility concerns the proprietors and corporate executives	"Social responsibility" in the context of business considers reflectiveness, from a Christian perspective, upon moral values.
How to achieve social responsibility?	If social responsibility is exercised it is acting against the shareholders, owners of the business	In the decision-making process of a company, three value system should be applied: 1) the technical (based upon facts and scientific logic); 2) the economic (based upon market values and consumers); and 3) the human (based upon social-psychological needs).

**Table 1.** Main views of CSR in 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

**Source:** Created by the author

The views of Bowen (1950), Davis (1960) and Friedman (1970) are the most common texts in the syllabus of CSR subjects, whether in MBA or undergraduate courses. These texts have been considered seminal reading for their important reflections on the beginning of corporate social responsibility.

Events from the 1960s dramatized the extent to which supposedly private enterprises have affected the public interest in specific ways, especially in the United States (Heald, 1970). These events include discussions of problems such as poverty and technological unemployment, air and water pollution, mass transportation and urban blight, racial equality and protests against militarism and aggression. Such serious discussions “can overlook their direct relationship to important business activities and interests” (Heald, 1970, p. vii), even when they are directly related. In fact, “CSR literature expanded significantly during the 1960s, and it tended to focus on the question of what social responsibility actually meant and its importance to business and society” (Archie B. Carroll & Shabana, 2010, p. 87).

So far, we can observe a clear division in what we are starting to refer to as CSR literature. Most of the argumentations are based upon “Normative Ethics” attempting to give systematic answers to how we should decide what to do in corporations that do not cause perverse effects in the social context. Therefore, the corporate responsiveness to social issues was related to “the capacity of a corporation to respond to social pressure”, “the literal act of responding, or of achieving a generally responsive posture, to society” (Frederick, 1978, p. 154).

In 1979, Carroll offered a conceptual model to describe what he called The Philosophy of Social Responsiveness. At that time, there were questions related to a) what should be included in corporate social responsibility; b) which social issues an organization must address; and finally, c) what the mode of social responsibility is. The results showed the achievement of Corporate Social performance required that “(1) a firm’s social responsibilities be assessed, (2) the social issues it must address be identified, and (3) a response philosophy be chosen” (A. B. Carroll, 1979, p. 504). The Carroll framework was useful to academics and managers, helping to clarify and integrate the CSR orientations into the literature. Moreover, the framework presented notions of ethical and discretionary responsibilities. It was considered a step toward the refinement of CSR performance.

Similarly, in 1980, Jones raised the following definition “corporate social responsibility is the notion that corporations have an obligation to constituent groups in society other than stockholders and beyond that prescribed by law or union contract” (T. M. Jones, 1980, p. 60). The obligation to this kind of responsibility must be voluntarily adopted; however, behavior

influenced by coercive forces of law or union contracts is not voluntary. In addition, the obligation is broadly extended beyond the traditional duty to shareholders to other societal groups (customers, employees, suppliers, neighboring communities). Therefore, the conceptual enigma was whether the corporation has an obligation to groups other than shareholders.

Since the mid-1990s, societies around the world have paid increasing attention to CSR and the impact of corporations on global welfare (Buhmann, Rosenberry, & Mette, 2011). From the late 1990s, scholars have shared Carroll's definition (Gond, El Akremi, Swaen, & Babu, 2017) of CSR as "the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (Carroll, 1979, p. 500). According to Buhmann, Rosenberry and Mette (2011) the challenge is how best to ensure the business potential for assuming social responsibility, improving environmental protection, supporting human rights and so forth. Those are a couple of issues that have been heavily debated and consequently the business management literature on CSR has exploded.

CSR has been explored as an important attribute of contemporary business that recognizes and attempts to mitigate the social impacts of business operations (Craze, 2018). Thus, CSR can be considered a suggestion for the way business should be conducted, including both internal and external groups of interest, the environmental concerns, and the welfare of communities. In 1991, Archie B. Carroll proposed the Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility.

According to Carroll (1991, p. 39) "social responsibility can only become reality if more managers become moral instead of amoral or immoral". Thus, the study isolated ethical and moral CSR components and related three major ethical approaches to management – immoral, amoral, and moral. The result was a pyramid composed of four types of corporate responsibility. Economic responsibility means that the organization needs to "Be profitable". It constitutes the pyramid foundation upon which all others rest. Legal responsibility means, "obey the law" and consists of the rules of the game, of what is right or wrong. Ethical responsibility means, "be ethical" and consists of the commitment to do right, to be just, and fair. Philanthropic responsibility means, "be a good corporate citizen" contributing to improvement in the quality of community life (Archie B. Carroll, 1991).

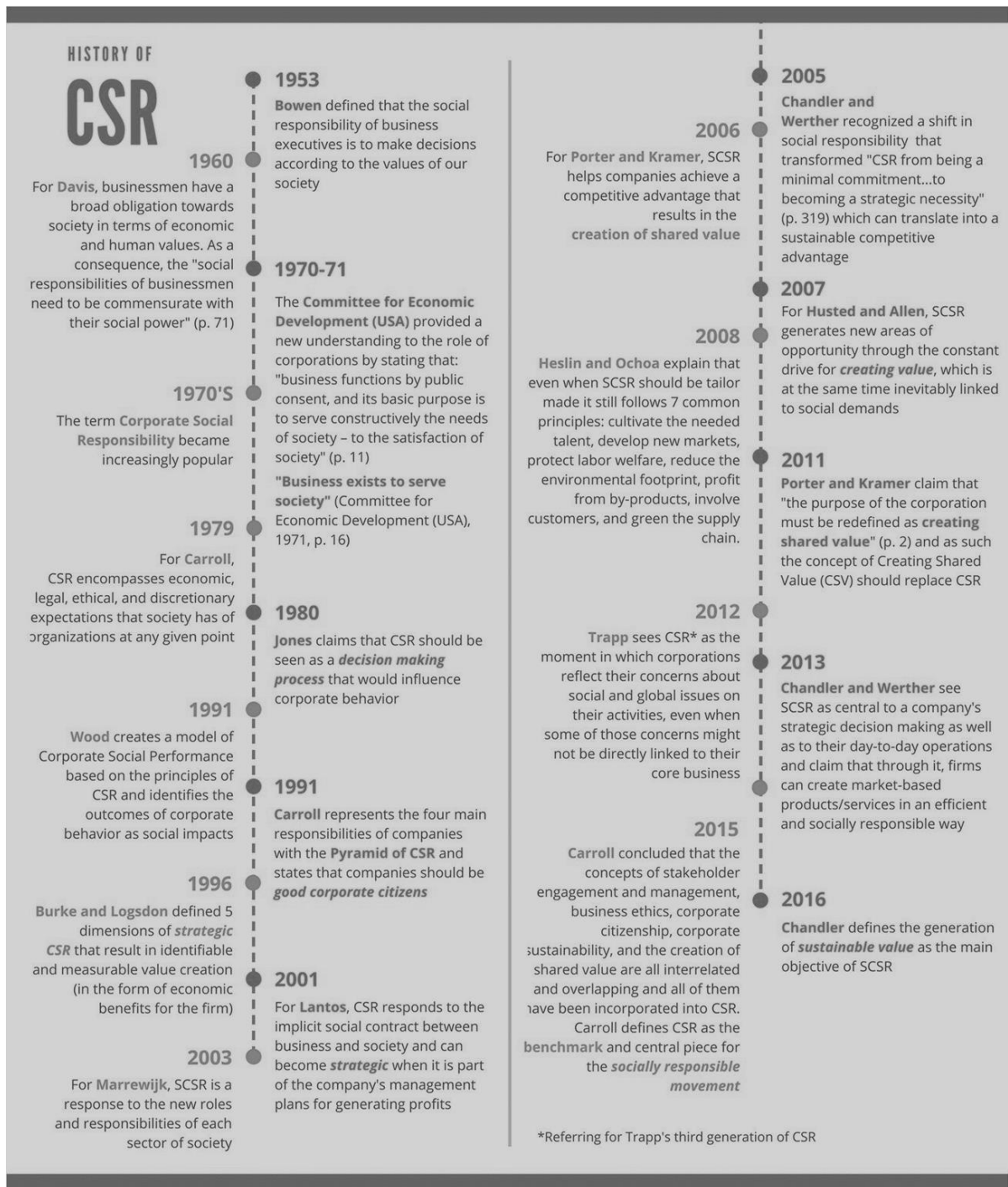
Through Carroll's four-part model, the three-domain model of CSR was developed. The last one is a Venn diagram initially composed, of economic, legal, and ethical domains. The model contemplates that the majority of corporate activities are economic in nature. The diagram shows overlapping domains, resulting in the creation of seven CSR categories - purely economic; purely legal; purely ethical; economic/ethical; economic/legal; legal/ethical;

economic/legal/ethical (M. S. Schwartz & Carroll, 2003).

Frederick (1998), in ‘Moving to CSR<sub>4</sub>’ stated that the principal focus of Social Issues in Management (SIM) has been the corporation-and-society interface. That has led to the reinforcement of corporations more attuned to their socio-political environment Frederick pointed out that the corporation has become “the sun around which society revolves”. Like a central star of the societal system and the vital core whose productive rays may enrich, impoverish, or at times devastate the planet. The author stated about four types of CSR, entitled as CSR<sub>123</sub> trap. In it, the CSR<sub>1</sub> is Corporate Social Responsibility, the CSR<sub>2</sub> is Corporate Social Responsiveness, and finally, the CSR<sub>3</sub> is Corporate Social Rectitude. Lacking responsibility breaches social expectations and incurs penalties. Lacking responsiveness incurs public wrath and regulatory entanglements. Lacking rectitude induces accusations of gross moral crimes. Therefore, the work of management scholars should be to head off the social transgressions of business, saying to corporate practitioners “be socially responsible! Respond to social needs! Act ethically and with moral integrity! (Frederick, 1998, p. 42). In CSR<sub>4</sub>, the author suggested a more integrative view including subjects such as nature and cosmos, religion and spirituality, science (philosophy, natural science, social science and organizational science).

In 1999, Carroll presented a definitional review that traced the evolution of the CSR construct. It begins in the 1950s, with definitions of the theme expanded during the 1960s, it then proliferated during the 1970s and was more empirically researched in the 1980s. At that time, Carroll concluded that the CSR concept would remain an essential part of business language and practice. CSR became vital, underpinning many of the other theories and consistent with what the public expects of the business community today. Thus, as theory is developed and research is conducted, scholars may revise and adapt existing definitions of CSR or new definitions may come into the literature (Archie B Carroll, 1999).

From 1950 to the 2000s, CSR literature has grown, and we can find a significant amount of literature reviews on the theme, including areas from environmental studies, ethics, and sustainability to business and management studies. In this context, the study “*A Literature review of the History and Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility*” was an important source in this debate, since it presents the historical roots of social responsibility (Latapí Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir, & Davídsdóttir, 2019). A fundamental piece of this work is the presentation of a timeline of the evolution of the academic understanding of CSR, which is illustrated in **Error! Reference source not found.2**.



**Figure 2** Evolution of the academic understanding of CSR.  
**Source:** Latapí Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir, & Davídsdóttir (2019).

Garriga and Melé's (2004) literature review classified the main CSR theories and placed approaches into four groups, (1) instrumental theories, (2) political theories, (3) integrative theories, and (4) ethical theories. In the first group, a corporation is shown as an instrument for wealth creation, and its social activities are only to achieve economic results. The first group is understood as instrumental theories because these studies understand CSR as a mere means to achieve profits. In the second group, political theories, the social power of the

corporation is emphasized – these studies are concerned with the power of corporations in society, and the responsible use of this power in the political arena. Third, the integrative theories include studies that consider businesses ought to integrate social demands, thus the corporation is focused on the meeting social demands. In the fourth group, ethical theories are based on the ethical responsibilities of corporations to society. This group understands that the relationship between business and society is embedded in ethical values.

Corporate Social Responsibility “may provide a general framework to structure the responsible use of corporate power and social involvement (Turker, 2009, p. 411)” . In an attempt to describe what the business community and organizations would get out of CSR, Carroll and Shabana (2010) pointed out what they called the business case for CSR. It refers to the underlying arguments or rationales supporting why the business community should accept and advance the CSR ‘cause’. The business case for CSR can be categorized into four arguments. First, reducing cost and risk. Second, strengthening legitimacy and reputation. Third, building a competitive advantage. Fourth, creating win-win situations through synergistic value creation.

Although CSR literature has been linked to shareholder value maximization (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017), there is an intention to present less objective approaches that go beyond organizational performance and macro-social considerations. Since the year 2000, for example, CSR literature has added sustainability and corporate citizenship (Banerjee, 2008), the political turn (Scherer, Rasche, Palazzo, & Spicer, 2016), the historical dimension (Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, & Phillips, 2016a), and the analytic, empathic and socioemotional reasoning domains present in CSR initiatives (Craze, 2018).

For Banerjee (2008), CSR is permeated by power structures within the economy, society and polity. Debates about the responsibilities of business, and its behavior and role in society are increasing due to the growing number of social and environmental scandals (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). Actions of corporate irresponsibility are defined by organizational events that have negative implications and harm stakeholders (Mena, Rintamäki, Fleming, & Spicer, 2016).

Currently, CSR studies introduce a variety of literature reviews describing different theoretical orientations adopted by researchers studying CSR. However, according to Aguinis and Glavas’ (2012) literature review, the majority of the studies have focused on the institutional or organizational level comparing it to the individual level. The authors define as institutional level because most of the studies on CSR tend to highlight the role of normative, cultural-cognitive, and regulative elements. In doing so, they have addressed discussions on

institutional pressures, stakeholder expectations regarding the CSR, regulations, and international standards of a company. On the other hand, the authors define it as organizational level of analysis because these kinds of studies have enforced discussions about the board of directors and how they perceive CSR as being good for the company. They include issues such as legitimacy (Bansal & Clelland, 2004), corporate governance practices, company mission and values, top management equity, and financial outcomes. In summary, according to organizational level studies firms engage in CSR primarily due to instrumental reasons such as expected financial outcomes, and due to normative reasons, that lie in the values of the company. Finally, on the individual level of analysis studies shed light on important issues regarding supervisors' commitment to CSR. This includes the moral development of leaders, the congruence of individual values with organizational values, individual conscience over sustainability issues, CSR training, and the attendance of CSR conferences among other things. Accordingly, there is a need to adopt different levels of analysis, such as a multilevel and multidisciplinary review (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

From the viewpoint of the CSR literature and theory building, some authors have considerations for a less objective theory. Therefore, a lack of research for a less objective theory of CSR includes:

- A) The current view of CSR does not include some social changes, especially with regards to rethinking and overcoming systems of privilege in society (Votaw, 1973);
- B) Some conceptions of CSR, “put emphasis on the normative foundations of responsible business behavior and develop a critical view of positivist theory building” (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, p. 1097);
- C) “The vast majority of the literature on CSR tends to be descriptive and instrumental with a focus on establishing an empirical relationship between CSR and financial performance” (Banerjee, 2018);
- D) “CSR initiatives are almost universally tethered to the idea that corporations exist to serve their own performance objectives, and that these will ultimately take precedence over wider macro-social considerations” (Craze, 2018, p. 1).
- E) Depending on space, place and scale (Bansal, Kim, & Wood, 2018) CSR engagement can vary. “Firms located in areas characterized by high levels of local CSR density score higher in CSR engagement. In addition, firms located close to major cities and financial centers exhibit higher CSR engagement compared to firms located in more remote areas” (Husted, Jamali, & Saffar, 2016, p. 2050). These differences lead us to think of the possible differences

regarding conceptions and engagement with CSR according to the degree of economic and sustainable development of the countries and cities.

Despite the growing body of literature on CSR, Tucker (2009) suggested that CSR is still difficult to conceptualize and to measure in a valid and reliable way. Aguinis (2011, p. 855) defined CSR as “context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders’ expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance”. From another point of view, Votaw (1973) reminded that social responsibility may also require us to think about systems of privilege. It is

“The participation by businessmen in the unpleasant task of changing the system of privilege, of which they, for generations, have been the primary beneficiaries. Every society since the beginning of history can be characterized by its systems of privilege. Certain people and classes of people in every society enjoy advantages over their fellows in terms of power, wealth, prestige, influence, access to governmental procedures, and security against radical changes in public policy. Society tends to reward those persons and groups it considers most valuable, but changes are slow because one of the rewards of privilege is the ability to resist change and to preserve the status quo. The movement of the economy from center stage has stimulated pressures from several directions for changes in our system of privilege.

Therefore, socially responsible behavior should include recognition, acceptance, and encouragement of social change. Nevertheless, behind this whole context of concept evolution and redefinitions, a couple of questions remain. Is the current CSR model (implemented by organizations) inclusive? Which groups are being privileged while others remain marginalized and a minority in discussions? CSR for whom? These are issues that will be addressed in the next topic, and then we can get into the issue of social irresponsibility in the corporate environment.

### **CSR for whom? Considering Systems of Privilege**

How could we ensure that society is being inclusive in the process of regulating and enforcing CSR? This question comes from Sidoti’s (2011) arguments regarding business and human rights. Indeed, in a world of interdependence and interconnections, business plays a big role, and it has directly influenced almost all the factors that affect people. Some examples are those that affect the lives and well-being of ordinary people such as weather, water, health, familial dispersion, police, governments, communication systems, and infrastructure, among others. Inclusiveness is important in ensuring the monitoring and enforcement of CSR commitments. In doing so, the participation of ordinary people in the development of standards enables understanding and promotes commitment to the implementation.

According to Sidoti (2011, p. 163) “the people whose human rights are most affected by business activities are the ones with the best knowledge and the most to gain through their participation. They are best placed to monitor and report on what business is doing”. For example,

“The local people in the Northern Samar province in the Philippines knew what the impact of the Australian aid project was and were able to monitor and report on the human rights violations relating to it. The workers in the tea plantations of Sri Lanka knew best what the effects on them of local and transnational business were. Local villagers in Burma were best able to report on and compare the different effects of different oil companies. Detained asylum seekers in Australia knew exactly how the private security company running the detention centres was violating their human rights (Sidoti, 2011, p. 163)”

The system of business privilege has operated largely with little opposition when compared to their power. Particularly, concerning access to government and the ability to protect itself from radical policy change, influencing the processes by which the important decisions of our society are made. For instance, the impact of business politics activities on lobbying activities has received little attention and is closely related to systems of privilege and access to government (Votaw, 1973). In this context,

Oil companies cannot opt for social responsibility and then lobby against all effective legislation for pollution control or campaign actively to defeat legislation that might divert small amounts of gas tax money toward research in rapid transit. Steel companies cannot embrace socially responsible behavior and then oppose the control of pollution or refuse to cooperate with public officials attempting to reduce smog levels temporarily elevated to dangerous heights. This kind of lobbying and certain types of advertising will surely have to change if social retribution is to be avoided (Votaw, 1973, p. 13).

Armstrong and Green (2013) recognized the role of government regulation in the great challenge of providing superior social outcomes. If regulators want to improve the welfare outcomes that arise from free-market interactions, they must meet basic conditions to ensure that regulation will make the situation better than an unregulated market would. The authors summarize ten conditions in which social welfare would likely be reduced by a proposed CSR or CSiR regulation if the regulator failed to meet any of them:

1. Stakeholder's endowments, relationships, and preferences must be made known.
2. How the situation could be changed to the benefit of those affected must be described in detail.
3. Rules that will produce the intended changes must be designed.
4. Rules that will not produce unintended changes, such as suppression of innovation must be designed.

5. Pressures to modify the rules in ways that would reduce the total benefit should be resisted.
6. Ensure those affected by the rules know and understand them.
7. Establish rewards and punishments to ensure the rules are followed.
8. Establish fair procedures for resolving disputes arising from enforcement of the rules.
9. The rules should be changed (see 1–8) when the situation changes, such as with inventions or scarcities.
10. Keep the administrative costs of the rules below the value of the benefits.

However, meeting those conditions is not an easy task because “in the case of the first condition, for example, stakeholders themselves typically do not know their preferences until faced with specific choices” (Armstrong & Green, 2013, p. 1923). In this sense, changing the roles of a firm’s managers could be a way to strive to maximize long-term profitability rationality and fair treatment of their stakeholders instead of short-term profitability and unfair treatment of stakeholders.

The literature on CSR has provided a variety of answers to the question of “*why would executives invest in activities related to CSR*”. There are explanations ranging from external factors such as pressure from activists to the idiosyncratic characteristics of executives, such as their beliefs, emotions and values (Hafenbradl & Waeger, 2017). Unfortunately, business practices are not as socially responsible or sustainable as they appear in company CSR/CS reports. Barkemeyer (2009) showed, through his analysis with corporate members of the UN Global Compact, that there are doubts whether the CSR and CS initiatives are suitable in terms of anti-corruption measures, labor rights and environmental impact. Especially, in countries that are playing from a non-mainstream position in international trade such as India, China, South Africa, and Brazil. Moreover, previous studies have engaged in finding patterns in good corporate behavior to achieve more reliability on CSR initiatives. Nonetheless, even though society is following an almost voluntary effort to provide greater transparency in the disclosure of the operations of companies, the CSR that we find in the reports is still more efficient and effective than the CSR that we find in the behavior of companies or in the moments of decision-making. This leads us to believe that there is a discrepancy between: a) what the CSR report of a company says (Landrum & Ohsowski, 2018; Nwagbara & Belal, 2019); b) how CSR or Corporate Sustainability (SC) is actually conducted by companies (Eccles, Ioannou, & Serafeim, 2014); c) and, consequently, how CSR or CS literature is understood.

Mountori and Purser (1996 apud Lechte, 1994, p. 248) stated that the current system of theory is more focused on the notion that “human beings are part of a homogeneous, stable,

theoretically knowable, and therefore, predictable system”. That suggests a misleading marginalization, theoretically biased towards the maintenance of the status quo – aiding and abetting those discourses and acts of domination. The majority of the theories present a totalizing discourse, such as a grand narrative to open themselves up to the possibility of being employed by dominant groups. In doing so, they are imposing efficiency and performativity on the systems they seek to control. Thus, the theory has become part of a totalizing and oppressive story used for the domination of others.

Current debates in our time around such things as climate change, digitalization, artificial intelligence, and different forms of inequality have raised questions as to whether the neoliberal capitalist system imposes restrictions “on corporate actions that make negative social, environmental, and ethical externalities of business conduct unavoidable, or might even systematically encourage them” (de Bakker, Matten, Spence, & Wickert, 2020, p. 1296). For that reason, it is essential to make a link between the economic system and how it shapes different forms of CSR. Scholars investigating CSR have argued that different “varieties of capitalism” shape different approaches from companies toward assuming their social responsibilities (Matten & Moon, 2008; Midttun, Gjølberg, Kourula, Sweet, & Vallentin, 2015).

According to Shevchenko, Lévesque, & Pagell (2016, p. 912) “today’s situation where the need to become truly sustainable is known but generally not acted upon shows that most firms have a rationale for remaining unsustainable”. Although the CSR and CS literature present significant differences as to how organizations can deal with social and sustainability issues, this literature shares interpretations that corporations are increasingly being called upon to improve social welfare (e.g. Friedrich & Wüstenhagen, 2017; Gond et al., 2017; Hafenbradl & Waeger, 2017; Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse, & Figge, 2014; Sonenshein, 2016).

If, on one hand there is a link between both concepts of corporate sustainability and corporate social responsibility – and they can be understood as similar – they are not the same. For Bansal and Song (2017, p. 105), these “two fields of study have converged to become deeply entangled and blurred so that researchers from both research traditions now speak to the same business risks and opportunities.” Corporate sustainability refers to the activities of a company that demonstrate the inclusion of social and environmental concerns in business operations as well as interactions with stakeholders (Hahn et al., 2014; van Marrewijk & Werre, 2003). Corporate social responsibility refers to “context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders’ expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance” (Aguinis, 2011, p. 858; Gond et al., 2017).

Sonenshein (2016) points out that a meaning-making perspective on social issues may offer contributions concerning the role of firms in improving social welfare. The author proposes that the managers' interpretations can reshape social issues for the firm as well as, possibly, other levels of meaning. Therefore, multiple levels of meaning shape social issues inside an organization such that some issues may display a variability of degrees of equivocality and illegitimacy.

In another view, drawing upon literature on managerial cognition, corporate sustainability, and strategic paradoxes, Hahn, Pinkse, Preuss, & Figge (2014) developed a cognitive framing perspective on corporate sustainability. They propose two cognitive frames, namely, a business case frame and a paradoxical frame. Thus, they believe that managers with a business case frame will be more likely to collect detailed information on how selected sustainability issues contribute to positive or negative financial performance. Managers with a business case frame tend to choose only those decisions that have a clear positive impact on financial performance. However, managers with a paradoxical frame do not direct decision makers toward clearly defined objectives or previously formed hypotheses about one specific type of relationship between different aspects of sustainability. The authors believe that managers with this frame have a more complex frame structure, comprising diverse economic, environmental, and social attributes in the decision. Moreover, managers with a paradoxical frame will scan more extensively and attend to a broader range of sustainability issues, even if they are contradictory.

The results from Hafenbradl and Waeger's (2017) studies tell a different story. Drawing on system justification theory, their findings showed that managers who believe in the business case for CSR have espoused a fair market ideology characterized by the tendency to justify and idealize the market economy system. At the same time, they did not focus on factual evidence to believe in the business case for CSR, and they were not more inclined to engage in CSR than managers who did not hold such an ideology. "It is thus not so much the difficulty of believing in the business case, but rather their lack of moral emotions that prevents executives with an instrumental view from investing in CSR" (Hafenbradl & Waeger, 2017, p. 1600). Their moral emotion together with their instrumental CSR orientation has shaped their experience with ethical problems.

Research on decision-making by directors taking decisions on social responsibility and ethical dilemmas has excelled in the literature on CSR. As a result, researchers have argued that more powerful ethics training could be the key to improving corporate ethics and corporate social responsibility. However, the findings of Rose's (2007) study reported that directors tend

to consider the current corporate law rather than the ethical and social implications of their decisions. Such research results of the director's ethical decisions suggested that additional ethics education would have little influence on the decisions of many business leaders because corporate law, rather than personal ethics drove their decisions. Therefore,

The decision-makers at the top of the corporate organization are aware of social responsibility, and they have well-developed standards of personal ethics. Directors perceive, however, that their legal duties favor shareholders above all other stakeholders and society. Directors make decisions that are legally defensible and entirely rational given the legal environment in which they operate (J. M. Rose, 2007, p. 320).

According to Rose (2007, p. 320) if society desired to increase the social responsibility of corporations and allow business leaders to apply their ethical standards in company operations, changes in corporate law rather than changes in ethics education would be necessary. "It appears completely appropriate to blame several recent business failures on personal greed and unethical behavior, but the broader picture of business ethics requires that we acknowledge stakeholders" rather than shareholders in the business model.

Bansal and Kandola (2003) stated that for organizations to act irresponsibly, individuals must act irresponsibly. Thus, when individual irresponsible actions become systemic and significant, the problem turns into an organizational one. However, the fact that some people in organizations act irresponsibly is not surprising because while there are some people who resist becoming involved in illegitimate activities, some inevitably will succumb. Therefore, company behavior can be unethical, even though the business directors are fully complying with applicable laws (Bansal & Kandola, 2003; Bowen, 2013; J. M. Rose, 2007).

Obviously, a banking concept of education, as criticized by Paulo Freire (1987), would not solve the issue of teaching ethics and its application in the spheres of work. We need to transcend the traditional education system. Ethical and social responsibility education must be initiated in business schools as an analysis and deconstruction of the situation experienced. Freire proposes the problem-solving method in education whereby reflections open concrete possibilities to overcome this recurrent pattern of unethical behavior, for instance. According to Freire, education must accompany the experience with reflectiveness, culminating in an encouraging criticism of new existential projects. An existential project is one that is committed to the responsibility of our society to rethink its systems of privilege. Including those people who are marginalized by these systems.

Before the biggest Brazilian socio-environmental disaster, Samarco S.A mining company (one of the perpetrators) held many CSR awards. For skeptics of CSR, it is not a

surprise that a company which has occupied a reference position in the Brazilian mining sector regarding its operational and social-environmental practices got involved in an irresponsible event of such proportions (J. C. Lopes & Demajorovic, 2020).

In its annual sustainability reports, Samarco was proud of its practices and model of sustainability (figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Samarco's annual sustainability report 2014.

**Source:** Samarco (2014).

The company was recognized for two years in a row as the best mining company by a Brazilian magazine called “Revista Exame”. In addition, Samarco was the winner of the Green Mine Award and the Environmental Award.

In the 2014 sustainability report, Samarco stated that investments in innovation, eco-efficiency, and technology were essential to allow the attainment of the company’s strategic objective. According to the company, its sustainability model was focused on research and development on technological advances in the mining industry. The company invested in the technology and ecoefficiency of six thematic hubs, (1) mining resources, (2) ore waste and tailing, (3) water resources, (4) renewable and/or alternative energies (5) energy efficiency, and (6) atmospheric emissions.

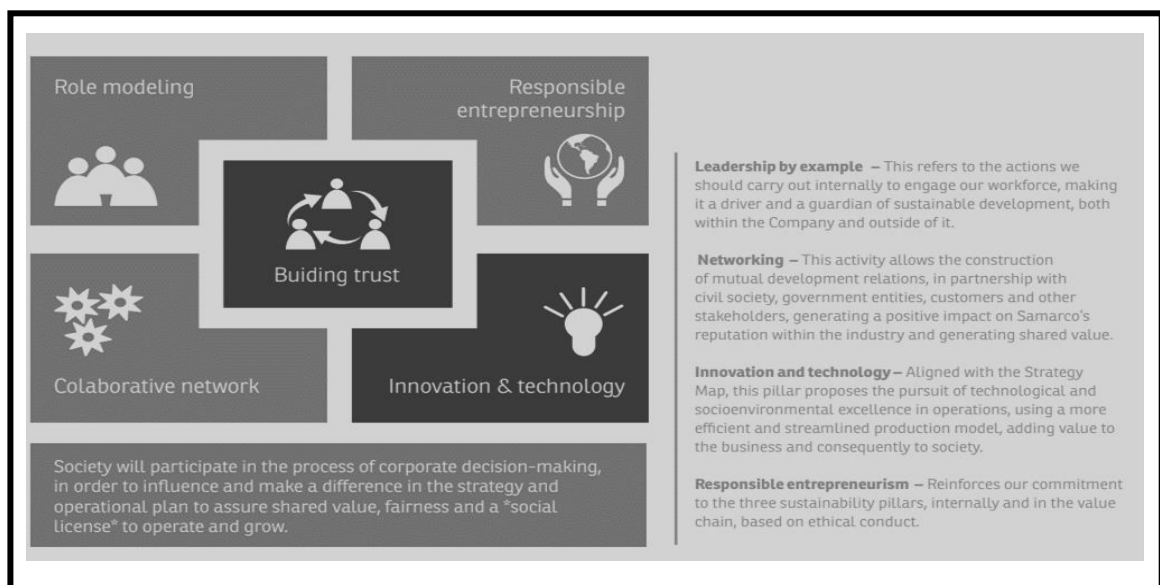
From pages 29 to 32 of the 2014 annual sustainability report, Samarco highlighted its transparency as well as its sustainability vision and CSR credentials (figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Samarco's annual sustainability report 2014.

**Source:** Samarco (2014).

These figures are important for the argument I make in this dissertation because they illustrate that a year before the tragedy, the company sustainability report from 2014 described good CSR's practices adopted by the company (figure 5). Paradoxically, the victories of the company in the "sustainable world of corporations" were not enough to prevent the Fundão Dam collapse tragedy.



**Figure 5.** Samarco's annual sustainability report 2014

**Source:** Samarco (2014).

Corporations have long been criticized for their socially irresponsible actions (Lee, Lu, & Wang, 2019; Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013). There is a countless list of incidents of irresponsibility including environmental degradation, human rights abuse, the unfair treatment of employees and suppliers, corruption, fraud, and many other activities. The set of socially irresponsible actions has increased externalized costs, promoting conflicts and a negative image for business operations. To understand the concept of CSiR, a comprehensive review of the literature is below.

### **Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR)**

While academic research has made noteworthy progress in understanding CSR, we still have a limited understanding of what exactly Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR) is, as well as its impact on business and society (Jain & Zaman, 2020). Unfortunately, widely reported cases of contradiction between CSR and CSiR have become more frequent (Riera & Iborra, 2017), and companies seen as socially responsible have faced great problems of irresponsibility and ethical scandal in their operations.

Since the early-2000s, studies on CSiR have attracted considerable academic attention in management studies, moreso in 2011. This expansion may be related to the international agendas for a better relationship between man and nature, business, and society. Some milestones are the twenty-one agenda, a non-binding action plan of the United Nations regarding sustainable development. This includes the *Millennium Development Goals (2000)*, *Malmö Declaration (2000)* *Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002)*, *Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (2009)*, *Nusa Dua Declaration (2010)*; *Climate Summit (2014)*, *Rio + 20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (2012)*, *17 Sustainable Development Goals – SDG (2015)*, *United Nations Climate Action Summit (2019)* (Unep, 2019). All of these agendas have reinforced a commitment to sustainable societies, in different geographical bases, combining environmental protection, social justice and economic efficiency (Rio+20, 2012).

A recent call to improve corporate behavior and transparency has influenced management theorists to search for theories that can help corporate stewardship through growth, conservation, and responsibility. They are seeking to understand the reason why management and organizational studies should be worked together with the sustainable development goals. However, this call for more sustainable practices in business and corporate social responsibilities reinforces levels of commitment that are not always rigorously considered in

organizational activities. Moreover, even though “over the last decade or so, corporate social responsibility reporting (CSRR) has become a widespread corporate practice (Nwagbara & Belal, 2019, p. 2395)” there are differences between the commitment levels of companies to CRS. Some organizations may have a high-quality commitment level while others may maintain mediocre or lower levels of CSR or CS (Eccles et al., 2014; Husted et al., 2016).

There are also those organizations in which CSR engagement only exists in the discursive field. Word choices and language style in CSR reports have become an issue since many companies are using it only to portray the image of a “responsible organization” without actually being one - see the case of oil companies in Nigeria (Nwagbara & Belal, 2019). Consequently, the persuasive effects of language in CSR reporting have also become a research interest.

According to the *Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility*, CSiR “is something businesses should aim to avoid” (B. Jones, 2013). It is the opposite of CSR and has synonyms such as “doing bad, self-interest, unethical behavior, externalization of costs”. CSiR revolves around companies being irresponsible through not putting anything back into the local community, causing harm, or not trading ethically, for instance.

Moreover, research on CSiR has focused on businesses that have behaved in a less than ideal way concerning their legal and economic obligations, ethical, social and environmental commitments. In summary, CSiR “can be defined as a business doing wrong in relation to the environment, community, society, ethics, and business practices”. CSiR “is when things go wrong in relation to profitability, the environment, and people (customers, suppliers, or employees). It is an emergent and growing subject area” (B. Jones, 2013).

In Campbell's (2007) view, there are two ways to know whether corporations are acting in a socially responsible way. First, a socially responsible company does not knowingly do anything that could harm their stakeholders - be they investors, employees, customers, suppliers, or the local community. Second, if corporations do cause harm, they must repair it voluntarily or in response to some moral suasion, legal threats and court orders, regulatory or normative pressure. However, if there is an absence of institutional constraints in the environment to mitigate such behavior, firms will be more likely to behave in an irresponsible manner. Similarly, Sulphrey (2017, p. 295) agrees with Campbell's (2007, p. 951) view reinforcing that CSiR refers to a “minimum behavioral standard with respect to the relationship of the corporation with its stakeholders.”

Nonetheless, in this dissertation I am bringing a different point of view to the CSiR concept, even though I recognize that CSiR is an emerging area and a clear definition for the term is still growing (Sulphey, 2017).

We have seen many organizational catastrophes that call into question whether organizations are prepared for a responsibility that is actually social (J. J. Pereira, 2020). We live in an era in which catastrophes, accidents, crimes, and organizational fraud are common. They could have been avoided but they were not (Nunes Costa & Borin, 2018), the potential risks and harm were known but were then ignored in company operations (Phillips, Brasileiro, & Lafranchi, 2018). All this context leads us to believe that companies have invested more in sustainable speeches, advertising and reports than effective social responsibility (J. J. Pereira, 2020). Such situations have placed CSR in the discursive field, whilst the actions of companies still display more CSiR than CSR.

Although research with empirical evidence has shown cases of companies that behave in a socially irresponsible manner (Riera & Iborra, 2017), with harmful consequences (Alcadipani & Medeiros, 2019), academic literature still needs to focus more on the concept of CSiR.

Despite the difficulty for science to define terms, Armstrong (1977) pointed out that it would be easier to look at a problem by knowing what it should not be. In this sense, the author defined "social responsibility" as an opposite term to "social irresponsibility". At that time, the author sought to not provide a definitive definition of what CSR should be. Instead, he stated what CSR should not be. In doing so, he gave us an initial definition for CSiR. According to his words "a socially irresponsible act is a decision to accept an alternative that is thought by the decision maker to be inferior to another alternative when the effects upon all parties are considered" (Armstrong, 1977, p. 185). Usually, the act involves a gain by one party at the expense of the entire system.

Although Armstrong gave us a definition, he also recognized some ambiguity around the meaning of CSiR. Therefore, a second definition was provided and this one stated "an act was irresponsible if a vast majority of unbiased observers would agree that this was so" (Armstrong, 1977, p. 185). To avoid problems arising from CSiR definitions, Armstrong considered cases where great harm was caused to the system and where almost all unbiased observers agreed that an irresponsible act has occurred.

As indicated by Küberling-Jost (2019) previous studies on corporate irresponsibility have focused on individual, organizational or environmental factors. However, focus on a single factor such as unethical decision-making (individual) or corruption (organizational) or highly

polluting industries (environmental) enabled the understanding of two important aspects of corporate irresponsibility. First, those analyses neglected conditions and the interaction between sequences of events that lead to many factors of corporate irresponsibility. Second, those studies ignore numerous factors across different levels of analysis. “These two aspects are interrelated as factors are highly interdependent and explain how processes of corporate irresponsibility unfold over time on multiple levels (Langley, 1999)” (Küberling-Jost, 2019, p. 2).

The lack of understanding about the interrelated factors of CSiR, has also influenced the way in which we have understood the attributions of corporate irresponsibility. Lange and Washburn (2012) suggested that when an observer makes an attribution of CSiR, they are not only judging that the corporation has caused some social harm but also that the corporation has a moral responsibility and should be held responsible for the harm.

From a utilitarian point of view, Kang, Germann and Grewal (2016) stated that past corporate social irresponsibility is leading companies to engage in CSR as a form of penance. Moreover, according to the authors, CSR provides an insurance mechanism against CSiR, because CSR builds a reservoir of goodwill to attenuate negative reactors if, and when, things go wrong. Specifically, the penance mechanism suggests that firms engage in CSR to offset CSiR incidents in the past, whereas the insurance mechanism proposes that firms engage in CSR, to insure against CSiR and its negative reactions.

Similarly, for Lin-Hi and Mueller (2013) beyond the “doing good” approach encouraged by CSR theorists, corporations are also responsible for “avoiding bad” in order to prevent CSiR, such as cheating customers, violating human rights, or damaging the environment. Due to this point of view, CSiR is defined as “corporate actions that result in (potential) disadvantages and/or harm to other actors” (Lin-Hi & Mueller, 2013, p. 1932). There is an understanding that CSiR involves the violation of law. In doing so, the violation of law is conceived of as sufficient, but not a necessary condition for defining CSiR.

According to Kang, Germann, and Grewal (2016) the definition of CSiR is firm-induced incidents that appear to hurt the social good. That is, the antithesis of CSR. The BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 is an example of a CSiR incident.

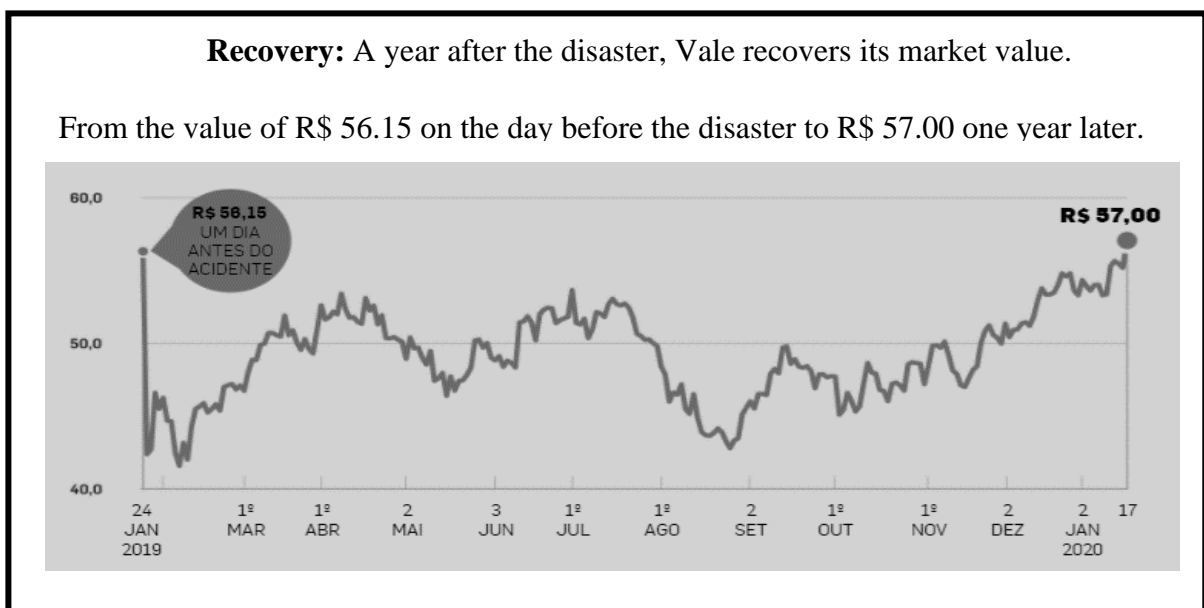
A recent study, from 2016, drew a parallel between CSiR concerns, stock price crash and CEO overconfidence. Based on a quantitative method and regression analysis, the empirical results showed that CEO overconfidence increases stock price crash risk. Moreover, the results also indicated that higher CSiR concerns weaken the effect of CEO overconfidence on stock price crash risk. Therefore, after investors perceive an enterprise as being socially irresponsible,

they become aware of its irresponsible actions in general. Consistent with the literature about CEO overconfidence, the study found that higher CSiR concerns mitigate the effect of CEO overconfidence on stock price crash risk. This evidence illustrates that investors are already aware of the socially irresponsible actions of the company in general. Therefore, investors are not surprised when the negative news hoarded by overconfident CEOs of CSiR firms eventually comes out, because less unexpected negative information is impounded into the stock price, reducing the stock price crash risk. Thereby, according to Kang, Germann, and Grewal (2016), higher CSiR concerns reduce, rather than increase, the stock price crash risk for firms with overconfident CEOs.

Nevertheless, based on the reflections carried out in this PhD dissertation, the question remains as to why, some months after CSiR incidents, mining companies such as Vale recover their market value and even leverage their actions:

“In a single day, Vale lost more than R \$ 70 billion in market value, in the first session of the Brazilian stock exchange after the dam burst in Brumadinho (MG) [in 2019]. However, does this sudden drop mean that the company will continue to lose value in the coming months? The company's history has already shown that it can be highly valued even after major problems [such as CSiR incidents]. In just over three years, between the tragedy of Mariana, in November 2015, and before Brumadinho, the company's market value more than tripled: from R \$ 81.25 billion to R \$ 289.77 billion. The survey was made by the Economatica, a financial information company” (Ferreira, 2019).

In relation to the Samarco dam collapse in 2015 and the Vale dam collapse in 2019, the recovery of their market value was even faster after the second CSiR incident. It took only 12 months, from February 2019 to January 2020, as shown in the graph below:



**Figure 6.** Vale recovers its market value.

**Source:** Guimarães & Durão (Guimarães & Durão, 2020)

Frooman's (1997) work stated that firms who engaged socially irresponsible and illicit behavior had a reductive effect on shareholder wealth. These results thus would suggest that self-interested firms would have reason to act in a socially responsible and law-abiding manner. They prescribe that firms should act in a socially responsible manner to promote the shareholder interests.

However, in the cases of the Samarco and Vale dam collapses, the effect on the market value of the company leads us to other important reflections on the relationship between CSiR and shareholder wealth. After losing R\$ 74 billion in the market value trading session on the following day of the disaster, when the company was evaluated at R\$ 290 billion, Vale's shares are now already at the same level as before the accident (Guimarães & Durão, 2020).

Having contextualized such facts, let us return to the CSiR literature with the following question, how, and under which conditions does the irresponsible behavior of organizations arise, develop and change over time? The question was proposed in 2019 by Küberling-Jost. After analyzing published cases of irresponsible organizations, Küberling-Jost (2019) described corporate irresponsibility as an emergent organizational process. There is a dynamic process path of CSiR that relies on the interaction of multiple levels of analysis and its temporal occurrence, resulting in either path dependency or path creation. In this process, CSiR can take two distinct paths, the reactive (organizations becoming locked-in in the path of corporate irresponsibility), and the proactive (organizations radically changing and breaking their paths of corporate irresponsibility) (Küberling-Jost, 2019).

Companies that are involved with CSiR incidents may be operating in a legal fashion but they do not perceive a broader social role in their operations (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013). For instance, whether a company is deliberately causing environmental degradation (including intentional violations of air or water pollution standards) or negative impacts associated with company operations, products or services, "CSiR may take the form of community impacts such as negatively perceived land usage or operational activities" (Keig, Brouthers, & Marshall, 2015, p. 92).

For Jones, Bowd and Tench (2009) CSR and CSiR are competing realities, two ends of a continuum (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013). Instead of polarizing the argument, Strike, Gao and Bansal (2006) stated that companies can be simultaneously socially responsible and socially irresponsible. In this sense, CSR and CSiR are characteristics inherent in organizations and can vary in degree. The greater the cumulative positive actions of a company the more responsible it is, in the same way, the greater the negative actions of a company, the more

irresponsible it is. Thus, if a subsidiary operates in an irresponsible way, it reflects on the MNE (multinational enterprises) irresponsibility.

In order to illustrate the contrast between the CSR and CSiR approaches table 1 is provided.

<b>CSiR</b>	<b>CSR</b>
Environmental degradation and pollution are inevitable and little precaution is taken	Environmental degradation and pollution are not inevitable and should not be tolerated, and it is important to raise awareness and commit to action
Employees are a resource to be exploited	Employees are a resource to be valued
Minimal community consultation and involvement	Maximal community consultation and involvement
Only basic, and sometimes reluctant, compliance with legislation pertaining to CSR	Compliance with, as well as policy and practical actions that go beyond the minimum legislative requirements for CSR
Ethical issues are on the periphery	Ethical issues are central to the organization
New technologies should be developed and introduced to the market	New technologies should be developed, tested, evaluated, and only introduced to the market if they do not cause harm
Treating suppliers and customers unfairly	Working fairly with suppliers and customers
Sustainability defined in terms of business survival	Sustainability defined in terms of business, environmental and community survival and mutual growth
Profit is the sole purpose of business and should be achieved at any cost	Profit is one of many purposes of business and should be achieved, but not at any cost

**Table 2.** Differences between CSiR and CSR

**Source:** Murphy & Schlegelmilch (2013), adapted from Jones et al. (2009).

With those differences in mind, some researchers have stressed the difference between corporate CSiR and CSR, reinforcing a dualistic model or CSiR-CSR bi-polarity (B. Jones et

al., 2009). CSiR, as the antithesis to CSR, was analyzed, the authors suggested that CSI is a term better suited to describe operations according to the ‘old’ shareholder business model (Friedman, 1962 apud Jones et al 2009) and that CSR is more applicable to the operations according to the new and emerging stakeholder business model (Freeman, 1984, apud Jones et al., 2009). However, a bottleneck for such an argument is to disregard the power relations of companies in modern society, as well as the legitimacy of new and old management systems.

To understand more about CSiR, below I present the main definitions of the concept that I found in my literature review. Although no agreed definition of CSiR exists is important to highlight that views on what CSR is may change over time and what is social responsibility to some people is irresponsible to others. Indeed, social irresponsibility is composed of acts that have violated the social responsibility perceived by external observers, stakeholders and civil society (Lange & Washburn, 2012) “rather than merely being simple lapses in socially responsible actions (Keig et al., 2015, p. 92). It may include deliberate abuse of power causing in the long-term perspective negative impacts on all civil society.

In order to summarize the main definitions of CSiR, a table of definitions I found during the literature review is presented.

<b>Literature definitions of Corporate Social Irresponsibility</b>	
“A socially irresponsible act is a decision to accept an alternative that is thought by the decision maker to be inferior to another alternative when the effects upon all parties are considered. Generally, this involves a gain by one party at the expense of the total system”	(Armstrong, 1977, p. 185).
“Minimum behavioral standard with respect to the corporation’s relationship with its stakeholders”	Campbell’s (2007, p. 951); Sulphey (2017, p. 295);
“At the level of the observer, the idea of corporate social irresponsibility is a cognitive structure, or schema, meaning that it is an element of the observer's abstract expectations about how the world operates”  “While the firm and situation being observed have specific qualities that exist independent of an observer...corporate social irresponsibility attributions are rationally derived as the observer considers the evidence [of] the firm’s behavior and situation, but because those attributions are dependent upon the	(Lange & Washburn, 2012, p. 302)

<p>individual’s attention and interpretation, [they] are highly subjective.”</p>	
<p>“It is the opposite of CSR and has synonyms such as “doing bad, self-interest, unethical behavior, externalization of costs”. CSiR revolves around companies being irresponsible through means [of] not putting anything back into the local community, causing harm, or not trading ethically, for instance. CSiR “can be defined as a business doing wrong in relation to the environment, community, society, ethics, and business practices”. CSiR “is when things go wrong in relation to profitability, the environment, and people (customers, suppliers, or employees). It is an emergent and growing subject area” (B. Jones, 2013).</p>	<p>(B. Jones, 2013). <i>Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility</i></p>
<p>“Corporate social irresponsibility occurs when a manager makes a decision that is either (1) unethical in terms of the manager's personal values, or (2) inferior to other options when considering the effects upon all parties. Avoiding such decisions will likely be consistent with the values of most owners and with their objective of long-term profit maximization. Consequently, owners and their managers are likely to welcome methods that can help them to prevent social irresponsibility”.</p>	<p>(Armstrong &amp; Green, 2013, p. 1927)</p>
<p>“CSI[CSiR] as corporate actions that result in (potential) disadvantages and/or harm to other actors. On the one hand, an act of CSI involves the violation of law. On the other hand, the violation of law is to be conceived of as a sufficient, but not a necessary condition for defining CSI”.</p>	<p>(Lin-Hi &amp; Mueller, 2013, p. 1932)</p>
<p>“It should be added that the CSI[CSiR] firms may be operating in a legal fashion, but they do not see a larger social role for the firm”.</p>	<p>(Murphy &amp; Schlegelmilch, 2013, p. 1807)</p>
<p>“Corporate irresponsibility is essentially a phenomenon that results from intentionally irresponsible strategies, decisions, or</p>	<p>(Keig et al., 2015; Küberling-Jost, 2019; Strike et al., 2006)</p>

actions evolving over time with negative effects on an identifiable stakeholder or the environment”.	
“CSR and CSiR are separate concepts. CSR is associated with doing ‘good deeds’; conversely CSiR reflects a firm’s ‘bad deeds’ (Muller and Kräussl, 2011, p. 912). CSiR is more than simply a firm’s failure to act in a responsible manner (Lange and Washburn, 2012). CSiR can result from an intentional strategy, decision, or action of a firm that ‘negatively affects an identifiable social stakeholder’s legitimate claims (in the long run)’ (Strike et al., 2006, p. 852).”	(Keig et al., 2015, p. 92)
“We define CSI [CSiR] as firm-induced incidents that appear to hurt the social good—that is, the antithesis of CSR. BP’s Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 is an example of a CSI incident”.	(Kang et al., 2016, p. 60)
“What is corporate social irresponsibility? It is not difficult to identify socially irresponsible companies. Examples that come to mind easily include Enron, Arthur Andersen, Philip Morris and Union Carbide. In fact, it is much easier to identify firms that are irresponsible than those that are responsible. Most people agree that firms should operate within legal parameters and not knowingly harm stakeholders. Yet despite the risks and consequences, some firms still operate outside of these parameters. Take the cases of Enron and Arthur Anderson”.	Bansal & Kandola (2003, p. 1)
“Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSI), defined as behaviours showing a lack of due concern for communities or the environment (Lange and Washburn, 2012), causes punitive actions from stakeholders (Balabanis, 2013; Grappi, Romani, and Bagozzi, 2013a; Klein, Smith, and John, 2004; Sweetin et al., 2013; Walsh et al., 2009)”.	(Antonetti & Maklan, 2016c, p. 583)

**Table 3.** CSiR definitions found during the literature review.

**Source:** Created by the author.

The issues of corporate power, the abuse of power, responsibility and accountability are central concerns of organizations and governments around the world, issues that include stories

of fraud, mismanagement, and unethical behavior (Mitchell et al., 1998). In fact, “the social responsibility of business should be proportional to its power” (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013, p. 1808), therefore the greater “the power an organization has, the greater the social responsibility it should exercise (Davis, 1960)”.

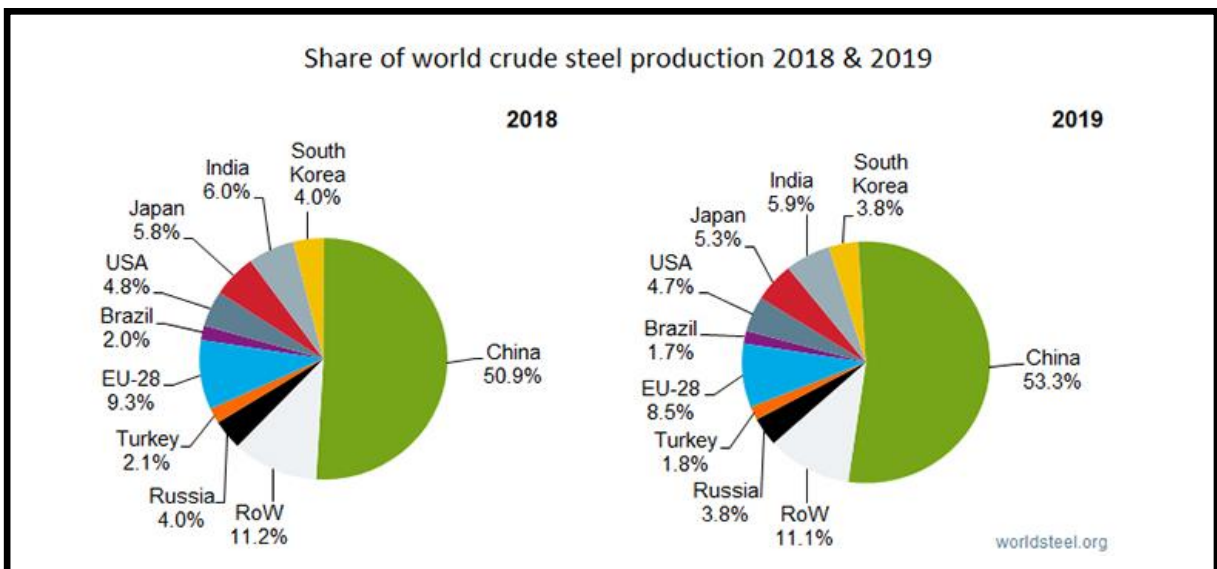
This argument opens space for the next topic developed in this dissertation: relations of power in extractive communities.

### Mining Companies in Brazil and Their Relations of Power in Extractive Communities

Being of great importance to the Brazilian economy, Brazilian mineral production in 2015 (the year of the Samarco dam collapse) was valued at \$26 billion compared with \$40 billion in 2014, representing about 1% of the Brazilian GDP. The difference between the years was attributed to the decrease in global iron ore prices during 2015 (Szczesniak, 2018).

Brazil is one of the leading mining countries in the world. It produces a variety of minerals, metals, and mineral fuels (Szczesniak, 2018) among other extractive services. Considering the global scale, Brazil is an important player ranked as the world’s fifth-largest mineral producer in 2016 (Nederland & NBSO, 2018).

According to The World Steel association (2020), in 2018 and 2019, Brazil accounted for about 2% of global steel production, and is also the leading producer in South America, representing 76% of South American steel production (Figure 7).



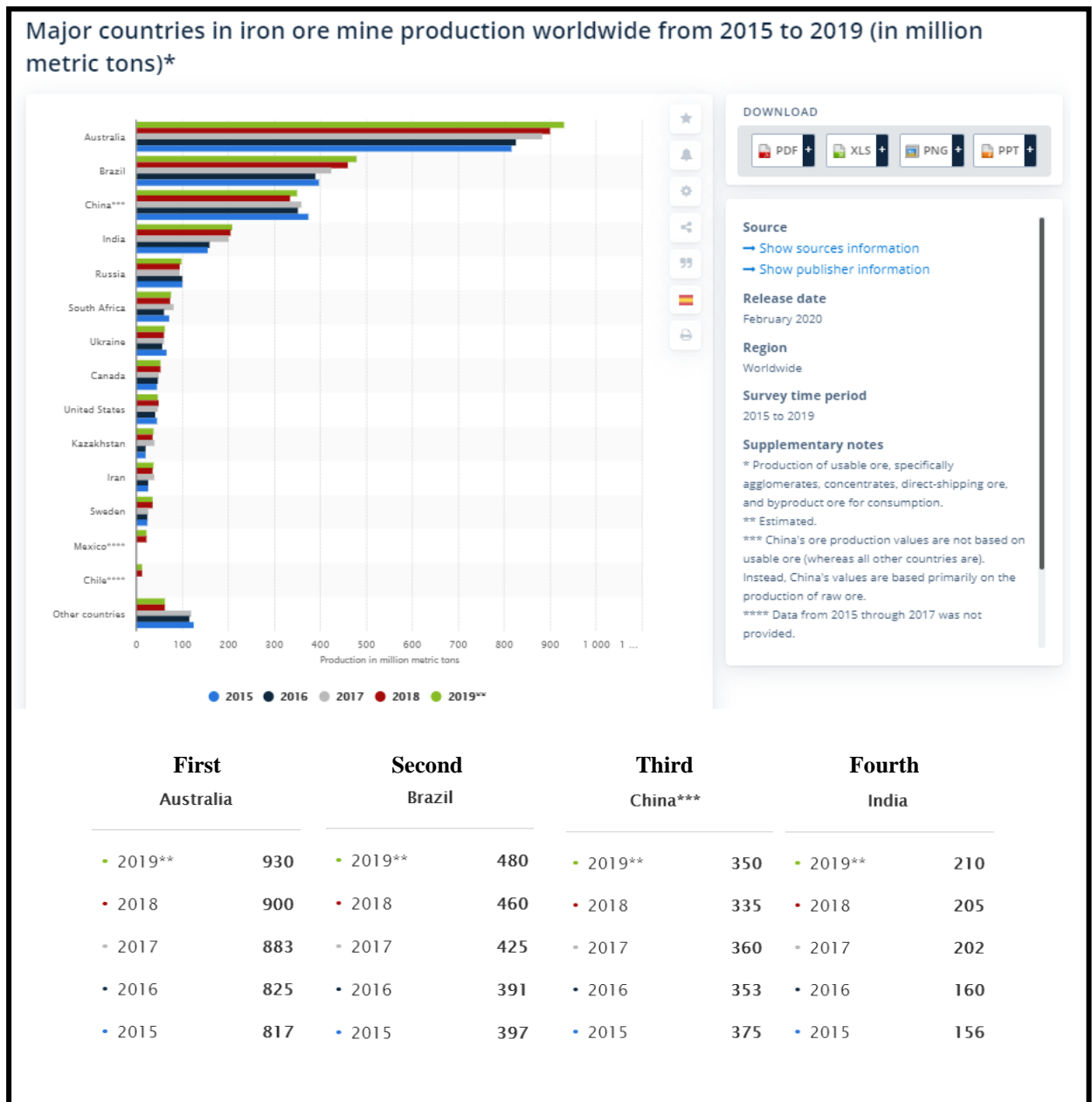
**Figure 7.** Brazilian share of world crude steel production 2018.2019.

**Source:** The World Steel Association.

Iron and steel industries worldwide are reliant on sources for primary iron material. A large majority of mined iron ore is used in steelmaking. Iron ore minerals are mostly found as

hematite and magnetite (Statista & Garside, 2020). In 2019, Vale S.A lost the top spot as the iron ore producer for the Rio Tinto Group, now the top iron ore producer in the world. The Carajás mines of Vale are believed to hold the highest iron ore content on the planet (67%). As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Vale estimates potential output losses to be around 15 million tonnes in 2020 (NS Energy, 2020).

Australia and Brazil are the largest iron ore mine producers globally, producing 930 million metric tons and 480 million metric tons, respectively, in 2019. As shown in Figure 8.



**Figure 8.** Worldwide production of iron ore by country

Source: Statista & Garside (2020)

China and India are the third and fourth largest iron ore producers in the world, producing 350 million metric tons and 210 million metric tons, respectively, in 2019.

The economic influence of the extractive industry in Brazil is seen in its participation in the trade balance. According to the bulletin of the mineral sector (MME, 2019), the Brazilian trade balance registered an accumulated surplus around US\$ 34.9 billion from January to October 2019. The exports totalled US\$ 185.5 billion and imports US\$ 150.6 billion. From the total of these exports, the mineral sector contributed with 22.6%, registering US\$ 41.9 billion in goods exported (ores and processed). Regarding the mining industry, exports have increased by around 8.3% over the same period in the last year, mainly attributable to the recovery in the average price of iron ore sales, which have totalled US\$ 16.6 billion. Regarding imports, in comparison with the same period of the previous year, there was a small increase of 2.3%, mainly explained by the increase in prices of metallurgical coal and potassium.

The economic activity of the extractive industry is very contributive in Brazil, from January to October, an increase of 54% was noted in the tax collection of "Financial Compensation for Mineral Exploration" (CFEM in Portuguese). This increase was attributed to the price of iron ore and payments of the previous year. Iron ore was the substance with the highest share, representing 78% of tax collected. Consequently, the states with the highest tax collections up to October 2019 were Pará (47%) and Minas Gerais (42%), both major producers of iron ore (MME, 2019).

Considering the labor market, the mineral sector also has very expressive economic activity. Even considering all the economic effects of the COVID-19<sup>1</sup> pandemic which has decreased job vacancies in 2020. The mineral extraction sector started the second half of 2019 with 173,642 workers and ended with 175,942. It generated 2,300 new jobs, which represented a 1.3% growth in formal employment in the sector in the period. The states that generated the largest positive balances were Pará, Minas Gerais and Bahia.

In the state of Minas Gerais (MG), it was the extraction of iron ore that generated most of the job opportunities, especially in the municipalities of Nova Lima, Congonhas and Itatiaiuçu. The rise in the price of iron ore and the shutdown of mines owned by Vale in Minas Gerais (due to the disaster in 2019) led small and medium-sized mining companies to resume or expand their production in the state, which justifies the positive balance of labor work in the

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to noticed that in 2020, due to the economic and social disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, countries, cities, and people around the world were in quarantine. They were facing a great challenge in terms of health, economy, food, among others. Many people have losted their jobs and many countries were facing a difficult situation. Therefore, the economic numbers presented in this topic are also reflecting this big challenge.

municipalities of the Iron Quadrangle of Minas Gerais (Quadrilátero Ferrífero). In Congonhas, MG, the new hires are due to investment by CSN Mineração S.A. in the new iron ore beneficiation plant that will be installed at the Casa de Pedra mine. It will have a production capacity of 10 million metric tons per annum (MMTA), which represents a total investment of approximately R\$ 1.3 billion and provides for the hiring of 1,300 employees during the implementation period, with an expected duration of 20 months. The investments by Mineração Usiminas of around R\$ 1 billion in 2019 in the steel industry (70%), mining (20%) and solutions and mechanics (10%) influenced new admissions in the municipality of Itatiuaçu MG (ANM, 2019).

There are many Brazilian and foreign mining companies active in Brazil. Some examples of major players in Brazil are Vale S.A (largest), CSN (second largest), Samarco (third largest), CBMM, Usiminas, Gerdau, Votorantim, CRM, Mineração Rio do Norte – MRN, Vallourec & Mannesmann – V&M, Yamana Gold, AngloGold Ashanti, Arcelormittal, Kinross Gold Corp and AMG N.V (Nederland & NBSO, 2018).

The Brazilian mineral industry is governed by the Mining Code, from exploration to production and use of mineral resources. The Brazilian Mining Code was instituted by Decree-law n° 227 of 1967, updated by law n° 9314 of 1995, and supported by the Federal Constitution of 1988. The Mining Code establishes the rights and duties of the holders of mining rights. There is a Draft Bill no. 5807 of 2013 for a new regulatory framework for mining. It was introduced in 2013 and has continued to be reviewed since 2015. The bill would modify the Mining Code by creating the National Mineral Policy Council (Conselho Nacional de Política Mineral, in Portuguese) to assist the President in strategic decision-making on minerals and by creating the National Mining Agency (Agência Nacional de Mineração, in Portuguese), which would replace DNPM and be granted additional authorities, such as organizing public bidding for mineral rights. The new code would also increase the royalties on minerals (Szczeniak, 2018).

In the scope of the geology and mining sector, there are government structuring programs and actions that aim to encourage investment in the Brazilian extractive industry. Although the amounts invested by Brazil are considered smaller when compared to other countries such as Peru, Chile, and Mexico (with smaller territorial areas) or even other countries of similar territorial areas, foreign direct investment in mining projects in Brazil has been a long-lasting trend in the past decades.

Aiming to expand mining activity in the country, President Jair Bolsonaro presented a bill in February 2020 to allow commercial mining on protected indigenous lands and recently

unveiled the proposed Mining and Development Program (PDM, in Portuguese) with goals for the sector in the period 2020-2023. In addition, the fiscal policies implemented by the Brazilian government are playing an important role in attracting direct foreign investments in the mining sector (Pineiro, 2020).

Such a concentration of economic power by the mining industry has effects on the access of citizens to government agencies, public policies, and natural resources. The majority (93%) of the income of Mariana (the city of the Samarco Dam disaster) is directly or indirectly related to mining activities. Until 2015, the year of the Samarco Dam collapse, the mining companies Samarco and Vale were the largest taxpayers in the municipality. Since Samarco Mining interrupted its activities, due to the disaster, the revenue of the municipality of Mariana has been decreasing considerably (Mariana-MG, 2018). Nowadays, the Renova Foundation plays an important role in the composition of the tax collection in Mariana. Indicating the continuity of an economy based on activities related indirectly to mining.

In the communities in which mining industries, or their related activities play a major role in the economy, comprising more than 90% of the municipality tax collection, we have seen a weakening of state supervisory and regulatory power. Without any diversification of the economy, municipalities are at the mercy of mining companies. Either due to the high tax collections derived from mining activity and creation of new jobs, or incentives for the emergence of new outsourced companies with indirect mining activities.

In Brazil, mining companies also have the most access to the government. They have power and the right resources to protect themselves from radical policy change (Votaw, 1973). Particularly, politicians and deputies who were elected with donations from mining companies have been very active in the affairs of the sector. They have proposed changes in regulations resulting in the removal of inspections of mining operations. They have also occupied key positions in commissions influencing policy changes. These politicians were voting against the amendments that aimed to improve the safety of tailings dams that already existed. According to Turolo Jr and Estarque (2019), the deputy Leonardo Quintão (MDB party, Minas Gerais) is the main exponent of what is called the "Political group of Mud" (Bancada da Lama, in Portuguese). In 2014 he received, R\$ 2.1 million from mining companies, 42% of what he declared to the federal revenue. It was the last election with donations from companies. In 2018, he was not re-elected but maintained his political influence, becoming an advisor to the government of Jair Bolsonaro (PSL party).

Due to their power, companies worldwide are influencing the mechanisms (politics) that judge their own irresponsible actions (Votaw, 1973). Indeed, companies have access to a variety

of resources to influence other actors in the social structure to make their own interests count, even where there is some resistance. According to Giddens (1989 apud Powell, 2001), “power sometimes involves the direct use of force, but is always also accompanied by the development of ideas [such as ideology] ...which justify the actions of the powerful”. Thus, power is more often manifested through ideas than physical force, which legitimizes the actions of the social actors. The concept of power is also linked to social structure, it is the capability to provoke change in conduct, being neither restricted to the individual nor to the action (Santos & Milanez, 2020). With the Samarco tragedy in 2015, the relationship of deputies with mining companies was under surveillance. But the deputies claimed that they were in fact not defending the interests of mining companies in exchange for donations in 2014.

Max Weber’s classic definition of power is “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests (Weber, 1978, p. 53 apud Warren, 1992)”. In a rational choice approach, individuals have the capacity and desire to maximize their preferences in a universe of limited satisfaction. Thus, actors have power when they have disproportionately more means to pursue their preferences, and they maintain these means at the expense of others (Warren, 1992).

Over time, the extractive industry has been cultivating power and establishing asymmetric relationships with social actors. Throughout Brazilian history, the extraction of native products has been constant. Deemed important at certain moments throughout political, economic and social history, whether in colonial, monarchical or republican Brazil. For example, in the 18th century, extractivism contributed to the expansion of the borders fixed by the Treaty of Tordesillas. Thus, the colonial economy counted on the collection of vegetal products extracted in the Amazon (guarana, Brazil nuts, cocoa, cinnamon, cloves, oils, and resins, among others), for export to Europe.

Since the neoliberal political reforms of the 1990s rekindled faith in extractivism natural resources have given a higher return on investment. The political economy of extractivism has drained investment from other areas, amplifying the influence that natural resources and extractive industries have on the economy of a nation. Therefore, productive capacity is funneled to satisfy the needs of the extractive industry (Pick & Htwe Thein, 2010). In some societies, this has weakened the supervisory and regulatory power of the state, because big companies have been directly involved in decisions about their responsibility regarding sustainability and safety issues.

Contributing to the debate on the social construction of economic action and power, Santos and Milanez (2020) spoke about the influences of mining industries in the state of Minas Gerais. They presented three cases of mining cities in the state, Conceição do Mato Dentro, Congonhas e Itabira. These cities have mines at different stages of the extractive cycle, which are installation, expansion, and exhaustion, respectively. The authors pointed out that forms of collective and institutional power are heading toward a multi-agency process. The category of power and its specific forms (i.e., corporate, institutional, and collective power) tends to bind corporate power with firms that are leaders in settings where economic actors are key. Consequently, power is understood as both a relational and a structural phenomenon. It involves resources and the way they are deployed which are cumulative and adaptive to contexts settled by diversified actors.

According to Santos and Milanez (2020), there are unequal capacities of influence between social actors, such as companies, syndicates, NGOs, unions, the state, and other political actors. However, the case of Congonhas, where the extractive cycle is the expansion of mining, showed that there are social movements that have mobilized institutional and non-institutional resources to contain the power of mining corporations.

On the other hand, the case of Conceição do Mato Dentro, where the extractive cycle is the installation of the mining, showed the fragmentation of social protest. This has obstructed the impacted communities from reaching the institutional arena and influencing decision-makers. The mining company has deployed resources, limiting the exercise of institutional and collective forms of power. Moreover, it has built a controlled and monopolistic interpretation of the environmental impacts.

Finally, in Itabira, the mining company has exercised its corporate power in a unitary manner. It has extended its influence over an inner realm, mobilizing the subjective adherence of individual and collective actors (L. A. S. Saraiva, 2009). The mining company has, therefore, sustained a consensus regime, favorable to its operation but unfavorable to social contestation. It has limited social mobilization, which also culminates in a moral disengagement (Medeiros, Alcadipani, & Oliveira, 2018)

In this topic of my dissertation, I related the category of the capacity of companies to influence the nation-, state-, or city-wide allocation of economic resources, political decisions, investment strategies and other forms of relationship in the social structure. In doing so, mining companies are decisively and consistently acting to pursue their own interests (Santos & Milanez, 2020). Moreover, I stated that the economic influence of the extractive industry, which has contributed to the strengthening of these businesses compared to other kinds of enterprise,

organization, or institution of public power. First, I showed evidence that reinforces the power of mining industries in the Brazilian trade balance. Secondly, I present data from tax collection in the states and cities that have mining industries in operation. In addition, I highlighted data on the generation of new jobs, even considering an unusual year like 2019. Finally, I covered national and international investment in the extractive industries.

Having presented the topic of "Mining companies in Brazil and their power within extractive communities" I finished the arguments presented in the chapter on Theoretical Foundations. The following chapter states brief thoughts regarding the method.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHOD**

To answer the question “**how can companies shape future perceptions of their involvement with CSiR?**”, I explored the singularities of Corporate Social Irresponsibility in the context of a company-caused social and environmental disaster. I employed an empirical and inductive approach (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012) to construct a theoretical model (Langley, 1999; Langley & Abdallah, 2011) to help studies from management and organization fields to understand the phenomenon of CSiR.

In my dissertation, I place emphasis on CSiR theory building based on empirical data (Spradley, 1980). Additionally, during the data gathering, the results of which are presented in the three papers of this dissertation, I searched for cultural patterns to present culture and history bounded theories.

One of the main motives for choosing the single case study as a research strategy, is that case studies are more efficient in uncovering the uniqueness of the phenomenon being researched. It has gained credibility by thoroughly triangulating the descriptions and interpretations, not just in a single part but continuously throughout the period of the study (Stake, 1998). Furthermore, whilst engaging in my data collection, it was possible to pay close attention to the effects of the Samarco Dam collapse in social, political, and other contexts. Therefore, in the next topics, I describe the ethical issues of the project, my journey into the empirical field, the reflexivity of the researcher, and finally the ontological and epistemological assumptions in this research.

### **The Ethical Issues of Research Involving Humans**

This research project was submitted to the Fundação Getulio Vargas ethical committee (in Portuguese *Comitê de Conformidade Ética em Pesquisas Envolvendo Seres Humanos*). It was approved in December of 2017. This research respected the requirements established by the institution (see appendix A). Whenever appropriate, the researcher avoided socio-demographic characteristics such as age, sex, gender, or profession. This was done to avoid the identification of the research participants.

### **My Journey into the Empirical Field**

My journey into the field started even before my PhD period at FGV. It started when I was finishing my master's degree in 2015, the year of the collapse. On the afternoon of November 5th, my smartphone suddenly started to receive notifications on WhatsApp, with messages, audios, photos, and short movies on an alleged tailings dam rupture in Mariana, MG.

Then, I saw news about the Samarco dam collapse on a popular terrestrial TV channel in Brazil, and I realized what had happened. The tragedy had occurred 30 km from downtown Mariana, the city where I had lived when I was a college student (from 2010 to 2014). The mud reached districts, villages, indigenous communities, and cities along the Doce River basin. On a message group from the Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP), the college where I had been studying, many students volunteered to host the homeless (due to the tragedy) at the convention center in the city. At the time, I just followed the news remotely – sending WhatsApp messages to people that I knew in Mariana-MG to make sure that they were in a safe place while they were helping others too.

In 2016, I traveled to Mariana for a meeting with my fraternity family. I remember seeing through the side window of the room where I slept how the Mariana community was suffering. Many hotels were temporarily housing those affected by the Samarco disaster. I remember, both as a business student and a member of society, feeling helpless - how could a company not have prevented such a disaster? I did not have a proper answer to that. Later, my former professors Dr. Carolina Maranhão, Dr. Fernanda Macedo and Dr. Diego Boava, who are professors at a public university in the city most affected by the dam collapse, introduced me to their work on the Samarco Dam collapse. Having been sensitized by the entire post-disaster context and being familiar with the research of my former professors, I decided to write a doctoral project that could contribute.

In 2017, the initial project for my PhD involved analyzing the context of the disaster and its impacts on the citizenship (from a human rights perspective, according to the political philosophy of Hannah Arendt) of people directly affected by the disaster. By that time, I was constantly monitoring news from the media talking about the case. There was a large mobilization of the affected community in public hearings, as they were looking to recover their rights. I wondered how such a catastrophe had impacted the sense of citizenship of people from Bento Rodrigues village - as citizenship includes the notion of the right to have rights, and the right to political participation to overcome situations of political exclusion. That is, how the affected people were organizing themselves to think collectively and act politically to overcome the brutal way in which their rights had been violated. The village of Bento Rodrigues was the most affected place because it is located close to the dam, approximately 30 km from downtown Mariana.

After a preliminary review of literature about extractive industries, affected communities, and citizenship, I prepared a semi-structured interview and went into the field. Upon arriving in the area where I would be conducting my research, I realized that the people

were not prepared for the questions from the research interview. Specifically, three important agents in the arena, the state prosecutor, his assistant and a religious leader pointed out that those questions were not appropriate for that moment. In the words of the state prosecutor: *“We have not achieved these levels of discussions. The tragedy has affected so many lives in a way that we cannot even tell who the affected people are - and they are many. There are people who lost their houses and relatives and there are those who lost their memories and history of the place where they used to live. There are couples who lost their right to marry in the Church that they have chosen, where their fathers also married. There are those who did not lose their house but lost their relationships with their entire neighborhood. There are those who lost their jobs in the company and do not have other employment yet. It is a public loss in many ways. So, it is a difficult situation to measure how all this catastrophe has impacted their sense of citizenship. We are still fighting for minimum things such as recognition, by the company, that there are many kinds of affected people in this context.”*

Having listened carefully to the advice of these agents, I returned home and rethought, and then, rewrote my interview script as per their suggestion (see appendix B). After that, I started to focus more on the empirical field, gathering data, taking field notes, organizing them in memos (B. Glaser, 1978) and interpreting them according to their macro-cultural and historical backgrounds (Spradley, 1980). In the next section, I describe the data gathering conducted for this dissertation:

**First round of interviews.** In July 2017, I did field immersion for 18 days in the city of Mariana, the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. I visited the villages of Bento Rodrigues and Paracatu de Baixo. It consisted of 19 interviews, participant observation, and a field diary (see the table in paper 1).

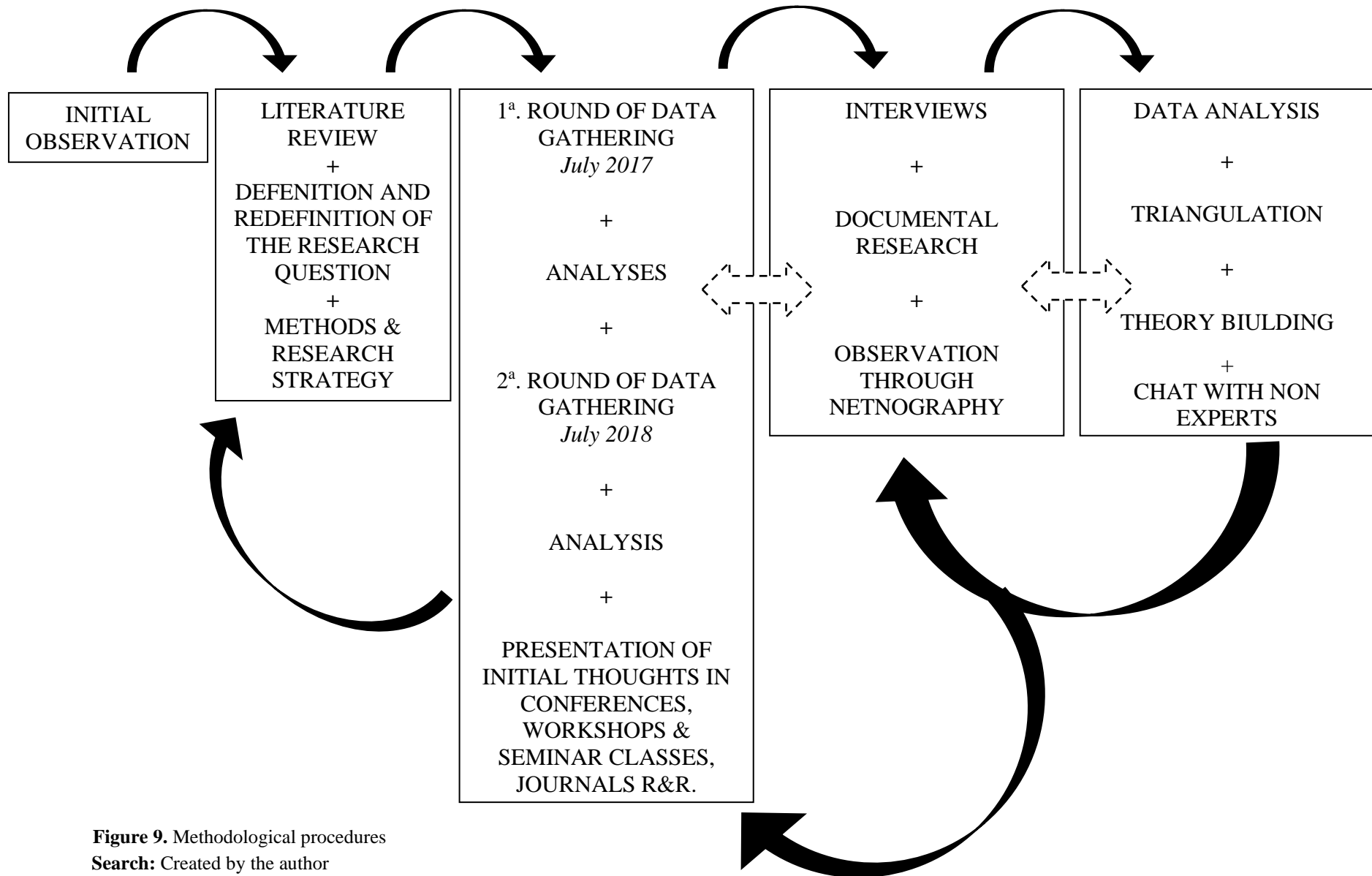
**Second round of data interviews.** In July 2018, I did field immersion for 23 days in the city of Mariana and the city of Barra Longa, both in the state of Minas Gerais and the city of Linhares, in the state of Espirito Santo, Brazil. I visited the villages of Bento Rodrigues, Paracatu de Baixo, Gesteira and Regencia. It consisted of 39 interviews, participant observation and a field diary (see the table in paper 3).

**Documental research.** I used news from a local newspaper called “A Sirene”, company reports such as “Annual Sustainability Reports”; judicial documents from the national prosecutors, and reports from the Renova foundation (see all the three papers)

**Netnographic observation.** This was conducted on a Facebook group from March 2017 to January 2019.

Utilizing Excel software as a supporting analytical tool allowed me to code main sentences and phrases in a spreadsheet. For each type of data, an excel document, composed of two spreadsheets was created. In the first spreadsheet, it was possible to organize the phrases into codes and domains. In the second spreadsheet, I was taking notes linking the sentences with theories that came into my mind while I was reading those pieces of data. Given the richness of the data, many analyses, and theorizations have not been used in this dissertation for reasons of research scope.

Figure 9 (next page) illustrates the methodological procedures as well as the strategies used in this PhD dissertation to build a theory from the case study. Following an iterative process of qualitative data collection, I chose a single case study as the research design. This choice was based on theoretical and analytical ground as being particularly fruitful for the understanding of the Samarco dam collapse as a CSiR case. The iterative process refers to the systematic, repetitive qualitative data analyses that were carried out, ensuring that information-rich participants or other pieces of evidence were included in the study (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009).



**Figure 9.** Methodological procedures  
**Search:** Created by the author

To maintain aspects of validity and reliability (Merriam, 1995), in the analysis carried out in this PhD dissertation, I have been attending both national and international conferences seeking to understand how congruent my findings were. Furthermore, I have applied triangulation using multiple data sources. I have checked interpretation through online meetings, seminars, and have also submitted to journals and been peer reviewed.

For a more detailed view of the methods used and analysis carried out in this dissertation, please see the methodological section of each paper.

### **Reflexivity on the Research**

As a researcher with strong connections to my empirical field of research, it was impossible not to feel empathy during the research process. Reading and understanding how the Fundão dam collapse has dramatically damaged the environment and has impacted many lives also affected my perspective. I completed this PhD dissertation with a much more critical perspective of how corporations need to understand, support and be responsible for their social, political and natural environment (C. M. Saraiva & Ferreira, 2018, 2019) .

In addition to all this socio-environmental and business tragedy, there was damage in relation to people's lives, including those who survived but were brutally removed from their homes. This loss includes material artifacts that contributed to their place in the community and their identity as members of the community, which will never be the same. They lost loved-ones, artifacts, but also their way of life. The losses of the impacted population included their homes, photos, cultural artifacts, spaces of symbology and tradition. The population of Bento Rodrigues has experienced how the 'Bento' way of life has been lost since the dam collapse (Sandeville & Makaron, 2017; Silva, Boava, & Macedo, 2017).

According to Cunliffe (2004) adopting a critically reflexive practice in management education and research, we can embrace subjective understandings of reality and think about the impact of our assumptions, values and actions on others. A critically reflexive practice helps us to understand how we constitute our realities and identities in a relational way, developing more collaborative and responsive ways of managing organizations.

### **Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions**

Based on Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four paradigms and Berger and Luckman's (1966) ideas of social knowledge, I adopt an interpretative, antipositivist approach, which assumes the organizational world to be socially constructed. The social constructionist perspective believes that knowledge is sustained by social processes. It is through the daily,

social interactions between people that our versions of knowledge are formed (Burr, 2003). According to this approach, there is no objective reality, with reality being socially constructed. Thus, language plays a vital role in the system, helping to establish what we perceive as reality. The focus of social constructionism is to uncover the paths on which individuals and groups interact in the creation of their perceived reality. What we believe to be real is in fact shaped by our social interactions and life experience with other people. In this sense, human beings rationalize their experience by creating a model of the social world.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) identified four paradigms formed by adopting two basic conceptual dimensions (objective views versus subjective views and the sociology of regulation versus sociology of radical change). It has been suggested that assumptions regarding the nature of science can be thought of as the subjective-objective dimension, and assumptions on the nature of society can be thought of as a regulation-radical change dimension. In addition, Burrell and Morgan identified two axes that, when placed at right angles, create four “mutually exclusive” paradigms. Thus, the production of knowledge in the social sciences would follow the paradigms of radical humanism, interpretive sociology, radical structuralism, and functionalist sociology. In this dissertation, I conduct the analysis of the phenomenon through the paradigm of interpretative sociology.

Since Burrell and Morgan identified the four paradigms, many of their basic assumptions have been interchanging and giving rise to new ideas, from different writers. However, the four paradigms are still a didactic way to demonstrate the ontological and epistemological assumptions that guide interpretations carried out in a scientific project.

It is also possible to find many views of social constructionism from different traditions of ethnomethodology, psychology, sociology of science and postmodernism (Parker, 2016). They all have opened the possibility of addressing the construction and stabilization of versions of the world, rigorously and systematically. One way of thinking of the social constructionism includes the processes by which ordinary people construct their life and give it meaning for themselves and each other (Burr, 2003; Mead, 1934). The view of social constructionism adopted in this work claims that

“we take a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world, including ourselves. It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world”(Burr, 2003, pp. 3–4) .

In the field, during my data collection, I was able to observe the relationships

between the agents. I was also able to reflect upon people's relationships with their space. They have shared their memories and histories with me. They told me about how things used to be organized, before the disaster. They shared their knowledge about geography, places, houses, church, and squares. I have learned from them about their cultural meaning and symbolisms. I have learned how those spaces have many meanings as cultural symbols. In addition, bodily sensations such as sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste were constant throughout all the data collection. During the interviews and even during the documentary source readings, the agents talked about the sensations before, during, and after the day of the tragedy. They talked about the colors of the sky, rivers, walls how they used to be beautiful, and then how the color of the mud changed everything. They talked about the smell of the flowers, gardens, plants, fauna, and how, afterward, it changed. They shared memories of relationships with fruitful plants such as the Jaboticaba tree (a kind of Brazilian Grape Tree), waterfalls, the calm of the village, and the devastating noise of the arrival of the mud in the village.

In afterward chapters, I presented the three article that composes the main arguments of my PhD dissertation.

## CHAPTER 4:

*The River? It is Doce (sweet)  
Vale? It is bitter  
Then, it would be better whether lighter was the load  
Among state  
And multinationals,  
How many woes!  
The domestic debt.  
The external debt.  
The eternal debt.  
How many tons do we export...of iron ore?  
How many tears do we hide...without shouting?*

Source: Carlos Drumond de Andrade (1984) Lira Itabirana

### **PAPER 1 – AN AFFECTIVE LICENSE TO OPERATE? THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY AND ITS PAST RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

#### **Abstract**

Why do some victims/stakeholders begin to minimize their criticism of companies within their communities after an event of corporate irresponsibility? This article investigates how communities that have an economy strongly based on the extractive industry may develop an affective relationship with these companies. Moreover, we stated that those companies may exploit this relationship to pursue their own interests. Literature from the fields of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR), and the Social Licence to Operate (SLO) were mobilized to understand the phenomenon. Such concepts have been examined in management and organization literature through its normative foundations and instrumental approaches. In this article, we address a puzzle to CSiR and the SLO literature, adding an affective dimension through qualitative critical analysis. The paper explores a gap in the literature of CSiR, showing that past relations contribute to social identification between agents of the same social structure. It goes beyond mere public relations in the SLO literature, and, may affect claims against the company. It is also ambiguous since it incorporates the emotions around the relationship between companies and communities. The self-image of the city of Mariana as a mining town, together with the huge importance of the activities of Samarco to the municipality engendered affections, that gave Samarco what we call here an “affective license”.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Irresponsibility; Social License to Operate; Mining; Corporate Social Responsibility, Samarco.

## **Introduction**

Research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR), and Social Licence to Operate (SLO) have shown that companies are concerned about how communities perceive the legitimacy of their actions. Especially, those companies that have caused large disruptions in local arrangements, such as the extractive industry (Idemudia, 2009). The literature also has shown that independent on the governance arrangements, strict or soft public laws, the interests of local communities need to be considered (Votaw, 1973).

The SLO is a function of CSR that tries to attain legitimacy, beyond the legal dimension of a business. The SLO indicates whether businesses “are considered legitimate in the eyes of society” (Demuijnck & Fasterling, 2016). It has been discussed in the fields of management, business, and industrial organisation as a process used by companies to engage with local communities, particularly the mining ones (Demuijnck & Fasterling, 2016; Melé & Armengou, 2016; Moffat & Zhang, 2014; Prno & Slocombe, 2012; Ranängen & Lindman, 2018)(Moffat & Zhang, 2014).

The CSiR is generally saw as the opposite and antithesis of CSR (Kang et al., 2016). It has synonyms such as unethical behavior, self-interest, doing bad, misconduct, externalization of costs, among others (B. Jones, 2013). It has been discussed in a variety of field such as business ethics, industrial relationships, and resources policies. Generally, it involves a gain by one party at the expense of the total system (Armstrong, 1977).

Studies in both fields of CSiR and SLO have highlighted a normative foundation and instrumental approaches that strategically guide the useability of these mechanisms by companies. In contrast, studies with critical analysis have shown that core development issues in communities which companies are operating are not being prioritized (Owen & Kemp, 2013). However, studies that aimed to understand how past relationships can shape perceptions of CSR, SLO, and CSiR engagements of companies still necessary (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016b).

In this article, we are questioning why do some victims and stakeholders begin to minimize their criticism against companies, after an event of corporate irresponsibility?”. Through a qualitative approach, supported by a single case study, we conducted a content analysis of interviews and documentary sources. Applying an iterative process of analyses based on critical interpretations our findings suggested that communities that have an economy strongly based on the extractive industry can develop a relation of affection with these companies. Our results are mainly addressed to the CSiR, SLO, and CSR literature, highlighting a social and emotional attachment of the community with the company studied. This

relationship was built over the years since the first operations derived from the extractive industry. The city became known for the exploitation of its mineral resources, boasting a Mining Town title that, for a long time, has defined the city's identity.

This paper is divided into six sections. First, it presents the literature review on CSR, CSiR and SLO. The following section we stated about the methodology, data collection, and analysis. Subsequently, we presented the discussion section, highlighting the idea of a social and emotional attachment. After this section, we present the final remarks and references.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

The concept of CSR encompasses two main ideas. First, companies have responsibilities that go beyond economic responsibilities. Second, these responsibilities must consider not only the shareholders but also all stakeholders (Swaen, Chumpitaz, & Full, 2008). The majority of the literature on CSR “tends to be descriptive and instrumental with a focus on establishing an empirical relationship between CSR and financial performance (Banerjee, 2018, p. 800). As example, the triple bottom line is considered an instrumental and pragmatic approach toward CSR that include three perspectives: social, environmental and economical (Garriga & Melé, 2004). The first was related to Human Rights and ethical protocols, the second includes the care and protection of the planet with environmental resources and management risks, the third refers to prosperity and economic results for shareholders (Elkinjton, 1998).

Studies from the 2000's decade have shown a relative decline in the capacity of the State to regulate supervisory public policies. Due to the increasing ability of the business to influence society and to operate in regulatory grey zones. This is a debate mainly tackled by the Political Corporate Social Responsibility theory that has been discussing the presence of a business-centered view in our society, particularly decreasing power of nation-states and increasing the power, of MNCs (Joutsenvirta & Vaara, 2015; Scherer & Palazzo, 2011; Scherer, Palazzo, & Matten, 2014; Scherer et al., 2016; Whelan, 2012). Other authors, discussing the human rights responsibilities of business also touch on this changing role of states and companies (Ruggie, 2014). However, most discussions around CSR do not pay enough attention to specific local challenges, even though some efforts in this direction are noticeable (Ehrnström-Fuentes, 2016; Griesse, 2007; Jamali & Karam, 2016; Peña, 2014).

Companies are under many types of pressure – popular, from society, international creditors, NGOs, human rights defenders and others – to contribute to the economic and social development of communities, respecting local arrangements wherever possible (Idemudia,

2011). Local development and sustainability have become key aspects of the debate around the extractive industry (Idemudia, 2009; Keenan & Kemp, 2014).

When we consider CSiR incidents in which companies that got involved used to be considered socially responsible, we realize how difficult is to establish standards for companies' operations. The Samarco dam collapse happened in 2015 in Brazil and caused huge environmental and social impacts, for instance. Years before the tragedy, the company was recognized as the best mining company in Brazil by *Revista Exame* and was the winner of the awards Green Mine Award and the Environmental Award.

A recent study examined how companies shape protests in communities affected by mining. It showed that CSR is affecting individual incentives to engage in collective action, depressing protests. The selective incentives of CSR have increased individuals' perceived costs and reduced the benefits of engaging in collective action against the firm. The study showed that the institutional and discursive mechanisms used by companies shaped the individual cost-benefit calculation of engaging against the company (Haslam, 2021).

Successive patterns on human rights violations by companies' operations are culminating in CSiR. Neither CSR nor SLO literature has been considering these patterns or triggering factors that, likely will lead to a socially irresponsible manner. More broadly, the literature showed the effectiveness and financial benefits of CSR and SLO companies' engagement. Both CSR and SLO literature have addressed issues of corporate power and companies' relationships with communities, but still unaware of specific local challenges (Ehrnström-Fuentes & Kröger, 2017; Votaw, 1973) faced by ordinary communities.

For instance, an incentive for economic diversification in extractive communities should be considered in CSR initiatives. Clearly, mineral deposits are an exhaustible resource and after years of mineral exploration, the mines will be exhausted. However, the economic dependence of local communities, when faced with a predominantly mineral-based economy, is still the rule (Nel, Hill, Aitchison, & Buthelezi, 2003). This relationship often becomes a new form of colonisation, or another "civilising mission" (Adanhounme, 2011), or a new type of imperialism (Khan & Lund-Thomsen, 2011). The idea of the SLO supposed to be accounted for an increased, shared capacity of self-governance from local communities. However, the debate usually ignores the diverse reality in communities situated in the Global South (Ehrnström-Fuentes & Kröger, 2017).

Over the history we have seen cities that became ghost towns (abandoned cities) because the economic activity that supported it has failed. Cities that were affected by high

levels of unemployment and dereliction, usually because it has concentrated its economy in extractive industries or had human-caused disasters such as nuclear disasters.

Following, a short revision of the concepts of CSiR and SLO is presented.

### **Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR)**

CSiR is an emergent and growing subject area (B. Jones, 2013). Studies shows Armstrong (1977) as the first author to promote an idea about the concept of social irresponsibility (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013).

According to (Armstrong, 1977, p. 185) “a socially irresponsible act is a decision to accept an alternative that is thought by the decision maker to be inferior to another alternative when the effects upon all parties are considered”. It revolves around companies being irresponsible through its stakeholders and not putting anything back into the local community, causing harm, or not trading ethically (B. Jones, 2013).

Although there is no agreement about what corporate social irresponsibility is (Armstrong, 1977), it is not difficult to identify socially irresponsible companies. Examples that come across include Enron, Arthur Andersen, Philip Morris and Union (Bansal & Kandola, 2003). Indeed, there is some ambiguity about the concept of CSiR because firms may be operating in a legal way, but they do not see broad social role in their operation (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013).

Some authors have defined CSiR as intentionally strategies and decisions involving negative effects to identifiable stakeholder or the environment (Keig et al., 2015; Küberling-Jost, 2019). While others have defined as a cognitive structure of culpability attribution derived from what the observer consider as harmful or guilty evidence. It demonstrates how subjective is the understandings of firm behavior, and how social identity affects reactions to CSiR (Lange & Washburn, 2012). Consequently, an act would be irresponsible if a vast majority of unbiased observers would agree that this was so” (Armstrong, 1977, p. 185). However, according to Lange and Washburn (2012) the attributions of culpability would less likely occur if the victims of CSiR have a different identity than the observer or if the company shares the same identity of the observer.

Scholars have hypothesized that retaliation against corporate social irresponsibility (CSI) is more likely to occur when observers share the social identity of the victims. In other words, social identification can reinforce feelings of sympathy towards the victims and anger towards the corporation (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016b). Therefore, cases of CSR and CSiR are interpreted as psychologically different from each other. While CSR may benefit the observers,

incentivizing then their reciprocity (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009), CSI would trigger justice evaluations and punishment (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016b). In an extractive community, for example, the population's social identification with the company can reduce punitive intention, and blame attribution (Pires et al., 2020).

For Campbell (2007, p. 951) CSiR is a “minimum behavioral standard with respect to the corporation's relationship with its stakeholders”. Moreover, according to *Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility*, CSiR “can be defined as a business doing wrong in relation to the environment, community, society, ethics, and business practices”. It is when things go wrong in relation to profitability, the environment, and people (customers, suppliers, or employees). In summary, CSiR would occur if a manager makes a decision that is either unethical in terms of the manager's personal values, or inferior to other options when considering the effects upon all parties (Armstrong & Green, 2013).

Due to environmental and interest conflicts between native communities and extractive industries, many mining companies are aware to CSR as a strategy to minimize their negative effects. Companies are looking for non-market strategies to improve profits, public perception of the industry, and to obtain and maintain the social license to operate (N. M. Smith, Smith, Battalora, & Teschner, 2018).

### **Social License to Operate (SLO)**

SLO is a term “originally coined to draw the attention of mining companies to stakeholder issues” (Boutilier, 2014, p. 263). It “can be defined as a set of concepts, values, tools and practices that represents a way of viewing reality for industry and stakeholders”(Nelsen, 2006). According to Boutilier (2014), the emergence of the concept of “social license” took place in 1818 in a book called “A World without Souls”, by John W. Cunningham, that used the term with the meaning of ‘excessive freedom or licentiousness’. However, James Cooney, a mining executive in 1997, conceived the contemporary usage of the social license with the meaning of formally granted permission. Nowadays, the use of social license suggests that communities also have authority in granting permission or licenses.

In the mining sector, local communities and their demands are understood as agents of governance that give legitimacy to mining operations (Prno & Slocombe, 2012). The SLO refers to ongoing approval of the community (Thomson & Boutilier, 2011). SLO can also give competitive advantages to a company (Nelsen, 2006), and increase the acceptance of future projects. The emphasis on the political and social support of industry in society is affecting even small mining companies that are recognizing the need for the social license, even those

that have the intention of to sell their operations to the majors (Henisz, Dorobantu, & Nartey, 2014).

The social license to operate is not a norm, as it is not law, it is not written on paper and does not provide for legal penalties. The concept has been developed around the context of the mining industry of the Global North and has less significance in other contexts (Ehrnström-Fuentes & Kröger, 2017). Local communities tend to suffer pressure from both governments and companies, with the media playing an important role in amplifying or silencing grievances (Ehrnström-Fuentes & Kröger, 2017). However, as this paper will show, parts of the local community also pressure those who are against the extractive industry, and that support goes beyond the employees and those living within the direct economic influence of the company (Adanhounme, 2011).

There is a critique of the legitimacy of corporate actions in the construction of human rights commitments to victims who have been abused (Deva & Bilchitz, 2013). In an attempt to earn accountability, credibility, flexibility and capacity for stakeholders and industry the SLO has the proposal to create a committee to negotiate and hear all of the parties involved (Nelsen, 2006).

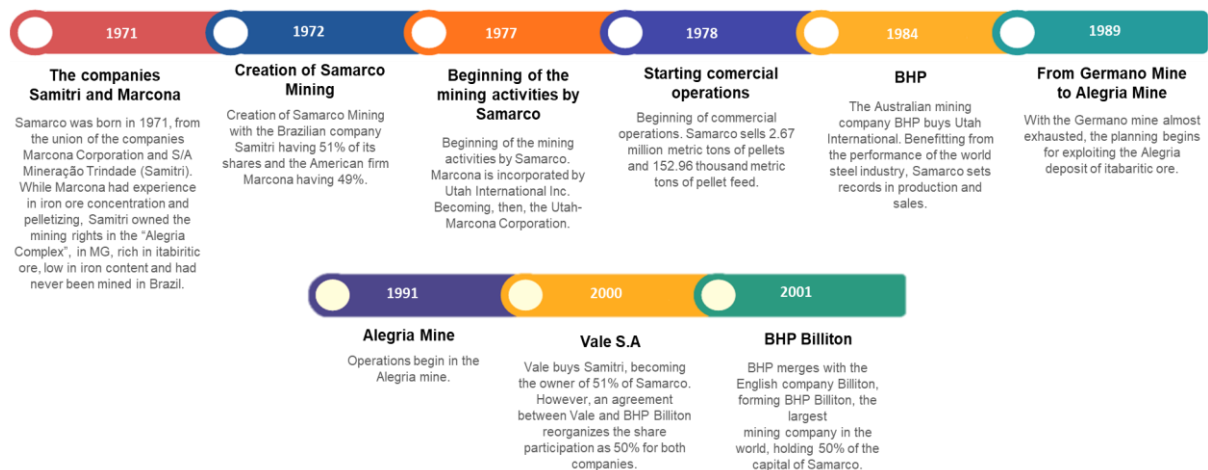
A project requires continuous approval or broad social acceptance from the local community and other stakeholders to obtain a social license (SocialLicense.com, 2018). The components of the Social License comprise the community and stakeholder perceptions of the social legitimacy and credibility of the project, and the presence or absence of true trust (Boutilier, 2017; SocialLicense.com, 2018).

The first component, that is, social legitimacy, consists of the local ‘rules of the game’ this is the established social, cultural, formal and informal norms of the community. Social legitimacy improves engagement with the members of the community and provides information to the project. The second component, that is, credibility, is the capacity of a project to be credible, providing true and clear information to the community. Credibility can be established and maintained through the formal responsibilities, rules and roles of a company within the community that are negotiated, defined and consolidated. The third component is the trust that corresponds with psychological identification, it is also when the company goes beyond and creates experiences in which the community can collaborate. The trust facilitates working together, generating experiences, from which trust can grow between company and community (SocialLicense.com, 2018).

Following, we presented the methodological procedures utilized in this paper.

## Methodology

Samarco activities mainly involve iron ore processing. Its main product is iron ore pellets, a raw material used in the fabrication of steel. The company was founded in 1977 and nowadays is a joint venture between BHP Billiton (Anglo-Australian) and Vale S.A (Brazilian). Samarco is a privately held company that operates in the mining industry and has operational units in both Brazilian states of Minas Gerais and Espirito Santo. Following the figure 10, shows Samarco shareholding in a timeline.



**Figure 10.** Samarco shareholding structure in a timeline.

**Source:** Adapted from Euclýdes, Fonseca e Pereira (2019)

From 2005 to 2014 Samarco expanded its operations, having finished in 2008 the construction of a new tailings dam called "Fundão" (this will be better explored in the 2nd paper of this dissertation). Aiming a strategy of growth and consolidation in the world market of iron ore pellets and due to the volatility of iron ore prices, Samarco invested in the Fourth Pellet Project (P4P). The 4th Pellet Plant Project aimed to increase by 37 % of Samarco installed capacity, achieving the level of 30.5 million tons of iron ore pellets per year. The P4P environmental licensing process, started in 2008, was concluded in April 2011, with approval of the Installation License of the fourth pelletizing plant in Ubu (ES). Originally scheduled to be delivered in January 2014, the Project had schedule changes (Samarco, 2011).

The involvement of Samarco with an episode of CSiR is likely linked with its project of operational growth and consolidation in the world market of iron ore (Ministério Público Federal, 2015). Despite having obtained the necessary licenses, according to the Brazilian legislation, investigations on the case showed that samarco significantly changed the structure of the projects. Consequently, the security of the dam has been put at risk (Phillips et al., 2018).

In 2008 Samarco finished the construction of a new tailings dam, but in 2009 problems with its drainage system was detected. Years later, in 2015 November 5<sup>th</sup>, this same dam called as “Fundão Dam” collapsed. Located in the city of Mariana approximately 30km far from downtown, the mud tailings first reached the village of Bento Rodrigues. The disaster caused environmental damage and killed nineteen people, affecting many families in the town of Mariana and other localities along the Doce River. Data from the company shows that a total of 32.6 million cubic meters of mining tailings was sent into the environment (Samarco, 2016c).

This case exemplifies how CSiR is a complex process and it does not happen overnight. Moreover, it allows us to describe how the sequence of conditions and events can lead companies to conduct their operations in a socially irresponsible manner. While mining companies have been investing in strategies of CSR and SLO they still have a questionable reputation regarding social responsibility (Kapelus, 2002). Hence, the Samarco dam collapse case is an utmost example that makes it possible to explore the ambiguities and tensions on companies’ relationship with local communities.

Following an iterative process of qualitative data collection, we chosed a single case study as the research design (Stake, 1998; Yin, 1994). This choice was based on theoretical and analytical ground to be particularly fruitful for the understanding of the Samarco dam collapse as a CSiR case. The iterative process refers to systematic, repetitive qualitative data analyses that were carried out, ensuring that information-rich participants or other pieces of evidence were included in the study (Mills et al., 2009). To achieve aspects of trustworthiness of the data (Corley & Gioia, 2004), validity and reliability of interpretation (Merriam, 1995), we attended conferences and getting peer expert reviews. We presented initial thoughts in seminars engaging with other researchers non-involved in this project. We chatted with non-expert seeking to understand how congruent our findings were. In addition, we applied triangulation using multiple sources of data.

It was taking several steps to ensure the trustworthiness of our data. We managed our data utilizing the Excell software as a supporting analytical tool. It allowed us to code main sentences and phrases in a spreadsheet. For each type of data, it was created an excel document composed by two spreadsheets. In the first spreadsheet, it was possible to organize the phrases into codes and domains. In a second spreadsheet, we took notes linking the sentences with theories.

In this research we used data collected from four different sources. Firstly, one of the researchers spent eighteen days in the field. Secondly, the document produced by the Federal Prosecutor was read assumptively to gather secondary data. Third, twenty-three

editions of the newspaper “A Sirene” (The Siren) were analyzed. The newspaper was named after the lack of a siren alarm that could have alerted the inhabitants of the Bento Rodrigues community. Finally, a netnographic study (Kozinets, 2010) was conducted of a Facebook group that was created to share pieces of information from the reality post-disaster.

During immersion in the field in July 2017, one of the authors of this paper went to the city of Mariana. The objective was to have direct contact with the victims and the local landscape after the accident. The author accompanied four events and meetings on the Fundão Dam Collapse that lasted between two to four hours. These events were recorded in notes and memos that were later analysed as part of the field diary.

Over the same period, nineteen interviews were conducted, with anonymity guaranteed to the participants. The interviews involved unrecorded conversations with five representatives of the stricken community; one member of the technical assistance and legal team for the community; the public prosecutor responsible for the indictment of the case; two religious leaders; five representatives of the Mariana municipal government and five representatives of the Renova Foundation, which is responsible for remedying the damage caused, were also interviewed.

The interviews ranged from thirty minutes to one hour. 'Additionally, participant observation was noted in a logbook. The material was later codified and organized. This was then analyzed to allow the construction of meaning from the data.

The second strategy was the detailed reading of the denouncement by the Federal Public Prosecutor (MPF complaint) in September 2017. The Denunciation by the MPF is a 272-page document. It judicially characterizes the Fundão Dam Collapse as a crime. After the examination of police enquiries, 22 people and 4 companies (Samarco Mineração S.A.; VALE S.A.; BHP Billiton Brasil LTDA.; VOGBR Recursos Hídricos e Geotecnia LTDA) were denounced. The document includes parts of risk assessments, fragments of their annual mining plans, both from the economic recovery plan and from management and sustainability reports, among other Samarco company documents.

The third strategy was the analysis of the local newspaper “Jornal A Sirene” between February 2016 and February 2018. The newspaper is produced by the community directly affected by the incident and represents their desire to be heard. Each month, they publish a new edition, which reports on difficulties, features clarifications for communities, exchanges of experiences between former neighbours and denunciations of Samarco and its parent companies. Thus, the data gathered in this research is vast, representative and diverse. It

allows for the elaboration of analyses that could contribute to the understanding of the affective licence, and how this debate affects those who were directly hit by the catastrophe.

Finally, the fourth strategy was netnography. Technology can be important for the creation of socio-cultural assumptions. The online social space has been increasingly explored by researchers as they emphasize the diversity and authentic cultural properties of online communities. Additionally, members of the social group develop an ability to express nonverbal cues in written form, placing cues of affection, affiliation and other types of communication (Kozinets, 2010; Rice & Love, 1987).

The data collected was from a social community whose name is #UmMinutodeSirene (#OneMinuteOfSiren). We joined the group in the month of October in 2017, after being accepted by a few gatekeepers. We then analyzed all earlier posts and other interactions. At the time of the survey, the virtual community had just over two thousand members. The data totalled 1100 pages in PDF format. The material was organized and analyzed in December.

Netnography is a qualitative and interpretive research methodology that seeks to adapt traditional ethnography for the study of social media. However, it adds specific practices such as becoming a member of a virtual community, following threads and discussion forums, and also manipulating the large amounts of data available in cyberspace, contextual data analysis, and ethical issues in the adoption of research procedures (Kozinets, 2015).

This research project was approved by the ethical committee of the institution with which the authors are affiliated. As ethical procedures, the authors guaranteed the anonymity of the research subjects. Moreover, we followed The Ethical Guidelines for Internet Research. The request for consent for the observation of participants could be destructive to the very interaction that the researcher wanted to study because it could diminish interaction between the members. It was then decided to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of personal data, dividing the internet quotes into two or more, avoiding the use of photos or videos that could trace the identity of informants and third parties. Additionally, the results of the research are going to be shared with representatives of the group researched (NESH, 2014).

Our final data gathering is illustrated in Table 4.

Type of Collection	Where it was collected	Description of the data collected
<b>1st data collection</b> <b>Field immersion</b>	18 days in the field, visiting the city of Mariana and its village of Bento Rodrigues Village and Paracatu de Baixo. Another city was visited was Barra Longa.	19 interviews
		Participant observation Field diary
		The interviews, field notes, and memos were doing in the Portuguese Language. One of the researchers translated to the English language the quotes used in this paper.
<b>2nd data collection</b> <b>Documentation of the Prosecutor</b>	From Federal Public Minister complaint:	Legal document of investigation.
	273 pages of the denouncement	The complaint was made by the commission of inquiry of the disaster. In this document was indicted twenty-two people and four companies for the dam failure.
	Internal documents made public in litigation.	
	Communication and reports seized at company offices.	The intention was observing official documents seized at the company's headquarters, as well as analyzing the memorandum by the commission of inquiry that legally incriminated people and companies.
	Whistleblowers' conversations intercepted by the Brazilian Federal Police.	
		The second intention was having an accurate reading of the memorandum, observing how prosecutors understand and characterized the disaster.
	First access in September 2017	
		The MPF complaint has written in Portuguese. One of the researchers translated the quotes used in this paper.
<b>3rd data collection</b> <b>Documentary</b>	A Sirene newspaper website	25 editions of A Sirene from February 2016 to February 2018.
		Field diary
		The newspaper was written in the Portuguese Language. One of the researchers translated to the English language the quotes used in this paper.
<b>4th data collection</b> <b>Documentary</b>	Observation in an online social network. A Facebook group whose name is #UmMinutodeSirene (#OneMinuteOfSiren).	1100 pages in PDF format
		Netnography immersion and field diary
		The post on Facebook was written in the Portuguese Language. One of the researchers translated to the English language the quotes used in this paper.

**Table 4.** Data collection

An iterative and integrative process was applied to the data analysis (B. G. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Spradley, 1980). It consists in a systematic exam to determine the understandings, cultural meanings and the relationship between the parts and the whole. Similar to the processing of pieces information gathered in an ethnographic interview (Spradley, 2016). In the analysis process, the researchers read the material at least three times, observing four tasks; domains, taxonomy, components, and themes.

The domains are categories of cultural meaning. The researchers reviewed all the material to look for cultural symbols, the domains can include semantically related categories, given the term taxonomy. Taxonomies are conceptual constructs derivatives of semantic relationships between words. The analysis of components and themes emerges from the domains and taxonomies and is based on a reflexive, interpretative and analytical task that aims to understand the cultural meaning of the relationships observed in the field as well as the development of a theorization of what was analyzed. In the entire analysis we found 30 domains and 107 taxonomies, but to answer the research question of this study we only selected 1 domain and 3 taxonomies. This coding process was inspired by grounded theory (Rodrigues & Barros, 2020), adhering closely to the guidelines of constant comparison techniques. The data were labeled with codes and themes, described into domains, taxonomy and components. During this process, they were clarified and refined until the researcher achieve “a clear grasp of the emerging the emerging theoretical relationships and additional failed to reveal new data relationships” (Corley & Gioia, 2004, p. 184). Our final data structure is illustrated in Table 5. Data analysis, codes, and quotes. It summarizes the coding process into domain and categories on we have built our model of social and affective identification of a local community toward the company.

Quotes from the data	Categories	Domain
<p>“Mariana is a city whose history is based on mining activities [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene”]”.</p> <p>“The history of Mariana is also a history of searches for minerals such as gold and other forms of natural resources exploitation [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene”]”.</p> <p>“The city of Mariana as we know it today would not exist without mining activities [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene”]”.</p> <p>“Mariana is facing a crisis in its own history and identity. If it was by the exploitation of its minerals resources that the city has born and grown, now this is the reason Mariana is suffering, too [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene”]”.</p> <p>“Many citizens are defending [Samarco] because the company was considered as “socially responsible” [retrieved from an interview with a member of the affected community]”.</p>	<b>Community ties</b>	<b>Social and Affective Identification</b>
<p>Mining activity is the mother of the State of Minas Gerais. [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene”]”.</p> <p>Before Samarco be purshed by Vale, the company was considered the best mining company. Particularly, in terms of safety, in relation to payment of employees [retrieved from an interview with a member of the affected community]”.</p> <p>“The mines located in Mariana still have almost one hundred years of iron ore to be explored. So, even if the company allegate judicial failed, closing its national registration (CNPJ), ‘Samarco’ shareholders will simply open another company, but they will never leave this place. [retrieved from an interview with the affected technical assistance]”.</p> <p>People are divided between supporting the company and fighting for the rights of those affected. The supporting Samarco comes from the necessity because of its economic importance. But I don't really understand where it comes from the necessity of a mobilization to ‘Stay with us Samarco’ [Fica Samarco in Portuguese]. Because there has never been a movement for ‘Bye-bye Samarco’. What the affected people want is only the defense of their rights. There is a demand for mining operations with more respect to the laws, the environment, and life in general [retrieved from an interview with religious leader]”.</p>	<b>Ambivalence in paternalism and business custody</b>	<b>Social and Affective Identification</b>
<p>Mariana’s economy and development has depended on mining activities. [retrieved from an interview with the affected technical assistance].</p> <p>“Minas Gerais became a 'hostage' of mining operations. It is a dangerous relationship. The state has developed economically from the activity, but experts criticize total dependence on the sector.’ [retrived from netnography observation of the Facebook group].</p> <p>“Mariana’s total income is around 93% dependent on the mining operations. [retrieved from an interview with representatives of the municipal government of Mariana]”.</p> <p>“The governments and the State are submissive to mining companies. [retrieved from an interview with the affected technical assistance]”.</p>	<b>Triggers of the economic dependence</b>	<b>Social and Affective Identification</b>

**Table 5.** Data analysis, codes, and quotes.

## Findings

To describe the Samarco dam collapse case allowed us to analyze the social relationship established between the mining company and the local community. Through coding and data analysis processing, it was possible to identify cultural and identity symbols shared between the members of the social structure under analyses. The interpretations driven from the analysis suggest that there is a strong social and emotional attachment of the community towards the mining activities, particularly with the Samarco company. In some times, this social attachment influenced a less punitive intention regarding the company guilty (Pires et al., 2020):

“Mariana's Mayor called the shutdown of Samarco mining company as the second tragedy in Mariana. It was in front of almost two thousand people, most of whom are shown as favorable to the mining company's return that the Mayor did a speech. He mentioned little about the company's responsibilities after the tragedy such as the fulfillment of repairs to the affected residents and the environment, and maintenance of the current jobs in the municipality. This month [December of 2016] Samarco concluded the voluntary dismissal of about 900 employees [retrivied from netnography observation of the Facebook group, page 736]”.

In this quote, the Mariana Mayor did a speech to a public audience about the return of Samarco operations. This quote illustrates a less punitive intention due to an emotional attachment that legitimizes forms of domination - including economic, social, and cultural. This influences a political dependence towards the company because, in the company presence, people feel safe. In contrast, without the company, a second catastrophe emerges. In the Mayor's words, there are two tragedies happing, the first was the dam burst and the second was the Samarco shutdown. As a consequence, in the city of Mariana, there is a mobilization called "Stay with us Samarco: yes for justice, no for unemployment" [Fica Samarco: Justiça Sim, Desemprego Não, in Portuguese]" that are protesting in favor of the return of Samarco operations. Since the disaster, the company was not operating. As many citizens of Mariana and local businesses have an income based on the company operations directly or indirectly, the city has faced an economic disruption. As Mariana's Mayor said:

We are grateful to God for the natural resources in our city. We recognize the importance of mining activities. We know the benefits in the economy and in the quality of life.

In this quote, we noticed feelings such as “gratitude” that come from the usage of the word “be grateful” referring to genuine emotion (Clore, Ortony, & Foss, 1987). The message linked this emotion to the notion of being in a mining town. In other words, the author

of the message is being grateful to God because his city has natural resources that can be explored by the extractive industry. The idea behind the "mining town" title is closely linked with an expectative for a greater financial resource to the municipality, more employability for citizens, and higher income in a local business. As one internet user said:

“There is a need for Samarco to act sensitively and transparently in relation to the accusations that have been directed against those affected people at Mariana. It needs to be clear: the affected people are not responsible for the shutdown of the company's activities, for the damages caused to the city's economy or for the dismissal of employees [retrivied from netnography observation of the Facebook group, page 837]”.

This quote illustrates how soft and subtle the local criticism against the company is. Studies have shown a marginalization and stigmatization of the Bento Rodrigues and Paracatu de Baixo communities because of the shutdown of Samarco. Many Mariana citizens have attributed the economic chaos in the city to the directly affected community – rural communities who lost their houses and farms buried by the mud tailings (J. Pereira, Rodrigues, & Olete, 2020; Sandeville & Makaron, 2017).

Our analysis shows that the communities economically based on the extractive industry can develop an affectionate relationship towards the companies through an emotional exchange. The energy that comes from the positive emotions can help to give meaning to life, organizing sensations, resulting in a sense of security. Emotions are internal events that occur within an actor and that stem from conditions of external events, thus emotions are likely to be produced when two or more people exchange valued outcomes, for instance, goods and rewards among others. Emotions also can be produced towards an organization (Lawler & Thye, 2006). In our daily life, some examples are home, church, schools, jobs among others. In the social structure under analysis, we can observe good and bad feelings toward the company. Especially after the CSiR event, when we consider changes in the social structure, the feeling of belonging, as well as the lack of something, was constantly emphasized by the affected community.

“The local community of Paracatu is miss its small local businesses and grocery stores... We are miss everything that made part of our ordinary routine... Homesickness is a feeling present in our life now [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene”, edition of February 2018, page 15]”.

In this quote, the community of Paracatu de Baixo (second most affected village) stated how they miss their normal life. The CSiR event caused a huge disruption of daily lives, many affected people are living in houses rented by the company, through Renova Foundation.

This foundation was created through a legal agreement between the perpetrators and governments, with the main purpose of compensating the victims.

We, the affected people, are not against the return of the company operations [Samarco]. We just hope that the mining companies change their way of operation to do not cause harm to rivers and fauna nether kill peoples. I am an affected individual from Bento Rodrigues, and I lost friends in this tragedy. [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene”, edition of January 2017, page 1]”.

To defend themselves against possible stigmatization due to the company shut down, those affected constantly reinforce that they are not against mining activities. The CSR and SLO are composed of social legitimacy, credibility, and trust in a company project by the members of the community. Thus, we propose a more critical approach to these phenomena through the addition of an affective dimension. The affective dimension suggests that companies can reinforce good feelings of gratitude, trust, safety, love, justice among others, and also bad feelings such as fear, injustice, revenge, and punishment.

Saraiva (L. A. S. Saraiva, 2009) points out that affective dependence is one of the faces of the mining activity. It is reflected in a relationship of love and hatred that is established in several layers of society. It happens especially, but not only, between employees and other members of the local community (Adanhounme, 2011). The city of Mariana is highly dependent on mining. An economic dependence that has also spread to the social, cultural, political, and affective spheres of this society (Coelho, 2012; Sandeville & Makaron, 2017; L. A. S. Saraiva, 2009).

There are three main categories to the model of social and affective identification of a local community toward the company that emerged from Samarco dam collapse case study (Table 5). They were (1) Community ties, (2) Ambivalence in paternalism and business custody, (3) Triggers of the economic dependence. To better understand why each of these categories and the domain emerged, it is important to gain a historical sense of the relationship between Samarco mining company and the local community, and as it existed prior to the dam collapse. Through this model we highlighted tensions and changes in the community relationship with the company that got involved in a CSiR episode.

- **Community ties: “We are a Mining Town”**

Mariana is situated in the "Iron Quadrant" (*Quadrilátero Ferrífero*, in Portuguese), a region that is responsible for 73% of the Brazilian production of iron ore (Bradesco-DEPEC, 2017). It is also known as a metallurgical zone, where historically mining and metallurgical

activities are the foundations of the regional economy (Falcão, Porto, & Alcântara, 2016). Mining activities organize the economy and the society of most of the cities and villages in the iron quadrant. This region is rooted in the political, economic, social, cultural and ideological relations that define mining activities as the main form of its resource appropriation (Galafassi, 2009). As it was stated in an open letter from the Federal University of Ouro Preto, Department of History:

“Our region has been built in close relationship with mining activities since the colonial period [retrivied from netnography observation of the Facebook group, page 977]”.

The great concentration of iron ore in the mountains of Mariana makes the activity very attractive. Resource extraction has had a controversial role in Latin American development (Veltmeyer, 2013). Historically, the state of Minas Gerais supported extractive capital, both through the creation of laws and the granting of licenses that benefitted mineral exploitation. That was also the case in the state of Minas Gerais and the city of Mariana. The first gold discoveries in Mariana date from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Vasconcelos, 2006). The city experienced an economic boom after the discovery, and throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Flausino, 2006):

“Mariana is known as the prime city of Minas Gerais, its origin dates to the end of the 17th century. It was the first town, city, and capital of the state of Minas Gerais. In the 18th century, it was one of the largest gold-producing cities for the Portuguese Empire. The city's historic architecture marks the contrast between the wealth of the gold cycle and the exploitation of slave labor in the colonial period [retrieved from field notes of a conversation with a city councilor during an open meeting, July 2017]”.

The exhaustion of some of its gold reserves led to a period of decline in its development. Nevertheless, many inhabitants of Mariana continued dedicating themselves to mining and related business. The creation and growth of the city was based on mineral extraction during the Brazilian gold cycle.

“Mariana has enormous tourism potential, due to its architecture derived from colonial times. But we know that the strongest part of the municipality is mining, we are a mining town [retrieved from field notes open meeting to discuss the post-disaster, July 2017]”.

Nowadays, iron ore is the main mineral explored in Mariana and has been particularly since World War II. Samarco was established in 1977, and since its early years, the company has been one of the largest Brazilian exporters. However, only in 2005, the municipality did begin to collect tax for the activities of the mining company. Samarco was the

largest corporate taxpayer in the municipality of Mariana, even though its operations have been halted since 2015 (Mariana-MG, 2018).

“I am very concerned with the economic issue of the municipality since the Samarco mining activities stopped. We need an alternative to overcome this situation. I have talked a lot about that with the Mayor [retrieved from an interview with representatives of the municipal government of Mariana]”.

Samarco produced 24.9 million tons of iron ore in 2015 of which 97% was in pellets and 3% was of refined iron ore. In that same year, it was also the 12th largest exporter in Brazil, earning R\$ 6.5 billion and generating around 6 thousand direct and indirect jobs (Samarco, 2018). The revenue of the municipality has been falling because of the decrease in the collection of mining royalties (CFEM in Portuguese), interstate goods transfer (ICMS in Portuguese) and of the city taxes (ISS in Portuguese). Also, there has been a decrease in the flow of outsourced companies contracted by the mining company that fomented local commerce.

All the changes in the social structure due to the CSiR event represented a chaotic situation for Mariana citizens. After the Samarco dam collapse, a misconception that the municipality had been buried in the tailings mud was disseminated in the media. The strong images of the mud overwhelming private and historical properties were heavily disseminated by the media:

“‘Mariana is still beautiful’ is an expression that came up shortly after the Fundão dam burst. It was created to counter a mistaken idea disseminated at the time: that the municipality had been destroyed by the “mud sea” of the Samarco company... More than a year after the disaster, the use of the expression ‘Mariana is still beautiful’ is increasingly inappropriate. Not because the city does not have its beauties. The city houses one of the main architectural collections of the country’s colonial history. But because it covers other types of wrongdoing. Mariana remains aimless, amazed, waiting for Samarco to return [retrieved from netnography observation of the Facebook group, page 1081]”.

However, the tragedy happened 30 km far from the Mariana downtown, where most of its historic architecture is located. The catastrophe mainly affected the villages and rural areas of the city. With that, the idea that Mariana was still beautiful and need income derived from tourism (due to the shutdown of Samarco mining company) soon spread. However, there is a criticism that the city Mariana is still hiding under the custody of mining companies. It is avoiding more autonomous and effective decisions about its future that includes greater economic diversification. Following, we described our second category.

- **Ambivalence in company paternalism and business custody**

There is a sense of ambivalence among members of the Mariana community regarding the company's power. Feelings of distrust and fear are mixed with feelings of gratitude for be in a city that has mineral resources. Our results showed that the criticism against the company and its CSiR event are likely to cause tensions in the social structure. Because of that individuals tend to minimize their criticism adopting more flexible and doublethink narrative:

I am not against mining operations or mining companies. I am against imbalance. I am against the bad distribution of profits. I am against living in the present and killing the future. I am against greed. Nothing without balance remains standing. We urgently need to balance mining with the environment. [retrivied from netnography observation of the Facebook group, page 861]”.

In this quote from the Mayor's speech, it was simultaneously accepted two mutually contradictory beliefs as correct. He pointed out that he is not against mining companies but is against imbalance. However, relationships between business, society, and government often involve asymmetric power relationships. This is because power relations are intrinsic to companies' capital accumulation projects. Consequently, companies will have access to greater resources and therefore will probably be the strongest player in the relationship. The relationship established between the community and the mining company already shows an imbalance. Thus, his narrative is a contravention to one's own memories or sense of the reality after the CSiR episode.

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED, 2002) shows that tailings dam failures account for about three-quarters of major environmental disasters related to mining operations. These types of incident culminate in social and environmental catastrophes. Affected communities face a huge change in their living conditions, leading to the rupture of social, affective and historical memories. The mud from the tailings that reaches those communities after the disaster does not cause only economic damage. There is also a social rupture because it represents a rupture of the daily life of the people who live in these places, who have built their history, and have woven their relationship with the world (J. Pereira, Rodrigues, et al., 2020; Sandeville & Makaron, 2017). An opposition was established between those who are defending Samarco returns and those who are defending the

compensation for affected communities. These realities should not be seen as mutually exclusive:

“The lack of imagination, as well as the collective selfishness or the cynicism of marketing obtained at the expense of veiled threats, is what has robbed Mariana of the possibility of a better future. Mariana lives, and the mobilization 'Stay with us Samarco' represents collective selfishness and the lack of imagination [retrivied from netnography observation of the Facebook group, page 872]”.

Although both stances of this tension are not mutually exclusive, what a previous study showed is that most people tended to position themselves on one side or the other (J. Pereira, Barros, & Rezende, 2020). The paradoxical situation that arose in the city of Mariana refers not only to an economic and political loss, but also to the loss of an affective symbol. Criticism against the company it likely means a sense of injustice against a loved one. At the same time, people feel betrayed by the company. How the company can let a catastrophe of this magnitude happen:

"Hi, Dad! How much I miss you! I'm writing to tell you what happened after that November 5, 2015. Our life has never been the same. My mother and sister and I had to relearn how to live; to take attitudes that you were the one who always took. I never thought we would live it all, it seems surreal. We still don't believe it. You always fought for our comfort and well-being. in difficult and happy times. [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene”, edition of February 2016, page 4, letter of a daughter to her father, an employee of a outsourced company, killed by the Samarco dam]

Our interpretation of the data allowed us to observe that Samarco for many Mariana’s citizens is a loved one of their family. Generations of grandparents, parents and uncles worked at the company or at outsourced companies. This sentiment is part of what is named here as an ‘affective licence’ for the operations of Samarco. The city still experiences traces of colonial capitalism based on the dynamics of the extractivism (Gudynas, 2010). The economy of Mariana is heavily dependent on the raw ore extraction.

This made the Fundão Dam Collapse even more of a problem for the city and its inhabitants. Besides the lives and property that were lost, the city of Mariana is also still experiencing a huge economic crisis:

The system of Fundão dam were outside the margins of safety. By taking such a risk, Samarco placed itself, its workers, the affected populations, and the city of Mariana in this danger zone. Much of the municipality's income comes from Samarco's production, but it is also true that the company's profits (in the billions of reais) come from the mineral reserves that exist in the municipality. We cannot forget this logic: this is a two-way track [retrivied from netnography observation of the Facebook group, page 837]”.

The findings suggest that some management decisions seem to have contributed to lowering the cost of maintaining and repairing the Fundão dam, which would consequently reduce production costs:

“Samarco increased its production, meanwhile, the number of resources spent on the safety of the Fundão dam had been decreasing. Moreover, as the production of iron ore and tailings increased, the unit cost (per tms of tailings) decreased even more [retrivied from documentation of the Prosecutor, page 191-192]”

Thus, it could be expected that Mariana's citizens would strongly blame the company for the tragedy caused by this CSiR event. However, the “affective license” diminishes criticism against Samarco. There is even hostility toward the struggle of the affected population and culpability for the fact that Samarco has still not resumed activity:

“The tragedy arose from failures, and today, with the advance of investigations, we can say: failures that border on amateurism. Which is unacceptable for a company the size of Samarco [retrivied from netnography observation of the Facebook group, page 837]”.

Reflectiveness is important when we are seeing many companies acting as political actors (Barros, 2017). It is also necessary to consider the complexity of the economic, political, and social dominance established throughout the years of development carried out by extractive industries. However, to understand the relationship between local communities and mining cities it is necessary to consider them as fruit not only of economic reason but also of the economy of affects. Even if both have developed in an interconnected way. Following, triggers that led to economic dependency were described.

#### - **Triggers of the economic dependence**

Samarco was responsible for some social and public functions in Mariana. The company offered various courses and training for the community and public officials. For example, Samarco offered a course in leadership and management. Some of the courses emphasized opportunities to attract new business to the city, the majority was linked to the supply chain of Samarco (Samarco, 2014).

The company affirmed that promoted those activities free of self-interest. However, the effect was the encouragement of more business aligned with the company needs. Particularly, the company's interests to influence the decisions of public managers. Thus, the dependency on the mining company is increased, and alternatives to an economic diversification are not considered. As a result, the city dependency in relation to the company

was increased. Recognizing the submission of the governments to extractive industries allowed us to understand the power relations in Mariana.

The company also reinforced other ways to influence the community. Training courses such as "Citizen of the future" and the "Environmental education program" were associated with volunteer actions such as "The V Day" and the "Solidarity Tax" that 'fostered people's belief in and admiration for the company' (Samarco, 2014). The Solidarity Tax Program, created by Samarco, encouraged employees to contribute up to 6% of their income tax to the Municipal Council for Children and Adolescents. Thus, the resources were donated by the employees of the company through the Solidarity Income Tax:

In 2012, the engagement of company professionals achieved a record value, around 200 thousand BRL, through the Solidarity Tax Program (Jornal Ponto Final, 2013) [retrieved from field notes from the field immersion, July 2017]".

In 2014 the company was the 10<sup>th</sup> largest Brazilian export company, and its net income was equivalent to 1% of the Minas Gerais state GDP (Ayer, 2017). The lower commodities prices since 2014 (Sanderson, Raval, & Sheppard, 2015) have influenced companies to increase their productivity and cut costs at all levels.

"Since 2013, to face the challenges SAMARCO announced, in its Management Reports a policy of reduction of production costs. It includes efforts on the efficiency of the process, increasing in productivity gains, and austerity in the production cost management... As the iron ore prices have been falling successively since the second half of 2011, from US\$ 180.00/t to US\$40.00/t, in the second half of 2015[retrivied from documentation of the Prosecutor, page 191-192]".

Management decisions were taken to increase production and exports and to reduce fixed costs. This would likely guarantee the profitability of stocks if the iron ore prices continued to fall. As the Brazilian National Department of Mineral Production (DNPM) stated that:

The falling prices of iron ore on the international market are making the operation of companies that have high production costs unfeasible. VALE and its major competitors in the international market (BHP and Rio Tinto) are adopting strict programs of cost reduction and productivity increase. The company has also adopted a divestment program, with the postponement of several expansion projects. (DNPM, 2016). [retrieved from field notes from the field immersion, July 2017]".

Besides an increasing in the production would create more job and revenue, this would led to a larger amount of waste being dumped in the tailings dams. Simultaneously, the mining companies continued squeezing their costs to make their products competitive on the

international market. Management decisions seem to point to the reduction of the budget for the maintenance of the dams. According to the Federal Public Prosecutor (*Ministério Público Federal*, in Portuguese) (Ministério Público Federal, 2015), the projected reductions would amount to almost 10% in 2015. The total cost in 2014 was around 26.2 million Brazilian Reais (BRL), and the projected cost for 2015 was around 23.3 million BRL (Ministério Público Federal, 2015).

When Samarco's activities were interrupted, it was established social and economic tension in the city. The relationship dynamicity between the human being, the natural environment, and social structures was disrupted. Thus, the ordinary life in the villages of Bento Rodrigues, Paracatu de Baixo, and other districts, was affected by decisions made by Samarco (M. Lopes & Biazatti, 2017). The economy of the city was also affected. There was an abrupt fall in its tax revenues with the shutdown of Samarco. Since November 2015 tax revenues in Mariana have been falling. It fell by 31.32% in 2016 and 44.31% at the end of 2017, from a peak of 24.5 million BRL to 17 million BRL (Mariana-MG, 2018).

### **Social and Affective Identification**

Previous study pointed that the perception of the economic benefits provided by Samarco company in the city Mariana, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil reduced the punitive intention about the Samarco dam disaster (Pires et al., 2020). According to CSiR literature, retaliations against corporate social irresponsibility are more likely to occur when observers share social identity with the victims (Antonetti & Maklan, 2018; Lange & Washburn, 2012). However, the reason why some victims and stakeholders begin to minimize their criticism toward companies who got involved in a CSiR event still a gap to be explored. We described the Samarco dam collapse case aiming to understand this lack in the literature.

In 1998, Samarco was the “first mining company in the world to receive ISO 14001 certification for all stages of its process” (Samarco, 2006, p. 20). In 2011, Samarco won a prestigious Brazilian prize for Social Responsibility. According to the sustainability report from Samarco (Samarco, 2011, p. 5), “knowing that we have a strong reputation certainly increases our responsibility to society, but also gives us the confidence to move forward”.

Our data support the idea that there is a social and affective identification of the local community with the company. We demonstrate that it composed of (1) Community ties, (2) Ambivalence in paternalism and business custody, (3) Triggers of economic dependence (Table 5). These findings contribute to a new understanding of emotions toward companies' CSiR events. It is possible to advance the CSR, SLO, and CSiR literature informing an affective

dimension in the relationship with local communities and companies. Through the Samarco dam collapse case, it was possible to describe how local communities' emotions and affections were changing over time. Especially, when the community felt betrayed by the company because of its involvement with a CSiR event.

From these interpretations, we suggest a generalization seeking to advance theories that aiming to understand the company's relationship with local communities. We, thus, suggested the softening of criticisms of the company, resulting in a less punitive intention, comes from the development of an Affective License to Operate. The “Affective licence” is the result of various forms of domination. It may be understood as a form of postcolonial domination (Adanhounme, 2011). It is established from the economic, social, cultural, affective and political dependence on the company. In contemporary times, there is affective capitalism in which accounts and descriptions of the rationality of well-being, the valorization of emotions has made economic relations more affective (Illouz, 2007).

We warn about a need for the company, society, and scientific studies are aware of this affective relationship. Depending on the level of social and emotional attachment, it may develop a harmonious or chaotic reality in the social structure. In addition, this affective relationship can also be one more form of domination and control by large enterprises. In the case under analysis, this ‘affective licence’ granted by the population to Samarco functioned as a legitimizing apparatus in which the company could exercise its capacity to dominate (Galafassi, 2009). Even people heavily affected by the CSiR positioned themselves in favor of the mining operations.

A Sirene newspaper notes that “mining activities was the mother of the State of Minas Gerais”. This phrase reinforces the position of Samarco company in the social structure, sometimes a lovely parent, other times a despot parent. As the main tributary taxpayer of the city of Mariana, the company afforded the community the experience of a relationship of ‘affection and rewards” with the mining company. After the collapse of the Fundão Dam, the ‘affective license’ of Samarco started to crumble. The Collapse as a point of inflection changed the social structure, and the people started to resist the domination imposed by the extractive industries. Therefore, besides the social license to operate (Nelsen, 2006; Prno & Slocombe, 2012; Thomson & Boutilier, 2011) the community also gave to Samarco an affective license to operate. This license was based on the economic, social, cultural, political and affective dependence that the model of economic development had established in the region.

### **Discussion: An Affective Dependence?**

Investigations have shown that Samarco reports of risk assertively predicted the probabilities of the Fundão dam to collapse and its possible consequences. In these documents were estimated about twenty fatalities and one hundred people left with permanent disabilities. In addition, there was a prediction if the dam collapsed, there would be serious impacts on the soil, biodiversity, water resources, and the air, expected to last for more than twenty years. Samarco risk report predictions also considered the social impacts for downstream communities, such as the collapse of social order, serious violations of cultural heritage, and accountability for human rights violations for the company.

The reports also considered reputational damages for the company. It envisaged media reprisals, pressure from NGOs, and mass protests with more than 100 people. The expected legal consequences were the loss of their operating license, foreclosure of the operation, investigation for corruption both in Brazil and abroad. As a financial consequence, the company expected losses ranging from US\$250 million to US\$2.5 billion. Thus, the risk of rupture by liquefaction or from the low capacity of the dam foundation showed scenarios based on the Dam Break Document of 2008 that simulates several scenarios for rupture. The forecasts also included a 2-year shutdown of any activity by Samarco and impacts on its revenue and variable costs. The company also anticipated possible financial impacts and prosecutions that would come from failing to properly implement the dams.

And why even though all the evidence from the judicial investigations, the community has minimized its criticisms of the company? Or why, as the poem in the epigraph of this text suggests, do many citizens of Mariana are seeing their mountains turn to dust (iron ore or pellets) without any shouting?

The findings of this text suggest that over the years an affective license has been developed which justifies the emotional dominance that the company has over the population that is afraid to criticize it. Feelings of gratitude and fear justify this control, which sometimes resembles despotic paternal control. The interruption of business for Samarco started a moment of social and economic tension in Mariana. According to governmental data, more than thirteen thousand people started the year 2017 without work. The number represents 23% of the population. For the coordinator of the National Employment System (Sine), the only hope for improvement is the return of Samarco. "There is hope that the company will start its operations again and generate jobs and income for the region. We also hope that the construction of the new Bento and Paracatu districts will generate great demand for labour" explained the coordinator in a regional newspaper (Jornal Ponto Final, 2017).

Of course, employees of Samarco were not the only ones that lost their jobs. Other employers were also heavily affected, including city hall. Reflectiveness about the capitalist system, income, and wealth inequality has begun to emerge in the newspaper published by the affected population (A Sirene newspaper). They have stated that the "indoctrinated by a capitalist and consumerist system, the Minas Gerais state population, like every other Brazilian, cannot live without the comforts of the modern world and its privileges". Many victims report that they are suffering hostile attitudes on city streets and at events aiming to mediate the situation (e.g a public meeting with the affected community of Mariana, the company, and Federal Public Prosecutor). The affection that the citizens of Mariana have developed for Samarco has shielded the company from part of the criticism it has suffered. Mariana has developed socially, affectively and economically dependent on this type of business. Additionally, the Brazilian economic crisis is exerting pressure on the state coffers, which in turn increases leniency of the government towards the company.

The prosecutor's denunciation considered the Samarco dam collapse as a crime, in the legal instance. Despite all investigations, disagreements over whether the Samarco tragedy was a crime or not are still in dispute by Mariana's citizens. Most citizens do not want to blame anyone. In some circumstances, the event is classed as neither a crime nor an accident. Any word adopted can be synonymous with the choice of one side. There is a paradox between the responsibility attributed to Samarco and the defense of the rights of those affected.

The CSR and SLO literature agree that supposedly, local stakeholders grant social acceptability to mining companies (Ehrnström-Fuentes & Kröger, 2017). However, an extended economic domination may arise (Gudynas, 2010; Kapelus, 2002). Not only commodities and money were exchanged, but affections, feelings, and emotions as well. In the Samarco report of sustainability of 2008, the company described some of its sponsorship - renovations of churches, squares, and other community spaces, donations of toys, painting of schools, among other social functions. In the Samarco sustainability report of 2006, a member of the residents' association from Bento Rodrigues, gave a testimony on how the community was grateful for and proud of the São Bento Church renovation. " "Before the renovation, we were worried about the condition of the roof, which was held up by rotting timbers. Today we are engaged in conserving this asset as much as possible and we are proud to show it to all who visit Bento Rodrigues. I can say in all certainty that Samarco is a partner of the entire community, always ready to help and encourage one and all". This passage exemplifies how emotional exchanges, social acceptability and affects also have integrated the economic exchange systems of the economies dependent on mining.

On the other hand, some of the Samarco former employees and their wives have engaged in mobilization to reinforce the necessity of Samarco returns its operation. They stated that they are fighting for their jobs and their families. However, some of them attended meetings in order to stigmatize and pressurize the affected community into accepting the terms offered by the company. The economic dependence and rupture of the social structure in the direct hit communities do not seem to bother some of the inhabitants of Mariana.

Thus, a large proportion of the population feels that Samarco has already made amends to compensate those who were affected by the dam. They also anxiously wait and hope for Samarco return its operations. This expectation is also shared by government members from all levels and is aggravated by the continuing economic crisis that Brazil has been facing since 2014. Historically, Brazil has had a dependent position in the global economy. “Dependency, understood in its totality, reveals the articulation between external pressures and internal dynamics as part of a world historical phenomenon” (Misoczky & Imasato, 2014, p. 278).

Both views (pro and against Samarco) contribute to the idea of an “affective license”. The CSiR event aroused distrustful views of the company and its management decisions. However, the disaster also highlighted condescending views of the company that helped absolve them of responsibility for the disaster to some extent. These findings are in line with the theory of emotions and social exchange (Lawler & Thye, 1999) and are also an advantage to CSiR theories that aimed to understand social identification and corporate irresponsibility (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016a; Lange & Washburn, 2012; Pires et al., 2020)

### **Moving forward to an Affective License to Operate?**

For a company that has a social license, especially in the mining industry, the community should support its demands for land, water and deforestation (Adams, 2011). Ehrnström-Fuentes & Kröger (Ehrnström-Fuentes & Kröger, 2017). However, this concept does not consider the differences that emerge from contextual characteristics of governments and communities, especially when we between the Global North and the Global South.

The SLO is especially important in the mining business. Due to their large impacts, mining businesses need not only governmental permission (Ranängen & Lindman, 2018), they also have to address complex legitimacy issues arising from challenges common to their operations, as well as some more specific ones (Banerjee, 2018; Idemudia, 2009; Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). Mining has different impacts on society, employment, environment, community relationships, infrastructure and government, housing and others (Martín, Díaz, & Román, 2014), resulting in mixed impacts in all areas of society (Ranängen & Lindman, 2018).

Mining activities are disruptive to the environment because, besides the damages caused by the extraction of minerals, the residue from the process may also include contaminating minerals inducing the formation of chemicals and acids (Adiansyah, Rosano, Vink, & Keir, 2015; Edraki et al., 2014).

Through the Samarco dam collapse, we described a huge human rights crisis. This paper emphasizes the ambiguity around the local community's emotions in the case of the Samarco dam collapse. The population actively mobilized for Samarco to return its operations, because mining is crucial for the economic development of Mariana. We argue that even after a catastrophic event leading to expulsion, exclusion, and death (Banerjee, 2011), a company is still able to keep its social influence, even with an ambiguous status. Therefore, resistance movements must frame new ways of looking at their existence to resist destructive development (Faria, Ibarra-Colado and Guedes, 2010; Banerjee, 2011; Misoczky and Böhm, 2013).

Directly affected victims, named in this paper as the 'affected population', fight against rights violations. They seek the right to be resettled, the right to history, and to reconstruct their lives. On the other hand, indirectly affected victims lost their jobs or faced a reduction in their income from it. This includes not only direct employees but also, for example, people working in city hall, and those working on commercial activities. Those indirect victims have organized mobilizations to demand that Samarco returns operations. This work explores the debate around the conflictive relationship between communities and the extractive industries (Idemudia, 2009, 2011; Kemp *et al.*, 2011; Keenan and Kemp, 2014). This paper brings up new angles from which to analyze the extractive industry and its relationship with local communities. It expands the notion of CSR, SLO and CSiR to emphasize the affective dimension of the relationship.

In Mariana, this social license was intertwined with forms of affection. The economic dependence on the extractive industry contributed to the formation of an affective image around the idea of a "mining city". There is an affective dependence that legitimizes the actions of Samarco in the eyes of society. This is called an "affective license", which in part comes from economic dependence, but not exclusively. This license allows the mining company to enforce its power on its relationship with society, even sustaining its social license to operate despite the disaster. This affective license allows Samarco to expect to continue to operate its projects. It points to a return to profitability in the future but also allows for a more permissive operational environment.

## **Final Remarks**

CSiR incidents have been often characterized as the opposite of CSR, including deviations from legal obligations, violations of human rights, or damaging the environment. In this paper we employed fieldwork and documentary analysis to better understand past conditions and events that led companies to conduct their operations in a socially irresponsible manner. This research generates insights into the field of CSR, SLO and CSiR to inform theory based on emotions and social exchange, highlighting ambiguities, tensions and changes in the community relationship with a company that got involved in a CSiR episode.

We presented three main categories to the model of social and affective identification, they were (1) Community ties, (2) Ambivalence in paternalism and business custody, (3) Triggers of the economic dependence. Due to the nature of their business, mining companies tend to have huge environmental and social impacts where they are established. Usually, they demand huge financial investments, completely changing local environments. It is not uncommon for companies in the extractive industries to become responsible for the provision of social benefits (Adanhounme, 2011; Scherer & Palazzo, 2011).

Samarco has contributed to the economic development of Mariana and its surroundings. However, the community also developed other kinds of dependency on the company. This paper focused on an affective dependence, which though entangled with economic dependency, is not reductive to it. After the Fundão Dam collapsed destroying villages, the Doce River and causing other natural impacts, it was expected that the community would strongly be against Samarco. However, it did not happen. There is a tension between not blaming Samarco for its acts and not ignoring those affected who have lost everything. This stance is mainly based on the notion that a social icon has been broken. The image of a socially responsible company, that took care of the mining city was seriously affected. However, to fully blame the company would make the coexistence unbearable. Not to blame Samarco is to support the return of its operations and the economic and social benefits that would bring. On the other hand, supporting the cause of the families that were directly affected by the disaster sounds like blaming Samarco and advocating for the end of its operations.

The increasing relative size of companies, associated with the changing role of the state, increases pressure on the companies to assume a proactive role in society. Business is coerced into acting responsibly and to assume responsibilities beyond traditional corporate social responsibilities and philanthropic actions, including assuming human rights responsibilities (Ruggie, 2013). Mariana as a society has developed economically, socially,

culturally, and politically dependent on mining. This dependence culminated in another one referred to as affective license.

This license provided Samarco more than a social license for operating (Nelsen, 2006; Prno & Slocombe, 2012; Thomson & Boutilier, 2011). The phenomenon legitimizes the apparatus with which the company exercises its capacity to exert power over the city and its community (Galafassi, 2009). This paper contributes to expanding on the factors that should be considered when discussing the relationship between business and local communities. Although it is necessary to criticize predatory capitalism; it is also important to understand the mechanisms that give legitimacy to the policies and actions taken by companies.

The limitations of this text include part of the data gathering presented because it does not include other affected communities. We limited our analysis to the Mariana community. As we understand that mining has historically been part of the community this can be both a limiting factor in the analysis as well as its main motivation. In addition, there is a lack of interviews with representatives of the mining company.

Through our analysis, we are reinforcing a necessity for companies, society, and scientific studies be aware of this affective relationship. Depending on the level of social and emotional attachment, communities may develop a harmonious or chaotic relationship with companies. In addition, this affective relationship can also be one more form of domination and control by large enterprises.

## **References**

{ This list was omitted to facilitate the reading }

## CHAPTER 5:

*Teach the ignorant as much as you can;  
society is culpable in not providing a free education  
for all and it must answer for the night which it produces.  
If the soul is left in darkness sins will be committed.  
The guilty one is not he who commits the sin, but he  
who causes the darkness.*  
Victor Hugo, Les Misérables

### **PAPER 2 – WHEN DISASTER STRICKES: THE MANIPULATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND TACTICS OF IGNORANCE IN CSIR INCIDENTS**

#### **Abstract**

Studies on Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR) and the Social Theory of Ignorance have been gaining attention in organizational studies. Notably, most of the studies on CSiR have explored ambiguities around the concept and understanding of the phenomenon as the CSR opposite. On the other hand, studies on ignorance have emphasizing how corporations strategically promote ignorance and doubt to achieve their interests. However, little is known about how companies and actors that are at risk of being held responsible may strategically mobilize misinformation about an event of CSiR. Drawn upon these theories and adding a discursive dimension of ignorance in CSiR events, we state that willful ignorance arguments might repel attributions of culpability and blame in the context of organizational disasters. We highlighted that, in CSiR incidents, ignorance plays an important role by creating powerful rhetoric of misinformation. The organizational actors may do so using three tactics of ignorance: (1) denying responsibilities (2) concealing information, and (3) persuading the audience. We used a qualitative single-case study to explore a CSiR case namely, Samarco Dam Collapse. Our contribution extends the work on CSiR and the Social Theory of Ignorance including the notion of ignorance as a discursive process. The results show that organizations can use the willful ignorance for manage their culpability in enterprise accidents or unethical management actions.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Irresponsibility, Ignorance, Culpability, Disaster, Failure, Manipulation of knowledge, Samarco.

## **Introduction**

Scholars have demonstrated that audiences generate discourses to make sense of behavior that transgress society's idea of right and wrong (Antonetti & Maklan, 2017; Lange & Washburn, 2012). When an organization is accused of a transgression, its members may generate discourses aiming to deflect blame. In doing so, actors who are at risk of being held responsible can actively engage in discursive strategies (Roulet & Pichler, 2020). While the audience may go from compassion to retaliation, being in favor of or protesting the company, investigations, and information released about the Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR) case will likely to impact the positioning of the audience.

An emergent body of research has looked at CSiR as when managers make a decision that is either unethical or inferior to other options when considering the effects upon all parties (Armstrong & Green, 2013). Including a minimum and bad behavioral standard with respect to the corporation's relationship with its stakeholders (Campbell, 2007; Sulpey, 2017). It revolves around causing harm, doing wrong in relation to the environment, community, society, ethics, and business practices (B. Jones, 2013). This literature has received increasing efforts from studies in the field of marketing, customer reactions, psychology, business ethics, misconduct, and attribution of culpability.

However, little is known about how companies and actors that are at risk of being held responsible may strategically mobilize misinformation about an event of CSiR. To address this question, we build on CSiR and ignorance theory a model that integrates misinformation and manipulation of knowledge to the process of whistleblowing or trustiness crises.

In this paper, we are seeking to linkage the concept of CSiR to acts that aim to misinform or to encourage widespread ignorance. Because the deliberate engagement of one actor with misinformation to influence other actors to carry out his own will has not yet been related to the concept of CSiR. We state that actors who got involved in CSiR incidents are maximizing all kinds of resources to pursue their preferences at the expense of the others. In doing so, social actors can manipulate the knowledge about something with the sole purpose of asserting your own will. To develop these ideas, we rely on Max Weber's classic definition of power presenting a parallel between social theories of ignorance through the idea of strategic uses of ignorance (McGoey, 2012).

Particularly, we are interested in knowing how cases of corporate irresponsibility can motivate strategic uses of ignorance, negotiating and manipulating knowledge about the event. Through it we are examining relationships between CSiR and ignorance theory, drawing upon the case of the Samarco dam collapse. We employed a single case study to carry out qualitative

data analysis. Through a deep understanding of the case and data gathering of multiple sources of evidence, we did a content analysis based on past decisions of the company until the disaster strikes.

We develop a model of tactics of ignorance and misinformation about an event of CSiR. This model integrates misinformation and manipulation of knowledge to the process of whistleblowing or trustiness crises.

The article is structured as follows. First, we review the literature of CSiR and the social theory of ignorance. We linked CSiR understandings to ignorance as a social construction. Third, we explain our methods, the case, and data collection. Fourth, we show our analysis, developing our model to discuss what we called tactics of ignorance, especially to managing culpability in corporate misbehavior, enterprise accidents, and crisis context. We finalize with the discussion, followed by final remarks suggesting then limitations and possibilities for future research.

### **CSiR and disasters caused by organizations**

Despite the demands for transparency has increased through compliance and governance reports, business interests still make use of disinformation as mechanisms of non-disclosure (McGoey, 2007), especially in cases of CSiR events. People, companies, and governments are likely to do this by deceiving, misinforming, and buying influence from the key actors in order to manipulate the knowledge (M. J. Smithson, 1985).

CSiR has been understood as the opposite of CSR, including unethical behavior, doing bad, self-interest, deviations of laws, firm-induced incidents that appear to hurt the social good (B. Jones, 2013; Kang et al., 2016). CSiR is corporate actions that result in potential disadvantages or harm to other actors. If a violation of law by companies is considered as a CSiR incident such violation is a sufficient condition but not a necessary one for defining CSiR (Lin-Hi & Mueller, 2013, p. 1932). Because firms may be operating in a legal fashion, but without seeing a large social role in their operations (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013, p. 1807).

However, the deliberate engagement of one actor with misinformation to influence other actors to carry out his own will, maximizing the pursuit of their preferences at the expense of the others has not yet been related to the concept of CSiR. In doing so, social actors can manipulate the knowledge about something with the sole purpose of asserting your own will or buying influence from the key actors to manipulate the knowledge. To better understand these ideas let us remind some cases that likely involve misinformation and CSiR.

Recent cases in which people, companies, and governments choose to ignore pieces of information for their own benefit have drawn attention to the media, researchers, and society in general. The U.S pharmaceutical Merck & Co, for instance, removed the Vioxx medication from the market in 2004 after it was linked to the risk of heart attack and stroke. Due to this action, the drugmaker was lauded by the prestigious medical publication "The Lancet" as an example of pharmaceutical practice. However, later, "The Wall Street Journal" published leaked emails indicating that Merck executives knew the risks of the drug for years with underreported side effects, including heart attack (Abel, 2011). Internal documents made public in litigation revealed that Merck skewed the results of clinical trials, (Union of Concerned Scientists, 2017). Thus, despite many warnings, the drug giant took a long path to the Vioxx medication recall (Berenson, Harris, & Meier, 2004).

Another example is the Tobacco Industry that manipulated knowledge about tobacco-related causes of cancer, particularly lung cancer (Oreskes & Conway, 2010; Robert N. Proctor, 2001). According to Coraiola and Derry (2019, p. 233) some corporations engage in forgetting work with the aim of avoiding responsibility for their wrongdoings. Thus, a collective project of social forgetting takes place, resulting in actions of misrepresentations, strategic use of misinformation, and evidence obfuscation to maintaining the specific interests of industries.

In the case of the mining industry, dam collapses have been associated with CSiR events due to the lack of warnings for communities downstream of the dam, lack of transparency and communication, degradation to the environment, crimes and violations against human rights among others (Milanez, Santos, et al., 2016; Milanez, Wanderley, et al., 2016; J. Pereira, Barros, et al., 2020; J. Pereira, Rodrigues, et al., 2020; Pires et al., 2020). Although, "dams have a catastrophic potential" and "mining is a death-dealing activity", accidents could be reduced (Perrow, 1984, p. 232), because the operator error is flagrantly apparent. For example, the Teton Dam disaster in 1976, Idaho, U.S, was considered as an organizational failure, more than an engineering one. The House Committee's reported that the construction of the dam ignored a severe professional's warning that the dam would be not safe. Moreover, a memo indicated that the monitoring effort was faulty, and the conditions underground were not favorable. The collapse of the dam resulted in eleven deaths, but the officials never were sued, neither lost their jobs for it (Damfailures.org, 2019; Perrow, 1984).

When Vajont Dam collapsed in Italy 1963, a commission of inquiry of the disaster indicted ten people for criminal wrongful death. The commission finished the process in 1969. Three of charged people died shortly after, one was released on severe illness, and four were acquitted on appeal, claiming that the sliding was unpredictable (Biswas & Chatterjee, 1971;

Frejus, 2009). In France 1959, a similar charge happened in Malpasset Dam Failure. The chief engineer Andre Coyne was the main accused. He died before the judgment. Probably, he was the unique agent that assumed the guilt for the collapse explicitly. The judge collected the declaration of responsibility for the failure shortly before the death of the engineer (Frejus, 2009; Perrow, 1984).

Marshall (2018) explored parallels between tailings dam failures at the Mount Polley mine in Canada and the Samarco Dam Collapse in Brazil. There are similarities “not only in the contexts and circumstances leading up to the breaches but also in the corporate, governmental and civil society responses afterward” (Marshall, 2018, p. 3). This situation reveals an alarming corporate practice of putting production and profit ahead of safety considerations, ignoring warnings, recommendations, and known structural flaws. In both cases, mining companies ignored numerous warnings about the security of the dams. Despite serious risks, regulatory agencies and governments have still maintained the exploration concession. Although most dam failures are not enigmatic, “once a failure has taken place, it is sometimes a matter for intense debate as to just what happened” (Perrow, 1984, p. 240).

These cases exemplify how dam collapses can be a CSiR concern in society and how many lives can be affected by it. Many of them showed that warnings were ignored all the time. In addition, other practices like falsifying documents regarding the inspection of the safety system, low investment in security, and ignoring critical assessments by professionals. These behaviors suggest an intentional dimension of ignorance associated with CSiR events.

To develop these ideas, we rely on Max Weber’s classic definition of power presenting a parallel between social theories of ignorance through the idea of strategic uses of ignorance (McGoey, 2012). First, according to Max Weber’s power is “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests (Weber, 1978, p. 53)”. Actors have power when they have disproportionately more means to pursue their preferences, and they hold these means at the expense of others (Warren, 1992). Second, ignorance can be a performative resource. Whether sometimes means a lack of knowledge, at other, it means an excuse to not know something. Therefore companies can use ignorance as a management tool (Schaefer, 2018)

In the next section of this paper, we understood ignorance as a discursive process. It is a process based on language and its relationship with social structures. All discourse can be shaped and constrained by social structure (Fairclough, 1992), discourse produced by social actors including companies shape models of responsibility and irresponsibilities. Because the

attributions of responsibility or irresponsibility of organizations depend on social judgments. Therefore, stakeholders evaluate the actions, image, and legitimacy of companies all the time (Lange & Washburn, 2012). They are making social judgments of the company's activities over time. As a temporal phenomenon, it takes place moment-to-moment within and across space and time (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012)

### **To know or not to know that is the question**

Social judgments are sensitive to narratives of sensemaking by organizations (Rayner, 2012). When an organizational disaster occurs, actors are likely to make polyphonic, multiples, and alternatives narratives about the event. Particularly, organizational actors may create a narrative to avoid blame and to exonerate them from their possible fault. They may willfully explore ignorance as a lack of knowledge or non-knowledge. In this section, we highlighted how organizational actors might explore their ignorance seeking to manage their possible wrongdoings in a CSiR incident.

Social theories of ignorance include a variety of studies that goes beyond fields such sociology and the concept of specified ignorance (Merton, 1987). Law with the concept of culpable ignorance (H. Smith, 1983). Management and organization studies with process of ignorance, secrecy mechanism and strategic ignorance (Bakken & Wiik, 2018; Costas & Grey, 2014; Gross & McGoey, 2015; Knudsen, 2011; Mcgoey, 2012; McGoey, 2012; Otto, Pors, & Johnsen, 2019; Roberts, 2013; Schaefer, 2018). Economy highlighting the concept of willful ignorance (Mcgoey, 2007). Finally, psychology with the concept of homo ignorans (Hertwig & Engel, 2016)

Despite a variety of approaches, many scholars believe that the act of not knowing can excuses someone's fault. Therefore, ignorance can excuse someone's fault because it narrows, considerably, the domain effect of culpable action (Rosen, 2003). For Smith (1983, p. 543), "ignorance of the nature of one's act is the pre-eminent example of an excuse that forestalls blame." He uses the example of a doctor who exposed a premature new-born infant to an unnecessary high concentration of oxygen, which caused severe eye damage. The case is known as the infant's respiratory distress in 1954. But, even if the doctor did something terrible but not realized that high oxygen concentration would have this effect, he is not blamed for the blindness of the baby. The author examines whether or not such "culpable ignorance" excuses. He argues that there are occasions when a person's ignorance is itself criticisable because the person should have realized what he was doing.

Moral philosophers believed that there was a distinction between the objective wrongness of action the agent's blameworthiness for performing it. Therefore, "no matter how terrible the act may be from an objective point of view, the agent is not blameworthy if he had an excuse for what he did" (H. Smith, 1983, p. 543). When a person acts from ignorance, he or she is culpable for the act only if he or she is culpable for the ignorance from which he or she acts (Guerrero, 2007; Rosen, 2003). Thus, the full extent of responsibility for wrong actions needs to satisfy the element of knowledge about the fact.

Whereas that ignorance can decrease the responsibility of who misbehaves, individuals can manage their responsibility for their actions using ignorance. It, consequently, reinforces the argument that ignorance is used as an organizational resource or strategic management tool (Mcgoey, 2012; Schaefer, 2018). Issues like responsibility are on the social agenda, which makes it necessary to discuss questions that can overshadow responsibilities. If management and organization scholars, governments, ONGs, society, in general, have concerned about corporate irresponsibility. Therefore, being aware of ignorance and its deliberate use in CSiR incidents should be a concern, too. Because ignorance might restrict the limits of someone's responsibility, and its justification might prove a lack of knowledge about one's misconduct. Thus, if there is not how to know there is no guilt. Ergo, the actors' ignorance opens a gap for the corporation to manage its responsibility. Even though the social actors are behaving badly and with wrongdoing, but they can claim that did not know about anything when indeed they do.

The question of responsibility has essential relevance to the design of political decisions in social institutions. Responsibility has been increasingly debated in society, especially issues linked by human and corporate responsibilities. There is a concern with particular conceptions made through the object of analysis, for example, the liability of citizens, moral agents, corporate regulation, subject or criminal law and so on. Underlying ideas about freedom, voluntariness, choice, self-control composes the contemporary views of responsibility (Lacey, 2001).

Hannah Arendt, for instance, has shown how a man who was neither a monster nor a demon could nevertheless be an agent of the most extreme evil, evoking derision, outrage, or misunderstanding. Everyone could decide for himself to be either good or evil, but the man's conscience would dictate what was right or wrong. For Arendt conscience is a way of feeling beyond reason and argument and of knowing through sentiment what is right and wrong. What has been in doubt is the fact that such a feeling indeed exists, and whether people feel guilty or feel innocent. Nevertheless, these feelings are no reliable indications, they are in fact no

indications at all, of right and wrong. Because guilt-feelings can, for instance, be aroused through a conflict between old habits and new commands. If the old habit is not to kill and the new command is to kill, the demands have become a habit and are accepted by everyone, the same man will feel guilty if he does not conform. In other words, these feelings indicate conformity and nonconformity, but they do not indicate morality. A prime example of a disastrous loss of all feeling for reality is when authorities deny its responsibilities and not even raise their voices in protest. For Arendt there exists a more pernicious evil than the radical evil, it is independent of political ideology and its execution is limitless because the perpetrator feels no remorse and can forget his acts as soon as they are committed (Arendt, 2013).

For Smithson (1985), it is not enough to understand ignorance as purely neglect or distortion. Once ignorance is socially constructed and negotiated like the knowledge, the society need to attempt do not demarcate ignorance as the field of “nonknowledge.” One implicit fact is that sometimes ignorance conceptualizations consists of distortion or absence of “true knowledge” (M. J. Smithson, 1985). That supports the argument that ignorance may obfuscate the bound of responsibility, throwing discussions about willful ignorance into the field of forgetfulness.

Following, we explained the methods, context of research and data gathering.

## **Methodology**

The organization we studied is Samarco S.A mining company, a closely held company in the Brazilian mining sector. Founded in 1977, the company plays a vital role in Brazil's economy. The involvement of Samarco with an episode of CSiR is likely linked with its past decisions on project of operational growth, dams' risks, and security (Ministério Público Federal, 2015). The company is controlled by the Anglo-australian BHP Billiton and Vale S.A. one of the largest mining companies in the world. Its main product is iron ore pellets.

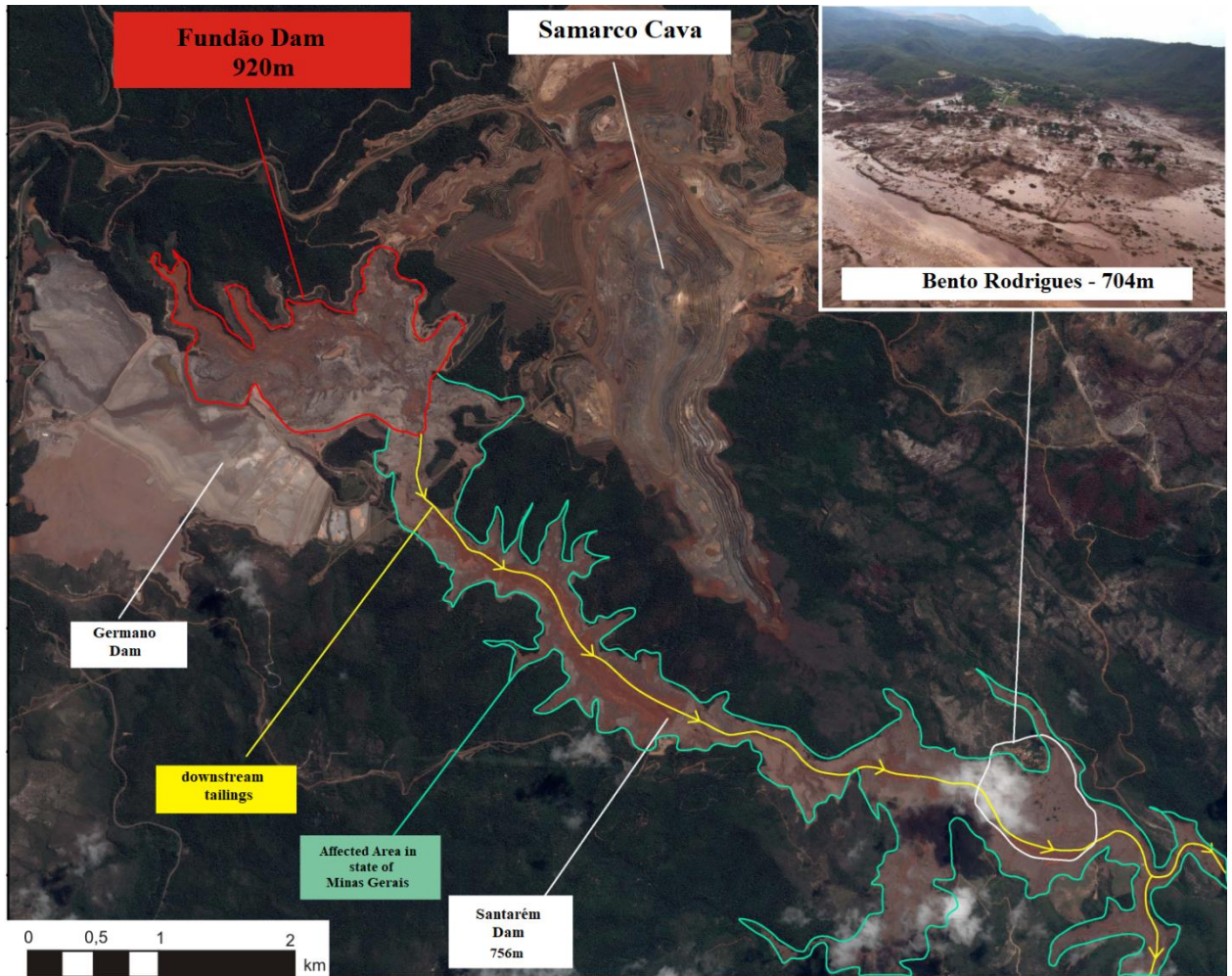
Samarco operates in two Brazilian States: Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo. The company facilities in the state of Minas Gerais include the mining, processing, and concentration of iron ore. The iron ore is drained through a pipeline to the state of Espírito Santo. After, the iron ore transformed into pellets is negotiated on the foreign market. Thus, the company's mining process consists of five stages: 1) extracting the ore in the state of Minas Gerais; 2) separating the materials “beneficiation”; 3) transporting the iron ore slurry (pulp) to the state of Espírito Santo; 4) Producing pellets; 5) Shipping pellets to clients: a) Transformation into steel, and b) Products in everyday life (cellphones, computer, airplanes among the others) (Samarco, 2019a).

The revenue from the company has a substantial and positive impact on the GDP of both states. In some cities of these states, the direct tax from Samarco activities is crucial to the local economy. For example, the directly tax collected from Samarco activities correspond to 54% of the Mariana income, 35% of Ouro Preto income, and 50% of the Anchieta income, Brazilian cities of the state of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, respectively. In Mariana (most affected city by the dam collapse) the indirectly tax collection from Samarco operation is around 90%.

In 2015 the company was ranked as the 12<sup>th</sup> largest Brazilian exporter (Samarco, 2019b), and its exports represented 1% of Brazil's total exports. In that year, the Brazilian exports valued U\$\$ 191 billion, and Samarco revenue export had the amount of U\$\$ 1.9 billion. Unfortunately, in the same year the Fundão Dam, propriety of Samarco collapsed.

Tailings Dams are structures used as a reservoir in the mining process. Mining tailing is the byproduct of mining operations. The mining process can be magnetic or with water. In the magnetic processing mining, the mining is dry, and there are no dams. However, in the mining process with water, liquid substances or a blend of liquids and solids are containment and accumulated. Typically, a dam complex is composed of 1) Processing facilities; 2) Slurry discharge line; 3) Water; 4) Solid waste, and 5) Containment, a blend of materials compacted as clay soil, ore tailings, and rock blocks (Vale, 2019b).

On November 5th, 2015, a tailings dam operated by Samarco collapsed in the city of Mariana. The collapse devastated the village of Bento Rodrigues, about 30km far from Mariana downtown. The dam failure sent approximately 30 million cubic meters of mining tailings to the environment, killed nineteen people and affected the lives of various families along the Doce River. The slurry formed by mining tailings and water continued its flow through the Doce River. On November 21, 2015, the tailings reaching the mouth of the Doce River in the district of Regência, municipality of Linhares (ES) (Samarco, 2016a). Some people who have lost their homes are still without resettlement. Fishers and indigenous peoples were prevented from fishing. Some rely on the company's monthly aid; others might not prove that they were anglers or were affected by the mud tailings somehow. Figure 11 illustrates the first area affected by the collapse.



**Figure 11.** The first area affected by the Fundão dam collapse.

**Source:** Adapted from Silva, Boava, & Macedo (2017).

The importance of studying the Fundão Dam collapse might help to understand what causes it, preventing other failings of the same magnitudes. We have searched an integrated view of many factors that caused the dam failure, above all the unexplored ones. Elements, for example, that can help to understand the involvement of one of Samarco maintainers in a recent and similar case of corporate irresponsibility the Vale Dam Collapse, in Feijão Dam, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

We are using a qualitative single-case study (Stake, 1998) to explore how companies and actors that are at risk of being held responsible may strategically mobilize misinformation about an event of CSiR. The case study was chosen as a research strategy because it can concentrate on experiential knowledge on the case and making considerations about the political, social and other contexts of influence (Stake, 1998). As well, single-case research can exploit a “significant phenomenon under rare or extreme circumstances (Eisenhardt &

Graebner, 2007, p. p.27). Moreover, the case of Samarco's Dam Collapse in Brazil typifies in their macro and micro dimensions what the management and organizational studies can learn with this event. As a macro dimension, we have the context of political, economic, cultural and natural resources in Latin America. As a micro dimension, we have the context of extractive industry, misbehavior in management actions, laws, licenses to operate and others.

This case is a prime example of how CSiR involves a combinations of conditions (Küberling-Jost, 2019) and activities that led to a irresponsible manner to conduct companies' operations (Lange & Washburn, 2012). We initially chose documents and informants who would be most able to inform us on our main research question. Our analysis focused on the attributions of blame resulting from the denouncement presented by the Federal Public Prosecutor (MPF complaint) in September 2017. We established as a unit of analysis Samarco company's decisions of Fundão dam operation and security.

In this paper, we have different sources of evidence such as archives from the company and from Brazilian prosecutors' court, field observation, memos and photos. We utilize the triangulation of data to clarify and validity our perception of the data. The process of triangulation can be considered as the use of multiple perceptions to clarify the meaning, through data gathering, also verifying the repeatability of observation and interpretation (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994).

The three sources of data were classified and organized (Table 6) by its proximity to the unit of analysis in the description of the case. In this way, the sources that have a relation with Samarco's management action get the first place. In the second place is the source about the judicial foreclosure and the company documents about the dam breaking risk and dam security actions (made public in the litigation). In the third place is the field immersion, with the researcher impressions, memos and photos during the field immersion.

*The documentation of the company.* Management reports and financial statements, sustainability report, consolidated interim financial statements were collected in the Samarco S.A mining company website. The company has these documents in both languages English and Portuguese.

*The documentation of the Prosecutor.* It is a denouncement by the Federal Public Prosecutor (MPF complaint) in September 2017. The MPF Complaint has 272 pages and characterizes the Fundão Dam Collapse as a crime. It judicially denounced 22 people and 4 companies. Among the companies is Samarco S.A Mining Company, its maintainers Vale S.A and BHP Billiton Brazil, and the company VOGBR (of water resources and geotechnics)

responsible for the technical evaluation that attested the safety of the dam. The document was written in Portuguese but contains some documentation of the company in English.

*Field observation.* One of the authors started his immersion in the case since 2017. In July 2018, the researcher visited the Samarco operation in Mariana. On this visit to company facilities, the researcher had access to information about dams' security, talking with employees of communication and institutional relationship, monitoring center coordinator, technicians and dam inspector. After the Fundão Dam burst, to assist in the monitoring and safety works of the remaining structures (dikes and Germano and Santarém dams), Samarco is using high-tech tools. The monitoring of structures has done in real-time using radars, laser scanning, cameras, water level meters (piezometers), and accelerometers, among others. The monitoring has reinforced by a visual monitoring room that was set up at the Germano Unit, working 24 hours a day (Samarco, 2016). Detailed notes were taken in a field diary at the time of the visit, the researcher also took photos and collected information leaflets made available by company employees. The information was entered and later organized into excel spreadsheets. Table 6 provides an overview of the data collection.

Source of Evidence	Quantity and Description	What was intended with this collect data?
<b>Documentation of the company</b>	From Samarco S.A mining company: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 9 Management Report and Financial Statements.</li> <li>✓ 7 Sustainability Report</li> <li>✓ 3 Consolidated interim financial statements.</li> <li>✓ 1 Samarco response to the prosecution complaint, in Samarco claries.</li> </ul>	Samarco official documents.  The intention was analyzing pieces of information provided by the Company for the shareholders and stakeholders. Also, to observe the language used in the reports and to study the way how Samarco addresses its stakeholders and the type of information provided.
	First access in March 2019.	Although Samarco is a Brazilian company, most of the documents related to the company did not need translating. The company has these documents in both English and Portuguese.
	From Federal Public Minister complaint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 273 pages of the denouncement.</li> <li>✓ Internal documents made public in litigation.</li> <li>✓ Communication and reports seized at company offices.</li> <li>✓ Whistleblowers' conversations intercepted by the Brazilian Federal Police.</li> </ul>	Legal document of investigation.  The complaint was made by the commission of inquiry of the disaster. In this document was indicted twenty-two people and four companies for the dam failure.  The intention was observing official documents seized at the company's headquarters, as well as analyzing the memorandum by the commission of

<b>Documentation of the Prosecutor</b>	First access in September 2017.	inquiry that legally incriminated people and companies.
		The second intention was having an accurate reading of the memorandum, observing how prosecutors understand and characterized the disaster.
		The MPF complaint has written in Portuguese. One of the researchers translated the quotes used in this paper.
	From field immersion:	Field immersion.
<b>Field Observation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 1 day of visit to company facilities in July 2018 (morning and afternoon).</li> <li>✓ Talking with 5 employees of communication and institutional relationship (1), monitoring center coordinator (1), technicians (2) and dam inspector (1).</li> <li>✓ 11 photos.</li> <li>✓ 4 pages of field memos.</li> </ul>	<p>The intention was to established contact with the field, analyzing a possible context influence on data.</p> <p>In this immersion, it was observed the cultural meanings and was made field notes that related empirical data to explanatory concepts.</p> <p>Empirical contact with the dam monitoring and safety systems facilitated the researchers' understanding of the unit of analysis raised in this research.</p>

**Table 6.** Data Collection

These sources of data were used in conjunction, producing a case study (Yin, 1994). “A case study concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political and other contexts” (Stake, 1998, p. 444). We verify the condition that each source was produced as well as its accuracy comparing the sources of data.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

In this research, the developing concepts were in continuous dialogue with empirical data (Becker, 1998), in an interrelated process. Thus, the fieldwork, data collection, and definition of the research question were made together. One of the researchers is studying the case for at least three years. This same researcher proceeded with all data collecting as well as the first drawn analyses. The company documentation gathering was made online in March 2019, and the Federal Public Minister complaint was also made online in September 2017. The field immersion happened in July 2018.

*Validity.* The data collection started 22 months after the Fundão Dam Collapse (Table 6). We consider that there is no objective truth about the past. For that reason, the time when the data have collected was not a critical issue for the concepts theorized. The intimate connection with empirical reality permitted the development of consistent patterns and validating our theory (B. G. Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The process of the validity of results followed recommendations for a single-case study (Stake, 1998; Yin, 1994). After the selection of the case, it relied on three primary sources and proceeding with interactive and successive rounds of data collecting. A systematic reading has done, followed by emerging interpretations based on the literature frame to interpret the empirical data (Eisenhardt, 1989).

*Coding Process.* After the first round of data collection, we have made a map using an Excel spreadsheet to explore the case of Fundão Dam Collapse in many ways. Subsequently, we did a systematically reading of all the data according to contextual influences that could affect them. The analysis focused on the content of the data through the analysis of the patterns. In this process, words, images, numbers, and charts of the Samarco report, MPF complaint, and field immersion have categorized by codes. Codes are specific categories for grouping the data. A process applied across all the individual quotations. Therefore, coding is to apply categories to the data (Jensen & Laurie, 2017). Codes that pertain to the same phenomenon were grouped to form of big categories or domains. Domains, interpreted from the data, had compared with the theory to build a theoretical explanation in terms of concept, proprieties, and dimensions. A structure for the data interpretation (see Figure 16) was building following 1st-order and 2nd-order analysis (Gioia et al., 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the 1st-order analysis, we tried to adhere faithfully to informant terms in our data structure. In the 2nd-order which is a theoretical level of themes, dimensions, and the larger narrative, we explore the linkage between our empirical context and its particular characteristics of ignorance mechanism.

*Reliability.* As there are many perspectives and many possible interpretations about the data (especially when human behavior is involved), "qualitative researchers are not seeking to establish "laws" in which reliability of observation and measurement are essential (Merriam, 1995, p. 56)". However, it is important to verify whether the results of a study are consistent with the data collected. In this research, we use three strategies to ensure greater consistency. First, triangulation of the data collection, using multiple sources such as documents, field notes, photos, and researcher memos (see Table 6). Second, peer examination, using as a strategy to provide a check that the researcher's interpretation is plausible to the data collected. So, another researcher checked whether the emerging results appeared consistent, helping to aggregate codes that were representing the same ideas and creating a hierarchy for the emergent results.

Third, audit trail, using in order to check if the investigators described in detail how data were collected, how the data were analyzed, how the study was designed. In addition, we present a first draft of this paper in conferences and seminars - getting peer feedback from anonymous reviewers and also researcher from the field that we are contributing.

Our final data structure is illustrated in Figure 12. Data analysis, codes, and quotes. It summarizes the coding process into first and second-order categories on we have built our model of tactics of ignorance and misinformation about an event of CSiR.

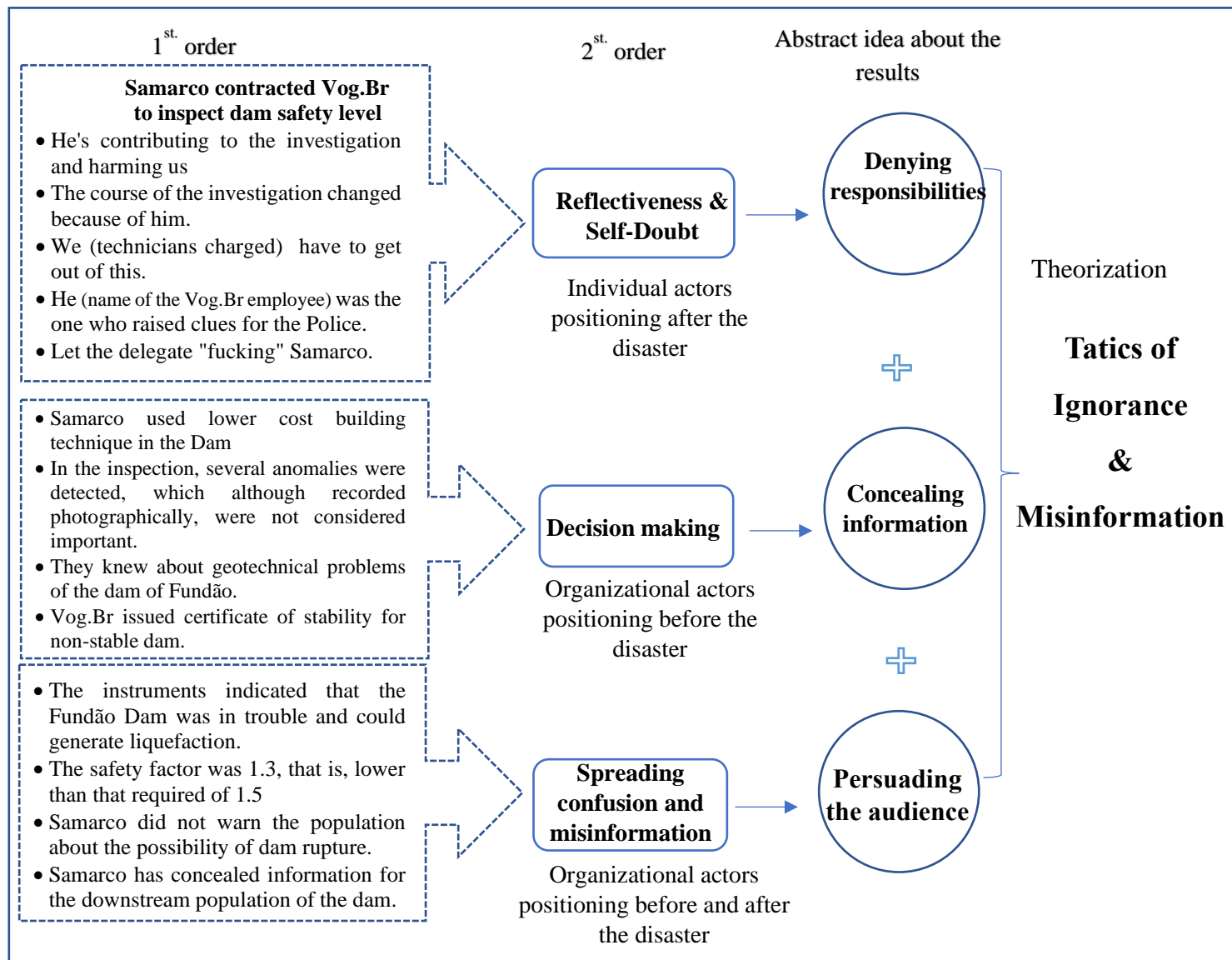


Figure 12. Data analysis, codes, and quotes

## Findings

As illustrated in figure 16, there are three main dimensions to the model of tactics of ignorance and misinformation that emerged from the Samarco dam collapse case: (1) Denying responsibilities (2) Concealing information, and (3) Persuading the audience. To better understand why each of these aggregate dimensions and their constitutive themes emerged, it is important to gain a sense of Samarco dam collapse investigations and storytelling.

The prosecutor office has categorized the Fundão Dam Collapse as a crime and had shown that the companies knew of potential impact, months in advance. The Civil Police conclude their first investigation in February 2016 and suggested the indictment of seven people for murder, and water pollution, and the flood of proprieties — six Samarco workers, among them the CEO, and one from the company was responsible for the technical report that attested to the regularity of the Fundão Dam, VogBr.

“Penalty characterization for relevant omission: It was found throughout the investigations that the accused, acting in the condition of directors, administrators, members of boards and technical bodies, managers, employees, representatives, agents or contractors of VALE, BHP and SAMARCO, have had knowledge of the various operational problems, flaws or “non-conformities” of the dam. As narrated in this denunciation, they knew about the progressive increase in the risk situation. They should and could act to prevent the Fundão dam rupture as well as these penalized results. However, they neither did prevent nor avoid them [MPF Complaint, page 197].”

The Federal Police concluded another investigation in June 2016. This investigation has examined environmental crimes regarding dam failure. The seven people indicted by Civil Police and one Vale S.A worker were indicated. Besides, three companies Samarco Mining Company, Vale S.A, and VogBr also were indicated. For the investigators, drainage faults, poor quality of the material, lack of monitoring and control of the amount tailings were the causes of Fundão Dam Collapse. Also, they state that Samarco reduced expenditures on geotechnical and safety of dams but increased the investments in production and, consequently, the production of tailings. Vale S.A and Samarco were accused of tampering with the Mining Annual Reports sent to the Union to hinder investigations.

“The duties and action power of the Members of the Board of Directors: The problems identified at the Fundão dam have been referred to the Board of Directors several times. Whether through specific reports of problem events, failures, or “non-conformities”, or through the results of technical reviews carried out by the ITRB. In these cases, knowing the problems, failures, or “non-conformities”, the board of directors did not fulfill their duties when they could and should act to avoid the harmful results produced with the rupture of the Fundão dam. In this way, they neglected their duty to supervise the management of the

bodies subordinated to them. Although, curiously, they did not do so in relation to the company's financial results [MPF Complaint, page 201].”

The Federal Public Prosecutor indictment denounced twenty-two people and four companies for the disaster. The complaint charged twenty-one people for felony murder. The allegations include false environmental reports - in the case of VogBR. Homicide, flood, collapse, personal injury, and environmental crimes - in the case of Samarco, Vale and BHP Billiton. For the prosecutor, there was a search for more exploitation of ore, always in order of increasing the profit and share for Samarco and their maintainers. Samarco workers noticed failures in the system of Fundão Dam in 2014, according to the engineers there were signals of pre-break. For the prosecutor, the company fulfilled part of the recommendations but used “structural curative” instead of giving conclusive answers to the problems of the dam. Therefore, CEOs, managers, board members and engineers were legally charged for the Fundão Dam Collapse. Investigations show that clear signs that the dam could break have been neglected. To summarize the relevant information about the case, we created a timeline of the case (see Figure 13).

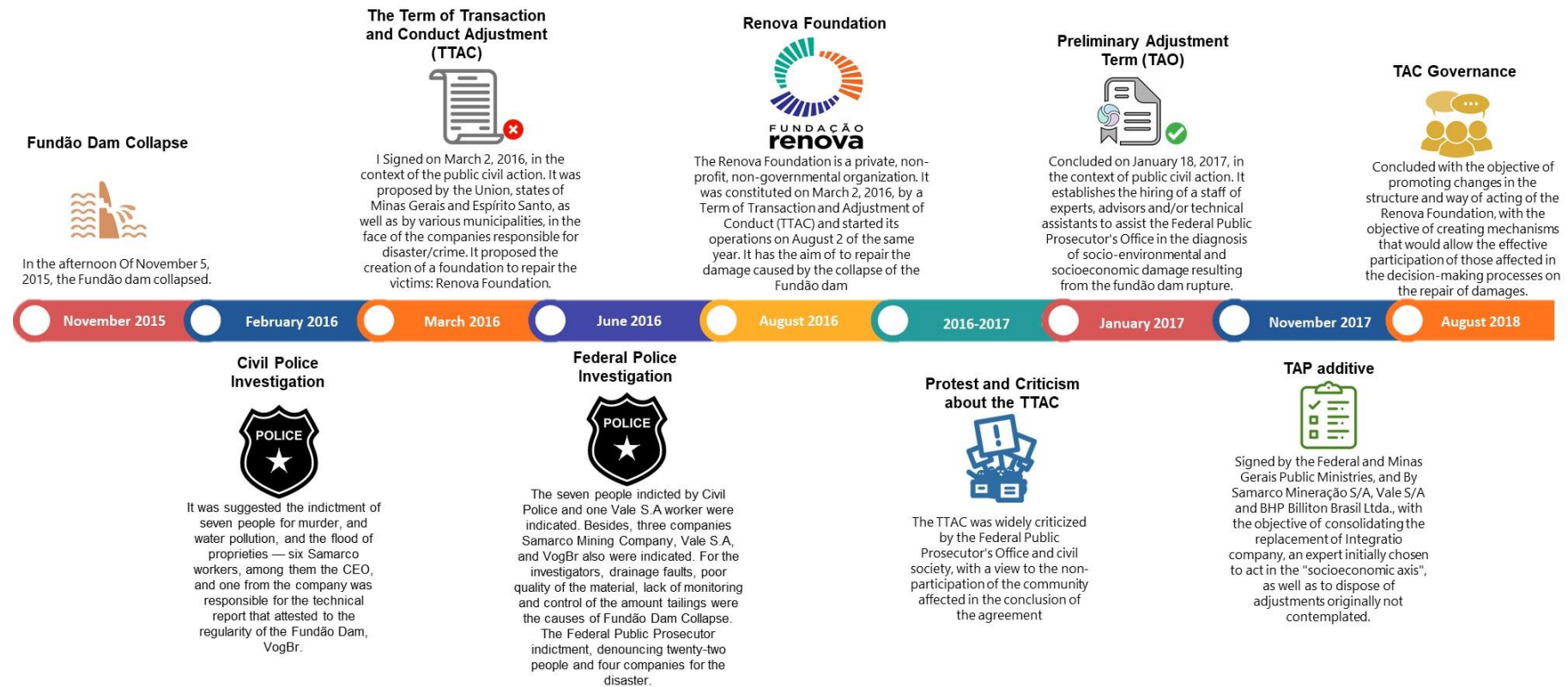


Figure 13. Timeline of the post-disaster main information.

In March 2016, Samarco and its shareholders (Vale and BHP Billiton) signed an agreement with federal and local governments. The Conduct Adjustment Transaction Term (TTAC) is an agreement celebrated between the Public Prosecutor's Office and companies when collective rights are violated by the last. The instrument has the purpose of preventing the continuity of illegality, repairing the damage to collective rights and avoiding legal action. The agreement created the Renova Foundation, a private, non-profit organization intended to assume responsibility for the compensation and damages to the victims of the Collapse. The TTAC defined deadlines for recuperation programs. Some examples of these programs are establishing the register for compensation and protection of impacted peoples as well as the reconstruction of affected communities. Protection of the physical and mental health of those impacted, and innovations in research in the area of disaster recovery. Emergency financial assistance for affected people; besides tailings management and restoration of water quality, forest restoration, biodiversity conservation. In both states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, a total of forty cities were affected as showed Figure 18.



**Figure 14.** The forty cities affected according to the Renova Foundation.

Source: Renova Foundation (2018) from research data.

A careful reading of the complaint presented by the prosecutor's office suggests that the organizational actors created a powerful rhetoric of misinformation by manipulating the knowledge. To understand this process, we described each of its dimensions.

### - **Denying responsibilities**

Even in the aftermath of the disaster, the company's employee statements were categorically denying the falsifiability of the security documents. In sociology, the helpful functions are called as eufunction of the social institution. These aspects contribute to the maintenance or surviance of a social group. In some circumstances, knowledge might mean pain without any other benefit, namely, "eufunctional ignorance". The eufunctional ignorance hides the benefit of the doubt, neutralizing any result that comes out of the expected. At this moment, a dangerous game of denial can obscure the truth. To manipulate the knowledge, the external auditors conducted counterfeit science, fraud, and falsified documents and try to pass it off as legitimate. According to the Brazilian Federal police

“The statement issued on July 30 by the [technicians] on the stability did not correspond to reality. They knew that the dam did not show signs of stability [MPF Complaint, page 33]”.

*Reflectiveness & Self-Doubt.* Before the denying action, a process of reflectiveness and self-doubt comes first. To know about their activities, companies will search for innovation processes in their field. In this process, tactics of denying or explore results will likely emerge. Important information about an event is discovered by research and development, reflexivity, and science and innovation. Knowledge is produced; the results are interesting and might be used strategically. However, some of the results can injure the rules of the game drastically for people, companies, and governments (as in the case of Vioxx medication). To increase the likelihood of the company activity approval, Samarco used flawed methodologies biased toward predetermined results to exaggerate the safety of Fundão Dam. However, the dam presented low stability and high risk and, consequently had a failed. Federal Police accused the Samarco hired outside technicians to issue a false document of stability.

“It was found that the company VOGBR RECURSOS HÍDRICOS & GEOTECNIA LTDA was responsible for issuing the declaration of stability of the FUNDÃO dam. In preparing the report on the stability conditions of the Fundão dam, in 2015, it omitted relevant data ... It declared the stability of a structure that it knew did not present stability conditions. It issued a misleading report, as it tried to hide the fact that there were inconsistent anomalies with a technical statement of stability. In addition, stability was declared even after verifying that the Risk Card was still out of date. [MPF Complaint, page 262]”.

### - **Concealing information**

A misleading presentation of the evidence about the level of operations security made the Fundão Dam look safe. Indeed, the Fundão dam had a critical safety coefficient of 1,3 when

the maximum is 1,5, being necessary corrective actions. For the police investigation, the dam was not safe and Samarco was negligent. Thus, the organizational actors began to disagree:

" After the collapse of the dam, which they declared stable, there was a disagreement between the accused, with the clear intention of exempting each one of their responsibility [MPF Complaint, page 34]."

*Decision making.* We all need to make decisions. A self-exam of responsibility can help in the process of making decisions. There is a linkage between ignorance and models of rationalization and mental systems of justification in the decision-making process (Sarch, 2015). Many times, when a decision needs to be taken, an individual makes use of the folkloristic notion of ignorance as a blessing. Once knowledge about something is the material condition of the blame for it, people, organization, governments can choose not to know or hide something so as not to have to deal with it.

The idea of ignorance as a blessing illustrates how it can be used as a political instrument. Since we define what we know, or we do not know and why we do not know it, ignorance reflects more than a simple absence of knowledge. It is also linked to things people do not want you to know (Proctor, 2006), and even things that people want to avoid, deny (Tuana, 2008) and concealing.

Samarco did not install sirens that could warn employees and the population about dam failure. However, two years after the disaster, Samarco established a state-of-the-art 24/7 monitoring center. According to the company, the modern “Monitoring and Inspection Center” (CMI in Portuguese) was created based on the lessons learned after the Fundão dam collapse. However, the Brazilian dam safety law has not yet required such technology. The monitoring center can be seen in figure 15.



**Figure 15.** Monitoring and Inspection Center (CMI)

Source: Samarco monitoring center (2018) from research data.

**- Persuading the audience.**

A sense-making about an event is possible only through the process of inclusion and exclusion of facts. The act of persuading someone requires the creation of a convincing story and rhetoric about something. For Rayner (2012, p. 111) “storytelling is possible only because of the mass of detail that we leave out. Knowledge is possible only through the systematic ‘social construction of ignorance.’ However, what does make ignorance become synonymous to deny or to avoid? The answer relies on an association with the management of memory due to three facts. First, memory is a process of social construction whereby the remembrance of facts occurs (Cubitt, 2013; Halbwachs, 2001). Second, memory has a malleable and subjective character as well as it related to time, history, individuals and collective narratives (Coraiola,

Suddaby, & Foster, 2017b). Third, the management of memory might include elements of willful ignorance, given conditions of distorted, uncertain and ambiguous events (M. Smithson, 1990).

*Spreading confusion and misinformation.* It is not a secret that business interests might deceive, misinform, and buy influence at the expense of public health and safety (Union of Concerned Scientists, 2017). The persistence of controversy can explain why various forms of knowing do have not come out or have disappeared, and consequently have become invisible (Proctor & Schiebinger, 2008). Ignorance, when involved in the policy process, is a committed dialogue with some interest and no facts are used as evidence in arguments, necessarily inconclusive and debatable (Ravetz, 1987). The social construction of ignorance is socially reproduced and maintained by spreading misinformation. The noninclusion of ignorance as a factor in decision making, prevents the assignment of the burden of proof, even when the transgressor is guilty of his willful ignorance. For the Federal police,

"it is clear that the instrumentation placed in the back of the dam was of the utmost importance, but the accused (name) tries to convince us (the police) the opposite in his statement [MPF Complaint, page 35]."

## **Tactics of Ignorance**

*Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than  
sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.  
Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Tactics of ignorance can create powerful rhetoric of misinformation by manipulating the knowledge. Our results uncover that willful ignorance arguments might create a rhetoric of "ignorance is bliss and bless." It is a process when organizations such as companies, regulators, governments among others choose ignorance over knowledge. They do it ignoring the inconvenient truths posed by the research, risk tradeoffs and activities potentially harmful. So they can continue the work maintaining the belief about their operation. Unfortunately, a lack of laws can reinforce that willful ignorance of a company. It because they might keep the argument of they are according to the law, even if they know that the law is not enough.

Large and powerful organizations and modern states also manufacture ignorance using neutralization techniques to break and manipulate moral, ethical, and legal rules (Thiel, 2015). In the case of Samarco, it turns out that the company manipulates the facts so as not to violate the Brazilian laws of the dam security. Unreported documents show the mining company was aware of the disaster but did not solve the real problem of the dam. We show that the company

has mobilized three different mechanisms of ignorance to deny the risks and, consequently avoid being blamed for the disaster, as can be seen in figure 16.

The tactics of ignorance are mechanisms that have been used to block regulations or minimize corporate liability. It consists of a discursive process of producing widespread ignorance denying pieces of evidence and manipulating the truth.

The three tactics of ignorance (denying, concealing, persuading) are elements of blame neutralization, in which the intention is evading legal and moral conjunctions. In the first tactic, denying, the transgressors brought before police offer post-facto explanations or excuses that deny the knowledge about the mistake or harmful situation. In the second tactic, concealing, they try to give unclear information, non-objective or even wrong clues that tend to take the criminal investigation effort to another course. The objective is to remove the focus of possible misconduct on the part of the investigated. Such a strategy aims to leave the police in the darkness by providing inaccurate information that confuses more than help. In the last one, persuading, they try to narrate persuasive storytelling to convince the police and society that it is not their fault. To illustrate our argument, we did a chronological summary of Fundão Dam Collapse (see Table 7) in which we show each past decision of Samarco's operations that had contributed to the dam collapse happen.

**A chronology of Fundão Dam Collapse (Samarco's operations before the collapse)**

		Interpretative thinking about the Samarco's past decisions until the collapse	
Period	Description	Position of Brazilian Court	Position of Company
2005	Samarco identifies the necessity to build a new alternative for the deposition of tailings from its mining activity in the Mariana Complex.	The Environmental Impact Study (required to obtain a license to Dam construction) indicated high danger to downstream communities, especially the Bento Rodrigues community.	The company begins an ongoing social communication program with downstream populations to democratize information on the operation of the dam.
2006	Samarco selected Fundão Valley location to build a new Dam.  The construction of the Fundão dam had classified as to risks at level III, the highest level.	Samarco opted for a location with a high risk harmful for the physical integrity of the downstream population and ecological balance. Besides, it was decided to use the most insecure dam construction technique, the upstream elevation.	Studies on tailings disposal have identified three alternatives locations to build the Dam. They are the valley of the Fundão stream, the valley of the Brumado stream, and Nativity Stream Valley.

2007	During environmental licensing, Samarco changed the original design of the dam executive project significantly.	Although the company knew the risks involved in the project, including the location of the Bento Rodrigues district, approximately 3 km, in a straight line, downstream of the dam, it opted to use the Fundão Stream. However, other alternatives would not present impact for populations in case disrupt of the Dam (case of the Brumado Stream alternative).	Samarco opts for construct Fundão Dam, using the upstream elevation method. It is the method most used by miners and most economical in the short term.
2008	<b>The construction of the dam had completed, but structural problems endanger operations.</b>	<b>In December 2008, the tailings deposition started. However, since the beginning of operations, Samarco has identified failures in the operation of the dam bottom drains.</b>	<b>Samarco had hired international consultant Andrew Robertson. He pointed out serious evidence for the malfunction of major internal drainage devices.</b>
2009	Samarco detects problems with the Fundão Dam drainage system	With only four months of operation, in April 2009, strong erosion was identified in the dam slope.	Due to construction defects in the base drain, the dam was severely damaged, and the original concept could no longer be implemented. Instead, a revised design substituted a new drainage blanket at a higher elevation. Together with the revised design, there was a fundamental change in the design concept whereby more widespread saturation was allowed and accepted. This increase in the extent of saturation introduced the potential for sand liquefaction. Samarco takes emergency actions in order to stop the release of tailings. The control conditions were considered satisfactory and risk-controlled by the company's technical team and the designer Pimenta de Ávila consulting.
2010	Due to the leakage that occurred with only one year of operation of the dam, the original drainage project was changed, increasing the level of saturation. The saturation level refers to the accumulated water level inside the dam; this	From this moment on, there was a total change in the initial drainage project of the Fundão tailings system. Therefore, the liquefaction process gave rise to tailings filtration and subsequent disruption.	At a meeting of Samarco's board of directors, they express concern about the construction failure of the dam. Presenting total costs of identifying and implementing the actions required to correct the drainage problem.

	increase in the degree of saturation has introduced the potential to soil liquefaction.		
2011	The second incident associated with slimes and water management occurred over an extended period in 2011 and 2012 while the new design was being constructed.	Samarco has created several risk conditions for dam stability. It is important to note that from the outset there was a high level of accumulated water in the dike reservoir, causing the downstream tailings to remain saturated while filling the reservoir.	At a meeting of Samarco's board of directors, the Council concluded that the activities carried out at the Fundão Dam would adequately support its operation.
2012	Another incident occurred in late 2012 when a large concrete conduit beneath the dam's left abutment, the Secondary Gallery, was found to be structurally deficient and unable to support further loading.	Samarco disregarded the technical guidance, keeping the operation absolutely in non-compliance with the necessary safety measures.  From July 2011 to September 2012, there was a significant increase in the utilization of the Fundão tailings system. In approximately one and a half years of operation, more than 8 million m <sup>3</sup> of sandy tailings were deposited (higher than the amount deposited since 2008) and more than 3.4 million m <sup>3</sup> of mud in Fundão.	The dam could not be raised over it until it had been abandoned and filled with concrete. In order to maintain operations in the interim, the alignment of the dam at the left abutment was set back from its former position. This placed the embankment directly over the previously-deposited slimes. With this, all of the necessary conditions for liquefaction triggering were in place.
2013	An increased amount of tailings deposited since 2011. As dam raising continued, surface seepage began to appear on the left abutment setback at various elevations during 2013.	In April 2013, VOGBR prepared an Executive Drainage Project to reduce water supply to the Fundão dam reservoir.	Samarco applies repair works to control the drainage problems of the dam.
2014	The saturated mass of tailings sands was growing, and by August 2014, the replacement blanket drain intended to control this saturation reached its maximum capacity.	On November 5th, 2015, the Fundão Dam broke down, without Samarco having completed the drainage reinforcement works. Nevertheless, the upgrades continued at a rapid pace; after all, production could not stop.	Only from August 2014, the accumulated water began to be depleted and subsequently filled with underflow from the sandy tailings produced by the cycloning plant, in order not to allow the formation of a lake.
2015	<b>Fundão Dam Collapse</b>	<b>The investigations founded that, over the years,</b>	<b>Samarco's CEO makes a public statement confirming the dam's</b>

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Samarco operations disruption and affirming the decisions had created company's commitment to situations of risk – this contain social and contributed to the environmental damage. occurrence of the Fundão dam rupture on November 5th, 2015.

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**Table 7.** Interpretation of Samarco past decisions

This table was created with pieces of information based on Samarco sustainability reports and the MPF complaint (see more about the data in Table 6). It summarizes Samarco past decisions describing what the company said about each decision in its reports and what the Brazilian court interpreted about each same decision. For the prosecutors Samarco noticed failures in the system of Fundão Dam but used palliative repairs instead of giving conclusive answers to the problems of the dam. We analyzed the MPF complaint elaborated by the Brazilian Federal Public Prosecutor and also The Fundão Tailings Dam Investigation elaborated by an external committee, which was retained jointly by Samarco Mineração S.A. (“Samarco”) and its shareholders, BHP Billiton Brasil Ltda.

**Discussion**

Have analyzed tactics of ignorance in the rhetoric of misinformation and knowledge manipulation, we argue that the polarisation of ignorance, as opposed to knowledge, can minimize someone’s responsibility. This is because someone's ignorance can excuse their negligent acts or lousy conduct in an organization. When a company is facing a trust crisis due an CSiR event its actors may construct a narrative aiming to deflect their possible fault or blame. In doing so, they dispose of three tactics to move unpleasant or harmful facts, events and information from the unknown straight towards ignorance, avoiding acknowledging what they hide. I call these tactics as denying, concealing, and persuading. The movement from the “unknown” to ignorance distort the truth and underplay the dangers of the company's actions, conduct, operations, and products.

Drawn upon a CSiR theory and the social theory of ignorance to understanding cases of disasters caused by organizations and attribution of culpability by society, we figure out the willful ignorance of organizational actors as a dimension little worked in the CSiR theory. Emergent debates in organizational theory are interested to know how corporations might strategically promote ignorance and doubt to achieve their interests. Ignorance has been drawing the attention of researchers in different scenarios (Kutsch & Hall, 2010). For example,

discussions on willful ignorance and willful blindness have been worked in the context of Criminal Law and Criminal Culpability. In Sociology, agnotology, sociology of ignorance and also the social construction of ignorance have been worked a while. In organizational studies, ignorance continues to be an undertheorized aspect of management. However, emergent streamings such as the Critical Management Studies (CMS) sub-theme “*Practices and strategies of ignorance*” in 2018 and also the PDW of Management History (MH) in the AOM 2018, namely, “*Organizational Mnemonics: The 'Historical Turn' and the Research on Learning, Memory, and Ignorance,*” have called attention to new research.

In this paper, we stated that ignorance is a discursive process shaped within the social structure. In disasters caused by organization, social actors can create narratives of ignorance about incidents, events and facts. Therefore, ignorance is a social and rethorical construction composed by willful ignorance arguments. Willful ignorance arguments might repel attributions of culpability and blame in the context of organizational failure. Through the prime example of Samarco dam collapse, and subsequent investigations, we showed that tactics of ignorance can create powerful rhetoric of misinformation by manipulating the knowledge, creating a movement from the “unknown” to the ignorance.

Three years and two months after the biggest Brazilian socio-environmental disaster, another disaster happened. The first collapse is the Fundão Dam Collapse, best known as Samarco Dam Collapse in Brazil, which happened on November 5<sup>th</sup> in 2015. Located in the city of Mariana, state of Minas Gerais, the Fundão Dam was the property of Samarco. The disaster caused extreme environmental damage, killed nineteen people, and affected the lives of families in Mariana city and other localities along the Doce River. The dam had the capacity for 50 million cubic meters of mining tailings, second data of the company a total of 32,6 million cubic meters of mining tailings sent into the environment (Samarco, 2016c). Samarco Mining Company S.A is a Brazilian iron enterprise founded in 1977. Nowadays, it is a joint venture between BHP Billiton and Vale S.A and its main product is iron ore pellets.

On January 25, 2019, another dam collapsed. Located in the city of Brumadinho, State of Minas Gerais, the Feijão Dam was the property of Vale S.A. (one of the maintainers of Samarco). The dam had the capacity for 12,7 million cubic meters of mining tailings, volume lower than Fundão Dam, which broke in 2015. Vale’s Dam failure released to the environment by approximately 12 million cubic meters of mining tailings (Vale, 2019c). At least two hundred and six people died and others one hundred and two are missing. Vale S.A is one of the largest mining companies in the world, it has one hundred and thirty-three iron ore dams in Brazil, and 80% of these are in the State of Minas Gerais, where both barriers collapsed (Vale,

2019c). Fabio Schvartsman, Vale CEO until the dam collapse in 2019, had a slogan “Mariana nevermore”; he was referring to the Samarco disaster in 2015. However, neither his words or his management prevented another disaster with similar characteristics from happening. In a television interview, he apologized without mentioning the Vale responsibility for the disaster, “*apologies to society, apologies to you, apologies to the whole world for what happened. I do not know who is responsible, but you can be sure we will do our role*” (Globo, 2019; Reuters, 2019).

At both dam collapse cases, subsequent investigations and lawsuits indicate the companies knew about imminent risks to the accident. Samarco S.A, for example, had an accurate dam risk report about the security of dams. For the Brazilian Public Ministry (Ministério Público Federal –MPF), Samarco knew the failures on Fundão Dam as early as 2011 when the risk management report came into force. Similarly, according to police investigations, a consulting firm had informed Vale S.A in 2017 that the Feijão Dam had a low-security margin. However, the mining company ignored the risks and preferred to covering up weaknesses at the dam (Eisenhammer, 2019; Simões & Nogueira, 2019).

Our study focuses on the case of the Samarco Dam Collapse to understand how companies and actors that are at risk of being held responsible may strategically mobilize misinformation about an event of CSiR. Our findings show that, in CSiR events, willful ignorance may be mobilized by companies to avoid blame from society. Contemporary literature in organization studies explores ignorance as a managerial tool, a lack of knowledge, or even a vital ability to dodge regulatory agents (McGoey, 2012; Schaefer, 2018). Our results highlight that organizations can use willful ignorance to manipulate knowledge, informing that all that should be done was did, and things could not work differently. Willful ignorance is also used as a strategy to avoid being charged for accidents and irresponsible actions.

### **Ignorance and culpability in CSiR events**

Companies are under pressure to assume responsibility towards society, either by responding to their adverse actions of the past (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016a), or by assuming responsibility in the scope of collective well-being (Wang et al., 2016). Thus, the stakeholders can evaluate the company’s actions making a judgment of the past and the future of organizations.

Based on a language process, the organizations can manage judgments from society, using willful ignorance as a discursive process. Companies may mobilize the willful ignorance using rhetoric elements that transform the guilt in a temporal phenomenon. For example, the

rhetoric of mining companies has long been that “Mines and Dam are risky and always will be”; “It is impossible to eliminate all risk of dams”; It is impossible to say there no exist potential catastrophic flows from the mining industries”(Adiansyah et al., 2015; Edraki et al., 2014; Vale, 2019a). The willful ignorance and the rhetorical strategies of the mining industry seem to be reinforced by the position taken by regulatory agencies when they decide to postpone discussions on trends and methodologies for the stewardship of tailings dams.

The mainstream literature in organization studies tends to treat ignorance like “a simple lack of knowledge that good science aims to banish” (Tuana, 2008, p. 108). Instead, we argued that ignorance is a social practice. For example, Robert Proctor exemplifies the social construction of ignorance through the persistence of controversy. In his research about Cancer Wars (1995), the author argues that everyone knew cigarettes are harmful, but no one had proof about that. The tobacco industry rhetoric was there no scientific proof of the harmful effects of smoking. Therefore, jury decisions made appeared that “smokers have only themselves to blame for their illnesses” (Proctor, 2006, p. 117).

The persistence of controversy is not a result of imperfect or bounded knowledge, but a political result of conflicting interests. If controversy can be engineered, ignorance can be produced maintained, and disseminated (Tuana, 2008). In organizations, the uses of ignorance as a managerial tool has been labeled as “wilful managerial ignorance” (Schaefer, 2018). In regulatory bureaucracies, it has been used as an important ability to circumvent regulatory agents (McGoey, 2012; Schaefer, 2018). It seems difficult to avoid the idea that willful ignorance at some point is used to “minimize” risks, making them more acceptable in a sense. Choosing to ignore warnings and risk is not a lack of knowledge about potential harms. Instead, it defines what corporate willful ignorance is. For Proctor (1995) the persistence of controversy between ignorance and knowledge support the social construction of willful ignorance. In this case, controversy persists as a result of conflicting political interests and attempts to produce, maintain, and disseminate ignorance purposefully. In this article, we described a case of CSiR exemplifying how organizations can manage their corporate willful ignorance.

### **Knowing and not-knowing: Ignorance as a discursive process**

Willful ignorance can change the rules of “the blaming game” (Roulet & Pichler, 2020). Oreskes & Conway (2010), for example, showed that after the discovery of global warming, some people create doubt to know whether human activities caused the warming by greenhouse gases or whether the sun produced global warming. They told a story about a group of scientists that obscured scientific pieces of evidence about climate change and spread confusion about

the theme. The ignorance strategy is cultivated in the blaming game. This blaming game has delayed essential issues for human behavior change, our relationship with natural resources, how industries produce, and the way that we live and we treat each other.

The ignorance strategy is disturbing regulatory agents that determine a maximum or minimum point of safety, which might disrupt the balance between economic development and human welfare for all. For Nietzsche (2012), ignorance is an important mechanism to enjoy life since it provides incredible freedom, negligence, imprudence, vigor, and gaiety. For the author, the knowledge and will to knowledge are more powerful than the will to ignorance, to uncertain, to untruth. The will to ignorance is not the opposite of will to knowledge, but its refinement. People continue to talk of opposites instead of degrees and refinements of gradation. Therefore, "the role of ignorance in social life is undeniable with information overload, fake news, doubt-as-a-product, and attention economies playing key roles (J. Rose, Barros, & Alakavuklar, 2019)."

Ignorance must be not theorized as simple opposite to knowledge or omission and passive gap (Stehr, 2017). An essential assumption of the epistemology of ignorance is the comprehension of, in many cases, there is an active production of ignorance. Hence, ignorance is commonly building and actively preserved, associated with cognitive authority, trust, silencing, doubt, and uncertainty (Tuana, 2008). Pleasure and ignorance are interconnected. Decisions based on ignorance not necessarily mean choices without knowledge, but also pleasure decisions, choice of pleasure.

In the context of Criminal Law, the full extent of liability on a crime respect the traditional rationale to satisfy the knowledge element of about it. Sometimes the willful ignorance precludes sustaining the knowledge element of the crime even though the willfully ignorant is as guilty as the analogous transgressor. The consequence of this is that some are "arbitrarily being punished more harshly than others who could have been convicted on a willful ignorance theory, but were not" (Sarch, 2015, p. 1027)

Ignorance can deny responsibility for a fact. The understanding of ignorance as the opposite of knowledge is itself a mistake. Such recognition created a gap that can remove or minimize someone's guilt by their misdeed when, indeed, the individual can use their own will to ignorance strategically for making decisions. Decision-making based on pieces of information allows a person to make "better decisions" if he knows the relevant facts for analyzing the context (Kutsch & Hall, 2010). However, have accurate management risk reports in hand might not prevent that organizational catastrophes happen. This fact does not only mean

that people have bounded rationality to interpret data, but also that some information can have been ignored intentionally.

In the case of Samarco's Dam Collapse, for example, the computers and documents confiscated by the Police in the offices of the company, indicate that the managers of the company viewed, or at least had knowledge about the problems in the structure of the Fundão Dam. Moreover, Samarco Company had an accurate report on risk management and critical flaws in the implementation process of dams (Ministério Público Federal, 2015) and accurately predicted the potential impact of such a disaster in a worst-case risk assessment (Phillips & Brasileiro, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

The results show that organizations can use willful ignorance to avoid being charged for accidents and irresponsibility actions. Moreover, for powerful organizations their high power and influence can "shape the actions of incumbent perpetrators, influence the form of social reaction to the injurious event, evade censure, and, by fostering ignorance of harm and criminality, may temporarily reframe morality itself" (Thiel, 2015, p. 260). Thus, organizations will try not to make public pieces of evidence of harm (McGoey, 2007).

Our contribution extends the literature on CSiR showing there is work of ignorance and manipulation of the knowledge in the construction of the organizational disaster narrative. It might block regulations or minimize corporate liability. It consists of a discursive process of producing widespread ignorance in situations in which there is the rampant use of mechanisms of non-disclosure (McGoey, 2007). The unwillingness to disclose can be understood as a dimension of corporate engagement in strategic ignorance. In the context of management decisions, ignorance may be useful to help individuals and institutions deny liability after the crisis (Mcgoey, 2012). Another contribution that extends the literature on CSiR and social theory of ignorance, is the notion of ignorance as a discursive process. In this process, companies may explore willful ignorance to avoid blame from society, especially in companies' accidents or disaster context.

This paper has limitations. As a methodological limitation we point out the database used in this article, we highlight the absence of interviews with representatives of the Samarco maintainers, affected communities and public agencies of the State of Espírito Santo, Brazil. However, the sources we used to build our database are enough for what we want to answer in this paper. Interviews with other social actors are necessary if other studies aim to see how the three tactics of ignorance develop in the domain of other contexts. Another methodological

limitation refers to the type of industry (extractive) and its specificity. Future work with other types of industries that may link to the economic aspects of societies is suggested. Other studies can adopt theoretical frameworks such as Decolonialism, Post-colonialism, Resource Curse, Natural Resource Governance, so well regarded in studies on Latin America. Therefore, we suggest that future research on the Samarco case may consider the macroeconomic environment of Latin America, as well as its political development and governance of natural resources.

## **References**

{ This list was omitted to facilitate the reading }

## CHAPTER 6:

*"Who controls the past controls the future.  
Who controls the present controls the past."*  
George Orwell, 1984.

### PAPER 3 - STORY-MAKING IN CSiR: DISPUTES OVER NARRATIVES OF A DISASTER

#### **Abstract**

Studies on Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR) have shown that society has become more concerned about corporate misbehavior. This literature received increasing attention from fields that go beyond marketing and customer reactions, psychology and blame attribution to business ethics and misconduct. However, less attention has been drawn to the discursive strategies and the forgetting work after a CSiR episode. Therefore, still being necessary studies that focus on disputes between narratives of those against or in favor of the company behavior. In this paper, we are interrogating why in a CSiR episode different versions of the past appear more powerful, legitimate, and credible than others. To address this question, we build on CSiR and the management history field to integrate processes of memorizing and forgetting into a holistic model. We adopted a qualitative approach, analyzing a single case study of CSiR, namely, Samarco dam collapse. Through the case of the Samarco dam collapse, we can see organizations engaging with history to frame future narratives about their recent past. Through a process that we named as story-making and story-maker. Our results suggest that companies and actors that got involved in a CSiR episode do mobilize narratives to manage impressions about their likely involvement with unethical decisions. In this disaster's story part of the local community is waiting for a savior, while others try to resist this subordination logic. There is a sense that corporate irresponsibility becomes an opportunity for learning and for a new beginning.

**Key words:** Corporate Social Irresponsibility; Memory and Forgetting; Narratives; Disputes, Samarco.

## **Introduction**

Studies on Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSiR) have shown that society has become more concerned about corporate misbehavior. This has been fueled by the emergence of a demand for better communication between companies, local communities, and society in general. Collective mobilizations against irresponsible corporate practices are being organized through internet access, new technologies such as smartphones, and social media (Coraiola & Derry, 2020). This is making possible new narratives about corporate social responsibility (CSR) and more mechanisms of governance, transparency, and disclosure.

The literature on CSiR has received increasing attention from fields such as marketing and customer reactions, psychology and blame attribution, business ethics and misconduct. Most of these fields have defined a quasi-symbiotic relationship between CSiR and CSR. Thus, the phenomenon of CSiR has been defined as organizational decisions that are either unethical or inferior to other options when is considered the effects upon all parties (Armstrong & Green, 2013). It includes a bad behavioral standard in the corporation's relationship with its stakeholders (Campbell, 2007; Sulphrey, 2017). Moreover, reflect actions such as environmental degradation and pollution, exploitation of employees, minimal community consultation and involvement, reluctant compliance with legislation or CSR, introducing new technologies to the market without considering any ethical issues especially on the periphery, treating suppliers and customers unfairly, profit is the sole purpose of business and should be achieved at any cost (B. Jones et al., 2009; Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013).

These approaches have expanded and enriched the research agenda on both fields of CSiR and CSR. Recent studies, for instance, showed an important link between social identity and reactions to CSiR in stakeholders' protests or mobilizations (Antonetti, 2020; Antonetti & Maklan, 2016b; Lange & Washburn, 2012).

However, still being necessary studies that focus on disputes between narratives of those against or in favor of the company behavior. Because less attention has been drawn to the discursive strategies and the forgetting work after a CSiR episode.

In this paper we aimed to understand why in a CSiR episode different versions of the past appear more powerful, legitimate, and credible than others. To address this question, we build on CSiR and the management history field to integrate processes of memorying and forgetting into a holistic model. We adopted a qualitative approach, analysing a single case study of CSiR, namely, Samarco dam collapse. Through the case of the Samarco dam collapse, we can see that organizations can engage with history to frame future narratives about their

recent past. We investigate an ongoing contest of narratives on the Fundão Dam Collapse, highlighting the importance of the historical dimension in organizations. Thus, we argue that organizations are also engaged in reframing events aiming to shape narratives for the future. Our results show that companies and actors that got involved in a CSiR episode can mobilize narratives to manage impressions about their likely involvement with unethical decisions.

After this introduction, the article is organized as follows. We first present a theoretical background on memory, forgetting, and CSiR - and how these concepts interact with our qualitative case study. Next, we present the methodology, data collection and analyses. We then discuss our results and theoretical contribution. Finally, we present the final remarks, implications for business ethics, and limitations.

### **The role of memory and forgetting in CSiR episodes**

Memorizing, revising, or forgetting are actions that concur to build memories. The fixation of a statement is conditioned to the discursive relations of language that belong to three fields: presence, concomitance and memory (Fairclough, 1992). The presence is characterized by utterances formulated elsewhere and recognized as true. Secondly, concomitance refers to the relations between different discursive forms that cohabit the same field. Finally, memory is linked to statements that are accepted, discussed, or forgotten, that are in constant transformation, continuity, and historical discontinuity to establish themselves.

Companies actively engage in processes of memory and forgetting to influence the ways in which events may be remembered. Thus, historic narratives are important in the sensemaking of the organizational community (M. Maclean, Harvey, Sillince, & Golant, 2014). Memories can be aligned into a form, as they see themselves in the present and how they want to be seen in the future (Gioia, Corley, & Fabbri, 2002), especially when the past of an organization is morally revisited with the intention of discovering what, historically, they have been responsible for (Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, & Phillips, 2016b).

An emergent and growing area of research on CSiR has focused on businesses that have behaved in a less than the acceptable way concerning their legal and economic obligations, ethical, social, and environmental commitments. CSiR can be defined as a moment when business do wrong in relation to the environment, community, society, ethics, and business practices (B. Jones, 2013). According to the literature if there is an absence of institutional constraints in the environment to mitigate misbehavior, firms will be more likely to behave in an irresponsible manner (Campbell, 2007). For some scholars CSiR means intentionally strategies and decisions involving negative effects to identifiable stakeholder or the

environment (Keig et al., 2015; Küberling-Jost, 2019). Instead, for others the understandings of a firm behavior is highly subjective, thus “an act would be irresponsible if a vast majority of unbiased observers would agree that this was so” (Armstrong, 1977, p. 185). Because there is a cognitive structure of culpability attribution derived from what the observer consider as harmful or guilty evidence (Lange & Washburn, 2012).

Contexts of corporate social irresponsibility (CSiR) illustrate common elements of organizational everyday practices that are framed as exceptional events (Alcadipani & Medeiros, 2019; S. S. Mena et al., 2016; Nardella, Brammer, & Surdu, 2019). Highly publicized cases of unethical corporate behavior are also examples of CSiR, such as Enron (van Driel, 2019), Volkswagen (Clemente & Gabbioneta, 2017), Shell (Hennchen, 2015), and Vale (Demajorovic, Lopes, & Santiago, 2019). This cases of CSiR can help us to understand attributions of culpability, especially when the past of an organization is morally revisited aiming to understand what happened when the the disaster struck. We believe that the recent tailings dams collapse in Brazil have a significant impact on what we know about CSiR and the mining companies' behavior in developing countries.

Organizational memory is understood as stored information about the organization that can be brought in to help with decision-making (Walsh & Ungson, 1991). Both organizational memory and forgetting imply a passage of time (Casey & Olivera, 2011). The representation of the past connected to both historical aspects and commemorative symbolism present in the collective memory (B. Schwartz, 2000) suggest the existence of a relationship between change and stability in the nucleus of memory (Casey & Olivera, 2011).

Taylor, Bell and Cooke (Taylor, Bell, & Cooke, 2009) observe the potential of the historiographical operation that transforms memory into history. They investigate memory and forgetfulness (Ricoeur, 2007), wondering why some events are unjustly forgotten, while others are thoroughly celebrated. The effort to remember is a process that reframes events from the past as mirrors of dynamic reality. There is a distinction between a simple evocation, and the effort of remembrance that can be tense or painful. When we remember, these differences can bring about error or illusion.

However, the understanding of how organizations and social actors decide to remember or memorialize specific episodes from the past is marked by subtle boundaries in the relationship between memory and history. This is because historical ballasts are between the malleable boundaries between present, past and future. Scholars from the fields of sociology, history, and management have a different understanding of objective history and narrative history - they both can shape narratives in the social structure. The use of history and historicity

in Management and Organization Studies (MOS) opened space for the ‘historic turn’. The historic turn highlights different approaches to history in management studies and organizations (Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Coraiola, Foster, & Suddaby, 2015; Mills, Suddaby, Foster, & Durepos, 2016; Rowlinson, 2013; Weatherbee, 2012).

Although the influence of the historic turn in the entire MOS field is disputable (Mills et al., 2016; Rowlinson, 2013; Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014), it is undeniable that the debate gained importance over time (Hatch & Schultz, 2017; Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014). For more than fifteen years now (Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Goldman, 1994; Lawrence, 1984; Mills et al., 2016; Üsdiken & Kieser, 2004), the dialogue between management and organizations has been recognized as part of the MOS theoretical landscape. This conversation includes tensions emerging from the differences in the way historians and Management and Organization scholars conduct research (Decker, 2016; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014). However, some would argue that history has been a part of MOS for longer. For example, resource-based view (RBV), suggests that the history of the firm may confer competitive advantage (Lockett & Wild, 2014).

In this study we understand that history directly affects the future of a company (Greiner, 1972). Additionally, organizations recognize history as a resource that can be explored in many ways (Barney, 1986). Rowlinson, Jaques and Booth (2009) emphasize that a critical approach to management and organizational history requires a reorientation (Üsdiken & Kieser, 2004) that can be made possible by a historic turn (Clark & Rowlinson, 2004). The ‘historic turn’ means a shifting of emphasis, from what actually happened, to an emphasis on how the past can be represented.

Organizations will likely influence the interpretation of their past for strategic purposes. The manipulation of the narratives is called rhetorical history and is defined as ‘the strategic use of the past as a persuasive strategy to manage key stakeholders of the firm’ (Suddaby, Foster, & Quinn Trank, 2010). Indeed, organizations are under permanent moral evaluation, and they are supposed to be held accountable for their actions in the past (Barros & Taylor, 2020; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016b), and in the present (Alcadipani & Medeiros, 2019). We consider stories as a powerful mnemonic resource that can allow an organization to influence the remembrance of an event. We have identified that this process is happening in the case of the Samarco dam collapse, as we will explore in the following sections.

### **An alternative view of the past?**

In this section, we present how organizations can instrumentalize their past and make it useful for managerial purposes (Wadhvani, Suddaby, Mordhorst, & Popp, 2018). We reinforce the powerful role that history plays in the processes of creating alternative views of the past. Coraiola, Suddaby, Foster (2017b, p. 261) highlight that “an alternative view of the past is not as an immutable account of objective events, but an interpretation of past brute facts.” The relationships between the different stakeholders are understood in this study as mnemonic interactions. These social actors are connected to the social structure of shared memories and forgetfulness through mnemonic communities (Coraiola, Suddaby, & Foster, 2017).

The mnemonic capability of organizations is not about the ability to archive or faithfully reproduce the past. It is about the ability to creatively select and use the elements of the past that contribute to the current demands of an organization. Mnemonic struggles are disputes around how to remember the past (Zerubavel, 1996). Organizational history is intertextually crafted by interested actors (Maclean, Harvey, Sillince, & Golant, 2018).

Mnemonic interactions occur when social actors are involved in an event and are connected to the common structure of sharing memories and forgetfulness through mnemonic communities (Coraiola, Suddaby, & Foster, 2017). When corporate irresponsibility occurs, it can cause everyday disorder and attract different levels of attention (Mena et al., 2016). The stricken people (direct and indirect victims), stakeholders (employees, shareholders, and municipalities) and other social actors (media, government, public prosecutors, and researchers) make up these different levels of attention.

The mining companies and the victims of Samarco dam collapse have been interacting, creating memories and narratives since the Fundão Dam collapsed. Narratives of the past are highly subjective. That is, the depth and richness of the facts available in the past offer a potentially unlimited number of stories (Suddaby & Foster, 2017). Thus, history shapes identities, motivate commitments, frame actions, and integrate technical and symbolic dimensions (McGaughey, 2013).

Elements of the historical events of an organization are omitted and others are emphasized all the time. The way in which the past is used as a persuasive strategy for managing different stories of the business is understood as rhetorical history (Suddaby et al., 2010). This process can neutralize contradictory elements of the past (Anteby & Molnár, 2012). Furthermore, the past can be understood as a resource for the present demands of organizations. This paper presents mnemonic struggles as various mnemonic battles to remember the past (Zerubavel, 1996). Mnemonic interactions occur when social actors are involved in an event

and are connected to the common structure of sharing memories and forgetfulness through mnemonic communities (Coraiola, Suddaby, & Foster, 2017).

When corporate irresponsibility occurs, it can cause everyday disorder and attract different levels of attention (Sébastien Mena, Rintamäki, Fleming, & Spicer, 2016). The affected people (direct and indirect victims), stakeholders (employees, shareholders, and municipalities) and other social actors (media, government, public prosecutors, and researchers) make up these different levels of attention. The victims of Samarco dam collapse have been interacting, creating memories and narratives since the Fundão Dam collapsed. Rhetorical history can influence the members of an organization, emphasizing the collective memory and sustaining an organizational identity. In this process, organizational identities become 'sites of memory' (Anteby & Molnár, 2012).

Some researchers understand the concept of organizational memory as a narrative that organizes and frames the past (Adorisio, 2014). Others, suggest that historical narratives are an emerging element of the social construction of business narratives, which can be used to create competitive advantage (Foster, Suddaby, Minkus, & Wiebe, 2011).

In the following section, we explain our methods, context of research, and data gathering.

## **Methodology**

Samarco Mineração S.A. is a joint venture between Vale S.A. and BHP Billiton Brasil Ltda (Samarco, 2018). It is a mining industry company that operates in Brazil. Samarco's main product is the iron ore pellets that are sold to the steel industry. The mining process of Samarco is facilitated by water, used to separate the iron ore and other minerals. Thus, the process creates a byproduct named mining tailing, which was disposed of in a tailing dam. Its probable involvement with CSiR is related to the dam collapse.

When disaster struck, in 2015, the company had revenues of roughly BRL\$ 6,5 billion, approximately US\$ 1,7 billion in that year, and generated around 6 thousand direct and indirect jobs (Ipeadata, 2015; Samarco, 2019b). The mining company also has offices in the Netherlands and China and commercial relations with 19 countries. Moreover, the revenue from the company Samarco's generated has a substantial impact on the GDP of the Brazilian states in which it operates (Minas Gerais e Espírito Santo). Therefore, Samarco's activities are crucial to the local economy in some cities of these states.

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, a tailings dam, operated by Samarco, collapsed in the city of Mariana, in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. The collapse caused the destruction of the district of Bento Rodrigues and the death of nineteen people. It also sent approximately 34 million cubic meters of mining tailings into the River Doce, causing the largest environmental catastrophe in Brazilian history (Brasil, 2016).

In March 2016, Samarco and its shareholders, Vale and BHP Billiton signed an agreement with federal and local governments. This document was named as Transaction and Conduct Adjustment Agreement (TTAC). Both states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo were affected by the collapse. The TTAC provided the creation of a foundation to remediate the impacts and compensate the victims of the Fundão Dam Collapse: The Renova Foundation (*Fundação Renova*, in Portuguese) (Samarco, 2016b). Renova Foundation is a private, non-profit organization, and assumed the responsibility for repairing the damage caused by the Samarco tailings dam collapse.

In August 2016, the Renova Foundation started work. According to the Samarco institutional website “R\$ 2.8 billion were spent between November 2015 and October 2017 on reparations and compensatory actions, which were assumed by the Renova Foundation in August 2016” (Samarco, 2018).

The actions of the Renova Foundation brought a new perspective on the history of Samarco into view. Through Renova, Samarco pled its commitment to “the social, environmental and economic recovery of the impacted regions (Samarco, 2018)”. Thus, in the future, Samarco will be able to use new memories to tell a story about what happened, maybe obtaining an enhanced reputation through the actions of the Renova Foundation.

The case of the Samarco dam collapse is a prime example of CSiR and served as inspiration for the following research question: How do corporations create alternative views of the past and its engagement in CSiR? Although there is significant academic literature examining CSiR, the engagement with alternative versions of the past still a puzzle to explore. Part of this limitation remains because, most of the analysis is made when a strong voice of the past is settled, making it hard to analyze other versions of the story (more visible close to when the event took place).

To answer this question, we focus on how the disputes between narratives may shape the narratives about a CSiR incident. In this research we followed a qualitative case study (Stake, 1998) with a unique case, given the relevance and richness of the case. The institutional ethics committee has approved this research project. In the ethical procedures report, the anonymity of the identities of the research subjects was ensured, as well as the ethical protocol

in relation to the data collected through the Internet. As unit of analysis we analyzed the perception of corporate activities post-disaster through contest narratives.

#### *Data gathering and data analyses*

We used multiple data collection methods with triangulation of different sources of information to access the narratives that delineate the reality observed (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 1995). The first contact was three months after the event; at the time, one of the researchers was able to observe people who had lost their homes in Mariana for four days. Samarco had allocated these people in hotel rooms in the city.

Three major sources of data allowed the creation of our dataset. First, field observation, notes and memos for 23 days in July 2018. During this moment, data was collected through a) thirty-nine formal and informal interviews; b) participation in four discussion-based events on the Fundão Dam Collapse and the communities affected; c) field notes, and audiovisual records (Spradley, 1980).

Second, netnography. One of the researchers gathered data from an online community on Facebook, a social network, and made the field notes (Kozinets, 2015, 2002, 2010). The researchers selected data collected from the Facebook page *Justiça Sim Desemprego Não #FicaSamarco* (Yes for Justice, no to unemployment, #SamarcoStays) from May 2017 to February 2018. The Facebook page, for the most part, aggregates discourses from populations that directly depended on Samarco's activities, such as employees and small enterprises in the region. One hundred and ninety-eight posts were collected from this page. Many spaces on the internet bring together people who share the same interests. Each Facebook group or page can be covered using the netnographic approach. However, the researcher must feel comfortable conducting an online observation and understand the rules and forms of communication assumed by the users of an online page (Kozinets, Dolbec, & Earley, 2014).

Thirdly, documental analysis. We collected documents from twenty-two reports downloaded from the Renova Foundation website. The reports inform the stakeholders about the progress of all socio-environmental and socio-economic programs that have been developed and executed by the foundation. At the time of data collection, there were monthly, quarterly, annual, and other reports for the collection, covering every month from November 2015 to December 2017 (nineteen monthly reports, one annual report, and one report per period) (Fundação Renova, 2018). Those reports also establish sources for a future autobiography (Moerman, van der Laan, & Campbell, 2014).

We also used documentary data from twenty-five editions of a newspaper produced by the victims. The newspaper is maintained by an agreement between those affected by the collapse, the Public Ministry, and the Archdiocese of Mariana (a catholic institution) (Jornal A Sirene, 2017). The newspaper ‘A Sirene’ (editions from February 2016 to February 2018), has the slogan ‘the voice of those hit by the mud of Samarco’.

Finally, we gathered news from the Samarco institutional website (Samarco, 2018). Table 8 summarizes the data collected.

Type of Collection	Where it was collected	Description of the data collected
<b>1st data collection</b> <b>Field immersion</b>	Field immersion for 23 days in July 2018. It was visited the city of Mariana and the city of Barra Longa, both in the state of Minas Gerais and the city of Linhares, in the state of Espirito Santo, Brazil. One of the authors visited villages of Bento Rodrigues, Paracatu de Baixo, Gesteira and Regencia	39 interviews
		Participant observation Field diary The interviews, field notes, and memos were doing in the Portuguese Language. One of the researchers translated to the English language the quotes used in this paper.
<b>2nd data collection</b> <b>data collection</b> <b>Netnography and</b> <b>Documentary</b>	Observation in an online social network. A Facebook page namely Justiça Sim Desemprego Não #FicaSamarco (translated as Stay with us Samarco: yes to Justice, no to unemployment).	Netnography immersion
		198 publications Field diary The post on Facebook was written in the Portuguese Language. One of the researchers translated to the English language the quotes used in this paper.
<b>3rd data collection</b> <b>Documentary</b>	Renova Foundation website	22 reports from the Renova Foundation
	A Sirene newspaper website	25 editions of A Sirene from February 2016 to February 2018.
	Samarco website	Samarco news The newspaper was written in the Portuguese Language. One of the researchers translated to the English language the quotes used in this paper.

**Table 8.** Data collection

Samarco dam collapse is an exemplar case of CSiR in wich company and other social actors are making sense of the tragedy and creating their own narratives. We chose informants and documents who would be most able to inform us on our main research question. For this study, we have selected data that shows the disputes among the narratives of the CSiR. Additionally, we illustrate how Samarco, has been trying to articulate a linear and hegemonic

narrative, to legitimize the dam collapse tragedy as a promise of hope and good expectations for the future.

Through an interrelated process, the developing concepts were in continuous dialogue with empirical data (Becker, 1998). Therefore, the research question definition fieldwork and data collection were made together. One of the researchers is studying the case for at least three years. This same researcher proceeded with all data collecting, read all the material from data gathering at least three times and did the first drawn analyses. We used the technique of content analysis to organize and interpret communications. We looked for cultural patterns, symbols, memories and narratives (Spradley, 2016). The main stories were organized in an excel spreadsheet. Following, stories with similar cultural symbols were gathered in the same domain. The domains are big groups of emerging senses; we numbered the domains to know the total of emerging senses. Each domain is composed of included terms, this is word occurrences that help the creation of sense (Spradley, 1980). In the readings, we looked for cultural patterns in the sentences that helped us to make sense of the data and have insightful ideas related to what we already know and do not know about CSiR.

From the readings of the communications, we found 27 domains, which we then subdivided into 102 categories referring to the included terms. To answer the research question proposed in this study we selected 1 domain named "The collapse as a blessing" which has 6 categories. All the material was organized in a spreadsheet. To present the empirical data in this study, the authors chose to synthesize it, showing only pieces of data relevant to the understanding of the analysis (Table 9).

Quotes from the data	Categories	Domain
<p>“For the president of Vale [S.A, one of Samarco's controllers] the environment and the quality of life of people affected by the tragedy in Mariana will get better than they were before the accident that left 19 dead, destroyed communities and wreaked havoc throughout the Rio Doce basin”. [retrivied from netnography observation on the Facebook page]”.</p>	<p><b>A promise for the future</b></p>	<p><b>The collapse as a blessing</b></p>
<p>“If I were in a city that had no mining, I would not allow mining companies to enter in the city’s economy so easily. Because it is a false impression of wealth [...] Municipalities receive revenues from mining but are not prepared to diversify the economy. The tragedy helped us manage the municipality in a different way [...] With the support of the Renova Foundation, today we have sufficient funds to diversify the economy that even in the best times of Mariana we never imagined [...] It’s a new opportunity to restart Mariana's history with mining”. [retrieved from an interview with the Mariana Mayor, data collected in the field immersion]</p>	<p><b>A new opportunity to begin</b></p>	<p><b>The collapse as a blessing</b></p>

<p>“The municipality of Mariana has a higher tax collection than other municipality due to mining [...] When we go back to operating the CFEM (tax) collection, it will be even higher, since an increase has recently been approved. There is a need for more technically capable public management [...] that knows where to apply the resources. Brazil does not create policies so that we go beyond the ore pellets. We export the ore ball and then import the technology [...] In 2011, Samarco won the Social Responsibility Award [...] And in a way, the Fundão Dam Collapse changed our concept of responsibility. Today we have a robust monitoring center for dams with laser, drone, cameras and others that monitor 24/7 so that it never happens again. After that happened the law changed, so all the mining companies will need to do that” [retrieved from an interview with a Samarco employee]”.</p>	<p><b>Learning to get it right</b></p>	<p><b>The collapse as a blessing</b></p>
<p>Today, the Doce River is the most monitored river in the world. A River that was already dead now has an opportunity to live. [retrieved from an interview with an employee from Renova Foundation]”.</p>	<p><b>Renova as hope and gift</b></p>	<p><b>The collapse as a blessing</b></p>
<p>Mariana asks for help! Who to turn to? Government? Mayor? NGOs? God? Media? Company? You? 15 thousand unemployed, 2 years ignored [retrieved from ethnographic observation on the Facebook page]”.</p>	<p><b>Waiting for a Savior</b></p>	<p><b>The collapse as a blessing</b></p>
<p>We know that the company and government have hundreds of journalists and thousands of advertising resources, working the story through their view. Here, there are few volunteers and those affected who come together to discuss problems and possible solutions. It is the stricken people who go out on the field to search, rewrite, photograph, and show history from their perspective, with their criticism, with their secrets, their questioning, and by pointing out the solutions they want for their lives [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene, March 2016”]”.</p>	<p><b>Community’s Resistance</b></p>	<p><b>The collapse as a blessing</b></p>

**Table 9.** Data analysis, codes, and quotes

## Findings

In our findings there are three main categories that compose the ongoing narratives about the CSiR event of Samarco mining company. They are (1) A promise for the future, (2) A new opportunity to begin, (3) Waiting for a Savior, (4) Renova as hope and gift, (5) Learning to get it right, (6) Community’s Resistance. To better understand why each of these categories and constitutive narratives, it is important to gain a sense of Samarco dam collapse investigations and storytelling.

Our data demonstrates that the existence of disputes between narratives that shape the narratives around Samarco dam collapse. The affected people (direct and indirect victims), stakeholders (employees, shareholders, municipal governments, and citizens) and other social actors (media, federal government, public prosecutors, and researchers) are interacting and creating memories and narratives since the Fundão Dam Collapse occurred. Thus, these actors are continually sharing and signifying memories and narratives of the community in which they live. Whether via the discussions on the importance of the activities of Samarco in the region

or debates about the responsibility of the company and their culpability for the social chaos after the Fundão Dam Collapse.

- **A promise for the future**

Five years after the Samarco dam collapse, the company has been working on a new perspective about its past. In the Biennial Report of 2015-2016, Samarco describe how the company has change since the tragedy:

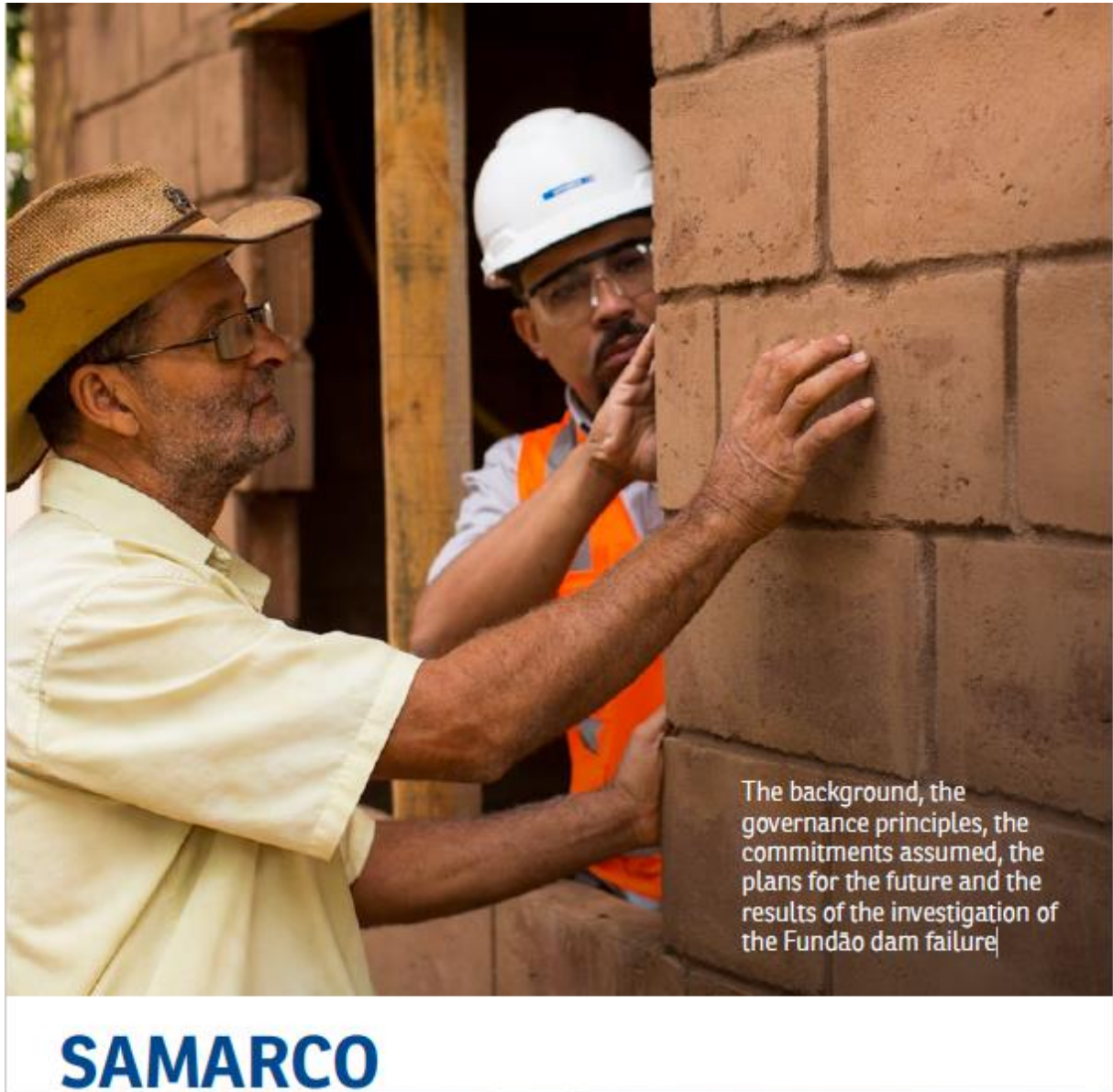
What has changed in the Company's vision of the future? The failure of the Fundão dam challenges Samarco to accelerate the quest for a new approach to safer operations, reducing the generation of tailings and developing optimized methods for their disposal and recycling. In addition, a new commitment is added to the already existing challenges – to generate sufficient cash flow to sustain the investments required for remediation and compensation of the impacts, providing financial resources for the Renova Foundation” [Biennial Report 2015-2016 Samarco, page 15].

Through the Renova Foundation, the organization created with the main aim to repair the disaster damage and compensating the victims, the company is articulating a hegemonic narrative to reframe the collapse as a promise for the future. In the samarco website samarco states its “commitment to remediation” describing that “R\$ 10,10 billion was already destined for repar and compensation actions”:

“The Renova Foundation is an autonomous and non-profit entity, responsible for remediating the impacts caused by the failure of the Fundão dam. It was constituted in accordance with a Conduct Adjustment Transaction Term (TTAC), signed in March 2016 by Samarco, its shareholders, the federal and state governments of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, in addition to other entities. The objective of its creation was to have an institution that would be dedicated on a fulltime and exclusive basis to the implementation and management of the programs necessary to remediate, mitigate and compensate for the damage caused by the dam failure [Samarco website/ Repair].”

Mena, Rintamäki, Fleming, & Spicer (2016), investigated corporate irresponsibility from the perspective of a forgetting work. In this paper we will not focus only in the forgetfulness process of corporate irresponsibility, but also on its transformation into a promise for the future. We have the opportunity to observe the the recent past of our object of study. Therefore, to understand this process we analyze how different versions of the past appear more powerful, legitimate, and credible than others.

We consider stories as a powerful mnemonic resource that can allow an organization to influence memories of an event. We have identified that this process is happening in the case of the history of the collapse. In the sustainability report Samarco described its commitments assumed since the Fundão Dam tragedy:



**Figure 16.** From data collection, Samarco Report.

This image illustrates a Samarco project on the reuse of mining tailings (a byproduct of mining operation), transforming it into bricks to build houses and buildings. Before the disaster with the dam break the tailing were considered waste. Therefore, in the case of Samarco, our study allows for the analysis of the dispute around the crystallization of a narrative. Instead of forgetting the irresponsibility, the organization is working to reframe it showing changes, learnings and commitment with a new Samarco. In doing so, Samarco is

using the Renova Foundation to reframe what the collapse will represent in the future. Thus, we observe history in the making. Samarco is managing and transforming the impressions of its stakeholders of its image to create an asset for the future.

- **A new opportunity to begin**

Social actors can shape versions of the past reinforcing some memories while others are forgotten. Narratives can be reframed to strategically deflect blame into the field of forgetting. Samarco dam collapse illustrate how the past is being rewritten to reframe a critical event into a project for a new narrative in the future. In the samarco website the company shows that its operations will work differently (Figure 17).



**Figure 17.** From data collection, Samarco website

Narratives such as “a new begin” is also shared with other social actors in the social structure. Not only does the company believe in a new start, but also other agents. A narrative that extended to the Mayor of the Mariana city (Table 9).

Through narratives of their past, the organizations also give meaning to their present, creating memories or forgetting them (Rowlinson, Casey, et al., 2014). The forgetting can occur when knowledge of an event is lost over time. It can result from actions by organizations or it can happen naturally, over time (Sébastien Mena et al., 2016). The process of forgetting can also be transformed into a new beginning, through a promise for the future. Samarco does not seem to forget what happened, instead is trying to articulate and to mobilize narratives for the future. The company is reframing the collapse as an opportunity to learn, presenting the actions in the post-disaster as a socially responsible project for its other impacts on society.

### - **Learning to get it right**

Studies have emphasized how organizational actors refer to the history of a company, remodeling, interpreting, recording and communicating it (Brunninge, 2009). As Samarco stated in its report:

“In order to cope with these impacts [due to the Fundão dam break] and slowly seek to rebuild the trust of Brazilian society, it is necessary to structure a new Samarco, with new competencies. The cornerstones of its new operational model are environmental and social recovery, safer operations, the lessons learned and the commitment to share them with the mining industry and society in general” [Biennial Report 2015-2016 Samarco, page 3].

This message shows how strong is the sense of “lesson learned” for the company and its employees. Samarco is highly engaged in projects related to new learning. This is a recurring narrative that appears in the company reports, the interviews with its employees (table 9) as well as in the company website:

Samarco is deeply sorry for the consequences of the failure of the Fundão dam in Mariana (MG). Since 2015, the company has based its actions on a commitment to remediate and compensate for the damage caused, and to build upon the lessons learned and experiences acquired, seeking a new operating model. [Samarco website/ Repair].

Companies can manage their history using three strategies to gain competitive advantage: exploitation, denial, or appropriation (Oertel & Thommes, 2015). Samarco is exploiting its history, evoking that this critical event can teach good lessons. Samarco is also reframing its image as a socially responsible company, one which deservedly received an award as a responsible Brazilian company in 2011. It also exploits its history as a major company in the mining industry. The category “Learning to get it right”, refers to Samarco company and employees and shows that the collapse can teach good lessons:

### - **Renova Foundation as hope and Gift**

The creation of the Renova Foundation propitiated a narrative that favors the idea of a promise for the future. The Renova Foundation was created by Samarco, its shareholders and the Brazilian government to be responsible for the compensation and repair of damage arising from the collapse, it can serve as a repository of institutional memories favorable to the image of Samarco:

“The Foundation brings together technicians and specialists from different areas of knowledge, dozens of organizations with socio-environmental and scientific knowledge from Brazil and around the

world. In addition, it has a robust and complex governance model, with the participation of more than 70 entities” [Samarco website/ Repair].

Samarco projects at Fundação Renova a commitment to victims of the tragedy. Because the Renova Foundation is the entity responsible for the reparation of the damages caused by the collapse of the Fundao dam in Mariana (MG). The legal commitment called Transaction and Conduct Adjustment Term (TTAC) defined the actions to be carried out by the Renova Foundation. They are 42 programs that unfold in the many projects that are being implemented in the 670 kilometers of the impacted area along the Doce River and its tributaries. The ongoing actions are long-term and expected to take up to 10 years.



Figure 18. From data collection, Renova Foundation website

The Renova Foundation website informs about the number of financial resources allocated to the compensation actions (figures 18 and 19).

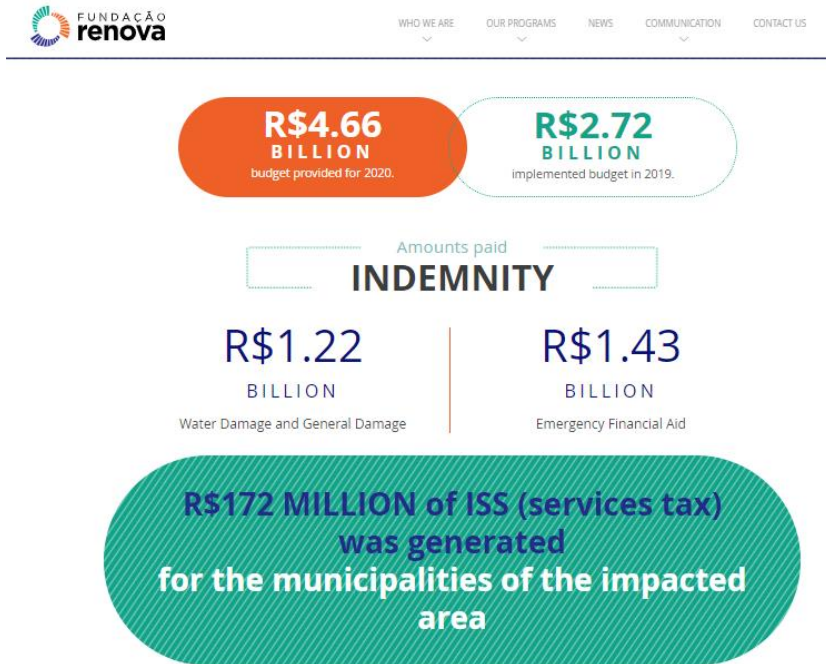


Figure 19. From data collection, Renova Foundation website

In addition, shows how Renova Foundation is now part of the social structure actively participating in the municipality tax collection. Renova Foundation is a memory repository that reinforce the image of projects carried out into basin Doce River (figures 20 and 21), the building of the new villages such as “The new Bento” and “The new Paracatu” (villages affected by the mud)”.

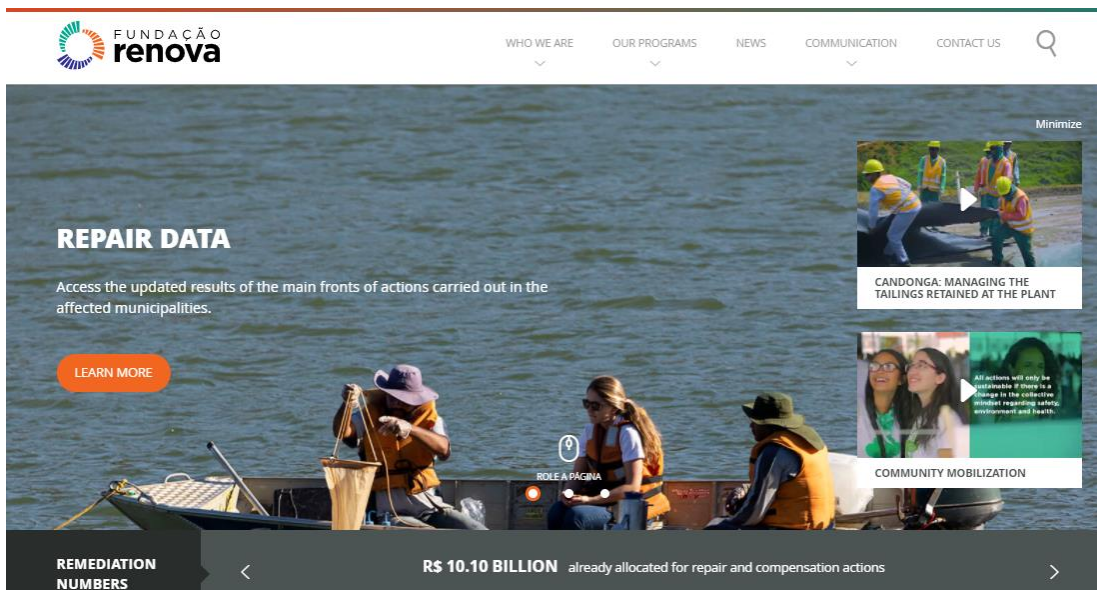


Figure 20. From data collection, Renova Foundation website

Although the Renova Foundation has no responsibility for what happened in the past, it may help Samarco to rebuild in the future its image and trust in the local community.

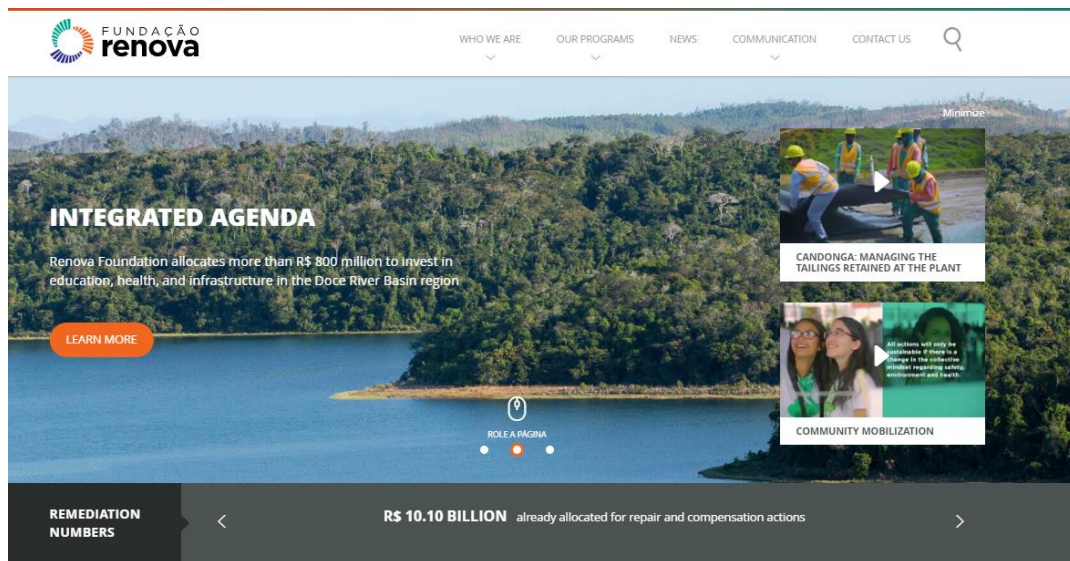


Figure 21. From data collection, Renova Foundation website

Even Vale S.A, one of the controlling companies of Samarco, is trying to create a discourse about the 'Renova as hope and gift of the Collapse'. In '[life] will get better than [it was] before the accident' there is the intention to report that Samarco is taking responsibility for what happened, and it will transform that reality into something better for the future.

### - **Waiting for a Savior**

Increasingly, corporations “can be targets of critical attention for actions once considered outside their traditional boundaries of responsibility” (Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, & Phillips, 2016, p. 700). Corporations are understood as political actors, shaping the society in which they operate (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017). Additionally, organizations must also deal with the effects of their actions over time and also the legitimacy of claims raised against corporations and how they react to these claims.

Mariana is economically dependent on the mining industry. Various agents of the social structure share this perception. These agents include, the mayoral office of Mariana, movements in favor of Samarco, employees at Samarco, Renova Foundation employees, and even movements of resistance to the mnemonic power of Samarco such as the newspaper “A Sirene”:

“We know that the economic development model adopted across the country would collapse without the contribution of mining companies. The world of consumerism has been orchestrated by the capitalist system. Therefore, the ending of mining exploration would be a utopia. To be against Samarco's return is to contradict everything that has been said and to contribute to unemployment in the Mariana region.

[retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene, edition of November 2017, page 28”].

However, the dependence of the Mariana city on mining is exploit in many ways according to company’s interests. Thereby, corporate trusteeship contributes to an authoritarian benevolence of the owner characterized as managerial efficiency (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017). This economic dependence reproduces the social and hegemonic order:

“Message from the CEO: In order to respond as quickly as possible to the event, immediately after the dam failure, the Company first concentrated its efforts on providing emergency relief to the victims, their family members and the impacted communities, and supplying pertinent information to the competent authorities and agencies. Priority was also given to allocation of resources, both financial and human, the minimization of the impacts caused by the tailings along the Doce River, and the execution of works to reinforce the structures of the other two dams (Santarém and Germano). During the execution of these actions, we received the invaluable support of the Civil Defense and public entities, private organizations, volunteers and city administrations which participated in the rescue actions and emergency response. To all these, we extend our most sincere gratitude” [Biennial Report 2015-2016 Samarco, page 6].

The discursive strategies around the Fundão Dam Collapse reveal the existence of mnemonic struggles. In which, the hegemonic power and institutional relations of the company are overlapping the capacity of the municipality to manage the city. The public administration is dependent on the revenue from mining activities making it difficulty to find other ways to the economy development. As shown in sentences from the Mayor in the category “A new opportunity to begin”. Economic dependence also reveals the existence of power relations between the dependent and those who exploit the dependency, placing mining companies in the region in dominant positions throughout history.

“Message from the CEO: For 40 years, Samarco had been writing a story of mutual growth and respect, together with its neighboring communities, employees and other publics in Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo. Unfortunately, 2015 stands out as the year in which the Company’s bond of trust with Brazilian society was put to test with the failure of the Fundão tailings dam on 05 November, an event which we deeply lament. It unfortunately impacted several districts and municipalities in the region of Mariana (MG) and the entire path of the Doce River downstream, as far as the coast of Espírito Santo. [Biennial Report 2015-2016 Samarco, page 6].

Thus, the power of state and municipal government agencies becomes increasingly weak in face of economic dependence. The return of Samarco to operations becomes an essential condition to control the chaos in the social structure:

“May Samarco be able to return to operate in order to correct its past mistakes. Perhaps in the future the company would be an example of

how to work with security and income distribution, transforming this paradox into a paradigm [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene, edition of November 2017, page 28”].

Without Samarco, unemployment increases, the city hall collects fewer tax, and less money circulates in the city, among other problems. As it was presented in the "Waiting Savior" category (table 9), the quote from the movement in favor of Samarco “Justiça sim, Desemprego Não” #FicaSamarco. In addition, the "Learning to Get it Right," category described this sense of learning from past events as stated by Samarco and its employees.

- **Resistance.**

Some of the population are waiting for a “Savior”, someone to repair all the loses or someone that will remove the dependence on extractive activities. Whilst others try to resist this logic.

Who has not stepped in the mud that will not decide for us! [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene, edition of November 2016, page 17”].

In this paper, we demonstrate that in five years since the Fundão Dam Collapse, Samarco has been trying to articulate a new narrative of the collapse. However, some actors of the social structure have been organizing collective mobilizations against irresponsible corporate practices:

“Losing family, home, health, work, land, square, church, river, beach; losing our history. We are living the mourning and at the same time being strengthen yourself to not lose even more. This has been the routine for those affected by the Fundão dam. [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene, edition of November 2016, page 2”].

Resistance movements have been essential for the company to rethink its operations and responsibilities. Moreover, it has also emphasized the role of the public administration in recovering the citizenship of its people:

We mention some questions that currently guide us: which forums have been promoted by the local government to discuss the lessons learned from this disaster? How is the city preparing to build a future that is less vulnerable and dependent on certain economic activities? How has local society been involved in this debate? How do the existing social groups in Mariana position themselves regarding Mariana's current situation and her prospects? We believe that these questions serve us as a kind of thermometer to measure, at this moment, the degree of maturity or retraction of our idea of citizenship. What city do we have? What city do we want? Yes, in different degrees, we are all reached. [retrieved from the local newspaper “A Sirene, edition of February 2017, page 28”].

### **Discussion: The Story-Making in CSiR episode**

We now present our argument emphasizing the performative role of history in making and unmaking organizational orders (Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014). The “story-making” is a process in which an organization explore contest narratives to create a better history about an event. Through “story-makers,” the organization can choose a scapegoat to be it alter ego (like Renova foundation). The story-maker is a kind of alter ego, that is, 'another self'. The term was used by Cicero as part of his philosophical discourse, in the first century, when he described the alter ego as a friend or close friend. It consists of another agent who has complete confidence, a perfect substitute. In doing so, the organization can act today to shape possible narratives that will be remembered in the future.

Currently, organizations are under scrutiny “for their role in historic repressive contexts, which they were connected to through their business activities” (Schrempf, 2012) and are under permanent moral evaluation for their past actions (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016b). In the case of the Samarco dam failure, we are observing the event, close to when it happened, before an edited version crystallizes.

The production of texts allows stories to be created, as they represent sources of records that make the appropriate histories reliable. In this CSiR case, the Renova Foundation has become the custodian of the “Samarco Dam Collapse Story” in the name of Samarco. The discourse used by the Renova Foundation corroborates discourses from Samarco. In this sense, Renova Foundation operates as an alter ego of Samarco. As an entity focused on story-making, the foundation transmits confidence that the damage caused by Samarco will be remedied and even rewarded. The process of reparation is lengthy, and Renova Foundation has received several criticisms. Victims of the collapse are saying things like “Renova only promises”; “Everything from Renova is beautiful on paper”; “If it was Samarco this would have already been settled”, these statements are frequent in the city of Mariana. If Renova keeps acting as an umbrella for criticism, Samarco may retain a positive image.

Although there are some voices resisting, such as “A Sirene” newspaper, they have just a fraction of the resources available to the companies and their supporters. The texts produced by A Sirene newspaper are presented mainly in the form of narratives. People share their experiences of what they saw at the time of the collapse and how they were saved. They also share the knowledge of the older population of the community, the places that Bento Rodrigues

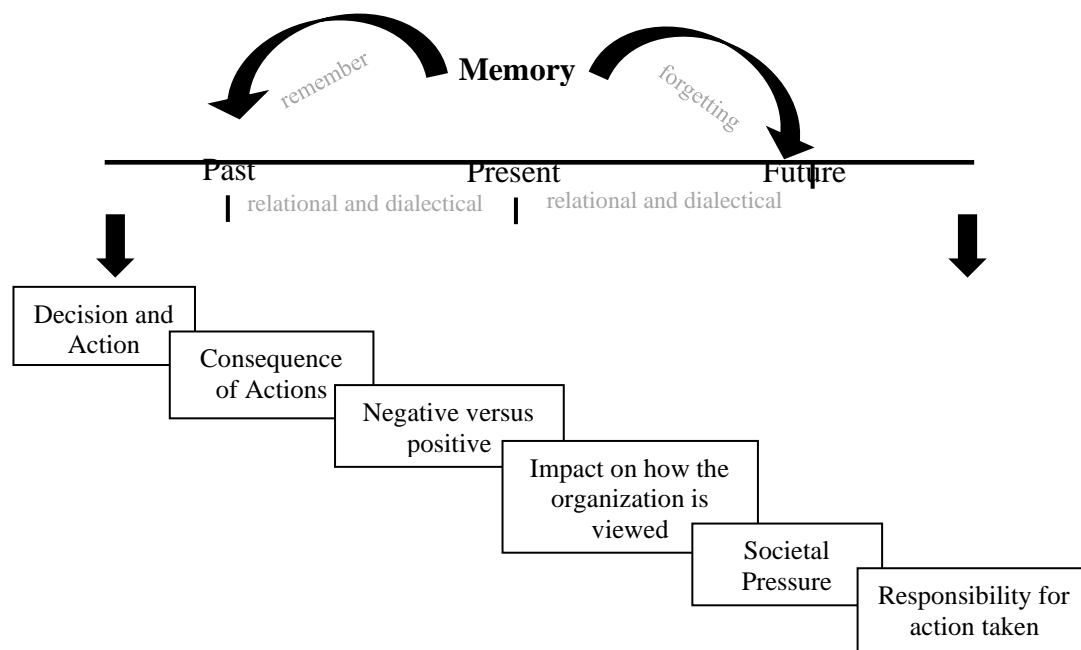
once had, its routine, traditional trades, cultural spaces, and neighbourhood relationships. In a part of the newspaper, called ‘the Right to Understand,’ the texts focus on the legal injunctions for the compensation for the victim's losses. It is a specific section of the newspaper that has the purpose of instructing and guiding the stricken population. These types of communication have the support of the public ministry of Mariana and the technical assistance of those affected.

### *Theoretical Contributions*

Our results highlight the discursive strategies and the forgetting work after a CSiR episode. It has contributions to the concept of CSiR to integrate processes of memoryizing and forgetting process into a holistic model. We are exploring the notion of “story-making” and “story-maker” in the contest narratives about an organizational disaster. All this process is modeling the stakeholder's perception of dam failure. Samarco is selling the Renova Foundation compensatory programs as a promise of the future; the disaster is being transformed into a kind of blessing. Our construct makes it possible to advance in a more historically informed theory about CSiR.

Since organizational memory can be politicized (Nissley & Casey, 2002), organizations may choose to selectively remember or forget events from their past (Adorisio, 2014; Anteby & Molnár, 2012; Casey & Olivera, 2011; Nissley & Casey, 2002; Rowlinson, Booth, Clark, Delahaye, & Procter, 2009). They can use the information available in their histories or appropriate information provided by other organizations (Anteby & Molnár, 2012), to shape narratives. In the social structure we analyzed there were several actors that could tell a ‘Mud History’, the final version may never be produced, but will forever be disputed.

The concept of a “promise for the future” in the aftermath of the Fundão Dam Collapse indicates the possible construction of an organizational narrative for future use. The concept involves using the resources of history, memory, forgetfulness and language in deconstructing the past-narrative (irresponsible) and recreating it as a future-narrative (socially responsible). The promise for the future of Samarco is to convince its stakeholders that they are acting responsibly in making reparations for its acts in the past that impacted or put the welfare of society at risk. These actions are being compensated for, not by Samarco, but by a new institution: The Renova Foundation.



**Figure 22.** A promise for the future

Figure 22 shows that a decision/action taken by the company in the past can have negative or positive consequences for the present state of the organization. The consequence of this action impacts the way the organization is viewed by society. If this action compromises values of justice, equality and human development among others there is pressure from society (for example, the judiciary system, NGOs, organized communities) for the organization to answer legally for its past actions (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016b). Thus, the organization initiates a movement that relates past, present, and future in a dialectical way (Fairclough, 1992) to overcome its (ir)responsibility (S. S. Mena et al., 2016). The company remembers the events of its past, creates memories about itself, selects events, and throws others into the field of forgetfulness (Anteby & Molnár, 2012; Suddaby & Foster, 2017).

However, what is remembered or forgotten by the company is part of the story that it wants to tell its stakeholders (McGaughey, 2013; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Suddaby, 2016; Suddaby et al., 2010). The choice of information provided by the Renova Foundation, “A

Sirene” newspaper or the Facebook page “Justica Sim, Desemprego Não” will be a strategic choice as it may impact the profitability of its actions. On November 6th, 2015, the financial market was already reacting to many narratives about the Fundão Dam Collapse and the preferred stock of Vale S.A - one of the controlling shareholders of Samarco - fell sharply (Thomson Reuters, 2017).

We emphasize that the stories chosen can either strengthen the image and the organizational identity or compromise them (S. S. Mena et al., 2016). Thus, in the future, Samarco will be able to use memories and documents from Renova to tell a story about what happened. Samarco can frame its reaction emphasizing how it had a positive impact on the reality of the communities, attaining an enhanced reputation (Harmon, Green, & Goodnight, 2015; Poor, Novicevic, Humphreys, & Popoola, 2016; Suddaby & Foster, 2017). This selection is not necessarily guided by the search for truth, but above all by the search for what is good for those appropriating this memory.

### **Final Remarks**

This paper makes three contributions to the theory of CSiR focusing on a temporal perspective. First, it extends the understanding of the past as relevant, presenting it by the strategies of “story-making” and “story-maker” in the organizations. Second, illustrates empirically how an organization can do it, showing the process of a “promise for the future” that uses another organization as a scapegoat to its alter ego project. Finally, we argue that history is a mnemonic power resource. The curating of the present, thinking about how it will be interpreted in the future allow an organization to influence the memories of an event, soon after it happened. Samarco can select views of the Fundão Dam collapse that corroborate with the organizational returns expected by its shareholders, adopting versions that complement the image of a socially responsible company. Manipulation is the primary way of transforming corporate irresponsibility, cancelling, therefore, versions that contrast or oppose the objectives adopted by the company.

After the Fundão Dam Collapse, Samarco had to deal with issues related to the violation of Human Rights, damage to fauna and flora, public patrimony, deaths, and the disappearance of people and communities. The Renova Foundation was created with the purpose of restoring and compensating for damages from the Fundão Dam Collapse. However, the memories that are being created about what happened and what is being done can be co-opted by Samarco for other purposes. Through the Renova Foundation, Samarco can manage the narratives that will compose the history of the Fundão Dam Collapse and minimize the negative effects of the

collective memories of the communities struck by the collapse. There is a collective effort to transform, learn with and overcome the post-collapse repercussions on the image of Samarco that is largely resisted by the victims and activist groups. Even the name Renova (renew) evokes this need to renew after Fundão Dam Collapse.

A promise for the future is when an organization uses the resources of history, memory, and language to create a new organizational narrative in which the company involved is seen to be a responsible one in the future. Corporate irresponsibility becomes an opportunity for learning and for a new beginning. In the case of the Fundão Dam Collapse, the stricken population will have the chance to have better lives, through the Renova Foundation, Samarco and its controllers try to instill full confidence that the damage caused by the irresponsibility of Samarco will be rewarded.

This paper has implications for business ethics as it highlights the transformation of corporate irresponsibility into a promise for the future. At the same time, it provides a critical approach to the manipulation and selection of the past, one that silences alternative voices of reality, making company managers consider the power of the mnemonic positions of their companies.

This paper also provides discussions on CSiR as a sequence of events and components that are connected over the temporality. History deserves to be recognized as a vital component for more ethical and humanistic management (Godfrey, Hassard, O'Connor, Rowlinson, & Ruef, 2016). In a sense, we join the call for a critical organizational history to scrutinize management (Durepos, Shaffner, & Taylor, 2019), by highlighting that although the past is immediately lost, the dispute around its future meanings can start immediately.

When an organization goes through situations of tragedy, scandal or crisis, the people start to make sense of what happened. The organization tries to minimize the effects of its bad acts in the past by reconstructing its narratives. Memories can be co-opted according to the objectives of companies. Conditions surrounding events are manipulated, silencing the voice of the stricken population. This is part of the efforts to shape the meaning of narratives, to establish a memory for the future. The analyses show that story-making uses elements of history, memory, and responsibility to shape an organizational narrative for the future – rescuing the history of the organization, selecting facts to compose memory and discarding others into the field of forgetfulness. The concept of a promise for the future is intrinsically linked to historic CSR in organizations. For it is through the current actions of responsibility that the organization can select the facts.

There are limitations to this study that provide insights for future research. Firstly, the proximity to the events does not yet allow the company to write a history about it. Here, we engaged with the ongoing dispute about how the disaster will be remembered. It is imperative that cases like these do not disappear into oblivion. A proper history must be told, and we are confident that when it happens, various new insights about the relationship between companies and its stakeholders will emerge. Second, the singularity of the case calls for further examining of how story-making develop. We would highlight, for instance, the role of the Renova Foundation in distancing Samarco from the disaster, while also reinforcing its economic and social importance.

## **References**

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## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

In this section, I revisit the most important findings highlighted throughout the three articles of this dissertation. Moreover, I describe how these findings advanced the CSiR theory and related fields. Through a historically oriented analysis focused on the temporality of the narratives, I conclude that companies will likely shape the future perception of their involvement with CSiR before crystallized versions of the past emerges. To do so, the company will mobilize all resources and institutional alliances available.

Companies that involved in CSiR events, therefore, will mobilize their past, present, and future in a strategic way to be persuasive in the narrative that they would like to portray. In the case analyzed, our results suggest that:

**(1) Since the beginning of company operations in the municipality of Mariana-MG, in 1970, the mining company has developed a quasi-parental relationship with the local community (see paper 1).**

This result advances the theory in CSR, CSiR and related literature because opens an affective perspective upon the relationship between companies and local communities. The affective relationship contributes to literature because emphasizes an emotional dimension, in which the community identifies with the company. My findings suggested that the emotional and social attachment influenced a less punitive intention regarding the guilt of the company.

**(2) Before, during and after the disaster, the mining company has manipulated a series of information concerning the security of its operations, ignoring risks and community safety (see paper 2).**

This result advances the theory in CSR, CSiR and related literature because it suggests that organizations can use willful ignorance to avoid being charged for accidents and irresponsibility actions.

**(3) Currently, the mining company is trying to articulate a new version of the narrative of the disaster (see paper 3).**

This result advances the theory in CSR, CSiR and related literature because it focuses on a temporal perspective, extending the notion of the past as relevant to the understanding of corporate irresponsibility episodes. Moreover, the results indicate the existence of disputes between narratives that will shape the narratives around Samarco dam collapse in the future.

These empirical results can be related in general to the theory of CSiR, because they illustrate how, in a CSiR episode, companies will likely deploy all resources to avoid any blame from society, transforming their guilt into forgiveness and redemption. For the company and pro-company stakeholders, CSiR is as a kind of blessing and everything will be better in the future. Nevertheless, there is still uncertainty and doubt about how the company will compensate the victims for all their losses, and for many of them, this is an unfulfilled promise by the company. If the local community has a strong social and emotional attachment to the company, then, this social identification is likely to be one more resource to be exploited by the company.

Although the Samarco dam collapse (the CSiR event analyzed) was understood as a catastrophe caused by the company, and therefore a sin committed by the company against the community, the local community seems to be willing to grant the company a pardon. This willingness to forgive comes from a license granted by the community to the company in the past, which I called the **Affective License**.

Affective license to operate (AFO) is a concept that generates insights into the fields of CSR, SLO and CSiR. **By Presenting it, I am informing a theory based on emotions and social exchange, highlighting ambiguities, tensions, and changes in the community relationship with a company responsible for a CSiR episode.** It comprises three main categories to explain the model of social and affective identification of a community towards the company. They are, (1) Community ties, (2) Ambivalence in paternalism and business custody, (3) Triggers of economic dependence. Due to the nature of their business, mining companies tend to demand huge financial investments. It is common for companies in the extractive industries to become responsible for the provision of social benefits within the communities in which they are established. This license provided Samarco more than a social license to operate, part of the community tends to soften criticism of the company, while stigmatizing the victims. This phenomenon legitimizes company capacity to exercise its power over the city and the local community.

Organizations will manage judgments from society using various resources. However, based on a language process the knowledge can be manipulated. Using willful ignorance as a discursive process, companies may mobilize willful ignorance using rhetorical elements that transform guilt into a temporal phenomenon. This is a process that I called **Tactics of Ignorance**. It is composed of three elements (1) denying responsibility, (2) concealing information, (3) persuading the audience. **These three tactics of ignorance (denying, concealing, persuading) are elements of blame neutralization, in which the intention is to**

**evade legal and moral responsibilities.** In the first tactic, denying, the denial of the transgressor of any knowledge of the mistake or harmful situation. In the second tactic, concealing, they try to give unclear information, non-objective or even wrong clues that tend to take the criminal investigation effort on another course. The objective is to remove the focus on possible misconduct on the part of those being investigated. Such a strategy aims to leave the investigators in the dark by providing inaccurate information that confuses more than it helps. In the last one, persuading, they try to narrate persuasive storytelling to convince the police and society that it was not their fault.

To create persuasive storytelling is not an easy task, it is an ongoing investment. In this process, organizations will select views that would help them to pursue their own interests. Social actors and companies can create an alternative view of the past using strategies that I called **“story-making”** and **“story-maker”**. Such strategies will act as spokespeople and receptacles for a narrative that the company wants to tell. **The “story-making” is a process in which an organization explores contesting narratives to create a better history of an event. Through “story-makers,” the organization can choose a scapegoat to be its alter ego (like the Renova foundation).** The story-maker is a kind of alter ego, that is, 'another self'. Cicero used the term as part of his philosophical discourse, in the first century, when he described the alter ego as a friend or close friend. It consists of another agent who has complete confidence, a perfect substitute. In the story-making process, the company can create a powerful narrative of hope. In which, CSiR is a kind of blessing, an episode that all the social actors can learn from and have a new opportunity to restart. In doing so, the organization can act today to shape possible narratives that will be remembered in the future.

The case of Samarco dam collapse exemplifies that corporate social irresponsibility can differ from corporate social responsibility in fourth ways. The first is related to the dimension of conflicts. Organizations have different stakeholders, that is, groups that are part of the organization's social structure, it is difficult to find a way in which all parties are equally satisfied. The conflict dimension leads to the second dimension, that of legitimacy. When the organization loses the trust of a good part of the social structure in which it is inserted for some reason, it also loses its legitimacy, although this should not be confused with legality. Legality is conferred by the laws of a jurisdiction, whereas legitimacy is conferred by people who attribute legitimate or not a character to the actions of that organization.

The third dimension is related to the permissive role of some governments, States, or nations. In this context, the presence of less rigid laws, less enforcement, lack of a clear separation between public and private, and even dilution of state power in the face of the

greatness of capitalist companies are considered. This characteristic can facilitate the bad behavior of an organization. Therefore, companies can deliberately use loopholes in the laws as escape strategies for their unethical behaviors. The fourth dimension includes bad behavior, moral responsibility, lack of ethics, and injustice. This dimension is intersected with other dimensions and is characterized by the danger of the company's actions to social, environmental, and economic well-being.

This dissertation has five central contributions to the theory of CSiR focusing on a temporal perspective. First, it contributes to the understanding of the social, affective, and emotional factors that should be considered when discussing the relationship between business and local communities in a CSiR incident. It is essential to understand the mechanisms that do or do not give legitimacy to the practices of a company.

Second, it advanced the CSiR theory indicating strategies of misinformation and manipulation of knowledge of possible causes. Indicating ignorance as a social and discursive process used to avoid blame from society. Third, it extends the understanding of the past as living, presenting it by the strategies of “story-making” and “story-maker” in organizations. Moreover, it illustrates empirically how an organization can do so, showing the process of a “promise for the future” that uses another organization as a scapegoat for its alter ego project.

Fourth, it presents advances in methods of online data gathering, in which I describe the huge task of data collection and management of online data such as participant observation in netnography groups. In online spaces, the researcher's ability to collect data increases substantially, so the daily work of organization and interpretation also increases. Moreover, it is necessary to guarantee that the individuals that created the messages in the online group will not have their identity easily recognized in a search on the internet.

Fifth, it allows administrators and public policy makers to rethink the systems of privilege that embody the current vision of CSR. Since it is from these privileges that differences are recognized, as well as the needs of vulnerable communities and their subordination to the great power of industries. It is necessary to present draft laws that include broader social responsibilities for enterprises with exhaustible resources.

When a narrative is contested, as in the CSiR case of Samarco, the asymmetries and power of influence among social actors become more visible as increasingly polarized versions of the past solidify its content. Thus, the relationship between mining companies and affected communities and their history becomes retrospective from contemporary political positions.

The mining companies as a group have a political condition of privilege and can, thus, maintain a special relationship with the State and governments. When government

representatives join certain mining projects, voting in favor of extractive industries and their agendas, such companies tend to receive special protection from the State, either by law or by privileges in the parliament. In some layers of the analyzed society, mining companies have inspired almost a total loyalty, remaining them immune to radical change and criticism.

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**APPENDIX A – ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THE INSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE**

Rio de Janeiro, 05 de dezembro de 2017

*Comitê de Conformidade Ética em Pesquisas Envolvendo Seres Humanos – CEPH/FGV*

Parecer n. 30/2017

Solicitante: Jussara Jéssica Pereira

Centro de pesquisa: EAESP

Título do projeto de pesquisa: “A construção de uma nova cidadania: o caso das vítimas do rompimento da barragem de fundão da Samarco”

Financiamento: Não há

Relator: Daniel Vargas

#### Apresentação

Trata-se de uma tese de Doutorado a ser desenvolvida na EAESP. O objetivo geral da pesquisa é compreender como a violação dos direitos humanos impactou o exercício da cidadania dos indivíduos atingidos pelo rompimento da barragem de Fundão. Como objetivos secundários pretende-se analisar o reflexo dos impactos socioeconômicos no exercício pleno da cidadania dos ex-moradores dos distritos; e descrever como o rompimento da barragem de rejeitos de mineração representou uma violência ao direito de cidadania.

Para tal pretende-se coletar entrevistas com os sujeitos da pesquisa, notas de campo, dados netnográficos de redes sociais ou coletivos de resistência sobre a tragédia e edições do Jornal A sirene (jornal produzido pelos atingidos).

Os participantes serão expostos a um termo de consentimento esclarecido, tanto física quanto virtualmente, sendo todos maiores de idade. A princípio serão entrevistados, com base em um roteiro semiestruturado, trinta atingidos. Tal processo se dará por amostragem não probabilística e a decisão de escolha dos elementos que participarão da etapa de coleta de dados primários será orientada por meio da

conveniência do pesquisador, de sua sensibilidade investigativa e considerando critérios de inclusão e exclusão na amostra além do acesso e disponibilidade de informações. Os dados coletados serão armazenados em um HD externo de posse da pesquisadora.

Os riscos desta pesquisa estão relacionados ao desconforto que o sujeito poderá sentir ao ser abordado. No que tange à participação, pode-se prever riscos relacionados ao compartilhamento de informações pessoais, e/ou quaisquer incômodos em responder a alguns tópicos da entrevista. O pesquisador, por sua vez, se compromete em esclarecer ao sujeito a sua total liberdade em não responder às perguntas que o deixam desconfortáveis. No que se refere à parte virtual da pesquisa, os pesquisadores solicitarão a autorização dos administradores do grupo para fazer parte da comunidade online sobre o rompimento da barragem de Fundão, bem como pesquisar as interações que se estabelecem via comunidade.

Os dados coletados identificáveis serão mantidos em sigilo dentro da equipe técnica do projeto. Assim como quaisquer comentários sobre os elementos e as principais percepções sobre o comportamento deles será preservado no âmbito da equipe técnica do projeto. Nas entrevistas, as identidades dos sujeitos serão anonimizadas, eles serão identificados como “entrevistado 1”, “entrevistado 2” e, assim por diante, conforme a ordem de coleta. Em relação aos dados netnográficos, as postagens também receberão uma numeração e a identidade dos sujeitos de pesquisa será anonimizada.

### Considerações

#### I. Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

O Comitê considera adequado o uso do TCLE submetido pela pesquisadora. No entanto, tendo em vista que a pesquisa trata de um tema sensível que vem sendo estudado por diversos agentes nos últimos anos, e que diversas entrevistas já foram conduzidas com os moradores do entorno da área atingida, o Comitê ressalta que caso o TCLE não se mostre a forma mais adequada de registro de consentimento, este pode ser obtido oralmente e registrado em outras mídias, como a gravação de áudio ou vídeo.

Desta forma, a pesquisadora tem uma alternativa para o registro de consentimento que não o TCLE, caso entenda pertinente.

II. Anonimização dos dados

O Comitê considera adequado o processo de anonimização conduzido pela pesquisadora responsável, de forma a proteger a privacidade dos participantes da pesquisa.

Deliberação

Após deliberação dos membros, o CCE/FGV classifica o presente projeto de pesquisa como:

**Aprovado**

O protocolo está totalmente adequado para execução.

Nota: O pesquisador responsável deve enviar breve relatório anual de acompanhamento sobre os aspectos éticos da pesquisa aprovada.



Daniel Vargas  
Coordenador do Comitê de Conformidade Ética em Pesquisas Envolvendo Seres Humanos – CEPH/FGV

## **APPENDIX B – CONVERSATIONS SCRIPT (1ª AND 2ª FASE)**

### **Roteiro de conversa ATINGIDOS**

Me conte sobre a sua história com a comunidade?

Como era a sua vida e a de sua família? Sua casa, suas lembranças, os momentos que vocês viveram?

O que aconteceu em 15 de novembro de 2015? Qual a lembrança mais forte sobre aquele dia?

O que mudou desde o rompimento da Barragem de Rejeitos

Como é a vida de Atingido?

O que significa ser atingido?

Qual o seu sentimento em relação ao seu modo de vida atual?

### **Roteiro de conversa CÁRITAS 1**

Qual a atuação da Cáritas junto aos atingidos e atingidas pela Barragem de rejeitos?

Quais ações tem sido desenvolvidas?

Como é o dia-a-dia da Cáritas?

### **Roteiro de conversa SECRETARIA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO**

Existe alguma atuação da Secretaria Municipal de Administração junto aos atingidos e atingidas pela Barragem de rejeitos?

Qual o impacto da paralização das atividades da empresa Samarco na receita do Município?

Qual o impacto da paralização das atividades da empresa Samarco no nível de desemprego da cidade de Mariana-MG?

### **Roteiro de conversa FUNDAÇÃO RENOVA**

Como a Fundação foi criada? Porque ela existe?

Qual a atuação da fundação?

Quem faz parte do conselho deliberativo da Fundação?

Quais as ações estão sendo desenvolvidas?

Os atingidos fazem parte do conselho desta Fundação?

### **Roteiro de conversa MINISTÉRIO PÚBLICO**

No caso do rompimento da Barragem de Rejeitos de Mineração, existem direitos humanos que foram violados pela Samarco? Quais?

Existe alguma forma de reparação para os danos causados? Quais?

De que maneira as empresas e Fundação Renova têm se mostrado disponíveis perante a Lei para reparar os danos causados aos atingidos?

Porque Mariana precisou e precisa de um ministério público diferente das outras áreas impactadas?

Qual o reflexo deste acontecimento no exercício da cidadania dos moradores dos distritos?

### **Roteiro de conversa SAMARCO**

Qual a importância econômica e social da indústria de mineração na cidade de Mariana- MG?

Qual a importância do funcionamento da Samarco para o Município?

Quantas pessoas a Samarco emprega?

Qual a contribuição da Samarco para a comunidade?

A Samarco tem algum projeto de Responsabilidade Social Corporativa? Se sim como ele funciona?

Como a comunidade via a Samarco e como ela é vista nos dias atuais?

O rompimento poderia ter sido evitado? Como?

Qual a atuação das mulheres na mineração?

A comunidade de Mariana tem uma identidade forte com a Samarco?

### **Roteiro de conversa CÁRITAS 2**

Como a Cáritas Mariana foi criada?

Como é o dia-a-dia da Cáritas?

Qual a atuação da Cáritas junto aos atingidos e atingidas pela Barragem de rejeitos?

Quais ações tem sido desenvolvidas?

Quem são as pessoas que estão atuando com vocês? Como a caritas funciona e é mantida?

### ***Cadastro – Indenizações***

Como está o processo de Ressarcimento e Indenizações das famílias atingidas?

Existe algum cadastro para isso? Todas as famílias foram acessadas?

Existem critérios para mensurar e indenizar ou ressarcir o que foi perdido?

- Bens Materiais (casas, utensílios domésticos)

- Bens Imateriais? (laços de vizinhança, senso de pertencimento, história, memória, valores pessoais...)
- Demora? Quanto tempo as famílias tem esperado? O que foi feito?

### ***Projetos***

- Quais os projetos que a comunidade de Mariana mais necessita neste momento?
- O que foi perdido e que pode ser recuperado por essa comunidade?

### **Roteiro de conversa JORNAL A SIRENE**

- Como o Jornal foi criado?
- Como o Jornal é mantido?
- Quem são os atuais parceiros do Jornal?
- Porque o Jornal existe?

### **Roteiro de conversa TODOS**

*Sobre o derramamento de rejeitos de mineração:*

- Existem consequências sociais para a população e município? Quais?
- Existem consequências culturais para a população e município? Quais?
- Existem consequências econômicas para a população e para o município? Quais?
- Existem consequências ambientais e sanitárias para a população e para o município? Quais?
- O acontecimento mudou a rotina da população? Como? Porquê?
- Quais ações estão sendo feitas para recuperar a história, bens, casas da população e tradição religiosa dos distritos afetados?
- Existe algum trabalho sendo feito com as crianças atingidas?
- Existe algum trabalho sendo feito com as famílias dos atingidos?
- Qual o reflexo desse acontecimento no exercício da cidadania dos moradores dos distritos?
- Qual o reflexo desse acontecimento nos direitos humanos dos moradores dos distritos?
- O acontecimento culminou na destruição dos distritos, seja em termos de memórias, tradição local, artefatos culturais, religiosos, símbolos ou agricultura? Porquê?
- As operações da Samarco têm importância para o Município de Mariana? Porquê?
- Tal acontecimento poderia ter sido evitado? Como? Porquê?

## APPENDIX C – SOCIAL DEVOLUTIONS

Since the beginning of my PhD journey, I have been reinforcing critical perspectives of Management in undergraduate classes. As future CEOs and employees of companies, students should be aware of the impacts of CSiR from business and society. These are photos from lectures with undergraduate students from public universities such as Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP) and the University of São Paulo (USP) and private schools such as the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV EAESP).





In July 2017 and 2018, together with *GV Pesquisa* we organized a research experience with four undergraduate students, called “*Conexão Local*”. Two female students in 2017 visited communities affected by the Samarco dam collapse in the region of Mariana-MG. Posteriorly, in 2018, two male students visited communities affected by the dam collapse around the Doce River from Mariana-MG to Regencia-ES. The students were from business administration and public administration courses.



In the first edition of *Conexão Local* in Mariana-MG, 2017. The female students generated a research report called “*Ó os da Lama*”: *Impactos nas relações sociais e identidade dos indivíduos atingidos*” translated as “Look at those muddy people: Impacts on social relations and identity of an affected community”. The students won an honorable mention for the quality of their work. The research report was shared with the technical assistance of the community affected and research groups that were interested in the topic.



In the second edition of *Conexão Local* in Mariana-MG, 2018. The male students wrote a research report called “*Rompimento da Barragem de Fundão: Histórias e Lutas*” which translates as “Fundão Dam Collapse: The History and the Struggles”. This research report was shared with the technical assistance of the affected community, Samarco Mining Company and the Renova Foundation. The following photos were taken during the field visit to the affected territories. The visit was supervised by the Renova Foundation.



Moreover, I have been attending conferences around the world presenting the primary results of my research. Conferences such as Latin American & European Organizational Studies (LAEMOS) in 2018, where I met Roy Suddaby, who became my supervisor during my PhD visit to the University of Victoria Canada. In 2019, I attended the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada Conference (ASAC) and the Academy of Management Meeting (AOM). In 2020 I attended the AOM and also the European Organizational Studies (EGOS)

In the Brazilian context, I have attended national conferences presenting my research and receiving incredible feedback. I also took part in big academic meetings such as Encontro Nacional da Associação de Pós-graduação em Administração (EnANPAD 2018, 2019); Encontro Nacional de Estudos Organizacionais (EnEO 2019).



During the period of the PhD journey, I have conducted several presentations and lectures on the Samarco Dam Collapse and its impact on the life of communities.

## ARENAS POLÍTICAS E SOCIAIS NA CAUSA DOS ATINGIDOS

Data: 25/06  
Horário: 10:00 às 11:30

Palestrantes:  
Jussara Jéssica Pereira  
Filipe Euclides Maciel



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## NEOEXTRACTIVISMO E CIDADES MINERADORAS: QUAL O PAPEL DA CRÍTICA?

Palestrantes:  
Profa. Jussara Pereira  
e Profa. Pâmella Magalhães

10

SETEMBRO

SALA 101  
17:30  
HORAS

ICSA

INSTITUTO DE PESQUISA EM CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS E POLÍTICAS

Inscrições no [www.observatoriocafe.com.br](http://www.observatoriocafe.com.br)  
haverá emissão de certificado de 2 horas





# MESA REDONDA



**17 DE JULHO NO ICSA**

**Tema**

**A Lama da Samarco: Vivências, Pesquisas, Percepções e Resistências.**

Carolina Maranhão (UFOP); Marii Costa (Mariana); Luciano Batista (UFOP); Pâmella Magalhães (UFLA); Filipe Cabacine (UFES); Jussara J. Pereira (FGV EAESP).

**18h30 às 20h30**

Inscrições pelo link:  
<[https://forms.goe.com/d/196h0hAsiwii-DFj6TpbUphyP8StzVSp88Du7rvzJHM/ViewForm?edit\\_requested=true](https://forms.goe.com/d/196h0hAsiwii-DFj6TpbUphyP8StzVSp88Du7rvzJHM/ViewForm?edit_requested=true)>  
Entrada gratuita e certificado de participação.

**Organização:**



UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE OURO PRETO, OBSERVATÓRIO C.A.F.E.  
PROGRAMA CONEXÃO LOCAL DA FUNDAÇÃO GETÚLIO VARGAS  
DE SÃO PAULO ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS

In 2020, an article derived from this PhD dissertation won an international award from the AOM.

## Estudante da FGV EAESP ganha prêmio de melhor artigo da Academy of Management Annual Meeting

9 de julho de 2020



FONTE: REPRODUÇÃO

Jussara Pereira, estudante do [Programa de Doutorado em Administração de Empresas \(CDAE\)](#) da FGV EAESP, será agraciada com o Prêmio Ronald B. Shuman de melhor artigo de estudante da edição de 2020 do Academy of Management Annual Meeting. O evento, que acontecerá de forma virtual neste ano, entre os dias 7 e 11 de agosto, contará com uma cerimônia para a premiação. Esta é a primeira vez que um estudante de doutorado brasileiro recebe o prêmio.

O trabalho premiado, "Rhetorical Typology in Organizational Disasters", é derivado da pesquisa de doutorado que Jussara desenvolve sob orientação de [Amon Barros](#), professor da FGV EAESP e da Universidade de Essex, Inglaterra. "Na tese, discuto como o rompimento da barragem da Samarco possibilitou uma ampla discussão sobre responsabilidade empresarial e má conduta organizacional", conta Jussara. "No artigo, analisamos como as empresas podem atribuir ou até mesmo impor um significado específico sobre o seu passado, mobilizando a controvérsia nos discursos das partes interessadas", diz. O trabalho foi escrito em co-autoria com Amon Barros e Ana

The Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP), a local public university in the municipality of Mariana (the most affected city), recognized an article derived from this PhD Dissertation.

**News:** UFOP alumni receive international award



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Criado por **Matheus Santos** em ter, 21/07/2020 - 13:29 | Editado por **Patrícia Pereira** há 2 meses.

As ex-alunas do curso de Administração da UFOP Jussara Pereira e Ana Flávia Rezende receberam o prêmio Ronald B. Shuman de melhor artigo de estudante na edição 2020 do *Academy of Management Annual Meeting*, maior congresso internacional de Administração, que acontece entre 7 e 11 de agosto. Esta é a primeira vez que um estudante de doutorado do Brasil recebe o prêmio.

O trabalho premiado, "*Rhetorical Typology in Organizational Disasters*" (em português: "Tipologia Retórica em Desastres Organizacionais"), originou-se de uma pesquisa de campo realizada na cidade de Mariana, como parte da tese de doutorado de Jussara, e foi produzido em parceria com o professor da Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV) Amon Barros.

"O texto foi construído de forma conjunta entre nós três a partir da interação com atingidos pelo rompimento da barragem, com os funcionários da empresa Samarco e com representantes dessa mesma empresa (por meio da Renova). Buscamos explorar as formas de produção do discurso na (re)construção de histórias relacionadas com o desastre", assinala Ana Flávia, doutoranda na Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG).

Jussara, que atualmente é doutoranda na FGV, conta que "a tese analisa como o rompimento da barragem possibilitou uma ampla discussão sobre responsabilidade empresarial e má conduta organizacional. Analisamos como as empresas podem atribuir ou, até mesmo, impor um significado sobre o seu passado, mobilizando a controvérsia nos discursos das partes interessadas".