

Corporate social responsibility propositions and programmes in the South African mining Industry: *a disjuncture*

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Abstract

The mining sector in South Africa is faced with daunting challenges ranging from high wagedemands from organized labour, which results in protracted strikes and loss of production and income for companies and wages for employees; declining and fluctuating commodity prices, uncertain political expectations and the duty to shareholders for their return on investments. In all these cases, mining companies are expected to comply with a range of legislative requirements for their licence to operate, while at the same time, having to fulfil some social responsibility on communities in which their operations are based. What has become apparent in recent past is that, mining companies have embraced the notions such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Corporate Social Investment (CSI) and Sustainable Development (SD). In all these endeavours, the expected results are that mining companies should be seen as socially responsible. However, the finite nature of mining as an economic activity has brought to attention some unforeseen consequences for the mines that have ceased to operate. In these instances, the lack of poor planning for post-mining period has led to the emergence of illegal mining syndicates in those mines, utilizing in some instances former employees, with disastrous results and, the environmental degradation where natural resources cannot be easily rehabilitated.

The contention of this paper is to interrogate the philosophy behind mining companies' CSR/CSI/SD propositions and programmes in relation to post-mining period. The approach of this paper will be to look into three (3) mining companies, one is involved in the mining of Ferrous, Platinum and Copper, and the other two are involved in Platinum. The rationale behind the choice of these companies is based mainly on the reason that platinum is the leading and most sought-after metal. A comparative case analysis will be employed with the view to obtaining a general overview and, to critically examine if indeed these companies have any propositions and programmes to alleviate the burden on the environment and its employees post mining. In addition, an insight will be provided on the scourge of illegal mining on the disused mines. In conclusion, some recommendations will be made for both policy-makers and future research initiatives.
