

Beyond rocks and minerals – why people, nature and gemstones matter?

Reviewing Shame Mugova's and Paul R. Sachs' (eds.) Book:

Opportunities and Pitfalls of Corporate Social Responsibility: the Marange Diamond Mines Case Study

Books are a store of knowledge, a vehicle of science and it is not rare to find many which fit the phrase 'food for thought', but this book edited by Shame Mugova and Paul R. Sachs is not only illuminating, thought-capturing and rich in context but it transcends the average expectation of academic publications. It's hard to critique such a great paperback but to perhaps realise that it seldom addresses realities of other countries.

Interestingly, the editors in the preface compare "precious minerals to precious people" hence the title given to this review – needless to say that nature should not be taken out of the equation.

This volume has at least 253 pages, 15 chapters but one focus: the mining sector. The book provides a sweet-bitter experience to the readership by looking into both the achievements and drawbacks of CSR. An important aspect of the book is the fact that contributors were fetched from a wide spectrum of expertise; hence, a myriad of analyses it contains.

The MNCs are singled out as organisations that patronize the mining sector in Africa. The impact of mining, oil, and gas (MOG) industry is viewed as harmful to the environment. It is said that the indigenous people of Zimbabwe were historically dependent on mining activities as early as in the year 1000. As a country, Zimbabwe is 150 000 square miles wide with 16 million population, landlocked colonial history under England until 1965. In 1980 the black majority acceded to power. Zimbabwe is compared to a jewel of the post-colonial Africa but also astonishingly an empty basket, a kleptocracy regime sustained by violence, corruption and even racism. The government officials were 'seen' looting diamonds and platinum. In November 2017, Mugabe was forced to resign, and Emerson Mnangagwa took over. A thorough comparison between developed and developing countries is made in many instances. The first is where CSR sets a robust command and control of regulations while weaker institutions, weak legislation enforcement and rampant corruption are characteristic to a great extent of the latter. In July 2009 a Kimberley Process Review Mission found that that mine was not complying and thus was not congruent for certification. The Marange was in fact a 50% government shareholding but that did not stop the same government to militarise it from inside which led to the collapse. Many of the authors were right to characterise that situation as a resource curse playing out in Marange despite its 20-30% world diamond deposits. One author sees it as an agreement where Chinese supplied weapons and Zimbabwe mining opportunities for them. Surely,

not a win-win situation at all! After the 1980s independence from the British rule, Robert Mugabe presidency promoted a 51% ownership to locals and 49% to MNCs by the means of the famous indiginization law until the 2017. Mnangagwa scrapped it (see pages 1-13). On page 15, CSR is said to be a leading principle in the private sector. Reading this book, the biggest criticism emerges to be perhaps the fact that some authors jump from a concept to a totally different one like seen on page 17. A transition word would be necessary in this case, and a better restructuring between more theoretical and technical articles. This book shows that it is, to some extent, the Indigenisation Act that led to efforts to promote CSR in Zimbabwe. To illustrate the economic failure, it is stated that between 2010 and 2014 Zimbabwe exported 1.7 billion USD Worth of diamond but perceived less than 200 million USD in taxes, royalties, and dividends. Simply put, the people were subjected to abject poverty! The epitome of the chaos in Zimbabwe seems to have been the highest inflation rate the country had when it reached 89.7 sextillion ($= 89.7 \times 10^{21}\%$) and when prices doubled every 24 hours leading the population to reject the then Zimbabwean dollars.

There are advantages and drawbacks in implementing the CSR inherited from the Western countries. Bearing this in mind, Shame Mugova asks: "is there an Afro-centric model of CSR that would be more relevant to African countries and businesses, and more likely to be implemented?" (Mugova and Sachs, 2019:246). The answer to this question, if yes, could go a long way in helping businesses in Africa on CSR issues.

Source: *Mugova, S and Sachs, P R (eds.), Opportunities and Pitfalls of Corporate Social Responsibility: The Marange Diamond Mines Case Study. Cham: Springer, 2019. +253 pages. ISBN: 978-3-030-17102-5.*

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