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Mine-community dialogue: Stakeholder negotiations beyond roundtable meetings in Geita, Tanzania

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Abstract

Geita Gold Mine (GGM) has for over a decade now been dialoguing with its neighbouring communities. Although the company's annual reports, press releases and other forms of publicity demonstrate a positive outcome of the ongoing dialogue, little has been studied on what constitutes dialogue from the local communities' perspective. This study examines the local communities' understanding of, and involvement in the dialogue with GGM, to offer a deeper understanding of Stakeholder Dialogue (SD) practices. Various Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) studies purport SD as a suitable platform for settling differences and increasing cooperation among the differing groups. As a result, many multinational mining companies (MMCs) are currently recognizing local communities as their stakeholders and are inviting them for dialogue as a means to improve CSR practices. From semi structured interviews and discourse analysis, this study uses the narrated life and livelihood experiences of the locals in Geita, to illustrate how dialogue processes in the area go beyond roundtable meetings. This is particularly true given the locals' perceptions that the pronounced roundtable meetings with GGM are not genuinely pursued.

Keywords: CSR, Stakeholder Dialogue (ST), local communities, mining, Tanzania

Introduction

The presence of Multinational Mining Companies (MMCs) in the communities of the so-called developing countries has widely been contested and gripped with misunderstandings and at times violent conflicts (Hilson & Yakovleva, 2007; Davis & Franks, 2011; Mensah & Okyere, 2014). The discord saw interested partners such as international business watchdogs, human rights activists, NGOs etc., requiring MMCs to 'be socially responsive to the plight of the poor and the needs of developing communities' (Overton-deklerk & Oelofse, 2010, p. 388). The past three decades have witnessed promising tendencies of MMCs recognizing neighbouring communities as

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stakeholders, a step that sees the two engaging in dialogue for 'promotion of transparency, information sharing and inspiring cooperation' (Kaptein & Van Tulder, 2003, p. 208). The MMCs regard CSR programs and SD as suitable practices in addressing the afflicted relationships and getting a social license to operate.

Recent scholarship, however, has questioned the abilities of SD in addressing the disputes and building mutual beneficial relationships between the two parties. Part of the questioning lies on the power positions and interests of dialogue actors as well as the limited openness, transparency and inclusion of stakeholders in the practice. Moreover, the understanding of SD has been a subject of wide-ranging academic debates. SD is often perceived as an abstract and philosophical concept, something which makes it difficult to operationalize in a suitable fashion (Huijstee & Glasbergen, 2007; Theunissen & wan Noordin, 2012). Understanding how dialogue is organized, from the point of view of the actors themselves, is critical in any effort of promoting and maintaining good relationships between the two parties. In this study, therefore, it is claimed that the questioned abilities of SD, specifically those dealing with the exclusion of some actors in the round table meetings, offer a unique opportunity in furthering our understanding of SD practices. By using Putnam's (1993) Bridging Social Capital conceptualization, which enables me to study dialogue between MMCs and local communities as an attempt to connect two social groups who are unlike one another and who work to improve their social relations, I argue that the very instances which exclude part of the stakeholders in roundtable meetings, most often instigate the 'excluded' stakeholders to institute other ways of negotiating their stake- i.e., of bridging with those excluding them in that social tie.

As they attempt to bridge social capital through roundtable dialogue, MMCs in Tanzania e.g. GGM, tend to meet small groups of individuals (especially local leaders), assuming that they are representatives of a larger group (local communities). Quite often, however, this practice ends up facing a number of shortcomings. Among the notable inadequacies is that of making decisions based on the interests of a few participants (those most influential, e.g., the MMC itself) at the expense of the wellbeing of a larger group. In a number of instances, such decisions limit members in a larger group from accessing the available socio-economic activities, particularly those to do with their livelihood. Therefore, local communities feel left out of the dialogue arena, something which compels them to change the ways of dialoguing.

Building from such a situation, I argue that stakeholder dialogue can take different shapes. Following the understanding that the above mentioned roundtable dialogue may provide limited expected outcomes to the members of the larger group, who are at the same time pressed with a daily livelihood quest, it would be naive to expect

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these actors to simply sit down and wait for someone to define their destiny. I contend that they will find ways to continue dialoguing. Thus, the intriguing question here is how community members, those excluded from the roundtable dialogue practices, keep on articulating their expectations, demands and grievances I approach these different ways of engaging with the powerful actors as the changing ways of dialoguing which, empirically, improve our understanding of SD. As I stated immediately above, the Bridging Social Capital (BSC) conceptualization because it allows us to study SD beyond its traditional ideals and also to use stakeholders' (local communities) life experiences to inform our understanding of dialogue practices.

Corporate social responsibility: an overview

Scholars studying CSR are reported to be struggling in defining the concept. As Maignan et al. (2005) explain, the crux of the problem is on the meaning of the word 'social' and how it links to daily business activities. The authors contend that due to the level of abstraction of the word 'social', scholars studying CSR face problems in determining and evaluating corporations' contribution to the wellbeing of society as a whole (Jamali 2008, p. 214).A number of these scholars view CSR as a problematic concept. For instance, Godfrey & Hatch (2007) view CSR as a practice without a clear paradigm or a common language, henceforth placing its implementers into struggles of achieving a clear guidance (p. 87). Littlewood (2014), in the words of Blowfield & Frynas (2005), claims that there is no a universally accepted definition of CSR, it means different things to different people, and its meaning varies according to the circumstances in which it is applied (2014, p. 41). Likewise, Jamali (2008), pointing to Franketal (2001), argues that "CSR is a vague and intangible term which can mean anything to anybody, and therefore is effectively without meaning"; an elusive concept (Lee, 1987); vague and ill-defined (Preston & Post, 1975); a concept lacking theoretical integration and empirical verification (DeFillipi, 1982; Post, 1978; Preston, 1978); lacking a dominant paradigm (Jones, 1983), and a concept susceptible to subjective and value-laden judgements (Aupperle et al., 1983, in Jamali 2008, p. 214).

Despite the above negative stance on CSR understanding and practice, Iconcur with scholars such as Carroll (1979) who state that businesses have four basic responsibilities to society- economic, legal, ethical and discretionary. An apt elaboration of Carroll's description is provided by Hendrix's (2004) perspective that with CSR, "organizations are supposed to consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, employees, shareholders, communities, and the environment in all aspects of their operations". "CSR has to comply with legislation, be accepted in the contracts and see the organizations voluntarily taking steps to improve the quality of life for employees and their families

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as well as for the local community and society at large" (Hendrix, 2004, p. 294). This way of framing CSR understanding and practices, which I also follow in this study, apart from showing core areas of focus for CSR programs, it also highlights the fact that a focus on organizations' stakeholders is central in any CSR initiative. The reference to stakeholders as the key component of CSR is eminent in many other CSR studies aimed at exploring corporate responsibilities to societies. The studies see merit in using the term stakeholder as it reduces the level of abstraction of the term society (Clarkson 1995, Freeman 1984).

Stakeholder Dialogue (SD) redefined

The definition of dialogue, within and beyond the borders of CSR has been contested and wedged with uncertainty (Senge, 1990, Cheney & Christensen, 2001, Gao & Zhang, 2001, in Nielsen & Thomsen, 2009). Several relevant points have been central to the debate with far reaching outcomes on researching and engaging in dialogue. Some of the points which draw attention of scholars studying SD include those considering dialogue as a philosophical and abstract concept; a quality of relationship; and a continuous ethical roundtable meeting. For the sake of brevity, this study is more interested with the third aspect, namelyethical roundtable meetings.

The viewing of dialogue as continuous ethical roundtable meetings is immensely discussed in the literature (Pedersen, 2006, Kent & Taylor, 2002; Theunissen & Wan Noorbin, 2012). This way of approaching dialogue is perhaps the most accepted understanding among the scholars studying the concept. Scholars who conceptualize dialogue as a 'talk in a meeting' have distinguished dialogue from other forms of talks by developing a number of ideals which according to them, heightens dialogue into a level of 'ethical meetings'. Some of the features developed and suggested to dialogue participants for a differentiation between them and those in mere sit-downs, include Pedersen's (2006) model that serves as a frame of reference for a 'participatory and inclusive' SD. It embraces five key terms, inclusion; openness; tolerance; empowerment; and transparency (pp. 140-142). Pedersen argues that a failure to abide by these terms will bring hierarchy and exclusion during dialogue (Simpson et al., 2004, p. 49).

In short, what is clear following the reference to dialogue as "ethical meetings" is that scholars speak of the strengths of SD when participants hold each other in high regard and talk humanely, as they attempt to forge a positive relationship. This general view of SD is shared by a number of scholars in the field of CSR, and in a way, it has been instrumental in addressing the misunderstandings encountering organization-

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stakeholders relations. However, it is also understood that such efforts do not happen without faults. Among the widely noted faults is the one which interests this study-i.e., the exclusion of some participants in the dialogue. Various studies which have addressed this fault reflect on the reasons and effects of such exclusions without paying much attention to the reactions of the individuals who are excluded from the dialogue. This study is interested in following the reactions of those excluded actors-particularly because in the instances where these reactions were studied and reported-they were merely viewed as protest, opposition, violence and so forth. Definitions in SD have so far not been able to approach part of these reactions as alternative ways of dialoguing.

There are a few scholars who have attempted to stretch the conceptualization of SD; this has happened by trying to say that the actions instituted by stakeholders after being disregarded in roundtable dialogue are not supposed to be looked upon as a problem. They have done this by questioning the shared construct of dialogue as an ethical roundtable meeting (Kaptein & Tulder, 2003; Burchell & Cook, 2006; Stückelberger, 2009). These scholars try to show that something opposite to the perceived notion of stakeholder dialogue (e.g., opposition, confrontation or pressure) is not necessarily a negative thing and that it can be viewed as a dialogic action. While at one point they say such instances are not desirable phenomenon, their critical attempt here is to try to understand dialogue beyond a normative construction that informs the framing and discussion of the concept.

For instance, Burchell & Cook (2006) state that SD "is far from being a homogenous, unified concept with clearly defined parameters and boundaries" They claim that "a whole range of activities can be perceived by stakeholders as dialogue" (p. 157). Kaptein & Tulder (2003) underline that there is no "one best way" to conduct SD; it will be defined by the extent of urgency; the legitimacy and power of the stakeholder and the issues that arise; the stakeholders' willingness to cooperate; and their competencies. Kent & Taylor (2002) assert that dialogue is not about the "process" used, but rather it is about the product that emerges (p. 32). Stückelberger (2009) stresses that the type of dialogue depends on the context, actors, sector, culture in a specific society and the objectives. Different actors and dialogue parties can have different objectives in the same dialogue. He emphasizes that different objectives and strategies lead to different forms of dialogue such as explorative dialogue, learning dialogue, confrontational dialogue or a dialogue which aims at a common action (p. 329).

The author presses forward the understanding of dialogue by his argument that human decisions and behaviour are not only influenced by arguments and convictions exchanged in dialogues, but also by power and pressure. He underscores that confrontation can be an instrument of communication and conflict resolutions, and

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what we need is to distinguish between creative and destructive confrontations and use of power (2009, p. 337). I follow Stückelberger's definition of SD because it serves as a point of departure towards the understanding of the concept beyond the conventional realms. As I argue in this study, apart from the confrontational dialogue, SD can also be understood in terms of other reactions which may be instituted by the stakeholders who regard themselves as being left out in the dialogue platform. As the findings of this study illustrate, despite being excluded in the roundtable dialogue, for instance because of some decisions made against their interests and expectations, quite often, stakeholders like the communities surrounding GGM in Geita, do not cease from arguing for their cases; they tend to find alternative means of negotiating their stake, or means that will help them to articulate their messages and change situations. This study, approaches these alternative ways of engaging with those excluding them from roundtable meetings, as 'the changing ways of dialoguing'.

Methods

The above stated efforts of examining and representing the views and perspectives of communities as organizations' stakeholders demanded a particular methodological approach. I addressed this methodological requirement by employing qualitative research methods, particularly a case study approach and discourse analysis as a tool for analyzing the accounts, views and perspectives of the mentioned community members, in order to make sense of what these social actors express in relation to their actions and inactions towards SD practices. In the study, I looked at GGM and its relationship with local communities as a case study of SD. Therefore, the study considered the reactions of local communities on the outcome of the on-going roundtable dialogue between their leaders and officials from GGM as 'a single instrumental case' (Creswell, 2007, pp. 74-75). The aim here was to study the accounts of community members who consider the decisions and agreements made in roundtable dialogue as being out of context, thus finding alternative means of contextualizing the mentioned decisions and agreements. By probing into their accounts, I intended to collect social facts, i.e., to bring forth the shared norms and values, the way these people make sense of the world and in this way be able to show how their reactions to the outcome of roundtable dialogue inform us of the changing ways of dialoguing.

    For the sake of capturing the above mentioned social facts, i.e., how people see their world, how they make sense of things and events around them, I used multiple sources of data, namely, semi-structured interviews; observation; secondary sources;

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informal conversation; and minutes of roundtable meetings. From the semi-structured interviews, I was attentive to grasp the views, intentions, feelings and actions of the participants in relation to the outcome of the mentioned roundtable dialogue. The observation helped to confirm or disconfirm views, claims, complaints and activities mentioned by the participants. More so, I used secondary sources to get other relevant data, for instance, statistical reports and other information on GGM's operations in the area, as well as the socio-economic profile of Geita. Informal conversation was conducted to get additional information and viewpoints from other stakeholders who are direct or indirectly involved in the dialogic practices of the two parties. Minutes of the roundtable meetings were specifically collected to ascertain the agenda, discussion, decisions and agreements made during this practice. The documents served well in confirming how the roundtable dialogue is conducted.

The main aim of using multiple source of information was to get what Charmaz (2006, p. 14) calls 'rich data'- it is an approach referred to by Yin (2003) as data triangulation. In this way, I collected different views and information from key informants, namely; roundtable dialogue participants and community members in Nyakabale, particularly those who participated in specific events which were of interest to the present study. These were practices of cattle keepers and waste rock collectors, as well as the aftermath of a road block incident. The most important aspect that I considered in choosing the key informants was their ability in providing the most useful information needed to produce pertinent answers to the research question. In this sense, I interviewed the mentioned key informants in order to get clear explanations on how and why they participated in the events I studied during fieldwork. As I explain below, the need of capturing the views and perspectives of the participants is what necessitated the use of discourse analysis as a tool for data interpretation in the present study. In essence, I dealt with the data I collected through a holistic analysis of the emerging changing ways of dialoguing, drawn from the interaction between GGM and communities in Nyakabale, Geita. I chose Nyakabale Village as the area of study because there are more dynamics (with regard to the engagement of the two parties) in this village as compared to other villages which come close to GGM's concession. Other villages include Nyamalembo, Mpomvu and Mgusu. Nyakabale village is about 4 km north of the core mining activities, 1.2 km west of a tailings pond and 1.5 km southeast from tailing piles. Its proximity to the mine, the engagement and disengagement that takes place between GGM and community members in Nyakabale village, informs us more on the ways of dialoguing. The selection of Nyakabale Village was fundamental because community members in this village experience the immediate effects of GGM operations on their livelihood, socio-cultural aspects, environment and security. Moreover, given the

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effects on the village, roundtable dialogue practices are more often taking place between GGM and village leaders in Nyakabale than with leaders from other villages.

Coming to the analytical framework, I follow Gee's (2011) discourse analysis, as it focuses on studying how language can be used to do things. Gee provides five theoretical tools that inform discourse analysis from a linguistic perspective. These tools are (a) situated meaning (b) social languages (c) figured worlds (d) intertextuality and (e) 'Big D' discourse. In this study, I was specifically interested in the first three tools. I employed the three tools particularly because they offer a unique chance of using the accounts made by the research participants to show how they use words, phrase and statements to explain their life realities and/or social worlds. In other words, the tools enabled me to demonstrate how villagers use their expressions to show identities, to make sense of their actions and validate their norms and values. My analysis focused on these identities, actions, norms and values, to illustrate the community members' abilities in shifting contents of dialogue and in changing ways of dialoguing with GGM.

Findings and Discussion

In regard to Gee's (2011) situated meanings, social languages and figured worlds, the findings and discussion of this study followed the practices of cattle keepers and waste rocks collectors in Nyakabale Village, as well as the villagers' participation in a road block incident, in order to speak of what is (was) behind these incidents- in terms of stakeholder dialogue understanding.

Cattle keepers: Trespassers or dialoguers?

During the on-going dialogue between GGM and Nyakabale Village leaders in Geita, participants arrive at making several decisions such as those which forbid the villagers to graze cattle in the mine's lease area. Apparently, this is because the practice is dangerous as there are several reports documenting the death of cattle and people, caused by different accidents occurring in the area. There are reports indicating that cattle have previously been dying after drinking water contaminated with toxic chemicals, and people run over by huge trucks used for mining operations. Due to such incidents, GGM has been hiring people from the neighbouring villages to guard its lease area and prohibit people from grazing cattle in its concession. Those found grazing cattle in this area are either taken to the village's office (if it is the first

violation), or police station (if it is a repeat violation). For the former they are either given a first warning or a penalty, depending on what the village leaders decide. For the latter, they face trespassing charges and are at times taken to the primary court to answer for the same.

Despite the situation, cattle keepers in Nyakabale and in other neighbouring villages do not refrain from grazing cattle in GGM's lease area. Certain expressions conveyed by their accounts during field interviews, seem to tell us why they continue engaging in the forbidden practice. For instance, the villagers' use of phrases such as "we are congested in the village" and "no grazing areas", portrayed them as people who were bemoaning the absence of grazing lands in the village. Also the way cattle keepers were using the term *mifugo* (cattle), did not only refer to these animals (cows, goats and sheep), but it also communicated something special- something precious which has to be taken care of regardless of the challenges. They talked about going to *"the wilderness"* or "in the forest" to graze cattle when situations go bad, i.e., when they can't find their way to GGM's lease area, or when it is the dry season. The use of the words *mbugani* or *msituni*, supposedly distant and hostile places, communicates a certain urge or a pressing need; in other words, the importance of looking for grazing lands, whenever and wherever. It is an explanation of how important cattle are to the keepers, and it is conveyed as a message that those who uplift grazing restrictions, are far removed from cattle keepers' life realities.

Another perspective which can reveal how cattle keepers' expressions communicate the reasons for disobeying restrictions made in the roundtable dialogue is social languages. Drawing from the accounts made by cattle keepers in Nyakabale, it comes out to the open that members from this group share a particular language, a language which identifies that what they do, keeping cattle. The use of this language helps one understand how these individuals look at the issues surrounding them; how they interpret their local situations. The language is quite different from the language shared by those participating in the roundtable dialogue, particularly officials from the mining firm. In more particular terms, this language identifies cattle keepers as individuals who endure difficult times and are ready to face any challenge for the sake of finding pastures for their cattle. This can be established by accounts such as "we are compelled to lead the cattle all the way to Kagu"); "it's twenty kilometres from here"; "we go there with our belongings and food as well"; "sometimes we stay there for a whole month". The statements communicate how cattle keepers strive to overcome the restrictions of grazing cattle in the mining area, where the pasture is considered plentiful and the entire exercise friendly.

Thus, apart from conveying a sense of endurance, the language from cattle keepers also portrays them as saddened individuals, i.e., people experiencing difficult times because they have been neglected by those commanding authority. They talk of being

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maltreated by mining officials, especially the security guards: "their job is to stop us from grazing in the mine, not to apprehend our cattle", "sometimes they chase us away in order to apprehend our cattle"; "we are penalized at the police [station]"; the three statements are quite indicative. Here, cattle keepers are using the statements to portray a sense that the security guards are deliberately mistreating them. In other words, the guards are apparently going against their job descriptions, to find justifications of making cattle keepers accountable.

Other statements which paint a picture that cattle keepers are ill-treated include: "we do not know where to take the cattle; there [in the forest reserve] we are paying a hundred thousand [i.e., US$ 50] to get a grazing permit", "here in the village we get penalized when cattle eat crops in the farms". Such statements illustrate the misgivings held by cattle keepers against those forbidding them to graze cattle in GGM's area. They convey a message that it is these restrictions which make them pay 'so much' for grazing permits and penalties- thus it drains their income, and makes things difficult, so they are suffering. To bring the matter into perspective, these statements speak of the cattle keepers' displeasure towards those arriving at the decisions of restricting them from grazing cattle in GGM's concession. The statements also reflect how they consider the entire exercise. If the participants are not able to help them recover their interests, then the exercise is not meaningful to them. Therefore, it makes sense when they strive for other means of attaining their interests and pressing needs.

Figured worlds is the third point which helps one see how cattle keepers' expressions inform our understanding of why they refuse to comply with the decisions made in the roundtable dialogue, and indeed how they institute alternative means of dialoguing. Accounts made by cattle keepers during the interviews, convey a sense that they have their own social and cultural way of looking at, and understanding issues, which they also perceive as common and normal elsewhere. The way cattle keepers speak of their participation in the cattle grazing exercise, tells us that they see the practice as something normal, a livelihood activity. The exercise is described as a common experience, neither staged nor maliciously pursued. Cattle keepers talk of their everyday routine; waking up knowing that they need to graze their cattle, i.e., going out looking for pastures. Given the limited grazing land in the village, they look around for all possible grazing places. At times, they find themselves in GGM's lease area. They do not aim at causing trouble, but finding means of feeding their cattle. When stopped or told not to graze in that area, they go around looking for other places. When trouble happens sometimes cattle keepers are taken to police station or village offices- accused of trespassing, or have their cattle impounded, they find ways

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of addressing it and get back home without causing any more trouble. It is worth noting here that this point of peaceful engagements aptly fits my argument that expressions from the community members in Nyakabale, communicate the willingness for bridging social capital. At least their account on peaceful interaction with the powerful actors, the ones considered arrogant and disrespectful, speak more of that sense.

Referring back to cattle keepers' expressions, it comes clear that individuals in this group also communicate the means used to face what is considered a challenging situation or trouble. Amid what is viewed as 'trouble', cattle keepers talk of their attempts in negotiating the 'punishments', e.g., how much to pay as a 'penalty', or where security guards should take or impound their cattle, and sometimes who should probe into their cases. This is an interesting aspect because it brings the two parties (cattle keepers and GGM's security groups) into a discussion. In real sense, a regular one, which in most cases results in agreements (though at times temporal) on how the matter of cattle grazing in the mine's area should be handled. It is a kind of negotiation and agreement that does not seem to get space during the meetings between officials from the mine and Nyakabale Village leaders, where cattle keepers are categorically not allowed to graze cattle in GGM's lease area.

Moreover, when issues of trespassing crop up when arrested and cattle impounded, cattle keepers throw the blame on others: security guards, police and GGM's relations personnel. They actually blame the government for giving investors enormous pieces of land without considering its own citizens. They also blame the mine for turning their government "dumb"; as well as those participating in the ongoing dialogue for restricting them from grazing in the mine's area without considering their fate. Thus, they regard themselves as victims of the situation, unfairly treated, and the only way to reach those at 'a distance' is through pushing the limits of the agreements made in roundtable dialogue.

'Magwangala' collectors or encroachers?

Magwangala is a term used by people in the villages surrounding GGM referring to waste stones left after gold ore has been extracted from rock. The stones, technically known as tailings, are normally piled (thrown) in a chosen place within GGM's lease area. According to the Nyakabale's Village Executive Officer (VEO), the word 'magwangala' is Sukuma slang for 'meatless bones'. In this sense, *magwangala* refers to broken/crashed rocks. It is named after the excavated rocks, meaning that they are no longer in their original form. In Nyakabale and in other villages neighbouring GGM, villagers, including some of the former small scale miners (who could not continue mining after being evicted by GGM), have resorted to 'scavenging' on

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magwangala thrown by the mining firm. After getting *magwangala*, they re-process them and may get small gold nuggets which they sell to middle men - business people with some connections to other gold traders or goldsmiths outside the village.

However, these collectors are forbidden by the mining firm from gathering *magwangala* because of health and safety reasons. First, it is claimed by the mining firm that the excavated rocks contain toxic chemicals, cyanide and uric acid, used for separating gold from the stones. Second, by going up the piled hills to collect the stones, villagers put their lives at risk. They are likely to get injured because of the possible accidents, and they sometimes fight against each other when looking for stones with potential gold nuggets. When seen in the mining area, GGM's security guards chase them away, sometimes using police officers to arrest them. Despite being expelled or arrested by police, *magwangala* collectors do not relinquish 'encroaching' GGM's lease area searching for the stones.

Like cattle keepers, expressions from *magwangala* collectors also communicate the reason why they keep going to pick waste stones despite the mentioned sanctions. Going through their accounts, I find the use of words such as *magwangala* itself, not only referring to this wasted stones, it is also communicating a sense that the stone is something significant, a source of their income; sort of the only possible way they can earn a living in that locality. Thus, a denial from collecting *magwangala* compels them to sneak into the mining area through the less controlled paths, or going up the hill at night to pick the stones. As they point to such struggles they do not only seem to refer to the physical challenges the *magwangala* collectors face, they also map a situation where people are suffering from discrimination, i.e., because of inequality, income generating activities become complicated; then they are supposed to endure all the risks and challenges involved in trading *magwangala* to make a living. This sense of discrimination is also communicated by their use of the words FFU (field force unit), *defender* (Land-Rover), tear gas and radio call. The words referred to the moments when the *magwangala* collectors encounter brutality from individuals commanding authority. When GGM's hired guards are overwhelmed by the presence of *magwangala* collectors in the company's concession, they use radio calls to seek help from the officials at the mine who then call the FFU. The latter, rush to the area 'accompanied' with tear gas.

The social language drawn from the accounts made by *magwangala* collectors, also communicate the above-stated sense that they are discriminated by the mining firm. Their expressions seem to identify them as a group that is undesired by the mining firm. "We are arrested and beaten; they want to get rid of our grinding ball mills; police officers go away with our stones". *Magwangala* collectors do not seem to

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comprehend the reasons for these beatings apart from being a living proof that they are unwanted by the mining firm. This is cemented by the use of the statement *wanataka kuondoa makrasha yetu* (they want to remove our grinding ball mills) - essential tools used by *magwangala* collectors in processing gold in their local sites. Without them, they can hardly extract the small gold nuggets from *magwangala*. So, if GGM, in collaboration with government officials at the district, intends to take off *makrasha*, then this shows the depth of the company's desire to dispel them. This is not dissimilar from the act of police officers who apparently confiscate and trade their stones. This seems to communicate a message that *magwangala* collectors consider the action as an attempt to discourage their struggles in earning a living, thus wishing to see them gone.

   Thus, analysing the accounts from *magwangala* collectors, their statements seem to be quite telling. They depict how the waste rock collectors frame things or events happening in Nyakabale. Their expression openly draws a picture of a social group that considers itself as one which is discriminated against and viewed by the mining firm as displeasing. In face of such a series of events, *magwangala* collectors know who is to blame. It is people who made the decisions to stop them from continuing with their normal way of doing things. Certainly, it is those who represent them in the roundtable dialogue. However, this is not to suggest that they give up. They have their own ways of dealing with that what they consider discrimination. This is suitably expressed by the figured worlds drawn from their accounts.

   The expressions of *magwangala* collectors largely communicate a message that the exercise of collecting waste rocks, is a normal livelihood activity, it is their everyday life experience. They speak of going up the hill every day to collect stones, pack them in sacks and bring them down to grinding ball mills - by bicycles or on their heads and shoulders. Then they use local means to process gold and look for markets. Following their accounts, *magwangala* collectors regard the activity as a normal practice, especially because it involves a collection of 'dumped things'. They seem not to know why they are at times stopped from collecting things which are thrown away. When problems happen (e.g., tear gas, beatings, arrests), they seem not to comprehend it because they don't see themselves as committing any offence- we are not going into their kitchen to steal, we only collect the leftovers.

   Other issues crop up when they encounter police officers and security guards, but there are ways to face the incidents. They plead with police officers to let them remain with the stones; negotiate for the amount of money to pay as 'penalty'; including asking the authorities to address the matter by advising GGM to start 'dumping' the stones on a chosen area in the village. Thus in the midst of what is viewed as trouble, villagers find a negotiating space, for discussion. If agreements are not reached, the

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succeeding days will take the same 'normal' processes, as *magwangala* collectors continue with their livelihood activities.

Road blocks: dialogue in action

Before the commencement of GGM's operations in 1999, there was an eight-kilometre road used by villagers in Nyakabale as a short route to Geita town. Villagers used to go to Geita on foot or by bicycle, to attend to wide ranging issues. The commencement of GGM's operations, however, saw the company blocking this road and preventing all Nyakabale villagers from using the road (except for the VC, VEO, commander of the village security guards [*sungusungu*] and primary school head teacher who had gate passes). The company, thereafter, constructed another road (as compensation) which left the two sides 30 kilometers apart. Most of the participants in Nyakabale report that apart from the transportation problems, the distance left them prone to banditry and other violations, especially in the late evenings as they returned home.

Villagers' complaints were tabled in the on - going dialogue but solutions took long. Thus, while this incident was considered a confrontation, by the mining firm and government officials from the district, expressions from the villagers, communicate a different perspective. This can be drawn from the situated meanings, social languages and figured worlds which came out to the open. From the villagers who participated in the road block incident, certain words and phrases stood out as words which can only be meaningful within the contexts like the one in Nyakabale. The use of words such as "gate" and "gate pass" point to something strange, and surprising. Here, the literal meaning of the words gate and gate pass*,* are accompanied by the villagers' astonishment at this uninvited *mzungu* (white man) who arrives in the village and starts installing a barricade on their own road. The use of these words conveys the villagers' disbelief of a situation where someone comes to their own home and then encircles himself in a manner that denies them access to their own belongings.

Likewise, the use of the word Maasai did not only refer to people who were previously hired by the mining firm to safeguard the company's entrance on the side of Nyakabale Village, but also communicated the villagers' surprise at what happened in their area. The word pointed to the villagers' incomprehension of a situation where strangers arrive in their village and then start stopping them from using their 'own road'. Maasai usage discloses the moments when villagers were frequently stopped at the gate and asked (by the Maasai guards) to give their names, say where they came from, where they were going and for what purpose, before allowed to pass the gate.

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Again, it is only a few who were permitted to go ahead. Apparently, the Maasai guards were also whipping the villagers, the so called 'trespassers', and using dogs to chase them away.

The above words help one understand the accounts made by certain Nyakabale villagers in reference to road block incident. What comes to light here is that the owners of the mine were perceived as individuals without good manners, who could enter and install themselves in someone's compound without seeking permission. The words also communicate the villagers' frustrations which were a reaction to the officials who ordered people to interrogate and even whip them. These frustrations are even further communicated by the villagers' use of the words such as *porini* (in the forest), and *umbali* (distance). The word *porini* did not only refer to a dense forest they used to cross on their way to Geita and back to the village, but also of the above stated violations they encountered in this place, especially from ill-motived people. The same is true of the word *umbali*. Apart from referring to a long distance travel to and from Geita, they were also depicting the picture of all the trouble involved-travelling such a distance on foot or by bicycle; road accidents; hot weather or rainfall. Like in other instances presented above, the meanings of these words do not only offer us a position from which we can understand why these villagers participated in the road block incident, they also help us realize their abilities in continuing dialoguing after being forgotten in the roundtable meetings.

In terms of social languages, the villagers' expressions appear candid. There are several words which mark a particular group of people who seemed to be unhappy with the situations that happened to them. This is conveyed by their use of certain statements describing displeasing moments. This is the case with the statements such as "they stopped us but their cars were passing here every day", and "you call an ambulance and it comes late". The first statement referred to moments when villagers were not allowed to pass through a shorter route to Geita but seeing the mine's vehicle crossing their village every day. Here, they communicated their disappointments of unfair treatment. The second statement refers to the villagers' frustrations caused by GGM's delays in sending its ambulance when notified of a sick person in the village- a sign of being neglected. After GGM stopped the villagers from using the shorter route to Geita, it offered the ambulance service to the villagers. So the villagers would take a sick person up to the gate (three kilometres from the village), and then security guards would use a radio call to tell GGM officials to send the vehicle.

Other accounts which identify Nyakabale villagers as a group of people who were unhappy of the situations in their village, include the ones which referred to incidents where women were attacked in the forest. The moments when GGM ordered its employees not to give the villagers a ride in their vehicles; the occasion when they had to incur costs to spend a night in Geita town as could not return to the village on the

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same day due to the long distance; and when they could not carry their harvest to Geita market. This set of statements is revealing in terms of conveying the villagers as a group of people displeased with the actions of the mining firm, and indeed in shedding light on why the villagers decided to block the road.

The figured world perspective communicated by the accounts of the community members also helps us understand how these individuals make sense of their local situations, i.e., how they use certain statements to convey the normalcy of their practices. They said a shorter route to Geita town was blocked. The alternative longer route was detrimental to their lives. Information about the encountered challenges was sent to the officials concerned but feedback was delayed. So they thought of a possible means to reach those at the distance (GGM and government officials), for a discussion. This is by blocking the road used by GGM and stopping the firm's cars passing through their village. The aim was to meet GGM officials and tell them about the sufferings resulting from blocking the shorter route.

The idea was to meet the *mzungu* (white man) for a talk, and the *mzungu* came accompanied by district officials- so those 'at a distance' were finally accessed and brought to a dialogue. As a result, after several consultations with the committee formed in the village, GGM responded immediately, and villagers' concerns were attended to. Matters which were discussed for many years, (without clear solutions), in the 'usual' dialogue between GGM's officials and village leaders, were then resolved in a course of three days. When censured for blocking the road, again, there was someone else responsible for that. It is not them, but they mention those who failed to see and address the hassles they encountered; who could not comprehend their situation- those at a distance living a different life. They say because they have vehicles of their own, a health centre close to them, security and so forth, that is why it took so long for them to listen to and find solutions to their problems. The norms that are communicated by these accounts from Nyakabale villagers perhaps suffice the validation made by this study that such actions from the villagers are in actual fact the changing ways of continue dialoguing- a nuanced form of bridging social ties between two different groups.

Conclusion

This study explored the dialogic practices of the MMCs and neighbouring communities, as a social phenomenon, and used community members' views, perspectives and reactions on the same, to further the understanding of SD. In more particular terms, it attempted to speak of the varying ways of dialoguing which are

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beyond the traditional understanding of what constitutes SD. Given the increasing opposition and contestation on the operations of MMCs in the rural communities of the so called developing world, the deployment of various efforts to attend to this afflicted relationship, became necessary. Different studies in CSR developed, among other efforts, a stakeholder dialogue discourse, particularly round table discussions, as a suitable approach for resolving the differences brought by the encounter of MMCs and local communities. The said discourse has been quite helpful in addressing the troubled relations of the two parties, and in discussing the possibilities of co-existence. The aim of this study was not to challenge this discourse but rather to go deeper into the argument that there is a need to add parameters of measuring the stakeholder dialogue constitution in order to capture other equally pertinent ways of dialoguing.

Studies on stakeholder dialogue practices, in the eyes of round table meetings, appear to fall into two categories: first, those focusing on understanding the challenges which may impede the success of this implementation, and second, the ones which suggest better strategies for the effectiveness of the practice. Looking at these studies, it becomes visible that there are a few attempts which tried to get a deeper understanding of the outcome of ineffective dialogic practices. Most of the attempts in this respect, show and predict disorder and misunderstanding as the possible and probably the only outcome of ineffective stakeholder dialogue. This is especially true on the studies which focus on the dialogic practices between powerful actors such as MMCs and those seemingly less powerful, in the likes of local communities. A broader view on the outcome of such ineffective dialogic practices is that which speaks of confrontation, protest and violence as the probable reaction of the unsatisfied dialogue actors, specifically referring to those seen as less influential, as in regard to community members.

This study, however, attempted to refute the general view that disputes and conflicts are the most likely outcome of ineffective dialogue practices, in the context where those perceived as less powerful stakeholders feel left out of the exercise. The study argues that by referring to the actions and inactions of those excluded in the roundtable dialogue as disorder, protest, violence and so forth, scholars in CSR are probably reducing complex social phenomena to mere legal or procedural constructs. In other words, the study contends that a closer scrutiny to the reactions, views and perspectives of stakeholders who feel like their representation in the dialogue arena is not well pronounced, offers rich empirical data which help to further the comprehension of SD practices. In this sense, the study hesitated to look at organization's stakeholders, particularly local communities, as less influential partners or 'trouble makers'; instead it views them as stakeholders who have abilities to change the ways of dialoguing, especially after they feel excluded in the round table meetings. In that matter, the study attempted to tackle the question on the abilities of local

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communities in changing the ways of continuing dialoguing, i.e., how exactly are these stakeholders being able to continue articulating their concerns; negotiating their way; and pushing the limits of round table dialogue after they are 'shut out' from the same.

The analysis of the accounts made by the participants in this study, and indeed their expressions on that what they do after being 'excluded' in the roundtable meetings, illustrate how community members (here referring to those in Nyakabale Village) are able to create space for dialogue even within the avenues which other individuals would not imagine. Their accounts show that in the context where the interests of community members are not fulfilled in a more direct way, members in these communities find other means and ways of realizing their interests.

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