

Abstract

The behaviour of the multinational corporations appears to be uneven in diverse areas of operations and South African MNC's are no exception to other trans-national corporations, especially in Africa. The behaviour of the MNC's tends to vary from the country of origin to the host country and workers are the hardest hit since some trans-national corporations do not allow or recognise unions. Some tend to overlook the ruling made by national structures like Labour Court, and this negates the sovereignty of the country and is against the International Labour Organization's Guidelines on Multinational corporations. Despite the OECD Guidelines which emphasizes that multinational corporations should impart skills to the local people or host countries, in most of the cases senior positions are occupied by white people from the country of origin whilst local people occupy the lower ladder without the necessary skills. On the other hand, wage gaps are huge between the managers and the local people, whilst some companies pay far below the national minimum wage. In some countries there is a compensation for violating the environment of the people surrounding the companies, especially gold mines while other companies gloss-over and deny the environmental impact of mining.

The uneven application of democratic processes in different countries, for example, unions do not form part of restructuring and environmental management issues whilst considered in other worker forums. The marginalization of unions in key decision-making bodies is symbolic of double standards unleashed by MNC's especially if they enjoy the support from government and worker's rights tend to be undermined. The hire and fire approach in some mining companies like Geita Mine in Tanzania perpetuates dependency, exploitation and violation of worker rights. This hire and fire approach undermines and weakens the power of unions to organize. This calls for strong interaction between the Trade Union federations or affiliates both in the host country and the mother country of the MNC's.