

## **The Human Right to a Safe, Clean and Healthy Environment in Corporate Social Responsibility's Strategies: An Approach to Understanding Mexico's Mining Sector**

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**Abstract :** The virtues of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are explored widely in the academic literature. However, few studies address its link to human rights, per se; specifically, the right to a safe, clean and healthy environment. Fewer still are the research works in this area that relate to developing countries, where a number of areas are biodiversity hotspots. In Mexico, despite the rise and evolution of CSR schemes, grave episodes of pollution persist, especially those caused by the mining industry. These cases set up the question of the correspondence between the current CSR practices of mining companies in the country and their responsibility to respect the right to a safe, clean and healthy environment. The present study approaches precisely such a bridge, which until now has not been fully tackled in light of Mexico's 2011 constitutional human rights amendment and the United Nation's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UN Guiding Principles), adopted by the Human Rights Council in 2011. To that aim, it initially presents a contextual framework; it then explores qualitatively the adoption of human rights' language in the CSR strategies of the three main mining companies in Mexico, and finally, it examines their standing with respect to the UN Guiding Principles. The results reveal that human rights are included in the RSE strategies of the analysed businesses, at least at the rhetoric level; however, they do not embrace the right to a safe, clean and healthy environment as such. Moreover, we conclude that despite the finding that corporations publicly express their commitment to respect human rights, some operational weaknesses that hamper the exercise of such responsibility persist; for example, the systematic lack of human rights impact assessments per mining unit, the denial of actual and publicly-known negative episodes on the environment linked directly to their operations, and the absence of effective mechanisms to remediate adverse impacts.

**Keywords :** corporate social responsibility, environmental impacts, human rights, right to a safe, clean and healthy environment, mining industry

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