

**CONTESTING MINING AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY
DISCOURSES: THE IFUGAO WOMEN OF DIDIPIO, KASIBU,
NUEVA VIZCAYA**

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ABSTRACT

This research, based on a field research to Didipio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya in the Philippines conducted in 2007, focuses on impact of the discourses on transnational mining and indigenous identity on the Ifugao women of Didipio. An inclusive picture of the situation of the Ifugao women is done by an ascending analysis from the local and specific location of the women. Mohanty (2003) refers to this as a transnational anticapitalist feminist critique. The main objective of this study is to make the Ifugao women visible in the discourses on indigenous peoples and mining, which the twin discourses have rendered invisible.

This research argues that the discourses on transnational mining and indigeneity, *first*, conflate the multiple identities of the Ifugao women by insisting on the fictive homogeneity of indigenous identity; *secondly*, render the Ifugao women invisible by the denial of the connection that is created between actors in a particular mining relationship; and *thirdly*, erase the value of the Ifugao women's labour in the process of shifting from subsistence agricultural economy, where women are active participants, to a capitalist mining industry that generally excludes women because of the lack of skills necessary and required to participate in such an industry. Likewise, the situation of the Ifugao women of Didipio leads us to think about the contingency and multiplicity of identities. Their case affirms the notion that identities have epistemic validity and that they are subject to multiple determinants that will have to be verified in the course of one's life. In the Ifugao women's case, an identity that is exogenously valued, such as indigenous identity, may not be necessarily substantiated by their local and specific realities. Finally, the narrative of Ifugao women's resistance, on the face of the persistent threat of transnational mining, re-centers what has been up to now known tangentially as the periphery. Through the study of the Ifugao women's resistance, power in all its manifold forms is exposed for its fragility.

KEY WORDS: MINING/ INDIGENOUS WOMEN/ INDIGENOUS IDENTITY/
PHILIPPINES/ FEMINISM

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