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Understanding Women's Views on Mining: The Case of the Winemakers of Adams

Weena G. Franco¹

¹Mariano Marcos State University, City of Batac, 2906, Ilocos Norte Philippines

*Correspondence email: wgfranco@mmsu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Mining causes displacement and marginalization of affected communities, especially those comprised of indigenous peoples (IPs). However, it is very rare for the local people, the IPs specifically, to say no to such. The municipality of Adams, Ilocos Norte is one of those that curiously have been able to withstand the entry of mining corporations. Interestingly, those who were able to get the LGU to say no to it were the local women engaged in making local wines. This study is about understanding the views of the local women winemakers of Adams on mining. It contends that winemakers' view of their environment, their forest in particular as source of livelihood, as a home and a source of identity for them. These shaped their view on mining as threats to their resources intensified by media representations of mining highlighting the experiences of other host mining communities facing social and environmental adverse effects of such development projects. The LGU's program on eco-tourism, promoting Adams as an eco-tourist destination supported the winemakers' opposition on the entry of mining in the municipality.

Keywords: Understanding, Mining causes, Winemakers

INTRODUCTION

As humans work toward developing themselves and improving their quality of living, they harness the environment and the resources present in it. Every human undertaking is coupled with diverse and competing meanings. People look at the world in a relative manner and construct the world according to their own values. Thus, every human endeavour is coupled with competing meanings and differing values.

The way people use the world's resources reflect the values that they have toward the environment. In using these resources in the name of development, there are at least two competing views: one, the developer's perspective – usually that of an outsider and the other, the perspective of the indigenous community.

Some outsiders to a specific community may look at local resources as a good setting for progress undertakings and as an opportunity to implement projects for development. This is in contrast to the indigenous people who consider their land as sacred, since it is the home and cradle of memories of their ancestors, and the source of their identity and life. Such differences in the way groups view resources and the environment at times breed conflict.

According to Yangot (2009), the Philippines is one of the world's most highly mineralized countries, with untapped mineral wealth estimated at more than \$840 billion. It is one of the top five mineral exporters in the world, and has the potential to become the world's third biggest supplier of gold, fourth of iron, fifth of nickel and sixth of chromite. Of its nine million hectares of mineralized lands however, about half a million hectares have already been developed. Most of these lands are located within the indigenous people's ancestral domains (http://www.thai-ips.org/Documents/FPIC_philippines.pdf). This is because while the indigenous people make up less than a fifth of the Philippine population, most of the country's remaining biodiversity and other natural resources are located in their territories (Yangot, 2009: 2). These include mineral resources as such copper, nickel, chromite, limestone and marble.

The environment and its natural resources are considered by the indigenous people as fundamental to their survival. They depend on these resources for livelihood. Because of this, the indigenous people's loss of control of their lands and resources adversely affect their survival as a people. As such, they view the prospect of mining with hostility and suspicion.

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According to Ronderos (2013), while large-scale mining operations have negative consequences for everyone living in areas near mining sites, the indigenous people are particularly more vulnerable because of the large-scale destruction of forests and agricultural land, and the pollution of soil and rivers with toxic chemicals that these cause. In addition to these, indigenous people are also prone to various types of human rights violations such as displacement due to the appropriation of their lands; frequent mining accidents; health problems for mineworkers due to exposure of dust, heavy metals, hazardous gases, fumes; loud noises; and, the disintegration of their indigenous societies and culture. Because of these, the entry of mining companies in indigenous people communities generates opposing responses among the local people.

This study determines how the women winemakers' livelihood shapes their view of their environment, which consequently affects their views and perceptions of mining and their engagement with the LGUs and the other stakeholders in Adams. To do this, the study seeks answers to the following questions:

- What are the traditional wine making practices of the women in Adams? How are these threatened by mining?
- How do the women winemakers view mining? What are their perceptions about the prospecting of nickel in their locality? What factors shape their views on mining and mining operation, especially in Adams?
- How do the LGU policies and programs affect the views of the women winemakers about mining?

Related Work

Externally imposed development projects that involve resource extraction, such as mining, are one of the issues that IP communities face nowadays. Mining is considered and promoted by some as a development project. However, this view comes from an outsider's point of view and not from the people who and will be affected by it. This paper highlights the views of women winemakers on their environment as home of their IP identity and as source of their livelihood activities potentially threatened by mining operation. Most papers written on this subject came from the point of view of men who will benefit from it or whose livelihoods were threatened by it. Women's views on this subject were rarely taken into consideration. This research is conducted precisely to show how the women, especially those whose traditional practices and livelihood are threatened, view the prospect of mining.

The researcher hopes that this study, development project implementers can be made more mindful of the views of locals who will be affected by the project. By highlighting the women's views of mining, the researcher also hopes that the study can facilitate understanding and consideration of women's concerns in the design and implementation of development projects. Furthermore, the LGU as popularizers and as a medium in transforming claims to appeal in public will take its function as an institution to address the concerns of the IPs through policy formulation and strict implementation of IP related laws such as IPRA as well as mining laws. Stakeholders' (DENR, NCIP, NGOs, etc.) collaboration on the review and issuance of mining operation permits is necessary in order to ensure the respect and preservation of the rights and welfare of the IPs and of women, and at the same time steers the wheel of development at the local communities. Thus, this study will contribute to a more holistic understanding towards implementing development projects with resource extraction especially among IP communities.

This study focuses on the women winemakers of Adams, Ilocos Norte who are threatened by the potential impacts of possible mining projects in the municipality. Since no mining operation has taken place in Adams due to the fact that the locals have rejected mining exploration in their municipality, this study will focus on the local women's winemaking practices and how mining posed a threat to such. Consequently, the study also focuses on the responses of the winemakers, particularly on how they perceive the possible impacts of mining on their environment and sources of their livelihood. This paper highlights the views and voices of women who are open rarely emphasize in struggles of communities facing external development projects.

Social constructionist approach – anchored in the sociology of knowledge, interpretive sociology, and much of what now passes as postmodern epistemology (Burr, 1995) – addresses the historical, cultural, and political processes by which humans seek out, create, evaluate, and contest specific place meanings. Within the context of nature and wilderness, social construction refers to social, cultural, and political processes by which groups of people create shared meanings and understanding of a place and how these shared meanings, in turn, structure social actions in and with respect to those places.

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Ingold (2000, p.20) points out, for example, that the environment is socially and culturally constructed. He argues that the environment from which people derive resources is a relative term. He contends that the environment or the place where people live takes on meaning only in relation with the person's experience of such. Hence, the environment exists only with the people living in it. Ingold (2000) also avers that the environment or localities are never complete.

Meanwhile, Jenkins (2014) in her article entitled "Women, mining and development: A research agenda" argued that the experiences and perspectives of women in relation to the extractive industries have often been absent from analyses of the impacts of mining in the global South. She claimed that while it is true that natural disasters are inevitable, the worsening of their effects can be traced back to various man-made development programs. Environmental change, thus, is not exclusively brought about by the processes of nature but also by the activities of humans. The constant struggle in the class system directed man to centralize its economic development strategies. One of the strategies raised by Jenkins (2014) is natural resource extraction like mining. For both artisanal and small-scale and large-scale mining, the evident consequence is environmental degradation. Disadvantageous effects of mining include the pollution of water, air and land, and the use of land and water resources previously dedicated to agriculture.

Mining sites are usually in the rural areas. Hence, as mining companies occupy the area, rural communities lose access to communal and common land previously used for subsistence activities such as farming and hunting. Aside from its environmental effects, Jenkins identified the social impact of mining on women. Jenkins claimed that the work of women in the masculine-perceived occupation of mining remained obscure and hidden, forgotten and devalued.

Environmental change comes in two ways – natural and man-made- but leaning more to the latter like utilizing local resources for livelihood. Social structures are product of social constructs. It is formed from the perceptions of the people on the best course of action to take. Similarly to the residents of Adams who are threatened by mining operation and later denied a mining company entrance to their locality. This action was made to protect their land which they consider as a home and a livelihood resource.

Vandana Shiva's (1989) radical views on development and feminism are combined in her theory of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism's main contention is the inseparable relationship between the principles of ecology and the principles of feminism. Shiva theorizes that the injustice and adverse effects of environmental degradation brought about by the promises of economic development is the same injustice that puts women specifically in an exploited, marginal position. Injustice against women happens by discounting their contribution to the economy. An economic development that excludes women's work and wealth creation in the mind deepens the injustice by displacing women from their livelihoods and alienating them from the natural resources on which their livelihoods depend. The environment according to Shiva does not only feed the women who toil on its soils; it is also their home. As such, the environment encompasses all that is meaningful in a woman's life. Shiva specifically gives focus on the lived experiences of third world women because of her belief that it is these women who directly experience the impact of corporate globalization.

Shiva's theoretical stance on ecofeminism springs from her long involvement with the Chipko movement in India which is basically against industrial forestry, illegal logging and the risk caused by the destruction of forests on the women's source of livelihood.

On the other hand, Sandra Harding's (1993) gendered epistemology, also is called the feminist standpoint epistemology also becomes significant in this study through its two principal claims. Standpoint epistemology supposes that because knowledge is socially situated, marginalized groups become more inquisitive and assertive about their social positions because they are socially situated in oppressive contexts, which raises their awareness of why they are in the margins in the first place.

Harding specifically wants to find and highlight women's voices in oppressive structures such as in development. She specifically points out that the lived experiences of women are not as mundane as people think they are, but actually are politicized experiences as affected by power structures and material experiences.

John Hannigan's (2006) social construction of environmental issues and problems dovetails the social issue of the locals of Adams, specifically the winemakers being confronted by the impacts of the possible

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mining operation. The necessary factors for the successful construction of environmental problem are present and experienced by the local of Adams. Hannigan outlined necessary factors for the successful construction of an environmental problem. These factors are necessary for a prospective environmental problem to be fully and successfully contested. Hannigan's social constructionism will be used to explain the views of women winemakers about mining in the locality.

In his book *Environmental Sociology*, specifically on the chapter of social constructions of environmental issues and problems, Hannigan emphasizes the contrast between social and environmental problems. Although they are similar in a sense that they emerged as a "sequences of events" emerging from shared definitions, social and environmental problems are different. While moral aspect is embedded in both environmental and social problems, the former has greater physical ground. As such, more factual arguments are involved in them.

Related to this, Hannigan identified three key processes which are crucial in bringing the environmental topics into public awareness. These include assembling, presentation and contestation of environmental claims. The first process covers problem identification and discovery. These can be either derived from acquired scientific information or directly experienced by the locals. The second process involves legitimation of the problem through people's confirmation or acceptance of the problem. Lastly, the process of claims making must be scientifically precise, easy to manage by policy and address values of the policy-makers.

Applied to Adams, the local's responses to mining also involve these key processes. Firstly, if the mining operation is approved, the locals of Adams will be facing the impacts or threats of the possible operation of externally imposed development projects. These threats can impact on the locals differently, depending on how they view their environment. The locals of Adams construct their environment in relation to their needs. Their environment, especially their mountains provide them with resources used for their livelihood.

RESEARCH METHOD

The issue at hand talked about the interaction of external development activities with resource utilization and the local people, in this case, the winemakers in Adams, Ilocos Norte who were confronted with the threat of possible mining operation since mining companies operate where the resources are located. To date, along with other municipalities like Nueva Era, Carasi, Solsona, and Vintar – all identified towns where various IP groups live, Adams is the only municipality that has not given consent for BC's mining application primarily because of the negative response of the winemakers being the most affected group if the mining industry enters the locality.

The reluctance of the people of Adams, specifically the women winemakers, towards the possible entry of the mining industry in the community could be analyzed in four frames. These frames of analysis would be: 1) winemaking as a thriving economic frontier, 2) winemaking as a gendered industry, 3) winemaking as repository of indigenous knowledge, and 4) winemaking as ecologically and culturally embedded.

These four frames of analysis elaborate how winemaking is tied with livelihood as well as an important activity where gender and development could be affirmed. Both of these variables are threatened by the possible entry of mining in the area. Being a thriving economic frontier and a gendered industry, local efforts basically from the LGU is accounted as an important variable in response to this threat. Moreover, the reluctance of the winemakers toward the entry of mining in Adams springs from the projected adverse effects of this industry to their environment, their source of livelihood and their indigenous culture as intensified by media representation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The significance of winemaking in the Adams community did not start out as a purely economic endeavor. Winemaking in this community, like its other highland counterparts in the Cordillera and the Mountain Province, has been a part of the mundane community life since wine, mainly *tapuey* and *basi*, has always been a ritual element in special events such as marriage and burial, among others. Winemaking and wine consumption, however, have always been traditionally viewed as central elements in cultural life and not from the perspective of the economic. In Adams, winemaking became economically important because of the "one town, one product" advocacy of the province to boost its

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tourism industry. Thus, from the traditional production, use and consumption of wine in the area, winemaking became an economic activity since it has been designated as the localized Adams product which has become its identifier from other towns in the province and among tourists. As such, local ownership of wine production has been introduced, IP women have been tapped as makers and associations such as the AAA have been established. In terms of economic scale, the bugnay wine of Adams, most specifically, has become very visible in local hotels such as those in Pagupdud, Ilocos Norte and has been widely promoted in tourism expos at the provincial and the national level. These then, in retrospect, make the winemaking industry in Adams generally a thriving economic industry since its reach has exponentially widened and no longer just limited in the traditional, exclusive consumption of the locals.

As a thriving economic frontier, winemaking in Adams diversifies the sources of livelihood in the community, transcending agriculture and fishing. It has to be understood that the industry of winemaking was an offshoot of the booming eco-tourism in the province. Winemaking in this case then served as an identifier in response to the flocking of tourists in the area. While wines can be sold anywhere, winemaking in Adams provides an exotic and organic vibe because of its observable endowment of an abundant supply of natural resources and because the tourists themselves could get a peek of how they are processed. Using the concept of value-adding by Neil J. Smelser, winemaking as an economic industry in Adams is not only profitable because it is promoted as a local product but because the process of winemaking in itself gives tourists a sense of cultural immersion. Seeing how the products are made by the local people and seeing the mountains where they get their raw materials elicit a feeling of being an emic observer.

The reluctance then by the local people towards the possible entry of mining in Adams can be inferred as a subtle resistance to the probable demise of a communal economic effort through winemaking. Akin to this demise would also be the demise of the prestige of their wine products as their local identifier.

The advocacy of both the LGU and LEAD in campaigning for sustainable development through eco-tourism (which winemaking is a part of) could be seen as a local strategy to condition the community members that they do not need to risk their abundant natural resources just to be economically progressive. In effect, these efforts by the AAA, LGU and other institutions saliently puts mining and winemaking in a binary relationship with the latter as positive and the former negative, economically and ecologically speaking.

The process of winemaking in Adams is also a significant domain to study because it underscores a gendered industry with specific sets of expectations and performativity. The winemaking industry can be considered as gendered because it is particularly a livelihood activity designed for women.

While the motivation for this industry is predominantly economic, the specific tapping of women for this industry evokes the discussion of financial independence and feelings of empowerment. The label 'gendered' here then does not connote a negative stance, rather a more positive one.

Through winemaking, women in Adams enter a new realm of gender performance. Being identified as a winemaker elevates women's status as more than just mothers, wives or daughters. The act of gathering the raw materials, fermenting them in a laborious process, labelling them and then packaging the wine add a new layer to their everyday performance as women.

Consequently, financial independence stirs feelings of empowerment. Vandana Shiva's radical feminism, as epitomized by the contention of Susan Harding's standpoint epistemology, states that most often than not, the voices of women are muted in economic development. This position indicates that women are most of the time considered as not contributory characters in economic development since they are confined within traditional roles and they could not be separated from the domestic domain of living. This is not however, the case in Adams because amidst the development of their economy through eco-tourism in which winemaking plays a part, women are given the opportunity to take part in the actual developmental process. Empowerment comes then from the fact that women now hold an important role not only within the confines of their homes but also contribute to the progress of the whole community.

In this case, the reluctance of the community members toward the potential entry of mining may be viewed as deeply seated in the gender dynamics that winemaking gives to the community of Adams. With women as the winemakers, the adverse environmental effects of mining are directly aimed at a

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specific group deemed as still generally occupying a marginalized status in the Philippine context. As such, the resistance to mining then, as voiced by the AAA, is fundamentally gendered too; thus, the attachment of the locals to the forests does not only present an economic relationship nor an exclusively cultural relationship but also a gendered one.

It is also striking that women winemakers of Adams all have IP affiliation. With this, the reluctance of these winemakers towards mining does not only come from a gendered perspective but also from an indigenous indispensable attachment to a home. Thus, the negative perception of the winemakers toward mining and their attachment to the forests are ingrained in the spectrum of first, being a native to a home; second, being dependent on a natural resource, third, being valuable in the community's developmental process, and fourth, being independent and empowered. From these four visible standpoints, women winemakers are reluctant to mining because of their affective construction of the forests and mountains being their home and extension of their indigenous selves. This affective construction is manifested in winemaking.

Winemaking in Adams becomes significant then in contributing to a more positive reference in the discussion of gender and development. Furthermore, the solid position of the winemakers to resist the entry of mining in the area debunk the general idea that the woman's voice is absent in debates regarding conservation management and in the community's choice of developmental trajectory.

Adams provides a unique backdrop to winemaking predominantly since it is a melting pot of various ethno-linguistic groups, which historically speaking, has been made possible by resistance efforts during the Spanish colonization. The most notable ethno-linguistic groups/IP groups who settled in Adams are the Ilocanos, the Bago, the Isnegs/Yapayaos, the Igorots (composed of both Kankanaey and Ibaloi). Each of these ethno-linguistic groups regards winemaking and wine consumption as central figures of their cultural and communal life (Celino, 1990:32). The high level of variance in the composition of Adams' population in terms of ethnicity makes winemaking a repository of indigenous knowledge and a manifestation of the peaceful assimilation of ethnic identities in one community.

As a repository of indigenous knowledge, winemaking displays the winemakers' deep ecological attachment with their forest. The ability to turn a specific type of wild berry endemic in the Adams mountains presents the winemakers' knowledge on the use and taxonomy of their natural resources. The capacity of winemakers to mark the terrains where they could get raw materials from, and the conservation techniques used to protect these sources of raw materials through the ban of slash and burn, illegal logging and presently the resistance to the possible entry of mining in the community are reminiscent of the dialectical relationship between man and his environment. The antagonistic view of the winemakers, the LGU and other community members toward mining is not only motivated by the fear of losing a localized industry but also of the fear of losing the identity and dignity of what they consider as their land. The degradation of the forest through mining is then symbolically viewed by the winemakers and residents as a direct degradation of their indigenesness as a community and a direct blow on the indigenous knowledge made richer by the hodgepodge of beliefs, traditions and way of life through assimilation.

Moreover, their knowledge on the process of winemaking in itself is an intergenerational indigenous knowledge as emphasized in the narrative of winemakers noting that the art of winemaking has been a tradition handed to them by their forefathers. The sentimental construal of the winemakers of their environment as typified by the intergenerational knowledge of winemaking and their attachment to the forest because of identity are focal points to consider as to why winemakers oppose the entry of mining in Adams. The winemakers and the forests are bound not only through economic profitability but also through affective ties as recounted in memory and tangibly through winemaking. Mining then in this respect is perceived negatively by townspeople because its projected adverse effects will have a direct impact on important aspects of community living transcending from more than just profitability.

The possible massive ecological and cultural disturbance that mining is perceived to bring about in Adams is perhaps the overarching theme of the study. The previous contentions all boil down to the deliberation that while some of the locals have expressed economic hope in mining, there are more respondents, especially the winemakers who feel antagonistic about the mining industry because their environment will be at risk.

The ecological rootedness of winemaking can be disturbed by mining because it poses adverse environmental effects. Following the theory of social constructionism, the aversion of the winemakers

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and townspeople of Adams toward the entry of mining is inherent in their social construction that mining is a negative developmental process. Moreover, the role of media in conditioning sets of behavior and mindsets as John Hannigan emphasizes become highlighted as the winemakers and community members use what they have heard and seen from the media as bases for further construing mining as a threat that they should resist from.

With the combination of media information and observation from neighboring towns, the stand of the winemakers is strengthened especially that these information allows them to project further negative implications of mining on their craft. Their statements signify their renewed concern for their resources. This connection entails a responsibility to protect the environment because of the recognition that the degradation of it will consequently produce a degradation of culture, craft and a way of life.

Mining is also threatening the cultural significance of winemaking in Adams as highlighted by respondents from the AAA. This cultural significance is essentialized under the frames of identity, social cohesion, and practices.

The presence of mining poses a threat in the celebration of identity in the Adams community because winemaking is a cohesive force in the area. Adams being a community sheltering diverse ethno-linguistic groups/IP groups, identity is a very important variable. Winemaking creates dual identities for the winemakers of Adams since they identify themselves as both a member of a particular ethno-linguistic group and at the same time a community member of Adams. Without winemaking as one of the communal activities in which their dual identities could be assimilated in through the sharing of their lives and experiences while making their product, the sense of communal living may be diminished in effect. In the potential loss of their localized product which is their wines, their construal of their identity as a town may also be at stake.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the perception of the townspeople of Adams towards mining is more negative than positive because mining is in conflict with one of their major sources of livelihood, which is winemaking. This negative view of mining is not only purported by the information they receive from the media and through observation from neighboring towns that have consented to mining but also because of their projection that mining can give more adverse environmental effects than economic good. With these projections, underlying issues are put into the surface.

First of these issues would be the probable effect of mining to the winemaking industry as a thriving economic frontier of the town. The advent of eco-tourism as supported by the LGU, the province and other stakeholders tapped winemaking as an added attraction that they could bolster for Adams to capitalize on. Since winemaking is a collaborative initiative and because of its lucrative financial returns ever since it was established, the LGU, townspeople and other stakeholders are reluctant to the entry of mining because they feel that they do not need to submit to a dangerous form of development strategy when they can improve and make their development sustainable through eco-tourism.

Another issue is the perceived negative effect of mining in women empowerment since winemaking is generally a gendered industry. Winemaking is comprised entirely of IP women and through the industry. Women have achieved economic independence and a renewed status in the community. Being at the core of winemaking, IP women in Adams become a significant labor force in the socio-economic development of the town. The involvement of IP women in an important economic industry establishes the claim of radical feminists such as Vandana Shiva and Sandra Harding that development can only truly be represented when women are seen as important contributors in the labor force on a par with men.

The lives of the winemakers are also intertwined with the environment. This tie between the environment and the people presents why there are efforts to protect the forest and why there is a solid stance to resist the entry of mining in the community. Underlying this important connection is the involvement of the concept of identity and culture. The environment and the winemaking activity serve as cohesive forces in maintaining the stability of the culture and the cohesion of community members. Saliiently, the role of the environment in enmeshing diverse ethnic identities to form a solid community is crystallized in winemaking as the townspeople identify themselves as community members of Adams sharing the endowment of their environment and not as heterogeneous groups competing for same resources.

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