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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Großmann, K., Padmanabhan, M., & Braun, K. v. (2017). Contested Development in Indonesia: Rethinking Ethnicity and Gender in Mining. *ASEAS - Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 10(1), 11-28. <https://doi.org/10.14764/10.ASEAS-2017.1-2>

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# Contested Development in Indonesia: Rethinking Ethnicity and Gender in Mining

Kristina Großmann, Martina Padmanabhan & Katharina von Braun

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This article reviews the literature on the relationship between gender and ethnicity in Indonesia's mining sector and outlines shortcomings and prospects for further research. Recent studies on mining and gender focus predominantly on women and how they are negatively affected by mining. Ethnicity, although a growing asset in struggles on environmental transformations, is hardly included in research on mining. The intertwinement of ethnicity and gender in elaborations on mining is often depicted in literature of development programs and environmental organizations in which indigenous women are homogenized as marginalized victims. We argue, however, for a multidimensional approach on mining that takes into account the institutionalization of gender and ethnicity in mining governance as well as the role of gender and ethnic identities. Feminist political ecology and institutional analysis are pointing the way for such an approach. Furthermore, other relevant categories such as class, age, or status should be considered in the analysis of the complex and multidimensional environmental transformations of the mining sector in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity; Feminist Political Ecology; Indonesia; Institutions; Mining



## INTRODUCTION

Gender and ethnicity are used to downplay and upgrade particular rights, access, control, and discursive power with regard to natural resources, and shape diverse understandings of development. In research on the masculinized mining industry, gender constitutes a critical variable in human-nature-relationships and related issues of development. As ethnicity also has strong impact on identity and group formation, this category is expected to feature prominently in the literature on mining in Indonesia, but this is not actually the case.

In this article, we discuss, based on a literature review, how researchers and development practitioners elaborate on the intertwinement of gender and ethnicity. In a further step, we frame shortcomings with regard to institutional analysis and give future prospects for further research. With special focus on Indonesia, we focus on gendered roles, access, control, and knowledge on processes of identity-formation and how these are instrumentalized in struggles over mining projects embedded in development discourses. This contributes to an understanding of how research in the field of gender, ethnicity, development and mining analyzes and describes the role and influence of different actors and

discourses, as well as the relationship between ethnic- and gender-coded power relations and socio-ecological transformation in Indonesia.

### ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH MINING IN INDONESIA

Indonesia, as many other countries, links development with resource extraction and mining which is directly associated with economic and social development. During the former president Suharto's developmentalist authoritarian regime until 1998, the top-down agenda of development (*pembangunan*) was based on the economic extraction of the peripheries for the sake of the center's progress (Haug, Rössler, & Grumbly, 2017). In most cases, the large-scale exploitation of natural resources was materialized through contracts with foreign companies within the Contract of Work system (*kontrak karya*) which was regulated in Law No. 11 of 1967. A *kontrak karya* is an agreement between the Government of Indonesia as the principal and a foreign company as the contractor, giving the latter a strong position with regard to tax payments, revenue sharing, and dealing with environmental pollution and human rights abuses. In 2009, Law No. 4 of 2009 on Mineral and Coal Mining replaced the *kontrakt karya* system by a mining permit system (*izin usaha pertambangan*) in the framework of a more protectionist economic approach.

As global demand for scarce energy resources is mounting rapidly, the coal mining sector promises massive revenues (Barma, Kaiser, Le, & Vinuela, 2012). However, the resource curse thesis suggests that natural resource abundance generates a series of economic and political distortions which ultimately undermine the contributions of the extractive industry to development through civil conflict (Sachs & Warner, 2001). The debate on the prospects and dangers of mining can be seen as an exemplification of the debate around the country's development model. The state's strong emphasis on economic growth through resource extraction can be seen in the expansion of Indonesia's coal industry. The mineral resources sector accounts for more than 17% of export revenues of the Indonesian economy (Price Waterhouse Coopers Indonesia, 2013) and globally, Indonesia is the second-largest coal producer and the largest exporter of thermal coal (Devi & Pragoyo, 2013).<sup>1</sup>

The benefit of mining to inhabitants living in resources rich regions – including ethnic groups – can materialize in the contribution to the development of local suppliers and local employment. However, the assessment of the impact of the mining industry on development depends on the definition of development. Multiple concepts of development exist – related to different approaches in the organization of social and production systems, orientations toward the past and the future, and philosophies of science and epistemology. The role of nature in development is a fundamentally distinguishing feature of the different concepts. A rather implicit classification has prevailed, with economics and development on one side, and the conservation of nature and ecology on the other (Colby, 1990). As a result of the negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goals, we may observe a convergence of the two streams in the international arena. Shaping the future in a sustainable way is

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<sup>1</sup> Between 1998 and 2013, the extraction of coal increased from 4.4 million tons (Lucarelli, 2010, p. 25) to 489 million tons, from which 426 million tons were exported (World Coal Association, 2014).

essentially based on the fair distribution of resources among those living today and future generations, and implies questions of distributive justice, development, future ethics, and causality (Muraca, 2010; Ott & Döring, 2004). Sustainability is thus a predominantly normative concept intended to influence the political and social spheres, and as such collides with the practices of natural resources use, as far as those norms are not respected in the mining sector.

Since the end of the authoritarian New Order regime under president Suharto, the Indonesian mining sector has undergone considerable changes with respect to policies and regulatory frameworks. This is largely due to democratization and decentralization processes resulting in greater regional autonomy (Haug et al., 2017). Although decentralization aims at promoting accountability, transparency, and public participation, conflicts over power and access to resources have increased as new elites strive for power (McCarthy, 2004; van Klinken, 2007). Priorities and interests differ between communities, the state, and mining companies (Resosudarmo, Resosudarmo, Sarosa, & Subiman, 2009). Conflict is caused by illegal mining, pollution, environmental impacts, as well as uncertainties surrounding the livelihoods of local residents after mining closure. Policy and regulatory uncertainties over land use and property rights relate to the overlap of mining areas with community lands, protected areas, and indigenous conservation sites (Ballard, 2001; Ballard & Banks, 2003; Fünfgeld, 2016). Negative impacts on the environment and the people are seen in the case of one of the world's largest gold and copper mines, the Grasberg-Mine in West Papua which is operated by the US-american company Freeport-McMoRan. In 1967, Freeport was the first foreign company to enter a contract on the exploration and production of natural resources with the Indonesian government. Therefore, it has enjoyed broad fiscal privileges as well as protection by the Indonesian military. Immense exclusion and deprivation of the local population, human rights violations, and massive destruction of the environment have led to protests and violent clashes between the Indonesian military and the Free Papua Movement (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka*, OPM) (Leith, 2002).

Concerns also relate to the poorly implemented national environmental impact assessment system in Indonesia (*Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan*, AMDAL), the relaxation of controls on environmental performance to stimulate investment, and the provision of increased access to nature reserve areas (Ballard, 2001; Großmann & Tijaja, 2015). Corporate Social Responsibility and Community Development (CSR/CD) could be a means to develop better standards of living for affected populations, if natural resource extraction occurs. However, in Indonesia, CSR predominately focuses on infrastructure projects and tends to exclude vulnerable groups (Welker, 2014). Devi and Prayogo (2013) state that CSR/CD tends to

be used to secure the mining business and to cover up (or avoid) tensions and conflicts between companies and local communities. In such circumstances, CSR programs are developed in the form of charity, which tends to provide only short term benefit. In some cases, it may even escalate the pre-existing and unresolved issues. (p. 48)

Therefore, communities are disappointed and distrust the implementation of CSR/CD programs. The rapidly expanding Indonesian coal industry is concentrated in Kalimantan where 83% of Indonesia's overall 5,462 million tons of coal reserves are expected (Lucarelli, 2010, p. 40). The national Masterplan for the Acceleration and Development of the Indonesian Economy (*Masterplan Percepatan dan Perluasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Indonesia*, MP3EI) from 2011 to 2015 aims at establishing Kalimantan as a "center for production and processing of national mining and energy reserves" (Government of Indonesia, 2011, p. 96). Whereas East and South Kalimantan are already established mining areas, Central Kalimantan is the new frontier for coal exploration. Large coal deposits have been found in the province's Upper Barito River (Kapuas) basins. Much of Indonesia's mineral resources are found in areas of rich biodiversity or within indigenous territories. Therefore, large-scale mining often entails struggles over access, control, and benefit pertaining natural resources. In Central Kalimantan, a number of indigenous groups are experiencing drastic changes in their livelihoods due to the expansion of palm oil plantations, deforestation, and existing mining activities (McCarthy, 2004). The influx of workers from other provinces, rivalry over employment, and competing land-rights pose considerable threats to local communities (Böge, 2007).

In extractive economies, large-scale mining occupies one end of the spectrum whereas artisanal or small-scale mining occupies the other, "with a complex array of informal, mineral-based livelihoods lying in between the two" (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012a, p. 201). Artisanal mining is characterized by non-mechanized and labor intensive mining activities, often in the informal sector, and is associated with visions of chaos and plunder invoking fear and insecurity amongst economists and policy-makers (Lahiri-Dutt, 2006). In fact, small-scale mining operates under hazardous conditions and has negative impacts on environment and health such as land erosion, river pollution as well as intoxication. Frequently, artisanal mining is not formally authorized by the government but has been contributing to the livelihoods of people living in resource rich regions for centuries, even before governments existed (Lahiri-Dutt, 2004; Les-tari, 2011; Spiegel, 2011).

### ETHNICITY AND MINING

Ethnicity is a crucial issue in Indonesia – given the large population of indigenous peoples and the conflictual history of ethnic relations on the island (Bertrand, 2004; Davidson & Henley, 2007). During the Suharto era, ethnicity, religion, race, and group affiliation, the so-called SARA (*suku, agama, ras, dan antar golongan*) topics, were officially forbidden in political discourse due to fear of national disintegration. On the other hand, Suharto's developmentalist authoritarian regime highly politicized and instrumentalized ethnicity. For example, the connotation of being a Dayak was derogative, associated with living in a remote area and being underdeveloped, backward, primitive, and a member of an 'isolated tribe' (*suku terasing*) and, therefore, subject to discriminative and paternalistic development programs (Duncan, 2007; Li, 1999; Sercombe & Sellato, 2007). With spatial and social dimensions always being connected to power relations, Suharto's regime defined marginality as geographically and socially distant from Jakarta which represented the absolute center (Grumblyes,

2017). Therefore, the Outer Islands and especially the uplands were constructed as marginal areas and their inhabitants were expected to give up swidden agriculture and their nomadic mode of subsistence as well as convert to an officially recognized religion in the name of development and modernization (Li, 1999). This led to the rejection of ethnic belonging, identity, and difference amongst members of ethnic groups (for the Bentian ethnic group, see Sillander, 1995, p. 82; for the Meratus, see Tsing, 1984, p. 32).

Since the post-Suharto *reformasi* era, ethnicity has experienced revitalization, predominantly because it has become a central bargaining power in struggles over land and natural resources. The revival of tradition in Indonesian politics (Davidson & Henley, 2007) has also to be seen in the context of the parallel strengthening of indigenous identity supported by the global indigenous movement. New international agreements on the rights of indigenous peoples encouraged the self-assertion of communities that had been oppressed under the New Order Regime (Hauser-Schäublin, 2013). The internationally funded Indonesian organization Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*, AMAN) coined the Indonesian term *masyarakat adat* (people who adhere to customary ways) – now officially used to designate customary law communities (Afiff & Lowe, 2007). With customs (*adat*) playing an important role in communities' self-definition, the concept of *masyarakat adat* has become central to the rethinking of the relationships between nature and nation. AMAN (2012) classifies 50 to 70 million people of Indonesia's 230 million inhabitants as indigenous.<sup>2</sup> *Masyarakat adat* are defined as a group of people from the same ancestral lineages who inhabit a certain geographical area and have a distinctive set of ideological, economic, political, cultural, and social systems and values as well as a territory (AMAN, 2012, p. 3).<sup>3</sup> AMAN states that indigenous peoples traditionally live on their ancestral land and depend on nature, thereby having accumulated their own knowledge on how to manage this natural environment. They believe the Earth is a common property that deserves protection to maintain sustainability. AMAN indicates that indigenous peoples in Indonesia mostly live in rural environments rich in natural resources but many of them suffer from impoverishment as the government of Indonesia does not acknowledge their rights to land and natural resources. Oftentimes, the transfer of rights to land and natural resources has resulted in the loss of their livelihoods and they suffer from poor education and health, lack of mobility and information (AMAN, 2012).

In struggles over natural resources, indigenous identity has become a means to strengthen community rights over and against state and corporate claims (Li, 2000). In 2013, AMAN won a lawsuit requesting the Constitutional Court to review parts of the 1999 Forestry Law, giving indigenous communities the right for land titling. The

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2 Indonesian law uses diverse terms for indigenous peoples, for example, *masyarakat suku terasing* (alien tribal communities), *masyarakat tertinggal* (neglected communities), *masyarakat terpencil* (remote communities), *masyarakat hukum adat* (customary law communities) and, more simply, *masyarakat adat* (people who adhere to customary ways). AMAN states that most of these terms comprise a negative connotation (AMAN, 2012, p. 4).

3 Therefore, AMAN characterizes indigenous peoples through their specific way of living and economic activities. They are described as living in forested, mountainous, or coastal regions, being nomadic and/or sedentary, engaged in gathering, rotational swidden farming, agroforestry, fishing, small-scale plantations, and mining for subsistence needs.

legal review states that *adat* forests are no longer categorized as part of state-owned forests and therefore can be owned by indigenous communities. In January 2017, the president Joko Widodo enacted the Constitutional Court's decision and announced the recognition of the rights of nine indigenous communities (Mongabay, 2017).

Based on the particular characteristic of their *adat*, indigenous groups distinguish themselves from others in order to substantiate their claims for the restitution of their traditional rights – namely land or other natural resources. In the course of the decentralization process, for example, the indigenous group of the Dayak – a term referring to a heterogeneous population of non-Muslim or non-Malay natives of the island of Borneo (Sercombe & Sellato, 2007) have experienced new power constellations that strengthened the regional elites (Haug et al., 2017; Schulte Nordholt, 2014). The Dayak revitalized their identity in Kalimantan in the course of this process as they experienced an increase in political and economic participation (Duile, 2014; Haug, 2007; Schiller, 2007). Although the formal absence of effective forms of accountability hindered the systematic redistribution of power, some groups were enabled to assert customary *adat* claims, for example, the Muluy Dayak community in East Kalimantan. They try to resist large-scale mining operations by depicting small-scale mining as part of their indigenous customs and identity. Mulut Dayak communities emphasize that some of the rituals and religious ceremonies carried out are intrinsically connected to artisanal mining (Down to Earth, 2001).

## GENDER AND MINING

Indonesia is of specific relevance within gender studies as researchers point out the prevalence of communities which are barely stratified along the dimension of gender and tend to lack the domination of men. Gender complementarity is stated amongst the Minangkabau in Sumatra (Sanday, 2002) with matrilineal structures. Symmetric gender relations are found among some ethnic groups, for example, the Dayak (Haug, in this issue; for specific Dayak groups such as the Meratus, see Tsing, 1990; for the Kenyah, see Colfer, 2008). Despite the acknowledgment of complementary and symmetric gender relations, researchers depict mining as an exceptionally masculinized industry in terms of the composition of its workforce and its cultures of production as well as of symbolic exploitation of feminized nature. According to Robinson (1996), mining “is so ‘naturally’ masculine [that] its gender effects are invisible” (p. 137). Until the beginning of the 21st century, studies on mining have neglected to focus on gender and the social position of women as workers, providers, and wives. Current research on gender and mining asserts that women's land rights and their rights to representation within the mining community are commonly diminished in the context of mining activities. The loss of land and resources to mining projects along with the pollution of the environment impact most heavily upon women in local communities who are seen as key subsistence providers (Down to Earth, 2001, 2014). Furthermore, mining often puts additional pressure on women to perform as the maintainers of kinship networks owing to male absenteeism (Ballard & Banks, 2003). Civil society groups stress augmented domestic violence and transformations in patterns of marriage and sexuality, leading to increases in the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases for women (International Women and Mining Network,



2004). The efforts of companies' CSR programs predominantly concentrate on men and thereby tend to overlook women or homogenize women as victims of mining (Mahy, 2011). Studies also point out that the rapid influx of cash as land compensation or income to indigenous men impacts on gender relations and pushes women further into marginalization (Byford, 2002; Lahiri-Dutt & Mahy, 2007; Macintyre, 2002).

In artisanal mining, women generally play a much larger role than in large-scale mining. They occupy a broad range of activities like crushing, grinding, sieving, and panning. Moreover, they are involved in the hazardous processing of mining products, involving, for example, mercury in the case of gold. Amalgamation is often conducted at home which means great risk of mercury poisoning and silicosis (Hinton, Veiga, & Beinhoff, 2003). Furthermore, women are involved in cooking and running small food and drink stalls.

The gendered impacts of mining often cut across different ethnic groups and classes but poorer women (and men) are described as more negatively affected. Women of some ethnic groups do participate to some extent in small-scale mining when cultural, historical, and legal aspects prevent them as Moretti (2006) shows in his study on the Anga in the Kaindi area of Papua New Guinea. He ascertains that pollution beliefs, land tenure practices, the unequal control of household resources, the gendered division of labor as well as the gendered history of the colonial goldfields, contemporary national law, and company practice marginalize women in the extractive sector.

In summary, the existing literature exhibits a tendency to focus on women rather than on gender relations and tends to represent women as victims, deploying a duality of women as either wives or sex workers and men as either miners or exploiters. In counterbalancing this, Lahiri-Dutt (2012a) argues for a post-capitalist feminist approach which aims to reveal women's agency and involvement in mining. In a recent study, Lahiri-Dutt (2012b) explores the articulations and enactments of race-gender-class in a company town in East Kalimantan and analyzes the performances of differential power enjoyed by women and men, foreigners and Indonesians in different sites of social interactions. In his study on men and masculinity, Cannon (2003) explores the discourses and practices of expatriates in the mining industries of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. He describes that the strongly patriarchal nature of the industry and its workforce fuels a transnational mining labor culture that places a premium on expressions of masculinity, alcohol, and violence.

### **INTERSECTIONALITY OF ETHNICITY AND GENDER IN MINING**

Gender-based inequalities are often intersected with inequalities based on class, age, race, and ethnicity. Intersectional approaches examine how these axes of stratification are mutually constructed and reinforce each other. Ethnicity and gender are two overlapping categories that "bring to the fore the intertwined aspects of economic, ecological and cultural distribution" (Escobar, 2006, p. 10). Both gender and ethnicity are critical variables in shaping access to, knowledge and organization of natural resources (Resurrection & Elmhirst, 2008; Rocheleau, Slayter-Thomas, & Wangar, 1996). Moreover, gender and ethnicity function as markers for identities. Both indi-



vidual and collective identities are (re-)produced in a dialectical process of internal and external identification and have a flexible and situational character (Hall, 2000; Jenkins, 2014). Therefore, multiple identities reflect the coexistence of diverse ethnic or gender identities whose particular meaning depends on situation and context. Identities not only coexist but also intersect. Gendered identity does not necessarily carry the same meanings for members of different ethnic groups. Similarly, women experience ethnic identity differently than men. Drawing on the concept of intersectionality, gender and ethnic identities are complementary or competing and ethnicity disrupts or reinforces the existing gender order.

### **Strategic Essentialisms: Indigeneity, Women, and Development**

The instrumentalization of ethnicity and gender as identity markers can be understood as *strategic essentialism* (Spivak, 1988). Strategic essentialism relates to identity politics, a term signifying political activism founded in the shared experiences of injustice as a social group. With the goal of greater self-determination, groups assert their understanding of distinctiveness to challenge dominant oppressive structures and processes. Oppressed groups deploy strategic essentialism, for example, women may retrieve modes of essentialism to combat the ideological representations of masculine superiority. However, social struggles channeled through a discourse of identity-based rights and law can also be highly problematic. Identities may be reinterpreted or even imposed upon actors, often as a result of inequalities of power and authority, thus becoming divisive and repressive. Just as gender may serve as a strategic tool, different actors may also use ethnicity in an essentialist way to pursue certain interests (McCarthy, 2006). Similarly, ethnicity is not a natural category of difference that precedes social relations but is rather formed by and through contested and historically contingent relations of power. As described above, in the context of the revitalization of Dayak identities, ethnic identity became central in struggles over natural resources. Reasons for rising claims on rights and control are not only to sustain people's livelihood but also to preserve customary rights.

Civil society organizations and development institutions deploy rather frequently strategic essentialisms in the context of gender and ethnicity. The UN Briefing Note 5 on Gender and Indigenous Peoples asserts that

Indigenous Peoples believe that there is a holistic interconnection among all things on the planet: animals, plants, natural forces, human beings and the supernatural life. The state of environment will predict the health and state of people who depend upon its provisions. The environment is the provider of life for all human beings who depend on its bounty to survive. . . . Indigenous women have played a fundamental role in environmental conservation and protection throughout the history of their peoples. (United Nations, 2010, p. 23)

Another example are the Guidelines on Integrating Indigenous and Gender Aspects in Natural Resource Management that state:

The draft Platform argues that women, particularly indigenous women, have pivotal roles in environmental conservation. . . . The proposed actions are designed to promote the involvement of women in environmental decision-making at all levels and to ensure the integration of women's needs, concerns, and perspectives in policies and programs for environmental and sustainable development. In most developing countries, women are responsible for obtaining water and fuel and in managing household consumption. As a result, they are especially concerned with the quality and sustainability of the environment. (Kiørboe, Vinding, Salazar, Tuxen, & Munk-Ravnborg, 2005, p. 4)

And The Manukan Declaration of the Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network (2004) reads:

We, Indigenous women, secure the health of our Peoples and our environment. We maintain a reciprocal relationship with Mother Earth because she sustains our lives. Indigenous Peoples have developed our own health systems, and Indigenous women are the fundamental conservers of the diversity of medicinal plants, used since the time of our conception. (n.p.)

These examples show that indigenous peoples are often connected to a more monistic conception of human-environment relationship and are seen as entertaining a stronger reciprocal relationship between themselves and the environment. This naturalist approach of women being closer to nature is directly related to ecofeminist perspectives which argue that women and nature have been subject to a shared history of oppression by patriarchy and the domination of Western culture (Biehl, 1991; Mies & Shiva, 1991). They emphasize the 'natural connection' between women and nature and construct women as unrecognized vanguards of the environment (Dankelman, 2003; Dankelman & Davidson, 1988; Rodda, 1991). Ecofeminism is grounded in a form of radical environmentalism and aims at transforming social and environmental injustices by giving women a central role in the process of change. This approach overlaps with the Women, Environment, and Development (WED) framework, which has primarily been applied within development policies since the 1980s, as both put women at the center of environmental action. However, mainstream development agencies have tended to echo ecofeminist discourses in their statements and designs for environmental programs in much less radical ways, thereby depoliticizing them (Leach, 2007).

The naturalist approach of ecofeminism is criticized by a large body of scholarly work because of its essentializing and homogenizing of women and gender relations and concentrating merely on one aspect of oppression in society, namely that of men over women (Agarwal, 1992; Jackson, 1993; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Thus, scholars within the Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) framework analyze the relation between environmental transformations and certain categories of inequality, including gender, and elaborate on multifocal power relations, access and control in political economies, processes of commodification, and changes in women's labor conditions (Elmhirst, 2011; Elmhirst & Resurreccion, 2008). Furthermore, they contribute research on gendered environmental knowledge (Howard, 2003; Jewitt, 2002; Padmanabhan,

2011) as well as on development policy and governmental development programs (Cornwall, Harrison, & Whitehead, 2007; Leach, 2007). FPE re-established a more differentiated and politicized perspective and debate concerning the gender-environment-development nexus.

Despite this critique in academic circles, an essentialist take on women still plays a central role in development programs, both in their ideologies and in their practical applications. For instance, women are often appointed as effective managers of natural resources and constructed as key actors in conservation programs (Suma & Großmann, 2016). References to such approaches are also found within sustainable development policies related to mining where women are either invisible or depicted predominantly as victims to be targeted in economic and social empowerment programs for the enhancement of national development. The Guidelines of Mainstreaming Gender into Extractive Industries Projects by the World Bank (2006) assert that

improving women's economic and social empowerment is an integral part of the development agenda. It strengthens countries' abilities to grow, reduce poverty, and govern effectively. Improving gains from extractive industries for women stakeholders will not only leverage their untapped potential in increasing growth, reducing poverty, and fostering positive conditions for sustainable development, but also improve the development effectiveness of oil, gas and mining operations for communities and countries as a whole. (n.p.)

### MAPPING WAYS OUT: INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND ETHNICITY IN MINING

Institutions, understood as providers of norms and rules, regulate government, private sector, and civil society. Similar to *doing gender* (West & Zimmerman, 1987), we may speak of *doing ethnicity* (Groenemeyer, 2003) as an institutional and discursive process. In order to elaborate on the intertwinement of ethnicity and gender as well as to understand the social-ecological dimension of mining, we suggest to unpack what Hagedorn, Arzt, and Peters (2002) consider the “four institutional perspectives”, namely (a) the property of the resource, (b) the characteristic of actors, (c) the property rights, and (d) the governance structures.

The *property of the resource* shapes the societal relations to nature, grounded in material expressions of human-nature relations. In the case of mining, the conceptual danger arises to equate the categories of gender and nature/culture, whereby women and nature are seen as both subject to exploitation. It is analytically more rewarding to move beyond the topos of *indigenous women* as victims and critically look into the gendered structures of the mining industry. The symbolism of the sheer size of operations, required technology, and capital refers to an engineering culture that embodies masculinity. Remote sites and dangerous work along with new community patterns give rise to social and institutional change. The properties of mining require enormous investments, resulting in a specific social organization of mining operations. Shift work or shuttling workers in and out of site results in new arrangements intersected by ethnicity and gender. The hierarchy of the enterprise is mirrored in the social hierarchies on the ground and the larger mining towns (Robinson, 2015).

The second institutional perspective refers to the *actors* on mining sites who are subjugated to a vertical and stratified division of labor. In some historical sites, men might have dug and women carried and processed (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012a). In any case, different spaces of work require different physical technologies which eventually become labeled male or female. While open-pit mining has seen more involvement of women and children, shaft-mining resulted in their exclusion. The miner is seen as quintessentially male. According to the doctrine of separate gendered spheres, true womanhood is portrayed in the miner's wife as the only legitimate woman on the mine, creating the dualism of mine versus home (echoing the public-private divide). The alternative model is that of the prostitute, the 'fallen woman', often counted as evidence for victimhood. Rereading sexual services as one of the few strategies open to (unskilled) women to participate in the riches from mining provides a new dimension to the analysis of the resource curse.

The third institutional factor is *property rights*. Property rights to nature's components are outcomes from institutions of environmental and political coordination that decide about gendered and ethnic access to and control over benefit streams. These property rights are embedded in larger governance structures with implicit gendered and ethnic regulations that are subject to changing patterns of participation. Whether women are able to realize economic gains in the wider mining sector depends on formal and informal property rights. In Indonesia, the state is the major formal landowner while land use often follows *adat* rules. Property rights play out in regimes of kinship, rules of inheritance, and layered use rights and result in either agency or powerlessness. As land is a crucial resource in mining, the access to and control over land titles determines participation, for example, through the payment of compensation. Tremendous social change is induced if formal rules contradict informal social organization, for example, the breadwinner concept in relation to equal responsibilities or the discrimination against women in unions. Equal decision-making over and access to budget and investments can then be diminished by insecurity in case of divorce, widowhood, or the absence of men for labor (Li, 2015) in an increasingly commodity based economy. Additionally, the distribution of the costs and benefits of mining and the provision of services – such as social services, income, or skills development and educational facilities through local governments and mining companies – differ between men and women. Especially women's rights organizations assert that through the erosion of subsistence economies by mining, women become marginalized in their position as food producers and their traditional role as gatherers, providers, care givers, and nurturers dissolves (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 2009, p. 108). An institutional approach informed by intersectionality can help to unravel the wo/men-nature relationship embedded in the material interactions around mining sites.

The fourth institutional perspective is *governance structures*. It comprises the complex and dynamic interplay between different institutions like the state, transnational regimes (e.g., the International Monetary Fund), private multinational mining companies, the local businessmen, and local people. Here, crony economies and illegal exploitations (Aspinall & van Klinken, 2011) are strongly intertwined with the state's paternalistic development efforts, whereas government power is often overruled by neoliberal forces (Gellert, 2010). Moreover, the economic spaces of mining

are influenced by the culture and control of international mining. This “corporate machismo” (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012a, p. 197) of a global industry expands from the shareholders in the Global North to the local outplay on gendered and ethnic livelihoods. The emerging new mining communities as a diverse mix of gender, class, and ethnicity reproduce the male-dominated state in company structures, labor organizations, and unions. Representations of the hypermasculine miner and overpaid executives (re)presented in the media establish industrial mining as the only legitimate extraction. This hides women’s work in artisanal mining where their labor force is on the rise worldwide.

### CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Recent studies on mining and gender focus mainly on an essentialist category of women and the negative effects of mining on women’s well-being, livelihoods, and working conditions. Women’s precarious access to and control of natural resources and their marginalization and exclusion within processes of environmental change as well as possibilities and strategies of empowerment in mining are major areas of concern. Ethnicity, although a growing asset in struggles on environmental transformations, is hardly included in research on mining. The intertwining of ethnicity and gender in elaborations on mining is mostly dealt with in the literature of development programs and environmental organizations in which indigenous women are homogenized and depicted as marginalized victims who should be empowered. As these organizations fight to enhance women’s rights, this homogenization as a means of a strategic essentialism may be effective and justified. However, scholars criticizing this approach aim at breaking up simplified notions and depict a rather heterogeneous picture in which women’s agency, involvement, and symmetry is stressed. Frameworks like feminist political ecology or institutional perspectives underline the multidimensional complexity of gender, ethnicity, and natural resource extraction. However, the intertwining of gender and ethnicity as important signifying forces, represented by a polymorph approach to power and acknowledging the complexity of identity formation, is rarely dealt with in existing studies. We therefore suggest a multidimensional approach in future studies on mining in Indonesia, taking into account the institutionalization of gender and ethnicity in mining governance and the role of gender and ethnic identities. Such a new research agenda investigates the norms and rules which regulate decisions, actions, and interactions as well as multi-focal power structures in mining governance along the line of ethnicity and gender. Furthermore, elaborations on the (re)production of identities and roles relating to gender and ethnicity may elucidate the disruption or reinforcement of gender/ethnicity orders and regimes in mining activities and facilitate differentiated approaches in development concepts. Moreover, categories beyond gender and ethnicity are relevant to consider (e.g., class, age, status) in order to unravel the complex and multidimensional environmental transformations taking place in the mining sector in Indonesia.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We duly acknowledge funding from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), (PA 1229/5-1) for (1) the International Workshop “Environmental Transformation, Ethnicity, and Gender in Kalimantan, Indonesia”, 10.-12. June 2015, University of Passau, Germany, organized by Martina Padmanabhan, Kristina Großmann, and Katharina von Braun; for (2) a preliminary explorative research trip to Indonesia by Kristina Großmann in 2015, and for (3) the visit of Suraya Afiff as guest professor at the University of Passau in 2016. We also duly acknowledge funding by the Bavarian Research Alliance (BayFOR) for an exploratory research trip to Indonesia by Martina Padmanabhan, Kristina Großmann, and Andrea Höing in 2014.

