

# *Women Small-Scale Miners' Households in Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte: Tactical Creativity or Resignation?*<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper seeks to present and describe the double-edged character of the household space of women small-scale miners in Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte. Using De Certeau's concept of *tactics*, the daily and ordinary experiences of women in the household, on the one hand, can be reckoned as locations of creativity and imagination. Living in a community where women are not provided with equitable livelihood opportunities, women small-scale miners reinvent themselves in the household and create something new, inspiring, and useful. On the other hand, from Foucault's perspective, the household may be regarded as space of women's resignation to power relations and hierarchical structures that compound their daily struggles to make ends meet. Their decision to continually reside in their neighborhood where they do small-scale gold mining is a manifestation of their disciplined resignation to the unfair and impinging structural and cultural relations in the mining community.

**KEYWORDS:** Women small-scale miners, Foucault, De Certeau, tactical creativity, resignation

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## **Introduction**

**M**ining communities in the country generally either fall under the large-scale or small-scale mining categories. Between these types of mining, the former usually requires large machineries and processing plants in the extraction of profitable deposits, for example,

gold. Since this endeavor requires a hefty capital, foreign investors often take the lead in large-scale mining operations. Small-scale mining, however, is less capital intensive. The technology used for this type of mining is simple, and the tools and equipment used can be easily produced or assembled. In many cases, small-scale mining is done within the vicinity of the barangay or the neighborhood. In large-scale mining dependent communities, men are usually hired as miners and laborers, and women are commonly left to find ways to figure in the social arrangement of mining communities (Pasimio 2013). Since livelihood opportunities lean toward the male populace, women often find themselves participating in the extractive industry through artisanal small-scale mining (ASM).

What is the unique relation between women and ASM? Why is ASM the common location for women miners? The marginal role of women in a mining community can be initially gleaned through the characteristics of ASM. According to the *World Bank Group's Oil, Gas, and Mining Unit* (Eftimie et al. 2013, 19), the activity shares these features: 1) It covers informal and/or formal arrangements or agreements; 2) it is heavily conditioned by poverty and lack of real economic choices-alternatives; 3) participation in small-scale mining is almost proportional to needs and prices of products; 4) when informally done, it often involves scavenging, as it exists alongside with large-scale mining operations; 5) it is also seasonal and/or done alongside other regular economic activities in a community; 6) it is labor intensive; 7) it uses manual tools that require simple technology; 8) it is largely an uncertain source of income; 9) it commonly has negative impacts on the integrity of the environment; 10) it usually entails local and unregulated buyers of stones-metals in the community; and 11) it comprises the extraction of stones-metals such as gold, diamonds, and silver.

Against the backdrop of such features, ASM shows key conditions that situate the kind of struggles women are forced to deal with, and the burden that they patiently carry through in many mining communities. More specifically, the characteristics of ASM point to the reality of marginal economic space that women fill in, and put on view the concomitant risks that they regularly

face, and the uncertainty of economic compensation that they deal with in the conduct of the small-scale gold mining. With these features, ASM as a term, generally puts women issues in mining communities in perspective: The absence of viable and empowering opportunities for women and the silent treatment of women's contributions in mining communities.

The stance that women small scale-miners are fully determined by the socioeconomic conditions brought about by the lack of equitable structures in the mining community may mean that women are full captives of the dominant structures in a mining community. This is a point which this article shall try to unpack guided by the hypothesis that women also initiate and sustain layers of tactical creativity, and express resistance. Since women are traditionally assigned roles in the household, such a location may also help unravel how women develop ways of asserting their creativity and capacity for innovations. The household, in this regard, may speak of unrecognized or undervalued images and contributions of women's productive and reproductive ways in dealing with patriarchal social arrangements.

## **Methodology**

To ethnographically describe the household of women small-scale miners, the researcher visited Jose Panganiban in October 2014. The field work consisted of visits to the community where women are engaged in small-scale gold mining and a focus group discussion (FGD) with six key informants from three barangays, namely Santa Elena, Luklukan Norte, and North Poblacion or Patiao. The participants also share in this profile: At least thirty years of age, with least ten years of residency in the community, either a mother or a wife, and with experience in ASM. These characteristics help establish the substance-depth-complexity of the stories and data that can be derived from the narratives and discussions of the participants. In addition, secondary data were used from related articles, as well as researches to discuss and magnify the identified women's issues of Jose Panganiban as the field site for this article.

The FGD was also guided by this predetermined format:

- A) Activity: Listing of daily, weekly, monthly charts in the household and articulating household narratives;
- B) Aims:
  - 1. To describe and identify the activities in the household on a daily/weekly/monthly timetable, and express household-based narratives;
  - 2. To address the question: Is the household a shared space between women and men?
- C) Instructions:
  - 1. A participant is asked to list the activities that are usually part of a regular daily schedule, or weekly tasks, or responsibilities that are done on a monthly basis that take place in the household;
  - 2. Write stories on the following points: a) Sources of income; b) budgeting; c) rearing of children; and d) decision-making/planning;
  - 3. The use of local terminologies in naming household activities is encouraged;
  - 4. Output: Six to eight daily, weekly, monthly charts of household activities, and six to eight narratives on the role of women in relation to: a) Sources of income; b) budgeting; c) rearing of children; and d) decision-making/planning.

After the activity, the FGD followed, giving the researcher the opportunity to raise questions, follow up points shared by the participants, and ask them to elaborate local imageries and analogies. In December 2014, the researcher also went back to Jose Panganiban to present the results of the study. The validation exercise allowed the participants to correct certain terminologies, and tighten the representations made in the initial draft of the study.

Following the protocols of ethnographic and qualitative research, this article aims to subject the key results of the study to two theoretical frames which shall facilitate the proposed gender analysis of the layers of power relations in the household space, namely, Michel De Certeau's (1998) notion of *tactics*, and Michel Foucault's (1977) concept of the *panopticon*.

## Description of Jose Panganiban

The municipality of Jose Panganiban is part of the province of Camarines Norte. The province falls within the Bicol Region or Region V, and is part of Southern Luzon. The previous name of Jose Panganiban is *Mambulao*, a word derived from *Mabulawan* or bountiful gold. It was subsequently renamed as Jose Panganiban in honor of Jose Maria Panganiban on 1 December 1934. Panganiban was a homegrown *Bicolano* patriot, and an ardent member of Jose Rizal's Propaganda Movement. The municipality of Jose Panganiban is also 34 kilometers northwest of Daet, the provincial capital of Camarines Norte. As regard principal languages, Tagalog and Bikol are spoken in the municipality, with the former predominantly used in their communication practices.

Politically, the town is subdivided into twenty-seven barangays, with large-scale and small-scale gold mining as the primal economic interest. The earliest recorded mining activity in this area was between 1750s and 1800s. In the past century, a significant number of large mining companies were stationed in various parts of the municipality, taking advantage of its predictive gold deposits. These mining companies included the defunct Philippine Iron Mines and the J.G. Realty and Mining Company, both of which stayed for extended phases in the locale. In periods when gold mining is consistently productive, the economy of the municipality proportionately increases. But in periods when mining tunnels are unproductive, the municipality's economy also takes a nosedive. This roller-coaster ride of mining excavations somehow describes the economy of mining-dependent communities like Jose Panganiban.

Since Jose Panganiban is part of Bicol, it also falls within the typhoon belt. Typhoons regularly visit the place and unfortunately cause havoc in the months of April, June, July, October, November, and December. This natural phenomenon is one reality that mining activities, either large-scale or small-scale, seriously consider as it puts at risk the safety of miners and mining activities in the municipality. When a typhoon hits the province, ordinary employees and informal women miners look for other sources of

income, since mining activities are shelved or required to take a short respite. After the typhoon, it can also happen that mining tunnels need extensive repair, thereby, extending further the number of days when men and women miners have no work and no income.

In the public market of Jose Panganiban, one can see numerous stores selling cheap equipment used in mining activities. The presence of these stores validates the significant number of households engaged in mining. Moreover, one can find stores that lend money (with interest) or appraise or buy gold jewelries such as earrings, bracelets and necklaces. These stores extend temporary relief to miners who are in need of money, but also they lure them to agree to paying schemes that favor bigger returns to storeowners, creditors, or financiers.

Barangay North Poblacion is located at the city center, and is situated beside the Mambulao Bay, while Luklukan Norte and Santa Elena are positioned in the hilly parts of the municipality. It is important to note that bodies of water naturally connect North Poblacion and Luklukan Norte: Patiao River in North Poblacion and Tacoma River from Luklukan Norte. More specifically, Tacoma River meets Patiao River in North Poblacion, which is then released into the Mambulao Bay. This natural relation between bodies of water is the reason why women participants from Patiao sometimes remark that gold from Mambulao Bay is comparable to *alika bok* or dust—a term which connotes lower quality and value. Gold is perceived as only incidental to the place and are but excesses from other mining communities like Luklukan Norte (Ban Toxics, Inc. 2015).

While Tigbi River in Santa Elena does not directly intersect with either Patiao or Tacoma rivers, its water flows into the Mambulao Bay. In this sense, Mambulao Bay naturally or unfortunately serves as the catch basin of majority of water streams from the three barangays and from other mining communities in the municipality. From an environmental point of view, Mambulao Bay may be a host to a lot of unwanted tailings. For small-scale miners in Patiao, however, the positionality of the area gives the impression that its sand will always be ready to receive runoff gold carried by tributaries that come in contact with gold mining activities from the hilly parts of the municipality.

With regard to mining, Barangay Santa Elena appears to be the busiest. This community is host to compressor mining, small-scale mining, and large-scale mining. Luklukan Norte also used to be busy until its large-scale mining activity was put on hold. Today, the residents are engaged in small-scale mining along the Tacoma River where their households are also located.

Being the center of the town, Patiao has a variety of economic activities. This does not mean that women in this community have ceased to engage in small-scale gold mining. During low tides, groups start to flock in the sea and start using their tools hoping that they can extract an adequate weight of gold particles from the black sand of Mambulao Bay.

### **Ethnography of Small-Scale Women Miners' Households**

What are the domestic roles and issues of a woman small-scale miner within her home and family? Is the household a shared space between men and women? In the FGD, the primary instruction was to invite the women representatives to describe their usual twenty-four-hour schedule. In this way, the women participants can reconstruct how their day begins, their activities during the day, their late night concerns before retiring, and their reflections over their schedule.

The sharing and discussion on the twenty-four-hour schedule paved the way for the identification of these key points from their narratives (see Ban Toxics 2015):

Firstly, *women should not get sick—bawal magkasakit*. This statement declares two significant meanings. One is that it connotes the intersecting roles and burdens of women in the household. A participant from Patiao shared a short list of such concerns: Waking up early around three o'clock in the morning, preparing the food for her simple food business, setting aside food for the family's breakfast, proceeding to Mambulao Bay *para sa pagkakabud* (for small-scale gold mining), returning home after spending hours shovelling and sifting sand for possible gold, returning home for meals, preparing food for lunch, resting for an hour, doing the laundry, cleaning the

house, preparing food for dinner, watching television, preparing food for the next day's routine, and retiring at ten o'clock in the evening. Because of the crowded and packed schedule of this mother, she underlined the need that women mothers should not get sick. Otherwise, the household chores will only pile up and the possible income from her livelihood engagements will unfortunately be lost. The other participants agreed on such point, and one expressed this line: *Pinakamahirap ang nasa bahay ka dahil walang katapusan ang trabaho mo* (It is most difficult to stay in one's house because work is endless). The other meaning of the statement that women should not get sick is couched in this view from another participant: *Ang reklamo ng babae, di maintindihan ng lalake* (Men generally do not understand the complaints of women). In the discussion, such line was clarified and meant that men do not see the burden of women while taking care of the needs of the household. This implies that while women work hard, men do not usually see such efforts and remain unappreciative of women's work. The inference from this meaning is that perhaps men in the household of the participants do not regard women's work as real work (Ban Toxics, Inc. 2015).

Secondly, *women's income is additional income*. The participants' sharing also revolved around the interesting concept of *abuno* (to augment or add). According to a participant from Patiao, a husband's take-home pay while working in a mining operation maybe around Php 400.00 a day. She pointed out that such an amount is never enough to adequately support the needs of her family. This is the reason why she is also into small-scale mining in Mambulao Bay, and sometimes sells cooked food for snacks and meals. With her economic engagements, she can earn more than her husband's daily wage. But despite her bigger daily revenue, she laments that her income is still reckoned as *abuno* or as additional income of the household. The participants from Santa Elena furthered the point that when mining operations stopped for a week due to power shortages, the men did not earn anything and it was the women who looked for alternative sources of income. She said, *nangangarag sa paghahanap ng pera ang mga babae* (Women tried all sorts of things just to earn money).



Another participant from Patiao reinforced women's resourcefulness when she opined: *Madiskarte at maparaan ang mga babae, workaholic pa sila* (Women are creative, resourceful and even workaholic). Despite women's earnings, the participants still consider their income as additional income. When asked for the possible reason of such perception, they suggested this answer: *Ang lalaki kasi kung maka-jackpot sa minahan, malaki talaga ang pera nila* (Men, if they get lucky in mining operations, can get high-grade gold, which is equivalent to huge sums of money). In hindsight, this last statement seems to precondition the view that women's income will only be additional income. Will this justification mean that the women participants are not yet that empowered to fully acknowledge and assert their economic contributions in the household?

Thirdly, *women are in charged of budgeting*. The financial management in the household, which entails planning, costing and accounting within the bounds of the family's needs and available money, is another primary responsibility of women in the household. This is perhaps the background as to why women try all sorts of means just to make sure that their families will not get hungry, and that the children can at least finish secondary education. But an interesting topic in the discussion centered on the idea of monetary savings. The participants recalled that their husbands, despite the meager money that they give to the family, sometimes raise this question: *May natabi ka?* (Did you save any extra money?). The participants, in general, laughed at the nerve of some husbands to ask such question and even said that husbands often say this line: *Kulang o sobra, bahala ka na* (Whether it is enough or more than enough, it is up to you now how you will budget it). But the reality as stressed by the participants is that women often need to source out money to provide for the family. As the participants reiterated, such reality is something which men in general do not really care to see and understand. *Kung ano lang ang maibigay* (men just give any amount), this is the concluding line that the participants mentioned to characterize men's location in the budgeting sphere of the household.

Fourthly, *women are like unpaid househelpers*. The participant from Patiao mentioned this term to characterize the experience of women in the household: *Double pain*. When clarified, such expression represents women who are forced to do responsibilities in the household because they are women. The community expects them to fulfil the household responsibilities. In this case, women believe that they actually do not have other options. The participants from Luklukan Norte and Patiao connected such forced situation of women to the notion of *camote* miners (related to small-scale gold mining). Camote, which is associated with a poor person's root crop, is used to analogically describe their type of mining—as ordinary, and unrewarding. This depreciating attribution of their contributions in the household hovers around the image of househelpers who work hard and remain unpaid. As a participant from Luklukan Norte expressed, househelpers are better off compared to them since their labor is paid. Mothers and housewives, whose work abound and are limitless, are expected to even work harder and render more sacrifices.

In summary, the participants in the FGDs expressed that women who engaged in ASM have burdens and multiple tasks in the household. While women perceive men as not generally considering the household as a place of work, women in the three barangays seriously and squarely face the challenge of balancing the needs of the family. In this regard, such dedication to household work may be interpreted as a sign of women's strength and resourcefulness. From another perspective, however, such commitment can be taken to mean as a form of resignation, an acceptance that the household can never be a shared space between the husband and wife. Although some of the participants narrated stories of men assisting them in doing household chores, the assumption that the household is the primary responsibility of women still regulates the almost categorical delineation of tasks between men and women, as in the case of small-scale women gold miners in Barangays North Poblacion, Luklukan Norte, and Santa Elena. These points do not even include the political issue of household work as unpaid work, its implications for the concept of work in general, and the optional value that society accords to women's way of looking at the world, which bears the stamp of her ingenuity (Illo 2005).

## **De Certeau and Foucault: Theoretical Frames**

De Certeau's and Foucault's theoretical positions are selected because their ideas help unravel or unpack the dynamics of power relations and the tactical creativity of women artisanal small-scale miners within the household space. Here is a description of the philosophers' respective theoretical standpoints.

***On De Certeau.*** Victorino Cueto (2002) provides a substantive discussion of De Certeau's distinction between tactics and strategy. A strategy is:

The calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that become possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats...can be managed (Cueto 2002, 46).

This means that a strategy has its own locus, a place or a site, which becomes a dwelling of a privileged stance. Such also has the capacity to influence, figure or reconfigure its environment through a vantage point or perspective that it has mustered to develop. Since a strategy has this formative, regulative or even ordering presence, it can be connected to the languages of modern science and politics that dictate and even orchestrate both visible and invisible worlds.

Unlike strategy, tactic is a "calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus....The space of a tactic therefore is the space of the other" (Cueto 2002, 47-48). This notion of tactic implies that it is a creative or inventive endeavor that moves and grows within an already highly regulated or determined space. Here, the uniqueness of a tactic can be gleaned: It does not directly confront or oppose the dominant systems or structures. In its own unique and, at times, fluid location, it finds a way of determining and even asserting its voice.

De Certeau's unique take on the meaning of tactic, and its difference from strategy, is also applied to a common task that many women do in the household—cooking. Cooking as a work which many women still perform in the household is also a place of:

[M]icroinventions to resist with a sweet obstinance the contagion of conformism, to reinforce the network of exchanges and relations, to learn how to make one's own choice...This is why the gestures, objects, and words that live in the ordinary nature of a simple kitchen also have so much importance (Cueto 2002, 60).

With the foregoing point, De Certeau manages to uncover the unique tactic available in a seemingly ordinary or familiar task such as cooking. Although he is clear that cooking is not endorsed as an act exclusive to women, the strength and creativity in cooking is uncovered through the lens of the tactic. Instead of diluting cooking to the less promising category of activities in the household, De Certeau argues for its merits that can only be seen or recognized from a creative or imaginative vantage point. The bonds and memories forged in the life of a family through cooking are conditioned by the efforts of women. This makes cooking a location of and a collection of narratives that point to the way women imagine and reimagine their families and the households.

**On Foucault.** David Harper (2008) discusses a Foucault-based view of surveillance in culture. He remarks that “through spatial ordering, the panopticon brings together power, control of the body, control of groups and knowledge...(I)t locates individuals in space in a hierarchical and efficiently visible organization” (Rabinow 1984, 19 as quoted in Harper 2008). The panopticon as an all-seeing vantage point in this regard fulfils a disciplinary measure that regulates the structures in social spaces. This is a point made more precise in *Discipline and punish: The birth of prison* where Foucault (1977) examines systems of control and power in various institutions-disciplines, such as education and medicine (Cueto 2002). In the field of medicine, for instance, a medical doctor exudes a disciplining power over his or her patient given the expertise and the credibility attached to the profession. In turn, patients expect themselves to obey, take the medicines prescribed and ordered by the doctor.

According to Foucault (1977, 36):

Discipline may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for exercise, comprising as whole series of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, target; it is a 'physics' or an 'anatomy' of power, a technology. And it may be taken over by a 'specialized' institution...or finally by state apparatuses whose major, if not exclusive function is to assure that discipline reigns over society as a whole.

This statement demonstrates the overarching project of locations of power in perpetuating their presence through disciplinary strategies. A bureaucracy, for one, given its deluge of requirements, steps, and routes, is an instance or an embodiment of disciplinary chore that imposes itself upon individuals who wish to enter its system. As Foucault (1977, 187) clearly holds:

Disciplinary power...is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection.

Aside from the disciplining and determining character of power, Foucault also takes serious note of the transcendental feature of power and the panopticon. He holds that:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it excludes, it represses, it censors, it abstracts, it masks, it conceals. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth (Foucault 1977, 37).

With this point, power is construed as having a double-edged capacity to dictate and challenge boundaries. For instance, as power censors, an individual or community can also generate ways of censoring or defying power. In most cases, a critical lens is needed to see the values-ideologies that orchestrate, produce, and maintain the tangible and intangible world-systems in communities. Critical knowledge, in this regard, is something which can sufficiently play host to the creative and originating directions of power.

## **The Household: Between Tactics and the Panopticon**

Certain elements in the narratives of the women small-scale miners in the three barangays can be reckoned as occasions or instantiations of De Certeau's tactics. For instance, the account of women's creativity and mastery of the household space speaks volumes of women's lucid map of the arrangement of the needs of a household, the way aspects of the household interact, and the important elements or features in the household that should be attended to. In the absence of viable conditions, mothers use such mental map in anticipating the kind of difficulty or burden which the family may suffer or endure. This is a tactic which women small-scale miners have shaped. Through time, mothers have crafted a mindscape and a landscape of thoughts, values, and considerations when dealing with the wellbeing of a household. This is also one reason why women miners try to outsource or look for other ways of generating income which showcases their unique capacities to anticipate situations with their game plans. This is a tactical skill that has been honed through the different challenges that a family has faced or may face.

The tactics of women small-scale miners, hence, pertain to their creative and proactive disposition in dealing with household issues, especially when the security or stability of the family is under scrutiny. While men may decide to rest and wait for job openings, women small-scale miners are more aggressive in trying to find generative or productive transactions. This is one reason why such an experience can be considered as tactical in nature. Women small-scale miners do not directly confront and oppose the unfair power and gender relations in trying to find productive ways within the colonized domain. Here, women small-scale miners instantiate their creative genius. In mining communities where work for women is scant, the small-scale women miners take up the challenge of freeing their families from the chains of hunger by inventing and reinventing themselves. This is the tactical seal, which the participants in the FGD perform and always potentially carry.

On the other hand, the spectacles of the repressive nature of the panopticon can be readily seen in the conditions that women small-scale miners deal with. For instance, they would have to confront the prevalence of a double-standard gender cultural mindset with regard to household management. To be more specific, men are expected to provide income for the family, and they have an option to or not to meddle with household chores. In contrast, women expect themselves to look for income generating transactions on top of their domicile responsibilities. This is perhaps one reason why, based on their narratives, they expect themselves not to get sick. Household chores are necessarily tied to them but not to other members of the household. The double-standard treatment of the household, on such consideration, has become ingrained in the consciousness of the women small-scale miners. This is a concrete expression of the disciplining action of the dominant male voice in the ways of the barangays in the mining communities of Jose Panganiban are arranged.

Finally, the instance when women small-scale miners are regarded as unpaid helpers who try to save money despite the limited income of the family, and the instance when their income are regarded as additional income can be reckoned as symptoms of the disciplining effect of the dominance of the male stance. As they try to find the balance between their household lots and elusive opportunities for work, women small-scale miners always end up being tied to their residences. Will this disciplining judgment cultivate the creative and constructive capacities of power and the panopticon in the community? Will women force the issue of imbalance in the power relations within the purview of gender and development? Following Foucault's appreciation of the creative and constructive nature of power, women small-scale miners can find ways to defy disciplining powers, and be originaries of relations that are more just and equitable to their interests.

## Conclusion

The household of women small-scale miners in the three barangays in Jose Panganiban can be construed as a location of tactical creativity and resignation.

Using De Certeau's concept of tactics, the ethnography of the household space can be interpreted as a location where women use their mastery and familiarity of the household space to their and the family's advantage. In planning, for example, they modify the boundaries of the household by engaging in activities that they recognize as beneficial to the wellbeing of the family. They also use their acquired practical wisdom in assessing situations that may harm familial bonds or aid in the development of the members of the household. This practical and creative wisdom conditions the tactical posture of women in their mining communities. Despite the snags or worries, women small-scale miners remain hopeful that there is always a way out of emerging or recurring problems in the family and/or community.

Using Foucault's panopticon, the disciplinal implications of a double-standard gender-cultural assumption are manifested in the narratives of women small-scale miners. While they create unique tactics, it remains evident that the overarching gender bias toward the interests of men provide the basic structures that oppress women in the three barangays. The absence of livelihood options open for women and the social expectation of guarding the interests of the family are functional structures that tie women to the households. If opportunities for work unfold, it is the disciplinary effect of such structures that disables women from broadening their thinking and working horizons. The double-standard, in this respect, acts as the panopticon, regulating and ordering the list of priorities that women expect themselves to fulfill. The defying side of power and panopticon evident in the reconfiguration of the bias against women small-scale miners may need more time to be cultivated.



The household of women small-scale miners is a space of tactical creativity and resignation. This paradoxical relation in which women miners—despite their familiarity of the environment and communal relations—find themselves in, waiting for specific and concrete structural changes. These are the hoped-for modifications that will provide better opportunities for women small-scale mines to cultivate personal interests, while at the same time attend to the needs of their families. Thus, women miners show their resistance within the household space as they continuously nourish an enduring hope that the reach and impact of their creativities will expand, and that their presence in the community will no longer be delimited within the confines of the household.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This article makes use of the data gathered in a research entitled *The situation and roles of women in small-scale artisanal communities in Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte, and Ga-ang, Kalinga* (2015). As the principal researcher of such project, Ban Toxics, Inc. gave the author the permission to use the ethnographic-based results of the research in this article.

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