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Claiming land, sustaining life: Feminist political ecology of women's collective action in Pari Island

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ABSTRACT

This article examines women's collective action against land grabbing on Pari Island, Jakarta Bay, through the framework of Feminist Political Ecology (FPE). Land grabbing in Indonesia's coastal areas often marginalises local communities, with women disproportionately affected due to their reliance on land and marine resources for subsistence and livelihoods. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research draws on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with four women from the Women's Group in Pari Island. The findings show that women's struggles extended beyond direct protest to include the development of gendered ecological knowledge—such as vegetable gardening and mangrove planting—and grassroots activism through arisan, beach management, and solidarity networks. These are transforming everyday ecological labour into claims over space, rights, and justice. Despite persistent challenges—restrictive gender norms, criminalisation, stigma, and the lack of generational succession—women secured small but significant victories. These included the Ombudsman's recognition of maladministration, political support from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, and local economic strengthening through community-based tourism. The study emphasises the importance of integrating gender perspectives into the analysis of coastal land conflicts and calls for greater institutional support for women's leadership, education, and advocacy in sustainable resource governance.

Keywords: Women's Collective Action; Land Grabbing; Feminist Political Ecology; Gendered Ecological Knowledge; Grassroots Activism.

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini menganalisis aksi kolektif perempuan dalam menghadapi perampasan lahan di Pulau Pari, Teluk Jakarta, dengan menggunakan kerangka Feminist Political Ecology (FPE). Praktik perampasan lahan di kawasan pesisir Indonesia memarjinalkan komunitas lokal, terutama perempuan yang sangat bergantung pada sumber daya darat dan laut untuk pemenuhan kebutuhan sehari-hari serta keberlanjutan mata pencaharian keluarga dan komunitas. Dalam konteks ini, perempuan tidak hanya menjadi korban, tetapi juga tampil sebagai aktor penting dalam mempertahankan ruang hidup. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif studi kasus dengan metode wawancara mendalam dan diskusi kelompok terarah (FGD) terhadap empat perempuan anggota Kelompok Perempuan di Pulau Pari yang secara langsung terlibat dalam perlawanan dan praktik ekologi sehari-hari. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perjuangan perempuan melakukan aksi protes langsung dengan mengembangkan pengetahuan ekologis berperspektif gender—seperti penanaman sayuran dan mangrove—serta membangun aktivisme akar rumput melalui arisan, pengelolaan pantai, dan solidaritas sesama perempuan. Praktik ini mentransformasi kerja ekologis sehari-hari menjadi praktik politik atas ruang, hak, dan keadilan. Meskipun masih menghadapi hambatan berupa norma gender, kriminalisasi, stigma sosial, dan minimnya regenerasi kelompok, perempuan berhasil meraih kemenangan kecil namun signifikan, termasuk pengakuan maladministrasi oleh Ombudsman, dukungan dari Pelapor Khusus PBB untuk Hak atas Pangan, serta penguatan ekonomi lokal melalui pariwisata berbasis komunitas. Studi ini menegaskan urgensi integrasi perspektif gender dalam analisis konflik lahan pesisir dan perlunya dukungan institusional terhadap kepemimpinan, pendidikan, dan advokasi perempuan dalam tata kelola sumber daya berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Aksi Kolektif Perempuan; Perampasan Lahan; Politik Ekologi Feminis; Pengetahuan Ekologis Berbasis Gender; Aktivisme Akar Rumput.

1. INTRODUCTION

Land grabbing conflicts in Indonesia's coastal areas, including Pari Island, not only affect local communities but also reflect broader issues of social and economic injustice. These conflicts are often driven by private companies with significant capital, displacing local communities and threatening their livelihoods. In many cases, land grabbing has become a central cause of social inequality, as local residents are marginalized from decision-making processes that determine the use of their land and resources (Borras, Hall, Scoones, White, & Wolford, 2011).

The case of land grabbing in Pari Island has been recognized by the Indonesia National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) as part of its thematic focus on Women and Impoverishment. As one of Indonesia's human rights mechanisms with a special mandate to monitor and document cases of gender-based violence, Komnas Perempuan classified the dispute in its 2017 Annual Report (CATAHU), entitled *The Erosion of Women's Safe Space in the Populism Politics*, under the sub-topic of Women in Conflict over Natural Resources and Spatial Conflict.

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In its 2018 Independent Report to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Komnas Perempuan further emphasized that environmental degradation on and around Pari Island has reduced women's ability to sustain themselves and their families. The report highlighted women's strategies in securing alternative food sources—such as cultivating land in coastal areas—and recommended that the government restore residents' legal rights to their land and guarantee access to marine resources as essential sources of income and food security.

Pari Island, located in the Thousand Islands region of Jakarta, offers a critical example of this pattern. Pari Island, originally inhabited by migrants from Tidung Island who came for fishing and then stayed due to the island's abundant natural resources (Fitriana, 2020), became the site of a land conflict in 2015. That year, PT Bumi Pari Asri, a company formed by a coalition of landowners, claimed ownership over 90% of the island, while the Institute of Sciences/LIPI (now the National Research and Innovation Agency/BRIN) laid claim to the remaining 10%. The assertions, made without the voluntary and informed consent of locals, jeopardised not only their land but also their livelihoods and cultural connections to the area.

For women in particular, this dispossession carries gendered implications. The enclosure of land and the development of high-capital tourism infrastructure diminish women's access to coastal resources they have long managed communally. As Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Wangari (2013) argue, women often hold vital ecological knowledge and play central roles in the care and stewardship of their environments. On Pari Island, the arrival of large-scale tourism has also brought environmental degradation, further undermining subsistence practices and increasing household vulnerability (Utami et al., 2024).

Tensions escalated in 2017 when security forces intervened on behalf of the private sector, resulting in violent clashes and the criminalization of vocal residents. Women, many of whom were on the frontlines of protest, experienced trauma and repression. These dynamics illustrate how patriarchal systems intersect with extractive development, silencing women's voices while eroding their environmental roles (Lamb, Schoenberger, Middleton, & Un, 2017).

Prior research has addressed land disputes in Pari Island from a political economy perspective (Christian, Satria, & Sunito, 2018), although it seldom investigates how women's communal activities—such as planting, beach cleaning, and mangrove management—serve as significant forms of resistance. This article therefore shifts the focus from abstract discourses of conservation and governance to the embodied experiences of women, highlighting how everyday ecological labor becomes a form of struggle. By mobilizing feminist political ecology, this study explores how women's knowledge of survival, their roles in environmental care, and their engagement in grassroots activism shape resistance against land grabbing.

Finally, the article also examines the tangible outcomes of these struggles. While women's victories are often partial and precarious, they nonetheless represent significant gains in defending livelihoods, sustaining community solidarity, and asserting rights. These outcomes—what can be described as a "narrow triumph"—reveal the transformative potential of women's collective agency even within deeply unequal structures (Park, 2019).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Land grabbing in Indonesia has been widely studied through political economy and structural analysis, yet gender remains an underexplored dimension, particularly in coastal contexts. While many studies have highlighted the socio-ecological consequences of land

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dispossession, few have centered women's roles in shaping resistance. As Puechguirbal (in Shepherd, 2010) argues, women are active at the grassroots level, yet their contributions are often overlooked or reduced to extensions of domestic labor.

Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) offers a critical framework to analyze the intersection of gender, environment, and power. It emphasizes how ecological labor and knowledge production are gendered and how everyday practices—like planting or resource care—can be sites of political resistance (Allen, 2020; Rocheleau et al., 2013). This study adopts FPE to understand women's collective ecological actions as political responses to land grabbing, particularly in the context of coastal Indonesia.

Research across Southeast Asia reinforces the relevance of FPE. Lamb et al. (2017) documented how women in rural Cambodia reclaimed land through reforestation and farming, illustrating how survival strategies and resistance are often interwoven. In the Indonesian context, Ratri (2022) and Stacey et al. (2019) found that women in small-scale fisheries actively resisted marginalization by asserting their rights in coastal governance. Despite their central role in sustaining livelihoods, development interventions have rarely adopted gender-transformative approaches that recognize women's agency.

Recent contributions also highlight the significance of care work and knowledge in shaping resistance. Haque et al. (2023) show how gender shapes perceptions of climate change and agricultural adaptation, while Standish et al. (2022) discuss how environmental protest evolves into everyday practices like permaculture and land care. Vigil (2024) connects these dynamics to broader displacement under climate stress, arguing that gendered migration and loss of land are shaped by historical inequalities. Similarly, Ekowati et al. (2023) demonstrate how embodied resistance and storytelling become crucial strategies for women confronting extractivism.

Within Indonesia, FPE has also been applied to analyze spatial and gendered segregation in land access (Tiominar & Afiff, 2021) and gendered incorporation into the palm oil sector (Elmhirst, Siscawati, Basnett, & Ekowati, 2017). These studies underline how gender norms shape resource access and control across diverse ecological and economic regimes.

Nevertheless, research on coastal land conflicts in Indonesia still rarely foregrounds women's collective resistance. On Pari Island, Utami et al. (2024) report how tourism-driven land conversion has degraded ecosystems, while Youwikijaya et al. (2023) reveal how women have responded through planting, community beach management, and localized ecological care. Yet, most studies have not interpreted these acts as political strategies for resistance.

In summary, existing research and studies on land grabbing in Indonesia and Southeast Asia have emphasized structural political economy, socio-ecological impacts, and, to a lesser extent, gendered dimensions of resource access. Yet three critical gaps remain: (1) women's ecological labor is often framed as subsistence rather than political practice, (2) coastal contexts remain underrepresented compared to agrarian or plantation-based conflicts, and (3) the tangible outcomes of women's collective resistance are rarely documented.

This study addresses these gaps. It explores how women in Pari Island transform daily ecological labor—such as planting mangroves and vegetables—into gendered strategies of survival and resistance. By applying FPE, the article argues that women's collective actions are not merely acts of adaptation but also expressions of political struggle to defend life and livelihoods in the context of land grabbing.

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Building on this literature, the following section turns to the case of Pari Island to examine how women's survival knowledge, environmental responsibilities, and grassroots activism constitute collective strategies of resistance, and what outcomes—however narrow—these struggles have achieved.

3. METHOD

This research employed a qualitative case study design grounded in a feminist perspective to analyze women's collective action against land grabbing on Pari Island. Qualitative methods were chosen because they are seen as more consistent with the values of feminism, which reject value-neutral approaches and involve women in research as human beings and not just as participants or respondents but as subjects themselves of research instruments (Bryman, 2016). Feminist methodology was adopted to confront bias in research and challenge traditional norms of objectivity that often ignore women's personal experiences while situating those experiences within broader social realities (Margaret Fonow & Cook, 2005). Feminist researchers are politically committed to producing knowledge that can transform women's lives (Leavy, 2020).

In this study, the term "research subjects" is deliberately used to emphasize women's position as knowing subjects rather than as objects of inquiry. Within feminist methodology, this terminology affirms that women are active actors in producing knowledge, whose lived experiences and ecological practices form the foundation of the research. Research subjects were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in land conflict and ecological action. Four women from a local women's group on Pari Island were included as research subjects. One key subject, referred to by the pseudonym Ibu Kartini, was chosen for her central role in organizing collective action. Three additional subjects—Ibu Cut Nyak Dien, Ibu Walanda, and Ibu Rasuna (all pseudonyms)—were selected for their active engagement in planting and coastal management.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). In-depth interviews were guided by a semi-structured question list, allowing for flexibility while centering women's narratives. This method is particularly relevant in feminist research, as it fosters empathetic, dialogical interaction that empowers participants to articulate their lived realities (Hesse-Biber, 2013). In addition, FGDs were conducted with the three women engaged in ecological practices. The collective and dialogical nature of FGDs made it possible to co-interpret experiences and reveal previously unspoken dimensions of resistance. Within feminist methodology, FGDs are especially valuable because they foster shared meaning and collective reflection on gendered social positioning (Hesse-Biber, 2013).

A case study approach is chosen to capture in detail how women's groups on Pari Island engage in everyday practices of resistance through planting, coastal care, and ecological care. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of a single, bounded context while highlighting the complexity of gendered ecological struggle in coastal areas under pressure from land dispossession and environmental change (Leavy, 2020). Data analysis was conducted by linking field data with the theoretical lens of feminist political ecology, particularly around themes of gendered environmental knowledge, environmental politics, and grassroots activism. Analytical attention was also given to the socio-political and economic conditions surrounding

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land conflict on Pari Island to interpret how collective ecological practices function as forms of resistance and feminist environmental governance.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are analyzed based on the lens of FPE, as formulated by Rocheleau et al. 2013), which provides a critical framework for understanding how gender, ecological knowledge, and power intersect in the context of environmental struggles. FPE provides a critical framework for understanding how gender, ecological knowledge, and power intersect within environmental struggles. Rather than reproducing binary separations between nature and culture, public and private, or production and reproduction, FPE centers the relational and embodied experiences of marginalized groups—especially women—in negotiating socio-ecological transformations. This perspective allows for a nuanced interpretation of how women on Pari Island engage in collective action not only as visible protests but also as interwoven practices of survival, resistance, and environmental rights.

Building from this framework, the findings are organized into three interrelated themes: (1) gender-based knowledge on the science of survival; (2) gendered environmental rights and responsibilities; and (3) gender-based environmental politics and grassroots activism. These themes emerged inductively from the field data and are also aligned with the theoretical pillars of FPE. Together, they reveal how women's ecological labor and collective action on Pari Island reconfigure the meanings of resistance, care, and environmental justice and rights in the context of land grabbing and climate change. The increased participation of women in collective actions concerning the allocation of natural resources and environmental issues has encouraged them to rethink their identity, the meaning of gender, and the exploration of the nature of environmental issues (Rocheleau et al., 2013).

4.1. Gender-Based Knowledge on Science of Collective Survival

Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) emphasizes that gendered knowledge is central to how communities survive and adapt amid environmental crises. Rocheleau et al. (2013) define the science of survival as knowledge that emerges from women's roles in creating, maintaining, and protecting healthy environments—at home, in the community, and within broader ecological systems. On Pari Island, this science of survival is expressed through vegetable gardening, coastal caretaking, and informal economies. These practices have become vital tools not only for survival but also for collective resistance and environmental governance in the context of land grabbing.

Initially, women on Pari Island received no formal agricultural training. Their knowledge evolved out of necessity, supported by civil organization and learning exchanges with other communities. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened the urgency of this knowledge. With mobility restrictions and reduced access to food, gardening became both a survival strategy and an act of territorial reclamation. As one of the participants recalled:

> *"At the time of Covid-19, we had difficulty shopping on land, so at that time we planted vegetables as well to fight the company. At that time. we had time to harvest kale and cucumber. At the harvest time, we divided it first to the group members (women), then we divided it to each household; we went around the RT*

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> *at that time. So, it really helped during covid (19).”* (Interview with Ibu Kartini, May 31, 2024 in Pari Island).

This testimony illustrates how survival practices such as gardening simultaneously became acts of defiance. Food production was not only a coping mechanism but also a visible assertion of presence on contested land. Planting transformed into a political statement of belonging, occupation, and refusal of dispossession. Another woman subject explained this idea more explicitly:

> *“Actually, we don't have any knowledge of planting either. But we are forced to control the land. We were helped by NGO X too, which means that they taught us like that. If you don't do it today you will lose your home like that. Planting means fighting back. We plant anything like that. If there are trees (meaning) there is life there right. (so) there is no way the company can build (build a resort) right. Because it's been a long time since we took action and went to Jakarta. It's not that there are no results but what should we be able to do in our own place, that's why we have made complaints to the government, we have done everything up to the presidential level, we have also done it, but it turns out that the conflict has not been resolved until now, that's why planting means fighting like that.”* (Ibu Kartini in Focus Group Discussion, May 30, 2024 in Pari Island).

Here, planting is explicitly equated with resistance—“planting means resisting.” The act of cultivation becomes an embodied strategy of struggle when institutional and legal remedies fail. For the women, tending land is a way of reclaiming space, expressing political agency, and challenging enclosure through everyday ecological practice.

Over time, these practices fostered solidarity. Initially supported by a government-initiated Women Farmers Group (Kelompok Wanita Tani), the women later redefined themselves as the Pari Island Women’s Group. This shift reflected a deeper political identity and allowed them to assert ownership over their collective struggle beyond state-sanctioned roles. Weekly meetings and *arisan*—rotating savings and social gatherings—became important spaces for knowledge sharing, mutual aid, and political organizing. As one subject explained:

> *“Since (mentioning one of the residents) was criminalized, his wife automatically has no one to earn a living. We work together, not the money to buy rice, buy milk... we go there every afternoon, every Friday we ride the bentor together, starting from there. Our spirit to fight because many are criminalized so we are in solidarity with fellow mothers. It is the women who do a lot of planting (vegetables and mangroves) Strengthening women's capacity by planting, managing the beach, just the women's community service to clean the beach.”* (Interview with Ibu Kartini, May 31, 2024 in Pari Island).

This narrative shows how women transformed personal hardship into collective solidarity. Responding to criminalization, they mobilized financial, emotional, and ecological support for affected families. Their capacity to step in demonstrates an expanded form of care work—one that integrates survival, mutual aid, and political resilience. Within the FPE

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framework, this illustrates how social reproduction itself becomes politicized and directed toward environmental justice.

Their ecological practices also addressed urgent material concerns. Gardens provided food security, while mangrove planting helped counter coastal erosion. Despite challenges—such as sandy soils and limited freshwater—the women experimented with plant varieties, purchased water using funds from beach retribution and mangrove seedling sales, and drew on both traditional knowledge and NGO support. One subject emphasized the importance of these exchanges:

> *"Yes, from this, from NGO X who assisted us like that... this is how they fight in their area like this. Like this teteh can fight here like this."* (Interview with Ibu Kartini, May 31, 2024 in Pari Island).

However, their initiatives were not free from opposition. Private security personnel frequently monitored their activities, interrogated visitors, and attempted to disrupt community service. As one subject recalled:

> *"In the past, every time we did community service in the garden, from the proceeds from the stall, we brought ice, we brought fried foods like that, the same as the chairman, we didn't have any money at all, so the capital used to be at home, yes, in the stall, anyway, we brought it every week like that, anyway, until we opened the land, opened this. Now the security always comes. Once we built a toilet (at Rengge Beach), security told us to stop."* (Focus Group Discussion, May 30, 2024 in Pari Island).

The collective practices of women on Pari Island reveal how survival strategies, such as planting and caretaking, are imbued with political meaning and transformed into instruments of resistance. Framed within the FPE perspective, their actions demonstrate how gendered ecological knowledge—often acquired informally and collaboratively—can serve as a vehicle for reclaiming land, asserting presence, and building resilient social infrastructures. These women do not merely adapt to environmental precarity; they actively reshape their environment through care work, solidarity, and grassroots learning. In doing so, they disrupt dominant paradigms that separate subsistence from politics and knowledge from power. Their science of survival is simultaneously a science of resistance: embodied, collective, and fundamentally transformative.

4.2. Gender-Based Environmental Rights and Responsibilities

Within the framework of Feminist Political Ecology (FPE), rights and responsibilities over the environment are socially constructed and often gendered (Rocheleau et al., 1996). On Pari Island, women's ecological responsibilities—such as gardening, mangrove cultivation, and beach management—are not merely extensions of domestic care work. They also function as claims to environmental rights. By assuming responsibility for collective ecological care, women simultaneously assert their rights to land, coastal space, and community resources.

Field data reveal a contrast between men's and women's orientations in resource allocation. While male groups prioritized purchasing boats—assets controlled and enjoyed

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primarily by certain individuals—women insisted on investing in collective infrastructures such as toilets, nurseries for vegetable seedlings, mangrove houses, and shelters for tourists at Rengge Beach. These preferences highlight women's long-term vision for sustainability and collective benefit, contrasting with masculinized economic rationalities that privilege short-term, material gains (Naples, 2020; Park, 2019).

> *"We received fund (one the government program for coastal areas), 80% was distributed to men to buy a boat to be used when there is a death and to be able to pick up the corpse when they go to Jakarta or other islands using the boat, and 20% to women, even though there are many needs for beaches and gardens. It has been discussed before, we had a meeting. Then I gathered the women, the men also gathered. But it turns out that the men have a different view. When they have bought the mother, after buying, they just talk. Now when we have a meeting together, the story is, how much will the liquid be? Teteh (sister) said it in the back. Just divide it in half, 50% for the men's group and 50% for the women's group. It can't be like that, said the man. Why is that? I asked. We want to buy this, women also need this, especially we in the garden need this. We want to have toilet facilities in the garden. Anyway, we want to have this, what's the point, we in the garden at (Pantai) Rengge make a shelter so that tourists can come too. we also need an educational house, I said for a nursery house for vegetables before sowing. If we are women (why do we want) a mangrove house, it is (because we can) work together and the harvest (can be enjoyed) together."* (Interview with Ibu Kartini, 31 May 2024 in Pari Island).

This testimony illustrates the structural sidelining of women's perspectives in formal decision-making forums. Although present in meetings, women's proposals—focused on ecological care and collective sustainability—were dismissed as lacking immediate economic return. It reflects a broader devaluation of care work and environmental stewardship within dominant development logics. As Puechguirbal (cited in Shepherd, 2010) argued, women's activism is often reduced to an extension of domestic duties. Their strategies aimed at preserving livelihoods, preventing environmental degradation, and ensuring inclusive access to resources (Naples, 2020).

Women's insistence on ecological care as a collective responsibility reframes environmental governance from a feminist perspective. Their proposals for nurseries, mangrove houses, and sanitation facilities were not simply technical requests but political claims to recognition, participation, and resource access. Their actions align with broader FPE scholarship showing that gendered responsibilities often shape alternative visions of justice and sustainability (Elmhirst et al., 2017; Vigil, 2024).

In Pari Island, women's assertion of environmental rights is inseparable from their daily responsibilities. Caring for gardens and coastlines becomes both a moral obligation and a political act—anchoring their claims not in abstract legal discourse but in embodied labor and lived practice. This duality reflects what Rocheleau et al. (2013) describe as the "gendered division of environmental rights and responsibilities," wherein women's ecological practices produce legitimate claims to space and resources even in the absence of formal recognition.

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4.3. Gen Gender-Based Environmental Politics and Grassroots Activism

The transformation of ecological practices into organized political resistance marks a key contribution of women's collective action on Pari Island. As Rocheleau et al. (2013) argue, women's increasing involvement in struggles over natural resources redefines gender roles and reshapes environmental discourses. The women of Pari Island have not only asserted their presence through planting and caretaking but also through group organizing, resource mobilization, and sustained grassroots activism.

4.3.1. Everyday Politics of Space and Presence

The management of Rengge Beach—once overgrown and neglected—became a focal point for territorial claims, income generation, and communal labor. Collective work, weekly clean-ups, and infrastructure development such as toilets and shelters signaled both care and control over the landscape. These activities went beyond environmental restoration; they functioned as acts of political presence, embedding women's ecological care into a broader politics of belonging and accountability.

> *"In the past, every time we did community service in the garden, it was from the proceeds of the stall. Some brought ice, (some brought) fried food. In the past, we (women's groups) didn't have any money at all, so we used to capitalize on what was in the stall, and we brought it every week like that. Anyway, until we open the land, open this (vegetable planting area). That's it, so the physical control is from the entrance to it, well the impression is the beach right, we manage it too, so after planting, the other is the beach, so we don't do anything along the way, we don't do all the weeds. Only at the end is the beach, we penetrate it. That's the main thing we penetrate using our own tools, right. We use sickles, we have them anyway. So the physical control is from the entrance to that, well the impression is the beach right, we manage it too, so after planting, the other is the beach, so we don't do anything along the way. Only at the end is the beach, we penetrate it right, we meet to make a road right. Arisan in kebon every week and every Friday, after sweeping we shake arisan."* (Focus Group Discussion, May 30, 2024 in Pari Island).

This testimony shows how women used personal resources and collective labor to physically transform space. Planting, cleaning, and maintaining the beach were not only ecological acts but also embodied strategies of territorial occupation. Through such everyday practices, women converted care work into political resistance.

4.3.2. Collective Economies and Solidarity

Women's collective action does not only focus on resistance but also creates sustainable livelihoods. Beach management was done collectively, together with other activities such as collective beach clean-ups, *arisan*, and weekly group meetings. *Arisan* played a key role in sustaining this activism. Beyond serving as a rotating savings mechanism, it became a medium of solidarity, mutual aid, and political discussion. Research elsewhere has shown that *arisan* functions as both a financial and social institution that strengthens community bonds (Nelly,

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Suwarto, Sudibjo, & Pramono, 2020; Lubis, Syahsudarmi, & Srimulatsih, 2018). These *arisan* and meetings serve not only as social activities but also as forums to exchange information on the development of the conflict and land grabbing situation as well as to strengthen solidarity among group members.

4.3.3. Organizing and Knowledge Transfer

Organizing women in groups did not just happen but was a long process and required a special approach according to the context of Pari Island. Ibu Kartini took a door-to-door approach to invite other women to join the struggle. This approach was effective because it was done by women, and, thus, it was easier to build trust and invite other women to fight.

> *"Teteh (an older woman or sister in Sundanese, in this context referring to I) knocked on the door one by one, who wanted to come. From one house to another, invite those in the west. Let's fight together. But what do you say to encourage them? Teteh doesn't compare it to visiting a house like that, talking privately, not in a group."* (Ibu Kartini in Focus Group Discussion, May 30, 2024 in Pari Island).

This strategy of personal dialogue reflected women's organizing style, which emphasized trust, reflection, and shared experiences. Beyond the island, women also engaged in exchanges facilitated by civil organization, learning from other communities facing similar struggles:

> *"(I was) sent by one of the civil organization, you have to learn when you are sent to Banyuwangi.... Then I was often sent to Banyuwangi, Madura, Sidoarjo. Sidoarjo is the place where Lapindo mudflow has never been resolved until now. Finally the intention of their struggle. Learning, like a study compared to yes, when we can strengthen. We learn how to coordinate everything."* (Ibu Kartini in Focus Group Discussion, May 30, 2024 in Pari Island).

These knowledge exchanges deepened women's political awareness and connected their struggle to broader networks of resistance. Within the group, Kartini also sought to share leadership and strengthen other women by involving them in external forums and collective decision-making, creating pathways for feminist political learning.

4.3.4. Gendered Constraints and Negotiations

Women's activism faced significant challenges. They encountered resistance from families, stigma in the community, and gendered expectations to prioritize domestic roles. They faced challenges from within her family, who initially did not allow her to organize, as well as slander that she was having an affair with a man who was a member of another resistance group on Pari Island. One of the subjects recalled:

> *"We do communal work on Sundays, so every Friday we will definitely do communal work. In the past, if we did community service in the morning, if not in the afternoon, then we had to take care of the children at school. Finally, we decided to do community service, the success of the women's success is now in me*

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> *and men, it was like that before."* (Ibu Walanda in Focus Group Discussion, May 31, 2024 in Pari Island).

Others noted how mobility was restricted by gender norms requiring permission from husbands:

> *"If going with me, it's safe, but still need to ask for permission… sometimes husbands aren't yet able to manage the household alone."* (Focus Group Discussion, May 30, 2024, in Pari Island).

Despite these challenges, women negotiated gendered expectations by balancing domestic responsibilities with activism. Their persistence transformed everyday constraints into opportunities for collective empowerment.

4.3.5. Care as Political Resistance

Finally, women's grassroots activism extended beyond human solidarity to ecological care. Mangrove planting, for instance, was both an environmental and political strategy—protecting the coastline while symbolizing resistance to land grabbing:

> *"Now why do we cultivate mangroves in our group? Because first it also adds value to us, it's like cultivation, after all, we are all here so every tourist who buys from our group means empowering our group. In addition, we also always tell tourists that by buying mangroves from our group (women) means empowering and donating to our struggle. We are fighting for our island. Our island is not okay, we always say that to tourists, including the box keepers (in the garden)."* (Focus Group Discussion, May 30, 2024, in Pari Island).

These practices illustrate how women linked care work, environmental management, and political struggle. Selling mangroves became not only an income-generating activity but also a tool for awareness-raising and alliance-building with outsiders.

4.3.6. Conceptualizing Collective Action Through FPE Framework

Women's groups on Pari Island, where women are collectively involved in building awareness of women's interests in situations of land grabbing and the impact of the climate crisis on coastal areas. Rocheleau et al. (2013) emphasize that women's increasing collective action over natural conflicts and environmental issues contributes to the meaning of their identity as women in environmental issues. This activism not only aims to fight land grabbing and the climate crisis but also to build solidarity among women and strengthen their position in the community. Cossyleon and Woolley (cited in Naples, 2020) highlight that collective action involves a process of concerted efforts undertaken as a form of resistance and to achieve specific and non-specific targets, which often include formal governments, private companies, and other power holders. These collective processes range from indirect to more overt and direct resistance strategies. In this research, the concept of collective action is used to analyze how women on Pari Island organize themselves and carry out diverse forms of resistance against

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land grabbing and climate change. Collective action here is not limited to resistance alone but also includes care work and efforts to sustain livelihoods.

Framed within FPE, the activism of Pari Island women demonstrates that resistance is not always confrontational but often relational, persistent, and embodied. From vegetable cultivation and beach management to *arisan* and knowledge exchanges, women have built grassroots infrastructures that sustain life and resist dispossession. These practices show that care work itself is political: everyday acts of cleaning, planting, and organizing become territorial claims and assertions of justice. In this light, women's activism challenges the masculine logics of privatization and profit, advancing instead a feminist vision of environmental politics grounded in solidarity, sustainability, and collective survival.

4.4. Marks of Significance: Women's Collective Resistance to Land Grabbing

The collective efforts of women's groups on Pari Island have produced tangible, if partial, outcomes in their resistance to land grabbing. One of the most significant was the finding of maladministration by the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia Representative of Greater Jakarta (Ombudsman Jakarta). Based on community reports, including those led by women, the Ombudsman investigated the issuance of land certificates and found procedural irregularities, abuse of authority, and neglect of legal obligations by the North Jakarta Land Office. In its Final Report of Inspection Results (LAHP) Number 0314/LM/IV/2017/JKT, issued on 9 April 2018, the Ombudsman confirmed maladministration in the granting of 62 land ownership certificates (SHM) and 14 building rights certificates (SHGB) in the name of PT Bumi Pari Asri and PT Bumi Griya Nusa. This recognition marked a rare formal acknowledgement of the community's longstanding grievances.

Women's resistance also gained visibility and political support at the international level. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Hilal Elver, listened to testimonies from Pari Island residents during a fact-finding mission. A representative of the women's group voiced their despair: "We never sold our land. We never sold our land," almost in tears after years of dispossession and conflict. The Special Rapporteur expressed deep concern over forced evictions in Indonesia, the criminalisation of residents, and the targeting of activists. She recommended that the Indonesian government strengthen protections to prevent further escalation and ensure that communities peacefully defending their land are not punished.

At the local level, women's collective action reshaped both the economy and ecology of Pari Island. Through their efforts in clearing access and maintaining the coastline, Rengge Beach—once neglected and inaccessible—emerged as a new tourist destination alongside the already popular Virgin and Bintang Beaches. Revenues from ticket sales were reinvested in collective resistance, including the purchase of mangrove seedlings to combat coastal abrasion and mitigate the effects of the climate crisis. Similarly, the harvest from women's vegetable gardens supplied household needs within the group and, in some cases, provided food at the neighbourhood level.

Together, these outcomes demonstrate what can be described as a narrow triumph. Women's groups on Pari Island have not overturned structural injustices, nor have they secured full recognition of land rights. Yet their actions have carved out spaces of accountability, visibility, and livelihood security. These victories, while modest, are significant: they embody the possibility of resistance in the face of dispossession and reveal how feminist political

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ecology practices—rooted in care, solidarity, and ecological labor—can generate both material and symbolic gains.

5. CONCLUSION

This research has demonstrated that women's collective action on Pari Island against land grabbing possesses distinctive characteristics that can be effectively analyzed through the lens of Feminist Political Ecology (FPE). Their collective practices are not confined to direct confrontation but also encompass the development of gender-based ecological knowledge, grassroots organizing, and everyday forms of resistance. The findings highlight the importance of integrating a gender perspective into the analysis of environmental conflicts, particularly in the context of coastal land disputes.

First, women's groups in Pari Island built gender-based environmental knowledge through the practice of planting vegetables and mangroves and beach management. This knowledge, initially acquired through necessity and later enriched by exchanges with civil organizations and other communities, became both a strategy of resistance and a means of sustaining livelihoods while preserving coastal ecosystems Second, women engaged in grassroots activism by organizing collectively, mobilizing resources, and establishing alternative infrastructures through practices such as planting and communal beach care. This activism not only resisted land dispossession but also fostered solidarity among women and strengthened their standing within the community. Women's organizing strategies were distinct, characterized by dialogue, interpersonal trust, and reflection on lived experiences. Third, women's resistance revealed a forward-looking orientation toward sustainability and long-term livelihood security. In contrast to male-dominated strategies emphasizing material assets, women's initiatives—such as mangrove planting—combined land claims with ecological preservation, directly linking territorial struggles to climate resilience.

Despite these achievements, women's collective action also faces persistent challenges. These include enduring gender norms that restrict their public participation, stigmatization and defamatory remarks within the community, and the lack of generational succession within the movement. Addressing these challenges is essential to sustaining their struggle over the long term.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of women's roles in coastal land disputes by showing how gender dynamics shape not only the strategies of resistance but also the visions of justice and sustainability that emerge from below. It underscores the need for gender-sensitive approaches in analyzing resource conflicts and calls for greater institutional support for women's environmental advocacy. Policy implications include expanding women's access to decision-making spaces, as well as providing education and training on sustainable natural resource management. Ultimately, the case of Pari Island reveals that women are not merely victims of land dispossession but active agents of ecological and social transformation. Their collective actions—rooted in care, solidarity, and grassroots learning—offer a feminist vision of environmental justice that confronts dispossession while sustaining life and livelihoods in precarious coastal environments.

Recommendations for further research include the need to explore women's participation in decision-making processes related to natural resource governance and to assess the long-term impacts of their collective initiatives on ecological sustainability. From a policy

perspective, the study underscores the urgency of enhancing institutional support for women's environmental advocacy, particularly by expanding access to education, leadership opportunities, and training on sustainable natural resource management.

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