



Ocean grabbing and gender-based resistance: A Literature Review with a Feminist Political Ecology (FPE)

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ABSTRACT

The seizure of coastal areas by the state and private capital through large-scale development projects has created a complex social and ecological crisis. This article reviews the literature on coastal agrarian conflicts, focusing on power relations, gender dynamics, community resistance strategies, and the impact of ocean grabbing on social structures and communal bonds. Research consistently shows that these projects reshape physical landscapes, trigger agrarian conflicts, and displace local communities, thereby commodifying living spaces. Women, often the most vulnerable group, play strategic roles as guardians of community values, actors in alternative economies, and symbols of living spaces. While local communities resist through mobilization, legal channels, and advocacy, complex power relations often obscure women's contributions in narratives of resistance. This dispossession also fractures community solidarity through tactics of divide-and-rule and repression. Employing a Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) framework, this article emphasizes the importance of gender-based and intersectional approaches in understanding coastal agrarian conflicts. Future research should therefore pay greater attention to women's strategies in defending their living spaces through their lived experiences and gender identities, employing feminist perspectives to advance more comprehensive gender justice.

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INTRODUCTION

Coastal ecosystems represent a critical component of local communities' living spaces, particularly in the context of their economic, social, and ecological sustainability. These environments, encompassing coastal fisheries, agricultural zones, and the territories of indigenous communities, have historically been crucial for their well-being, as these communities have relied on the continued integrity of coastal areas. However, in the contemporary era, these vital coastal regions are facing an unprecedented and urgent crisis. Over the last two decades, coastal regions globally, including those in Southeast Asia, have experienced escalating pressure from large-scale development projects such as land reclamation, marine industrialization, exclusive tourism, and conservation initiatives (Kitazume, 2022). These projects not only alter the physical landscape but also precipitate new agrarian conflicts, displace local communities from their traditional living spaces, and reinforce existing power imbalances between the state and capital owners (Benjaminsen & Bryceson, 2012; Susman et al., 2021).

Numerous studies indicate that the seizure of coastal spaces can result in the loss of land or sea as vital economic resources. Furthermore, this phenomenon has the capacity to fundamentally alter work systems, social roles, and the social relations among community members (van Noorloos, 2011). Within the context of urban transformation, formerly collective management practices often

transition into capitalist spaces governed by market principles and investment considerations. These shifts frequently lead to community fragmentation, a decline in solidarity, and a fundamental reorientation in how local populations perceive land and sea—from essential living spaces to mere commodities that can be bought and sold (Campling & Colás, 2018). In this regard, space becomes an arena not only for material conflict but also for symbolic and relational struggles (Jahnavi & Satpathy, 2022).

Considering this situation, various forms of resistance have emerged among local communities, which should not be viewed as mere spontaneous reactions. Resistance movements undertaken by coastal communities demonstrate a diversity of forms and strategies, including protest actions (Anwar et al., 2023), ecological preservation efforts (Runeckles et al., 2023), collaboration with media (Hairiyah & Putri, 2024), and everyday practices such as planting and maintaining local spaces (Cormier-Salem, 2017). This resistance stems from a localized understanding of space as a living entity, rather than simply an object for development. Across various studies, women have been consistently identified as occupying strategic positions in this struggle. These positions include their roles as guardians of community values, alternative economic actors, and symbols of the living space itself (Huda & Chusna, 2020; Jahnavi & Satpathy, 2022). Consequently, this article is predicated on the necessity of re-examining coastal agrarian conflicts through a gender-sensitive lens.

However, despite the growing recognition of these conflicts, a comprehensive understanding of the gendered dimensions of their impacts and the unique resistance strategies employed by women remains limited. Specifically, this study examines how the appropriation of coastal areas affects social structures and the distinct forms of resistance, particularly those led by women within affected communities. It is important to note that this limitation in scholarship often causes women's voices to be overshadowed by dominant masculine narratives, thereby obscuring their truly significant contributions. Moreover, although women play a crucial role in sustaining living spaces, they are frequently positioned merely as affected parties rather than as central actors in resistance. Therefore, further exploration of women's strategies, experiences, and agency is essential to enrich the discourse on coastal agrarian conflicts and to foster the development of a more gender-equitable and just analysis.

To comprehend these complex dynamics, this study employs the theoretical framework of Feminist Political Ecology (FPE), as developed by Rocheleau et al. (2013). FPE offers a crucial interdisciplinary lens to examine the intricate relationships between gender, power, and the environment. This research is particularly useful for coastal communities, informing their advocacy efforts by highlighting diverse resistance strategies and empowering women's voices within these struggles. Furthermore, it provides valuable insight for policymakers and development organizations seeking to formulate more equitable and sustainable coastal governance and conservation policies.

This article addresses the limited attention given to women's experiences and roles in resisting coastal land grabbing. While previous studies have explored environmental and political dimensions of spatial dispossession, few have focused specifically on how women collectively negotiate, reclaim, and manage marine and coastal spaces. Therefore, this review seeks to examine the intersection of gender and resistance in the context of ocean and coastal grabbing.

METHOD

This article adopts a literature review approach to explore the complex social and ecological crisis arising from the seizure of marine and coastal areas. This article draws on a narrative and thematic synthesis of selected academic works to understand key patterns, debates, and conceptual framework related to coastal grabbing, resistance movements, gender, dynamics, and environmental justice.

The literature was identified through purposive searching across academic platforms such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and the official repository of Universitas <https://remote-lib.ui.ac.id>. Keywords used in the search included: coastal grabbing, ocean grabbing, coastal communities, resistance movements, women's resistance, gender and environment, and woman against coastal grabbing. The geographical scope of the search primarily focused on studies from Southeast Asia, given the region's heightened pressure from large-scale development projects. However, the review did not limit itself to this region, extending to relevant global case studies, including those from India

and Egypt, to provide a broader, comparative understanding of the phenomenon. The timeframe for selected literature generally spanned the last two decades to capture contemporary pressures and responses, while also incorporating foundational theoretical texts.

The selection criteria emphasized studies that explored coastal and marine based agrarian conflict, particularly those that addressed power relations, gender dynamics, community resistance, and the socio-cultural impacts of ocean grabbing. Greater attention was given to empirical case studies, ethnographic research, and conceptual papers that foregrounded the lived experiences of coastal communities, especially women and other marginalized groups. Publication that focused solely on ecological aspects, without engaging with socio-political or gendered dimensions, were not included in the review.

By applying the FPE framework, we gained a deeper understanding of how power, identity, gender roles, and intersectionality shape both the experiences of dispossession and the forms of resistance enacted by local actors. It further highlights how some narratives, particularly those of women remain underrepresented in dominant discourses, despite their critical roles in sustaining community resilience and everyday practices of resistance.

The selected literature was thematically organized into four key analytical categories, such as gender dimension in coastal grabbing practices, local community resistance to the seizure of the sea and coastal areas, gender-based responses in conflicts over the seizure of maritime and coastal areas, and disrupting community bonds: the social consequences of coastal grabbing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gender Dimensions in Coastal Land Grabbing: State, Capital Accumulation, and the Marginalization of Local Communities

A significant body of literature underscores that development and reclamation initiatives in coastal regions constitute a form of land grabbing, exerting cascading effects beyond the immediate environment to encompass not only ecological systems but also the daily lives of local communities. As defined by [Bennett et al. \(2015\)](#), the phenomenon of global "ocean grabbing" refers to the seizure or takeover of rights to use, control, or access marine space or resources from previous users, rights holders, or residents by public institutions or private interests. This phenomenon occurs because of inadequate governance, involving actions that imperil human security, livelihoods, and socio-ecological well-being. Ocean grabbing fundamentally involves two principal elements: resources and space. Seized marine resources can be classified as living or non-living. While "seawater space grabbing" was initially used to describe the control of fish resources, this phenomenon can also encompass specific species, such as whales, seahorses, and sea cucumbers, as well as vital habitats including coral reefs and mangrove forests. Conversely, non-living resources subject to appropriation include sand, rocks, seabed minerals, and hydrocarbons.

[Barbesgaard's \(2019\)](#) study in Northern Tanintharyi, Myanmar, exemplifies the transformation of coastal landscapes due to the seizure and control of marine and terrestrial areas by the state (military regime) and foreign investors through rent-seeking practices. The planning of the Yadana Pipeline gas project and the expansion of the fishing and port industries with large fleets of foreign-owned vessels have profoundly influenced community dynamics in both social and economic aspects. In Daminseik, a coastal village central to [Barbesgaard's \(2019\)](#) research, land grabbing has significantly impacted local communities' ability to access marine resources.

Consequently, fishing areas have diminished and catch yields have declined substantially. Local communities, predominantly traditional or small-scale fishers, have been compelled to assume laborer roles on industrial vessels, thereby relinquishing control over their production tools and fishing grounds. These populations are demonstrably both economically marginalized and excluded from coastal spatial planning and decision-making processes. [Barbesgaard's \(2019\)](#) findings in a second village further illustrate how land acquisition for a gas pipeline project was characterized by unequal compensation and fraudulent land commodification. The ensuing land price speculation created a widening gap between community members, leading to some groups accumulating significant wealth while others experienced severe financial hardship.

Coastal communities in Malaysia encounter analogous challenges. [Cipriani \(2022\)](#) study in Malacca, Malaysia, found that the growing demand for new land for real estate development has driven large-scale land reclamation projects, notably dubbed the "sand war." This has resulted in significant environmental degradation, including the destruction of mangrove forests, water contamination, and coastal ecosystem erosion. Such reclamation projects have also demonstrably disrupted the livelihoods of local communities, particularly ethnic minorities like the Portuguese Kristang fishing community, who are deeply reliant on the sea for their subsistence. In an interview cited by [Cipriani \(2022\)](#), a Kristang fisherman recounts the profound impact of reclamation: "My family has been forced to move three times. The contemporary context signifies a loss of the sea that was once a vital resource."

The alterations to the marine ecosystem are evident, as evidenced by the accumulation of silt, the deterioration of seabed quality, the practice of sand dumping, and the presence of microorganisms in the mud. The color of the mud serves as an indicator of its vitality, with gray indicating vitality and pitch-black denoting death. This phenomenon is further elucidated by the assertion that "that is the sea's waste". The displacement of certain ethnic groups is thus a direct consequence of reclamation efforts, which are often regulated by foreign investors and local governments without adequate consideration for the rights and needs of local communities. This is exemplified by the state's practice of issuing permits to property corporations without genuinely engaging local communities in the planning and execution of reclamation initiatives.

Research by [Dewi \(2019\)](#) demonstrates a similar pattern in Bali, Indonesia. To stimulate the tourism sector, an increased demand for tourism-related land has prompted the government to plan the reclamation of Benoa Bay without conducting public outreach or involving the community in the planning process. The fluctuating legal status of Benoa Bay, which transitioned from a conservation area to a general utilization zone, has created an opportunity for capital owners to invest and perpetuate the reclamation process. This reclamation has demonstrably deleterious effects on the environment, including the exacerbation of sedimentation in coral reef habitats, potentially leading to coral polyp mortality and reef destruction. Furthermore, it can increase coastal abrasion, resulting in biodiversity decline, mangrove damage, and flooding. From an economic perspective, reclamation can generate income disparities among different groups. While increased tourism benefits local governments through higher revenue, local communities whose livelihoods are impacted by reclamation suffer significant economic losses due to restricted fishing areas and diminished traditional livelihoods.

The implementation of development projects in coastal regions, facilitated by state entities and driven by capital interests, has consistently shown far-reaching ecological and social consequences for local communities ([Gill et al., 2023](#); [Nalefo, 2020](#)). Coastal areas, previously managed communally and sustainably by indigenous communities or small-scale fishers, have experienced massive environmental degradation ([Magontier et al., 2024](#); [Simmons et al., 2022](#)). [Van Noorloos's \(2011\)](#) study highlights how the northwest coast of Costa Rica has transformed into a transnational economic landscape, where local community face alienation from their land and resources due to the influx of foreign investment and tourism development.

Historically, many local families in Costa Rica's coastal regions depended on agriculture as their primary means of income. The influx of foreign investment and housing development has profoundly impacted on the socio-economic landscape, leading local community to encounter escalating property prices and living costs that hinder their ability to purchase homes and necessities. The process of land commodification, whereby previously agricultural or livestock farming land is being sold or leased to developers, is becoming increasingly prevalent, leading to a substantial decrease in agricultural land. It is imperative to recognize that such land sales cannot be regarded as purely voluntary transactions, as selling prices frequently fail to reflect the historical or agricultural potential of the land.

Further to emphasize the phenomenon of land grabbing, [Christian et al. \(2018\)](#) study on Pari Island, Jakarta, show it was not solely attributable to the advent of capitalism, but rather to the active facilitation by local authorities, enabling capital investment to enter and control public assets. State officials and capital owners ultimately benefit from these land transfers. Concurrently, local communities encounter heightened social tensions, both internally and with state officials, stemming

from the imminent threat of criminalization as they strive to preserve their living spaces. The coast is not merely an economic space but a vital nexus where human activity, natural ecosystems, and the value of life are inextricably linked.

A significant consequence of this phenomenon is the profound and observable alteration in the local community's occupational structure and means of subsistence. Large-scale development projects, including land reclamation, maritime industries, and exclusive tourism, frequently displace community-based economic practices such as small-scale fishing, coastal farming, and seafood processing. In their place, these projects often implement wage-based work systems dominated by capitalist logic. Consequently, communities that previously maintained a relatively high degree of independence and self-sufficiency in their economic activities find themselves reliant on temporary, low-wage employment opportunities that provide only the most rudimentary forms of social security.

A study by [Barbesgaard \(2019\)](#) demonstrates that within the industrial fisheries sector in Myanmar, a significant proportion of local fishers, including women, are compelled to labor on large-scale fishing vessels under exploitative and inequitable working conditions. The loss of access to traditional fishing grounds, compounded by the absence of adequate labor protections, further exacerbates this situation. Women in the village of Daminseik also play a vital economic role in local fishing activities, particularly in catch processing. Nevertheless, the advent of the new fishing work system has diminished their traditional roles.

The contract work system exhibits a clear gender disparity: it predominantly engages young, unmarried women as formal workers who receive compensation lower than their male counterparts. This wage disparity further marginalizes pregnant women, women with children, and women over 30 years of age. Furthermore, within the framework of the contract work system, these individuals are often regarded as "unproductive" despite their ongoing contribution to post-harvest activities, particularly in the initial sorting of shrimp from other captured species. In stark contrast to the remuneration structure of contract workers, who receive a fixed monthly salary, this group receives compensation based on the quantity of shrimp they collect from the catch. The maximum amount that can be earned each month is equivalent to half of the monthly wage received by contracted female workers. Concurrently, the monthly wage for female contract workers is only half of that received by their male counterparts.

A parallel phenomenon was documented in the study by [Rap and Jaskolski \(2019\)](#) in Egypt, where women who had previously played a role in local agriculture and community management were compelled to exit the production sector due to land reclamation expansion. These individuals were predominantly employed as domestic workers or in informal sectors, typically characterized by low wages. This transition from work relationships predicated on autonomy and ecological relationships to novel forms of dependency weakens the bargaining position of local communities, thereby engendering a cycle of structural poverty.

The study [Huda and Chusna \(2020\)](#) in Kulon Progo observes that, despite female farmers' crucial role in agricultural production activities, they remain subordinated in decision-making processes within resistance organizations. Despite the considerable effort exerted by women in agricultural settings, their involvement in political and strategic domains within the movement remains underrepresented. Similar cases have been documented in research [Neef et al. \(2023\)](#), including iTaukei women in Fiji, who were excluded from marine conservation negotiations that impacted their access to the sea and resources, despite their historical role in water management and community relations.

The studies cited above collectively provide compelling evidence that the seizure of coastal and marine spaces constitutes a form of power abuse. This abuse not only displaces local communities from their living spaces but also reproduces existing structures of inequality. [Rocheleau et al. \(2013\)](#) emphasize that human relations with nature are never neutral; rather, they are always mediated by power and social differences, including gender, class, and ethnicity. In the context of coastal development and conservation initiatives, states and capital owners frequently engage in the appropriation of these areas while often disregarding the local and traditional management systems collectively implemented by the local communities. The governance of natural resources, including the sea, beaches, and catches, is a matter of significant political concern. Power relations are

frequently obscured within technocratic policies and masculine development narratives (Rocheleau et al., 2013).

This dynamic gives rise to the marginalization of specific community groups, particularly women, due to constrained access to resources. Women are frequently underrepresented in their involvement in the fishing industry and the management of marine resources, despite their active participation in the production, processing, and distribution of marine products. The marginalization experienced by women is not solely due to their social roles but also stems from the masculine structures of development and political economy, which fail to recognize the values of care, nurturing, and sustainability that women contribute. Women who formerly occupied pivotal roles in coastal agriculture, marine resource management, and community care and nurturing are not regarded as "workers" within the contemporary economic paradigm. This phenomenon renders them invisible and structurally unrecognized.

Local Community Resistance to the Seizure of the Sea and Coastal Areas

Amidst the pervasive expansion of development projects, land reclamation, exclusive conservation, and industrial expansion that are depriving coastal and marine communities of their living space, local communities are not standing idly by. Rather, they engage in diverse forms of collective resistance to defend their living space, identity, and livelihoods. These forms of resistance extend beyond overt confrontation to encompass peaceful actions, community organizing, ecological preservation, and the use of cultural and spiritual symbols as powerful and meaningful strategies of refusal.

Van Noorloos (2011) study demonstrates how communities responded to and resisted large-scale tourism projects that transformed the northwest coast of Costa Rica into a transnational economic landscape. Local communities mobilized to demand their historical rights in the face of threats from residential tourism, through meetings, organizing, and forming coalitions with environmental activists. They held demonstrations and marches to raise awareness about the impacts of tourism development on land and livelihoods, also participated in public awareness campaigns. Some communities also used legal channels to fight for their historical rights, filing land claims and facing the complexities of a legal system that sometimes does not recognize customary rights. In addition, they engaged in advocacy with the government to protect their rights and interests, including in the struggle to obtain legal recognition of land claims and in decision-making processes related to land use.

The power of collective resistance also emerged in research Neef et al. (2023) on land grabbing in coastal areas of Fiji, where the iTaukei community rejected a sea dredging and port development project by a foreign company. Despite pressure from the state and loss of legal protection, the community continued to resist through customary deliberations, collective action, and documentation of the damage. They strengthened their claims over the sea as communal heritage. The community, together with the church and environmental activists, also utilized social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook to voice their dissatisfaction with the mining company and urge it to cease operations. The same is evident in Cipriani's (2022) study, where Malaka fishermen and environmental activists formed a coalition to reject coastal reclamation that would eliminate their fishing grounds. They highlighted the ecological crisis and threats to the economic sustainability of fishing communities. Despite the state's insistence on the project, this movement demonstrates how coastal communities are building broad alliances as a form of resistance.

Resistance against the appropriation of coastal space is also revitalized through symbolic and spiritual strategies as a strong and meaningful form of rejection. These strategies do not rely solely on physical or legal power but also convey a deep meaning of space as part of the body, ancestors, and communist value systems.

We found two studies that highlight the dynamics of Balinese community resistance to the Benoa Bay reclamation project, which is planned to support the development of the tourism industry. Dewi (2019) research highlights various reasons for the resistance, particularly related to the ecological, social, and economic impacts of the project. Additionally, the reclamation permitting process was deemed rife with elite interests, marked by overlapping policies and the shifting status of the Benoa Bay area to accommodate the project's agenda. This situation sparked public anger,

leading to the organization of resistance through the ForBALI Movement (Forum Rakyat Bali Tolak Reklamasi). Meanwhile, Wiranata and Siahaan (2019) highlight the vocal opposition of the ForBALI Movement, which sparked a response from indigenous youth, encouraging indigenous communities to join the collective struggle. Together with ForBALI and indigenous youth, they urged indigenous leaders to also reject the reclamation. The narrative they used was no longer about ecological and economic issues, but rather that Benoa Bay is a sacred space with deep spiritual significance for Hindus.

Furthermore, Wiranata and Siahaan (2019) explained how previously there a coalition of traditional villages in Bali had never been to enter the arena of social movements. As religious institutions, traditional villages are traditionally more internally oriented to manage customary affairs in their respective areas. The solidarity of the traditional village residents in rejecting the reclamation was manifested in a forum called Pasubayan. Pasubayan consists of traditional villages that have officially (through a customary meeting) declared their rejection of the reclamation.

The Balinese people were upset and angry with Governor Mangku Pastika, who, without public knowledge, had sent a letter to the central government to change the legal status of Benoa Bay from a conservation area to a utilization area, thereby opening up the possibility of reclamation for commercial purposes. The subjects of their anger were also directed at the investor, which was considered to have used manipulative tactics to force through its agenda. Among these methods was a secret agreement made in March 2013 with several traditional village leaders of Tanjung Benoa at the time, wherein the investors provided infrastructure assistance on the condition that the traditional village of Tanjung Benoa would ensure the smooth implementation of the reclamation project in Benoa Bay. The indigenous community staged a demonstration, boldly entering the toll road and breaking through police barricades. Their actions were characterized by non-violence and became a source of pride for them. The spirit of upholding self-respect by defending their birthplace to the death is an expression of devotion to God.

In Jahnvi and Satpathy's (2022) study, the community in Sompeta, India, rejected the construction of a coal-fired power plant that would destroy their coastal wetlands. This rejection was manifested through sit-ins, peaceful marches, and community organizing across age and gender lines, affirming the marshes as spiritual and ecological living spaces, not empty land for industry. The people of Sompeta refer to the marshes as "anmoru" or mother. They believe that destroying the marshes is akin to killing their own mother. This symbolic narrative binds the community's identity to nature in a spiritual way and forms a strong moral foundation for their rejection of the power plant project.

The community's resistance to the seizure of their coastal and marine space is not only spontaneous but also involves the development of structured local organizations. The existence of community-based organizations serves as an important space for movement consolidation, community awareness, and the development of more systematic resistance strategies. This is evident in the research by (Huda & Chusna, 2020) focused on a group of coastal farmers who organized themselves to reject the mining and construction of an iron sand factory by PT. Jogja Magasa Iron, owned by the Yogyakarta sultanate family. These coastal farmers formed an organization called the Paguyuban Petani Lahan Pantai Kulon Progo (PPLP-KP). The members of this organization are farmers, both men and women.

The organization carries out various activities, including advocacy, direct action, and community education, demonstrating that collective power grows from the roots of the community directly affected by the land-grabbing project. They are concerned about the threat of losing their livelihoods, which is a consequence of the conversion of coastal land into an iron sand mining area. Land has become an identity for the local community, especially since farming has been a tradition passed down through generations. Farmers have managed the coastal land as agricultural land since before the year 2000. Planting has become a symbol of resistance for the coastal farmers. As a source of inspiration for their resistance, a book titled "Planting is Resisting" was published by PPLP and Tanah Air Beta in 2023. This book is a diary of a coastal community member from Kulon Progo.

The strength of local organizations is also evident in the case of Sompeta (Jahnvi & Satpathy, 2022), where residents formed a swamp defense committee and consolidated efforts across villages to protect the coastal area from being converted into an industrial zone. This movement

involves traditional leaders, farmers' groups, intergenerational residents, and both genders. Commitment to shared living spaces forms the foundation of solidarity that has strengthened the movement's resilience over the years.

Various forms of local resistance against the seizure of coastal spaces—through protests, organizational strengthening, and sustainable ecological practices—demonstrate that communities are never entirely passive in the face of exploitative development projects. They continue to build forms of resistance tailored to their social and ecological contexts, creating a dynamic field of resistance rooted in local values. However, the collective nature of this resistance does not fully capture the complexity of power relations within coastal conflicts, especially when we begin to ask who is most affected and who is most invisible in the narrative of resistance itself. In many cases, women are in a position that is specifically and multilayeredly affected. Women also play a crucial role as key actors in shaping distinctive resistance strategies rooted in their bodily experiences, spatial dynamics, and social relationships. Therefore, the subsequent discussion will focus on the experiences, roles, and strategies of women in coastal land-grabbing conflicts.

Gender-based Responses in Conflicts Over the Seizure of Maritime and Coastal Areas

In the discourse on resistance to the seizure of coastal areas, the experiences and strategies of women are often obscured by a masculine collective narrative. Women are not merely the affected party; they also play a unique and highly political strategic role in defending their living space. Encroachment not only appropriates physical territory but also erodes the social relations, identities, and sustainable practices that have been historically maintained by women, whether as farmers, fisherwomen, seafood processors, or community guardians.

Women encounter intersectional impacts. In addition to the loss of productive space, these individuals experience heightened pressures stemming from domestic responsibilities, exclusion from decision-making processes, and constrained access to resources and employment opportunities following the loss of property. However, it is precisely from these points of vulnerability that various forms of resistance emerge, rooted in everyday practices, spirituality, and unique care logic. In this context, women's responses to the seizure of space are not merely forms of survival but also forms of resistance that dismantle dominant structures and offer alternative ways of understanding the relationship between humans and nature.

From an ecofeminist perspective, women's deep connection with nature forms the basis of their ecological identity as well as their collective resistance against environmental threats. In the case of opposition to iron sand mining along the southern coast of Yogyakarta, female farmers emerge not only as those directly affected by ecological degradation but also as key actors at the forefront of defending livelihoods and sustainability. This ecological identity is further strengthened through community solidarity, nurtured by religious practices and communal spaces, such as collective prayers for families criminalized due to their resistance to mining.

This solidarity, rooted in spirituality and communal values, positions women not merely as victims but as agents of change who embody collective resistance. Previous studies (A. C. Nugroho, 2014; D. Nugroho, 2019; Supardal et al., 2022) highlight the importance of examining women's roles in agrarian relations, farming risks, and culture-based village policies. Thus, women's resistance in the southern coastal region of Yogyakarta reflects ecofeminist practices intertwined with community solidarity in confronting the exploitation of natural resources.

The representative of women in these community meetings, organized by various local groups, has the potential to enrich the discourse with diverse perspectives and knowledge. However, the participation of women remains limited, with only one or two individuals representing the female demographic (A. C. Nugroho, 2014). In accordance with the research conducted by Huda and Chusna (2020), employing Longwe's analytical framework, it is demonstrated that female farmers possess a robust and egalitarian standing in comparison to their male counterparts within the agricultural sector. Nevertheless, they continue to encounter subordination within the political sphere of the organization. The existence of the community association serves as an important space for women's empowerment, though it has not yet achieved full equality in decision-making. Researchers have concluded that women's struggles are not only against mining capitalism but also against internal structures that do not fully support equality.

Women experience the loss of space not only as the removal of access to resources but also as the erasure of their historically built social positions and ecological relationships. When coastal areas are appropriated for reclamation initiatives, tourism, or extractive industries, women often experience a loss not only of a place of employment but also of a space conducive to social reproduction, childcare, and spirituality. In numerous instances, the spaces under their management, including farmlands, shallow waters, domestic gardens, and areas dedicated to the processing of marine products, have been expropriated. Consequently, women are systematically excluded from the country's development plans and investment projects.

Concurrently, research conducted by [Alamsyah and Samadhi \(2023\)](#) on women's resistance to the Jakarta Bay reclamation project demonstrates how bodily experiences, social responsibilities, and maternal identity shape unique resistance strategies. Women fishermen in the northern coastal areas of Jakarta encounter multiple forms of structural inequality. Their access to the sea is restricted not only by reclamation efforts but also by a lack of formal recognition in policies designed to safeguard the fishing profession. The definition of "fishermen" in Law No. 7 of 2016 exhibits gender bias, excluding the contributions of women throughout the entire fishing production cycle, from the pre- to the post-production stages. The process of land reclamation has resulted in frequent tidal floods, which have had a direct impact on women and children. It has been demonstrated that women experience significant discomfort during their menstrual cycles due to the presence of unhygienic and unsafe environments. This underscores the notion that ecosystem damage impacts not only the economy but also reproductive health and the quality of life for women. The articulation of these bodily experiences constitutes the basis of resistance that is emotional, ecological, and highly political.

Fisherwomen are also actively involved in the Jakarta Bay Rescue Coalition (KSTJ) alongside other civil society groups. These actions have included demonstrations, legal challenges to reclamation policies, and public campaigns. Their demands extend beyond the cancellation of project permits and the demolition of reclaimed islands; they also include the restoration of ecosystems as a form of reclamation of living space. However, the consolidation process is not without its challenges. The full participation of women continues to be hindered by structural and cultural barriers. These barriers include domestic burdens, low self-confidence due to patriarchy, and individualism within urban communities. Notwithstanding, this movement has achieved a notable degree of success in fostering solidarity across diverse regions, with communities dispersed throughout regions such as Lampung, Bali, Makassar, and Kendari, to name a few. Consequently, the resistance exhibited by fisherwomen in Jakarta serves to underscore the assertion that conflicts arising from reclamation represent a national structural issue ([Alamsyah & Samadhi, 2023](#)).

Women's resistance strategies are not invariably dramatic; rather, they are consistent and deeply entrenched in their daily lives, manifesting in diverse contexts such as gardens, community forums, kitchens, and protest stages. The embodiment of women and their labor contribute to the formation of alternative spaces that offer a counterpoint to the prevailing forms of state and capitalist domination. The experiences of women regarding spatial dispossession are frequently concealed yet wield significant influence. In the face of encroachment on their living spaces, women often adopt strategies that, while often deemed unconventional, are in fact deeply political in nature (Rocheleau et al. 1996). These strategies include the reclamation of seized land, the defense of access to water and the sea, and the revitalization of spiritual narratives that underscore the sanctity of land as the "mother".

While the studies have illuminated the roles of women, [A. C. Nugroho \(2014\)](#) study is singular in its direct focus on coastal women as the primary subjects, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and interpretations. In contrast, the research by [Huda and Chusna \(2020\)](#) and [Alamsyah and Samadhi \(2023\)](#) focuses on the role and experiences of coastal women in their struggles. However, these women are not the primary subjects in the data collection process. To comprehend the impact and multiple burdens borne by women as a result of agrarian conflicts in coastal areas, it is crucial to analyze their experiences explicitly. These experiences constitute an integral component of a distinctive pattern of resistance that merits explicit emphasis.

FPE further underscores the necessity of comprehending resistance strategies within the context of intersectionality, emphasizing the manner in which factors such as class, ethnicity, age, and geographical location influence the manifestation of resistance. Consequently, collective actions undertaken by local communities, particularly those led by women, do not invariably display uniformity but rather emerge from the specific social and ecological relations that characterize these communities.

Disrupting Community Bonds: The Social Consequences of Coastal Grabbing

The seizure of marine space and coastal areas has not only had physical and economic impacts but has also shifted the way communities perceive their environment and altered the social relations that have historically sustained coastal communities. When exclusive development, reclamation, and conservation projects enter coastal areas, it is not merely land and sea that are eroded, but also social bonds, collective values, and environmental ethics that have been lived and passed down for generations. The plan of iron sand mining project by PT. Keraton Megasa Iron (KMI) in Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta, has caused social divisions among villagers. The community has been divided into pro- and anti-mining groups.

This has directly affected social interactions and practices of tolerance in the village. This can be seen in the attitude of Dyah, one of the subjects of [A. C. Nugroho's \(2014\)](#) research. A female farmer and information broadcaster at the mosque stated that although she is aware that she must be fair in conveying news to all villagers, both those who support and oppose the iron sand mining project, she explicitly differentiates between pro- and anti-mining villagers. To those opposed to mining, she would share the news and directly encourage residents to visit or even collect funds. On the other hand, to those in favor of mining, she would only share the news but did not encourage others to visit or check in. This illustrates how differing attitudes toward the mining project have disrupted the social order and created tension within the community.

A similar situation is observed in study by [Alamsyah and Samadhi \(2023\)](#). The reclamation project in Jakarta Bay, Indonesia, has sparked deep conflicts of interest between the community, the state, and capital owners. The loss of access to essential marine resources for fishers has prompted the emergence of a strong resistance movement from those opposed to reclamation. However, this struggle has not proceeded smoothly due to the intervention of capital owners who employ political tactics to divide and conquer the fishing communities. Capital owners have offered bribes to fishers to silence them (i.e., to refuse to oppose the project) and drop their lawsuits. The fishers' movement has also faced repressive actions from law enforcement, including intimidation, accusations of communism, criminalization, violence, and the forced removal of fishing boats at sea. The repressive actions of state authorities and the underhanded tactics of capital owners have further complicated the resistance movement led by fisherwoman. The offers and bribes from capital owners have caused a crisis of trust among residents. This fundamentally erodes the solidarity of the Jakarta Bay community.

The social divisions among residents caused by reclamation and sand mining projects are a clear illustration of how non-participatory development that is oriented toward capital interests can erode the foundations of a community. From Malacca to Jakarta Bay and Lor Segoro District, these narratives consistently show that external intervention through large-scale projects not only causes severe environmental and economic impacts but also triggers internal polarization among residents. Divide-and-conquer tactics, bribery, conflicts of interest, and the exploitation of identity and political issues all contribute to the erosion of trust and solidarity that once served as the driving force for communities in facing threats. Ultimately, the struggle to defend land rights and livelihoods is often overshadowed by internal divisions, revealing that the impacts of such development are far more complex than mere physical changes to the landscape, but also involve negative transformations in the social fabric essential to community life.

Drawing upon the Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) framework, the erosion of community solidarity in these conflicts has profound implications for gendered experiences and resistance, often disproportionately impacting women. [Rocheleau et al. \(2013\)](#) show that the socio-ecological relations formed by local communities are an integral part of their collective life and resilience. When these spaces are taken over by development, reclamation, or exclusive conservation projects, it is not

only the ecosystem that is damaged, but also the social networks that support sustainable practices and collective life. Through an FPE lens, we see that when community bonds break due to tactics like “divide and conquer” or unequal compensation, women become even more marginalized. As traditional caregivers and resource providers, they often find themselves caught between opposing groups, facing heavier domestic workloads and less support for their resistance. Their contributions, often already overlooked in male dominated narratives, become even harder to see when the community is divided.

The case of Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta, shows how differing attitudes toward iron sand mining have divided the community and influenced social practices such as funeral rites, with different treatment between residents who support and oppose the project. Similarly, in Jakarta Bay, reclamation projects have sparked conflicts of interest between communities, the state, and capital owners, with fishers opposed to the project facing divide-and-conquer tactics and bribery from developers, as well as repressive actions by authorities, leading to a crisis of trust and the weakening of resistance movements.

Although these studies effectively highlight the social divisions caused by development, they have not explored in depth the long-term impacts of these divisions on women. Existing research tends to lack detail in examining how women proactively contribute both during conflicts and in the process of fair social and ecological recovery after conflicts. Women, who often serve as guardians of social balance within communities, are frequently caught in the middle of these tensions. They must continue to care for their families and social networks, even as their communities are divided by differing attitudes toward development projects or compensation.

Implications and Limitations

The Implications and Limitations section of this literature review highlights several key points. It underscores community resistance strategies and informs a more effective defense of living spaces and socio-ecological integrity. The findings emphasize the need for sustainable and equitable solutions that integrate local values and actively involve women’s participation. Conflicts over coastal resources are also rooted in social, ethnic, and religious identities, requiring intersectional and culturally sensitive interventions. This review stresses the importance of a gender-sensitive and feminist approach to analyzing agrarian conflicts. It argues that women’s experiences and contributions are often overlooked, obscuring key dimensions of resistance and vulnerability. Future research should explicitly position women as primary subjects, exploring their unique perspectives and collective agency.

The study’s findings are constrained by its reliance on a systematic literature review methodology, which is inherently limited by the availability of published works. The scarcity of research on women’s interactions with opposing entities and their leadership roles further narrows the scope of this study. Moreover, the complexities of local comprehension and social dynamics within communities may not be fully captured, potentially leading to an incomplete understanding of the issue. Therefore, future research employing feminist methodologies is essential to explore women’s unique experiences and strategies for maintaining community solidarity, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, it is crucial for future studies to employ more participatory approaches that directly engage local communities. Such approaches would not only enrich the empirical basis of research but also ensure that findings reflect the authentic voices of women on the ground. Collaborations with civil society organizations, women’s groups, and community leaders could pave the way for more effective advocacy strategies while simultaneously strengthening women’s positions in decision-making processes related to coastal resource governance

CONCLUSION

This literature review reveals that the seizure of marine and coastal areas impacts ecosystems and livelihoods, and significantly reinforces existing social and gender inequalities. The main findings of this study highlight a pervasive pattern of socio-ecological injustices driven by coastal appropriation. Specifically, our review demonstrates how these projects fundamentally alter local perceptions of space and erode vital social relations, centralizing access to and control over vital resources in the hands of the state and capital owners. This re-establishes and reinforces power imbalances rooted in capitalist logic. We found that local communities consistently employ diverse and innovative strategies of resistance. However, women, while disproportionately impacted by these transformations due to their gendered roles and responsibilities, occupy strategic yet often overlooked roles in defending their communities. Their constrained access to and control over resources, coupled with their marginalization from decision-making processes, exemplifies the deep-seated power relations at play.

Overall, Coastal land grabbing is a complex crisis of social and ecological justice, intertwining environmental degradation with intensified inequalities. Future research should highlight women's strategies for defending their living spaces, considering their lived experiences and gender identities. Feminist studies are crucial for analyzing these dynamics and offering solutions that address social and ecological justice in coastal areas.

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