



A comparative study of women environmental defenders' antiviolent success strategies

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ABSTRACT

This research advances knowledge on the understudied topics of violence against women and their contributions to ecological movements through a multiple case study analysis of 25 women defenders listed in the EJAtlas, an environmental conflict database. Women's mobilization is often constrained within cultural contexts limiting them to gendered spaces and roles and punishing them with multiple violences. Women defenders' distinctly gendered violent experiences thus inform their perspectives, narratives, and advocacy. Women defenders assert authority and achieve movement success by emphasizing aspects of identity within and despite unevenly faced barriers, brutality, and burdens. These multi-faceted tactics contribute to emancipation beyond just women and their communities by dismantling violent hegemonies while promoting alternative, inclusive, and antiviolent visions of environmental justice.

1. Introduction

For decades, feminist research has acknowledged women's growing stakes and prominence in environmental justice movements worldwide. Shiva (1988), for example, argued that industrial development causes violence especially against women and nature. In response, "exceptionally courageous women" were at the frontlines of the Chipko movement in Uttarakhand in the 1970s, though their contribution "has been neglected and remains invisible" compared to male allies' disproportionate visibility (p. 64). As Guha (1989) and Pathak (2020) describe, both women and men had roles in Chipko. Gaura Devi led a group of women hugging trees to stop logging, which was imitated elsewhere. Agarwal (1992) explained that rural women in India became environmental defenders because they depended on natural resources and commons more than on wages, and because they knew more than men about medicinal and agricultural uses of nature. Agarwal (1992) contested Shiva, arguing that gendered relationships with nature need to be understood as rooted in their material reality and interactions with the environment rather than essentializing third world women as "embedded in nature" (p. 126). Rocheleau et al. (1996) document a "surge in women's involvement in collective struggles over natural resource and environmental issues" across diverse global contexts (p. 15). According to Arora-Jonsson (2009), women struggle to achieve recognition and legitimation even in places such as Sweden, which are assumed to have achieved gender equality. Organizing around identities as women is thus not only a result of social positioning, but also a political choice (Arora-Jonsson, 2013). Jenkins (2017) also explains that women's resistance can follow "everyday activism" in their seemingly

mundane daily actions (p. 1446). Arora-Jonsson (2009) writes that these small acts of care for the environment remain invisible to mainstream forestry (both policy and research), which instead tends to be focused on public acts and equates forests with timber and woody biomass. As these authors show, even in well-known cases, women's experiences of injustice in environmental movements are thus still poorly understood or relatively invisible.

Environmental justice discourse still has room to further explore WEDs' uniquely gendered experiences of violence and success (Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Nartey, 2020). I argue that WEDs face uniquely gendered challenges and violences that their success strategies must also tackle in addition to EDCs. In doing so, WEDs open new avenues for success challenging the roots of such violences for all. A multiple case study analysis of WED's strategies is a novel contribution for understanding how different WEDs work within diverse gender schemes rather than homogenize their struggles. The goal is to investigate women defenders' relatively unknown violent experiences and discuss WED tactics for success in response to the various manifestations of repression they face. This article begins with an overview of feminist political ecology as the theoretical framework informing the study. After comes an explanation of methods, and then an analysis of 25 cases from the Environmental Justice Atlas (EJAtlas) examining violent patterns and success strategies. To conclude, although their diversely experienced marginalization means that WEDs work within contextual limits, their positionalities also give them alternative perspectives bolstering success strategies challenging systems perpetuating violence.

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2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Concepts in feminist political ecology

Feminist political ecology (FPE) is a sub-area of political ecology encompassing various concepts throughout this article. FPE questions dominant worldviews on development and resource use leading to widespread environmental and community harm by examining the differently privileged and often gendered knowledges, rights, and practices informing environmental conflicts (Rocheleau et al., 1996). Accordingly, a recent shift in FPE now includes intersectionality to deprivilege gender, which, while still a central axis of difference, exists in relation to complex webs of multiple identities and subjectivities (Resurrección and Elmhirst, 2020; Sultana, 2020). Intersectionality is how race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, age, education, location, and other identifiers interact to create complex, overlapping experiences of structure, politics, and representation (Crenshaw, 2016). Such positionalities create contextual, coexisting privileges and marginalizations within interlocking systems of power and oppression. Shiva (1988) theorizes that western patriarchal development disproportionately victimizes women, non-westerners, and nature. Consequently, (especially rural, indigenous, Global South) women are often more vulnerable to environmental degradation. Agarwal (1992) warns against homogenizing women, however, and emphasizes the differences between “third world women of different classes, castes, races, ecological zones, and so on” (p. 125). Arora-Jonsson (2011) likewise argues that vulnerability to environmental disasters is not homogenous, but diversely experienced depending on the contexts of people’s lives. Rocheleau et al. (1996) showcase how intersecting positionalities influence environmental resource and burden distribution. For example, community struggles against a sewage plant in West Harlem, New York were not only gendered, but also racialized. This shifted ecological consequences from wealthy white neighborhoods to a low-income black one (Hallstein et al., 1996). Meanwhile, in the Indian Himalayas, rural women agriculturalists faced exclusion from property rights, resources, information, and tools. Men’s increasing specialization, out-migration, and market involvement then made women dependent on men as well as increasingly burdened with agricultural production despite having less means to work effectively (Mehta, 1996). Awareness of the layers of WEDs’ identities is thus crucial to understanding how their positionalities inform their experiences of oppression and resistance.

Women’s bodies are sites through which they diversely experience and resist social relations. The term embodiment refers to how many societies define female-coded bodies as deviant, inferior, vulnerable, and sexual to enforce subordination based on physiological differences from male-coded bodies (Sutton, 2010). Women’s bodies become sites of multiple vulnerabilities because they are unevenly exposed to injury, violence, death, and other harms owing to their construction as not having full humanity (D. Taylor, 2018). Consequently, violence against them is not fully harmful or worth moral and emotional responses, leading to sexual and domestic violence and vulnerability being coded as feminine. As Sutton (2010) explains, homogenizing women’s bodies also renders them hyper-visible as (often sexualized and/or victimized) commodities, yet invisible as subjects with needs, desires, and capacities. Beyond gender, other intersectional factors such as race, class, age, and ability furthermore influence which bodies are nurtured or discarded, and whose bodies are prone to control, coercion, experimentation, torture, and sacrifice. Women are expected to prioritize the bodily needs of others before their own and are also punished for their mobilizations during economic and environmental crises.

Yet women also use their bodies as a means for resistance. As Sutton (2010) states, “activist women’s presence in the streets, in protest, in defiance, and gaining strength through collective organizing with other women reveal female bodies that cannot simply be categorized as victims of violence but as courageous bodies actively striving to change their conditions” (p. 200). Bodies in protest challenge forces of

oppression both individually and collectively. Diverse protest tactics bring WEDs’ bodies to the forefront, making statements countering social structures such as industrialization or hegemonic cultural scripts about gender. For example, Fabricant and Postero (2013) retell how Bolivian protestors, predominantly mestizo and indigenous women, commonly use hunger strikes as an embodied performance demonstrating their visceral experiences of oppression. This rewrites history and disrupts masculinized public discourse in a context where women’s diversely marginalized and subordinated bodies have been erased from sight and memory. In doing so, they challenge and redefine hegemonies regulating which bodies matter.

2.2. Gendered understandings of violence and success

This study uses concepts from FPE to expand Navas et al.’s (2018) multidimensional understanding of violence to also consider gender-based aspects of each manifestation of violence. Multidimensional violence encompasses direct violence, structural violence, cultural violence, slow violence, and ecological violence, which are combined to repress defenders. Direct violence is brute force hurting people physically. This as well as the other manifestations are justified through cultural violence based on religion, ideology, language, science, and other cultural aspects. For instance, structural violence involves socio-political and economic structures disadvantaging groups through inequality and institutional failure. Common to all environmental justice conflicts are ecological violence, the consequences of environmental overexploitation, and slow violence, processes accumulating exponential harm such as pollution.

Applied to women defenders, their advocacy often stems from increasing exposure and burden in gendered roles. Structural and cultural violence sanction slow and ecological violence on the bodies of women, who are often relegated to gendered spaces and tasked with domestic labor directly exposing them to environmental hazards (Peek, 2007). Corporations also use direct violence to suppress women’s resistance. Moreover, cultural, structural, and direct forms of violence have misogynistic manifestations justifying domestic violence; death threats against family; or fears of sexual assault limiting women’s mobility (Gqola, 2007). These violent practices and attitudes are embodied because, as Tamale (2017) writes, culture, law, and religion construct women’s bodies as sites of power struggles over domesticity/labor roles, sexuality, and more. Furthermore, women do not experience multidimensional violence evenly, as race, age, class, sexual orientation, and other hierarchies construct diverse bodies as more or less powerful or marginalized. Women as individuals have little control of the meanings constructing bodily subjectivities (Barrett, 2005). Regardless, WEDs adapt intersectional and embodied scripts to rewrite themselves as powerful.

This study also expands upon the notion of success in EDCs to consider gendered experiences of positive outcomes. EDC success is subjective, understudied, and debatable (Aydin et al., 2017; Hess and Satcher, 2019). Özkaynak et al. (2015) write that the main criterion for perceived success is if contested projects stop. Scheidel et al.’s (2020)’s global statistical study of over 2800 EJAtlas cases finds that preventative mobilization, multi-pronged protesting tactics, and litigation raise the odds for project cancellation among vulnerable (especially indigenous) groups. Failures are when the threat continues, sometimes even after initially achieving goals. Yet even without cancellation, movements can be partially successful by attaining outcomes such as building and strengthening mobilizing networks, new legislation, and perceptions of governmental and/or corporate support. Consequences may continue after project cancellation, for example, or the project itself may restart. In this study, the criteria for success are thus that the movement achieves any of the above positive outcomes, with special attention to WEDs’ unique results.

Barca (2020) writes that feminist advocacy aims to dismantle the violent hegemonies justifying EDCs. Women redefine environmental

issues by questioning violent hegemonies and include their own knowledges expressed through counterhegemonies and collective resistance. For women defenders, success thus is not merely stopping a threat, but also achieving empowerment and asserting agency in various ways depending on contexts. Tamale (2017) explains that such empowerment is embodied because protesting bodies become the means for resistance against institutions and systems. Although bodies are often subject to social control, bodies as imbued with discursive power also can make their voices heard. Using the case of women's anti-mining activism faced with police brutality in Greece, Fotaki and Daskalaki (2020) illustrate how protesting bodies making public statements with their physical presence to create spaces for solidarity across gender and other multiple identities. Moreover, protesting bodies challenge cultural expectations and stereotypes by rejecting established norms excluding female, aging/childish, foreign/indigenous, poor, and other bodies from politics. Embodied resistance subsequently expands political agency in inclusive ways (Sasson-Levy and Rapoport, 2003).

3. Methodology

This study analyzes 25 cases highlighting one or more WEDs who have not been assassinated and who have at least partially achieved movement goals. Cases are documented in the EJAtlas, an online database mapping EDCs. Criteria for inclusion are that the conflict involves “economic activity or legislation with actual or potential negative environmental and social outcomes; claim and mobilization by environmental justice organization (s) that such harm occurred or is likely to occur as a result of that activity; and reporting of that particular conflict in one or more media stories.”¹ Entries contain a data sheet with a description of the conflict, sources, and codified variables. Once submitted, cases undergo moderation by a team of scholars and activists, who check the information and sources. The cases are examined using comparative political ecology, which Taylor and Hurley (2016) describe as analyzing case studies from different regions together to see how similar outcomes can be produced across the globe in a wide variety of regional contexts. Comparative political ecology is useful because commonalities between diverse cases are often difficult to see. These commonalities highlight patterns with authorities' and companies' behaviors, or strategies statistically shown to produce positive results.

Limitations to the EJAtlas include uneven geographical reporting owing to the situated knowledges of contributors (researchers and activists/organizations, listed on case pages) as well as the cases reflecting contributors' interpretations of reports and not always firsthand experiences of defenders on the ground. Information comes from news and academic reports, publications from defenders themselves, and other credible sources to attempt to capture histories as they happened. Although interpretations may be reflected in the cases, these subjectivities still are valuable because the atlas highlights differentiated impacts and responses in EDCs, thus documenting the nuances of seeking justice and empowerment for marginalized groups. FPE shares such interest in subjectivities for understanding gendered resource access and control (Elmhirst, 2018). My own interpretations in the EJAtlas case process are thus also helpful considering that relatively fewer cases (on EJAtlas and beyond) acknowledge women defenders specifically, whereas the ones I wrote and selected do. EJAtlas' origins, potentials, and implications are further explained in recent articles (Scheidel et al., 2020; Temper et al., 2015, 2018, 2020). Case summaries and WED information are in the appendix.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Violent repression

4.1.1. Overview of findings

Tables 1–3 count incidences and types of violence each WED faced. WEDs are listed in order of whom experienced the most to the least forms of violent incidences. Each category of violence comes from Navas et al.'s (2018) multidimensional framework for violence.

Every case featured multidimensional forms of violence including direct, structural, cultural, slow, and ecological violence (Navas et al., 2018). Each WED was subject to varying manifestations and intensities of violence according to her positionality and how it was perceived in specific contexts. The distribution of direct violence may be surprising because among these cases, WEDs subject to more marginalities did not necessarily face more brutality. For example, Ushigua Santi, a rural indigenous Sápara mobilizing against fracking in Ecuador's Amazon, was subject to nearly every type of physical aggression. Meanwhile, Cannon, a rural indigenous Inúpiat anti-fracking advocate in the Alaskan Arctic, was one of only two not to face any direct violence, though she was subjected to much slow, cultural, and ecological violence. Čaputová, who fought illegal dumps in the Slovak Republic, did not experience direct violence either, possibly owing to being a white lawyer. Meanwhile, the UK's Greenham Women's Peace Camp (GWPC) of predominantly middle-class white housewives blockading a military nuclear facility faced heavy violence. Likewise, Rice, an elderly white middle-class nun from the USA who infiltrated and vandalized an army nuclear base, also faced more violence despite having relative privilege.

Context may be a possible explanation for why the distribution of direct violence may initially seem to contradict intersectionality. Intersectional privileges and marginalities differ owing to colonial history, spatial power, or timeframes. Considering Ushigua Santi and Cannon, their positionalities as rural, poor indigenous women carried different weight in different contexts, leading to different experiences of brute force in the Amazon and in the Arctic, respectively. The United States, benefitting from extraction elsewhere, is relatively less physically brutal than Ecuador, which is one of the deadliest countries for environmental defenders owing to expanding extractivism (Global Witness, 2020). Čaputová, a lawyer-politician from the Slovak Republic fighting against illegal dumping, shared positionalities with the Greenham women and Rice as middle-class white women from the Global North. However, temporal contexts may influence intensities of violence. The latter two were part of antinuclear movements across the USA and UK in the 1970s. Rice's involvement in the movement sparked her disruptive advocacy since then, echoing the same police brutality in 2012. Whereas certain intersectional identities may be more vulnerable to direct violence in certain contexts, such positionalities may be less so in other contexts where there may be differently distributed and manifested privileges and vulnerabilities.

Structural violence as institutional and legislative inadequacy or gender discrimination as well as cultural violence in misogynistic ideology were near-universal to all cases, as these factors enable EDCs and dismiss WEDs to begin with. A common thread throughout WEDs' subjugation was that their knowledges and capacities were undermined as illegitimate. Women are frequently excluded from male-dominated “scientific” or “economic” public spheres. Some also lack access to legal knowledge and other literacies, though even accredited expert WEDs struggled to attain authority. In many cases, misogynistic delegitimization was compounded by persecution when their gendered expertise was not only excluded from serious consideration in decision-making, but their advocacy was also framed as sabotaging the community by questioning economic development. For instance, the Escravos Women's Coalition (EWC), a blockade movement against Chevron's oil terminals in Nigeria, was initially ridiculed for being “backwards: and “anti-development.” Men in power disregarded their deep understandings of the socioeconomic and environmental consequences not

¹ <https://ejatlas.org/about>

Table 1
Direct violence.

Name	Repression*	Arrests	Abduction	Stalking	Death Threats	Break-in	Direct attack*	Murder/attempt*
Ushigua Santi	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Escravos Women Coalition (EWC)	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Greenham Women's Peace Camp (GWPC)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Kajir	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Giordano	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Amuru women	X	X			X		X	X
Baun	X			X	X		X	X
Kaewkao	X	X			X		X	X
Mutegi	X	X	X	X	X			
Aquino, Broquil, Fajardo	X			X	X			X
Cruz	X	X		X	X			
Henning	X			X	X	X		
Lekalakala & McDaid	X				X	X	X	
Oquelf	X				X		X	X
Putla	X	X			X		X	
Wilson	X	X			X		X	
Agvaantseren	X				X			X
Mindo-Fetalvero	X	X			X			
Swearingen	X	X			X			
Foronda	X	X						
Garcia	X				X			
Lalian	X	X						
Rice	X	X						
Cannon								
Čaputová								
Total	23	16	4	8	20	7	12	10

*Repression: Police/guards/thugs forcefully evicting occupations, breaking up protests, blocking activists from getting to courts, blocking delivery of letters/petitions/data.

*Direct attack: Beatings, police/military brutality, rape, domestic violence in retaliation from family/husbands.

*Murder/attempt: Includes those targeting colleagues and family members of the principal activist.

Table 2
Structural violence.

Name	Institutional failure*	Inadequate legislation*	Land-grabbing/displacement	Judicial harassment*	Court cases failed/unresolved	Criminalization*
Kajir	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ushigua Santi	X	X	X	X	X	X
Amuru women	X	X	X		X	X
Cruz	X	X	X	X	X	
EWC	X	X	X		X	X
Foronda	X	X		X	X	X
GWPC	X	X		X	X	X
Henning	X	X		X	X	X
Oquelf	X	X		X	X	X
Rice	X	X		X	X	X
Aquino, Broquil, Fajardo	X	X	X	X		
Cannon	X	X	X		X	
Kaewkao	X	X	X			X
Lekalakala & McDaid	X	X		X	X	
Mindo-Fetalvero	X	X	X			X
Mutegi	X	X	X		X	
Swearingen	X	X		X		X
Wilson	X	X		X		X
Baun	X	X	X			
Garcia	X	X		X		
Giordano	X	X				X
Lalian	X	X	X			
Agvaantseren	X	X				
Čaputová	X	X				
Total	25	25	12	13	13	13

only when culturally mocking their activism, but also when structurally excluding them from negotiations allowing Chevron to encroach to begin with.

Every case featured ecological and slow violence, which are inherent to EDCs. The manifestations of these violences subsequently result from the type of damage resulting from various types of conflicts. For example, there was relatively less slow and ecological violence in the

case of Giordano, an anti-poaching activist in Italy, because the small-scale hunting occurring in her community was relatively less harmful than large-scale industrial projects. Intensities of violence are also influenced by how quickly conflicts could be resolved (Scheidel et al., 2020). Campaigners Lekalakala and McDaid faced the second least slow and ecological violence because they prevented most consequences by banning a nuclear power plant in South Africa before it could be

Table 3
Cultural, slow, and ecological violence.

Name	Misogyny*	Persecution*	Exposure*	Deaths*	Diseases/birth defects	Land, biodiversity, marine damage	Pollution
Cannon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oqueli	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Foronda	X		X	X	X	X	X
Garcia	X		X	X	X	X	X
Kaewkao	X	X	X		X	X	X
Ushigua Santi	X	X	X	X		X	X
Wilson	X	X	X		X	X	X
Caputová			X	X	X	X	X
Henning			X	X	X	X	X
Kajir	X	X	X			X	X
Mutegi	X	X	X			X	X
Rice			X	X	X	X	X
Swearingen	X		X	X	X		X
EWC	X	X	X			X	X
GWPC	X		X	X	X		X
Lalian	X	X	X			X	X
Baun	X	X	X			X	X
Mindo-Fetalvero	X	X	X			X	X
Agvaantseren	X					X	X
Aquino, Broquil, Fajardo	X	X					
Cruz	X	X					
Lekalakala & McDaid	X		X				X
Amuru women	X	X					
Giordano	X					X	
Total	22	14	19	10	9	19	21

*Misogyny: Repression explicitly because she is a woman, not just against her activism; repression intended to undermine her capacity to fulfill gendered social roles/expectations (domestic care work); etc.

*Persecution: Use of language/ideology/religion/etc. to legitimize especially marginalized groups' loss of traditional livelihood; threats to cultural identity/sacred land/capacity to perform rituals, etc.

*Risk exposure: To contamination, high likelihood of accidents, etc.

*Deaths: From illnesses, accidents, etc. rather than murders.

*Natural disasters: Increased risk factor and vulnerability to events such as landslides, floods, drought, etc.

constructed. The severity of violences increased, however, the longer harmful projects kept affecting communities, such as with Cannon and the Inupiat, who have been suffering from the consequences of environmental degradation and resulting illness for generations. Overall, varying severity and types of multidimensional violences reflect WEDs' positionalities and which privileges or vulnerabilities are attached to them in different contexts. Furthermore, each of these multidimensional violences have distinctly gendered implications.

4.1.2. Gendered multidimensional violence

4.1.2.1. *Direct violence.* Women environmental defenders experience gendered forms of direct violence during environmental distribution conflicts arising not only from the often-sexual nature of the attacks they experience, but also from how violence against women generally is normalized or not considered to be violence to begin with (D. Taylor, 2018). For example, soldiers raped, beat, and killed members of the EWC in attempts to control their occupation of Chevron's oil terminals. This is part of a global pattern of violence legitimized as normal and necessary to discipline dissent in ways punishing femininely gendered bodies as sexually vulnerable and "asking for it" (Deonandan and Bell, 2019; D. Taylor, 2018). However, there are also WEDs still subject to such brutality even when not the direct victims of rape and other forms of assault frequently committed against women specifically. Two of Ushigua Santi's female family members were kidnapped, raped, and killed as a threat to her advocacy. Jeopardizing other bodies in addition to one's own reinforces violence as not restricted to individual suffering, but rather part of women's collective experiences of violence and repression. This raises the stakes for WEDs to protect themselves and the people around them. As Taylor (2018) elaborates, neoliberal emphases on women's restricted movement for the sake of safety also deflects responsibility from perpetrators and the conditions sanctioning their actions, reflecting resignation to and even support of such violently

enforced power relations. Indeed, to circumvent such barriers, Arora-Jonsson et al. (2021) and Jenkins (2017) emphasize WEDs' everyday activism through small, covert acts of resistance in the daily home tasks informing their environmental awarenesses, knowledges, and interactions.

Intersectional factors unevenly subject WEDs to direct violence. The EWC members' humanity was rendered disposable as black indigenous peasant women in a context sensationalizing their routine suffering and deaths (Chiumbu, 2016; Gqola, 2007; Lawson, 2018). The proportions and reporting of violent incidences were uneven compared to the GWPC. Several thousand women participating in the 10-day EWC occupations faced widespread direct violence, yet disappearances and killings were anonymous, uncounted, and unnamed. Meanwhile, over decades of GWPC's occupation with over 50,000 mostly white middle-class women, violent incidences were commonplace yet less brutal as well as more widely condemned as unambiguously wrong, with victims often individually honored. In line with Sutton (2007) and Taylor (2018)'s writings on embodiment, compared to the GWPC, EWC bodies were not only coded as less-than-human owing to gender, but their intersecting racialized, classed, and location-based marginalities further homogenized them as routinely disposable victims. Beyond the devaluation of women's bodies, black bodies, even when male, are still vulnerable under the superiority of white bodies in a complex web of multiple context-specific marginalizations (Crenshaw, 2016; Weiss, 2018). Seeing these stories in the light and shadow of power relations thus casts WEDs' bodily scars as more visible against white skin than black skin.

4.1.2.2. *Structural and cultural violence.* WEDs' uneven experiences of structural and cultural violence are also nuanced by gender. Culturally violent systems privileging male voices often justify imposing industrial projects without consent from women, who are seen as incapable of valid input (Barca, 2020; Leguizamón, 2019). Women consequently tend to be excluded from decision-making during negotiations with

extractive companies, and thus unable to assert their knowledge from performing reproductive labor and managing subsequent disproportionate burdens (Ikelegbe, 2005; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Furthermore, environmental defenders' perspectives are also often pitted against economic development (Birkeland, 1993). For instance, Ushigua Santi and the Sápara's efforts to protect the Amazon Delta were ridiculed as against prosperity. Such contention justified structural violence through criminalization and smear campaigns undermining their legitimacy. Judicial harassment (such as SLAPP suits) additionally diverted time, resources, and attention in ways that cripple WEDs' abilities to manage other responsibilities, let alone sustained mobilization (Jenkins, 2017).

Such structural repression carries unfair consequences for women, who often have less training and means to be able to defend themselves in courts. This leads to additional legal threats in combination with direct violence attempting to eliminate, scare, and/or punish them in ways that restricted their movements as women trying to make their voices heard in a masculinized public sphere (Gaard, 1993; Verschuur, 2008). Legal and formal institutions and discourse construct and reinforce "normal" bodies through rules, hierarchies, and punishments. The prevalence of double standards not only between men and women, but also between corporations and communities shows how the law controls (women's) bodies as commodities (Tamale, 2017). Intersectional differences, however, gave some WEDs varying protections or vulnerabilities, such as for Mutegi, who, although indigenous, was a lawyer better positioned to navigate structural barriers in her community's struggle against logging in Kenya. Čaputová also had more relative advantage as a white lawyer defending against illegal dumping in the Slovak Republic. Nearly every WED thus experienced cultural and structural misogyny to some extent, though not all were evenly persecuted owing to other marginal identifiers that men are also subject to.

4.1.2.3. Ecological and slow violence. Almost every WED experienced ecological and slow violence through pollution and environmental (land, water, resource, biodiversity) destruction, which are the factors that incite EDCs to begin with. Women's experiences are also nuanced by gender. Biologically, Peek (2007) explains that women are more affected by ecological contamination because of differences in body composition. According to Krupp (2000), women's higher amounts of estrogen increase body fat cells, or adipocytes, which store toxins. With regular exposure to toxicity, adipocytes also increase, creating a cycle of toxic retention and accumulation. This affects all humans, since, for example, mercury, dioxin, and other pollutants not only harm fetuses, but can also only be expelled from women's bodies through breastfeeding (Peek, 2007). Subsequently, well over half of the WEDs experienced widespread deaths, illnesses, birth defects, and more in their communities. Moreover, women caring for the unwell are additionally burdened and must compensate for gaps in public health, sanitation, and other services (WoMin, 2013). Garcia, whose community struggled with pollution from the Tesoro Savage oil terminal in Washington, USA causing five times as much pollution as the Keystone XL pipeline, exemplified such bodily consequences as she campaigned while increasingly encumbered with her and her children's illnesses and chemotherapy.

Women's bodily experiences of ecological and slow violence are compounded with vulnerabilities such as being black/indigenous/people of color (BIPOC) and poor. For example, Lekalakala and McDaid advocated against plans for nuclear power development in South Africa during a time when the government created an energy crisis. Despite paying the brunt of the financial and ecological costs, the majority of South Africans would never be able to see the supposed benefits of cheaper and accessible energy from the nuclear project (Bond and Ngwane, 2010). Women in underserved black neighborhoods, unable to afford the electricity, subsequently resorted to burning paraffin, trash, or wood for their cooking and heating (Peek, 2007). Because women are typically responsible for household management, they are more affected

by electricity costs, not only from spending more time and facing more risks searching for fuel, but also from exposing themselves to dirty flames (Bond and Ngwane, 2010). Although multidimensional violence harms all people in affected communities, women face additional embodied burdens especially compounded by intersectional marginalities. In response, WEDs not only succeed in seeking justice for their communities, but also in addressing gendered violences.

As many of the cases show, gendered multidimensional violence is scalar in that each manifestation of violence carries consequences from the cellular to the planetary level (Elmhirst et al., 2017; Sultana, 2020). Many South African women, for instance, accumulate toxins in adipocyte cells owing to their struggles collecting and resorting to hazardous fuels in the face of energy conflicts and environmental degradation limiting their options. Those near oil terminals such as Tesoro Savage or indigenous Arctic settlements have disproportionate rates of cancer, with caretaking burdens often falling on women in underserved communities with lacking public health infrastructure. Physical brutality and legal harassment may be perpetuated against individuals or members of specific groups, but the implications have far-reaching consequences to entire communities, nations, and humanity at large as culturally sanctioned violent repression polices women's mobility, agency, and even conceptions of femininity.

4.2. Success strategies and outcomes

4.2.1. Overview of findings

Table 4 documents the narratives WEDs used to assert their authority, the ways in which they advocated for environmental rights during their respective conflicts, as well as mobilization outcomes sorted by the success status of the project they advocated against.

WEDs in this article may have achieved success owing to incorporating tactics correlated with positive outcomes for environmental conflicts. Project cancellation is the primary indicator for perceived success (Özkaynak et al., 2015; Scheidel et al., 2020). Although approximately half did not cancel the projects, these cases could still be considered successful owing to every case strengthening participation, a critical outcome. Women defender' capacities to earn respect and create networks contributed to maintaining unity, which strengthened movements. The GWPC, for example, was one of the longest contemporary feminist movements owing to internal cohesion ensuring a steady stream of supporters. Unanimous project rejection such with Baun and Čaputová also resisted division. Hess and Satcher (2019) similarly find that strong coalitions increase success through broader shared identities transcending social divisions, increasing leverage, and providing safety. Increased support, for example, helped anti-poaching conservationist Giordano bolster her efforts and receive protection as well as helped release anti-nuclear nun Rice from imprisonment. Beyond the featured cases, authors such as Agarwal (2010), Arora-Jonsson (2013), Jenkins (2017), Krauss (1993), and Sinclair (2021) also document how women build community cohesion through doing activities together as a form of subtle everyday activism. Indeed, reviving and reforming customary ways of working together not only created opportunities to reshape local social relations and power dynamics, but also mutually increased status and roles for those such as indigenous Pagu women struggling against mining in Indonesia (Sinclair, 2021). Early mobilization also boosts project outcomes (Özkaynak et al., 2015). For instance, Lekalakala and McDaid prevented damages from a nuclear plant that was never constructed because the earlier the mobilization, the less violence and pollution occurs before it is too late. Using multiple methods of advocacy is also key. All cases used more than one tactic in their mobilizations, with most incorporating legal action. WEDs with less access to legal aid, such as Rice being an elderly nun, Giordano being a teenager, and the EWC being farmers without connections to lawyers or other resources, meant that they needed to diversify their strategies. Moreover, because WEDs face gendered multidimensional violence, they also draw upon their positionalities to bolster success.

Table 4
WED Success, narratives, strategies, and outcomes.

Project cancelled			
Name	Narratives	Strategies	Other successful outcomes
Agvaantseren	Expert	Legal action, educating the public, dialogue with stakeholders, creating a network, public campaign	Strengthened participation, new programs, new legislation
Baun	Indigenous, mother	Legal action, creating networks, creative/artistic actions	Strengthened participation
Čaputová	Mother, expert	Legal action, creative/artistic actions, protests	Elected office, new legislation
Garcia	Mother	Legal action, creating networks, dialogue with stakeholders, public campaign	Strengthened participation
GWPC	Mothers	Protests, creative/artistic actions, public campaign, creating a network, legal action	New legislation, strengthened participation
Kaewkao	Fisher	Legal action, creating a network, educating the public, protests, blockades, financial activism	Project for another conflict cancelled
Lalian	Indigenous, mother	Legal action, creating networks, cultural rituals, protests	Compensation, strengthened participation
Lekalakala & McDauid	Mothers, black (Lekalakala)	Legal action, educating the public, public campaign, creating a network, protests	New legislation, strengthened participation
Mindo-Fetalvero	Indigenous, mother, expert	Legal action, educating the public, protests, creating networks	New legislation
Swearingen	Mother	Legal action, educating the public, public campaign, protests, creating networks	New legislation, strengthened participation
Partial cancellation			
Name	Narratives	Strategies	Other successful outcomes
Amuru women	Indigenous, mothers	Protests, cultural rituals	Compensation
Aquino, Broquil, Fajardo	Experts	Legal action, creating a network, public campaign, creative/artistic actions	Project suspended, strengthened participation, elected office, new legislation
Cannon	Indigenous, elder	Dialogue with stakeholders, legal action, public campaign, creating a network	New legislation, strengthened participation
Cruz	Expert, indigenous	Legal action, protests, creating networks	Project suspended, strengthened participation, lawsuits won
EWC	Mothers, indigenous	Protests, cultural rituals, creating a network	Strengthened participation, new legislation, compensation
Henning	Farmer		

Table 4 (continued)

Project cancelled			
Name	Narratives	Strategies	Other successful outcomes
		Community research, creating a network, legal action, dialogue with stakeholders, educating the public	New legislation, strengthened participation
Oueli	Expert	Protests, creating a network, occupation, creative/artistic actions, cultural rituals, legal action	Lawsuits won, strengthened participation, project suspended
Rice	Nun	Occupation, creative/artistic actions, educating the public, civil disobedience	Strengthened participation
Ushigua Santi	Indigenous, mother	Protests, petitions, legal action, creating a network	New legislation, strengthened participation
Problem reduced/compensation awarded			
Name	Narratives	Strategies	Other successful outcomes
Foronda	Expert	Dialogue with stakeholders, legal action, creating a network, educating the public	Elected office, new legislation, strengthened participation
Giordano	Conservationist	Creating a network, educating the public, dialogue with stakeholders	New legislation, strengthened participation
Wilson	Fisher, mother	Protests, petitions, legal action, creating a network, civil disobedience	Strengthened participation
Initial success, injustice ongoing			
Name	Narratives	Strategies	Other successful outcomes
Kajir	Indigenous, expert	Legal action, educating the public, creating a network, protesting	Some land rights, project cancelled
Mutegi	Mother, indigenous, expert	Legal action, occupation, educating the public	Some land rights, partial cancellation
Putla	Grandmother, indigenous, elder	Legal action, protests, blockades, cultural rituals, creating a network	Some land rights, strengthened participation, project cancelled

4.2.2. Reinventing gendered narratives

4.2.2.1. WEDs as women and mothers. WEDs assert authority through reimagining cultural narratives. As Unger (2008) describes, gender shapes advocacy owing to persisting political and socioeconomic conditions. Such conditions inform WEDs’ activism, which is frequently sparked by their social roles and their corresponding motivations for protecting families, communities, livelihoods, health, safety, and sense of place (Jenkins, 2017; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Mobilizing gendered roles legitimizes mobilizing, but also risks reinforcing unequal gender distributions of power (Morgan, 2017). This is exemplified between the two Indonesian indigenous movements wherein gendered power dynamics differed greatly despite occurring within similar contexts. In Lalian’s case, she struggled to gain legitimacy and supporters when mobilizing against mining in her indigenous Usatnesi Sonaf K’bat community. This was because of more patriarchal gender relations wherein husbands did not allow subordinate wives to participate in

activism, which was thought of as forsaking and endangering rather than defending familial duty. Meanwhile, Baun's anti-mining movement was spearheaded by fellow indigenous Mollo women. The more flexible gender context meant husbands took over domestic labor and childcare and recognized women as strong and forthright. Silencing or support indicate women's varying status shaping WEDs' possibilities to mobilize depending on uneven power distribution versus characterizations as altruistic (Unger, 2008). Such divisions are notable for WEDs emphasizing identities as mothers.

Motherhood narratives were the most common cross-culturally. Motherhood is prevalent in mobilization owing to women's perception of environmental consequences being situated in gendered caretaking roles (Rocheleau et al., 1996). Bell and Braun (2010) explain that women defenders across demographics often project motherly identity because the pressure many women face to prioritize caretaking means that WEDs must justify activism with concern for protecting the community as an extension of maternal duty. For some, including the Escravos women and Cannon, matriarchal status also granted authority in contexts where elder women are valued as wise decision-makers. By performing hegemonic femininity, they transform these norms to suit their mobilizations (Leguizamón, 2019). Articulating such values not only legitimized their advocacy, but also illustrated their importance to a wider global audience. Putting their maternal bodies on the line visibly challenges political gatekeeping, and furthermore spurs other bodies into action by invoking emotional responses (Fotaki and Daskalaki, 2020).

However, this trope can also be so pervasive that some WEDs not focused on motherhood had the narrative prescribed to them anyway. Coverage of Mutegi's abduction emphasized her desire to protect her family despite how beyond that moment, this concern was not a primary motivation. Godfrey (2005) also criticizes the mothering trope as excluding those outside virtuous mother molds, such as Rice, who infiltrated a US military nuclear facility to sing and make protest art. Although her disruptive actions were more extreme than other listed WEDs, she garnered little attention. Without a commonly understood motherhood narrative, she drew upon less unifying yet still normative religious and patriotic identities. Exclusion and stereotyping thus result from having few options in cultural contexts restricting women's performance of accepted gender roles to primarily maternal ones (Kurtz, 2007). Those in other contexts allowing more choice could instead perform other narratives in their intersectional advocacy depending on what kinds of repression they faced and what kinds of positionalities they have as diverse women who do not fit into the same generalized category. However, this is dependent on context, and there are always exceptions. Arora-Jonsson (2013) writes that motherhood is a point of departure and can have unusual value. Though similar phenomena did not occur among the listed cases, Arora-Jonsson gives the example of places like Sweden, where women mobilized motherhood as additional strength when supposedly gender-neutral rhetoric paradoxically made discrimination more difficult to challenge. Although the conflicts in this study were informed by overt gender discrimination, it is important to acknowledge different contexts beyond the scope of this study where repression is much more subtle.

4.2.2.2. Multifaceted identities and tactics. Beyond normative motherly themes, many WEDs also built respect drawing upon other aspects of their intersectional identities. Race is a powerful axis of marginalization and difference that, though contributing to the vulnerability of their communities, WEDs also incorporate into their mobilizing narratives (Crenshaw, 2016). Lekalakala, for instance, used her identity as a poor black woman to assert fearlessness against a white patriarchal capitalist violence she is already used to in her advocacy against a nuclear plant. Such argumentation draws empowerment from while also calling out distinct repression from that of a white woman like her co-campaigner McDaid, which is especially notable in their South African

context. Meanwhile, many WEDs used their indigenous identity as a central theme in their advocacy, grounding their mobilization in the spiritual value of their land, historical trauma of colonization reflected in contemporary extractivism, and respect for female elders in the case of those such as Cannon. BIPOC women's storytelling challenges white male hegemonies (Barca, 2020; Krauss, 1993; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Such tactics can unify one's own community for WEDs such as Lalian performing traditional rituals to make their voices heard in culturally targeted ways. Subsequently, she successfully unified the indigenous Usatnesi Sonaf K'bat against mining in their ancestral forest. Verchick (2004) explains the success of such cultural tactics as marginalized women seizing opportunities in spaces where they cannot be ignored and are divinely affirmed. For instance, Cannon and Ushigua both invoked indigenous imagery throughout their anti-fracking campaigns such as wearing traditional clothing, singing in their native language, and weaving cultural symbols into their discourse as historically marginalized peoples. Using clothing, slogans, and singing draws attention to their bodies as cultural "texts" and "performances" upon which they inscribe attention-grabbing symbols and messages (Sutton, 2007). Spectators then must bear witness to the scars they carry from surviving the bodily risks inherent in protesting and in suffering disproportionate consequences of EDCs (Fabricant and Postero, 2013; Sutton, 2010).

WEDs' varying jobs and social roles beyond reproductive work also influence the narratives and corresponding strategies they draw upon in their advocacy. Women's caretaking roles frequently overshadow their roles as farmers, land managers, and providers (Rocheleau et al., 1996). Such devaluation leads to barriers such as denied access to resources. In response, farmer Henning and fisher Wilson centered their advocacy on the multigenerational relationships they have with the land when advocating against encroachment from large-scale agribusiness in Michigan and a plastics company in Texas, respectively. Echoing Morgan's (2017) findings on Indonesian women farmers mobilizing against oil palm plantations, Henning and Wilson felt in charge of the land and were unwilling to compromise decision-making to outside interests despite increased hardship. Moreover, their identities as multigenerational locals were critical to their legitimization in rural small-community contexts. Both invoked shared values as insiders, uniting their communities. Furthermore, not all women share "universal" predispositions to nurture and protect as an extension of family (Salleh, 2017). WEDs also advocate not against personally faced threats, but rather out of a sense of justice still embedded in everyday practice. Agvaantseren, for example, was a trusted outsider who combined her understandings of community struggles with her translation and scientific skills unify locals and conservationists when advocating against a mine in Mongolia. Rice, as a nun, aligned with religious narratives drawing upon values of justice and nurturing as a Sister rather than a mother. Indeed, Smith and Jenkins (2012) suggest activists vary widely in how much their advocacy blends into and is informed by their personal life histories.

4.2.2.3. Multidimensional antiviolence. I argue that WED mobilizations address not only environmental conflicts, but also the gendered multidimensional violences arising from them. In doing so, WEDs dismantle repressive hegemonies (Barca, 2020; Rocheleau et al., 1996). One widespread tactic they use is protesting, which, though not itself gendered, is nuanced by gendered retaliation. Putting their bodies on the line exposes them to gendered forms of violence policing the spaces women can be in as well as unevenly punishing and burdening them with additional consequences from cultural, slow, and ecological violence (Deonandan and Bell, 2019). Yet Morgan (2017) argues that women's protesting is also powerful in mediating such gendered barriers. Indeed, Arora-Jonsson (2013) writes that women's protesting can also disrupt existing gender imbalances when their actions cannot be slotted into allotted roles. In many of the listed cases, women were

excluded from the public sphere for reasons such as being taken less seriously or compromising household duties. Protests and other mobilization strategies needing critical mass, however, also require women's participation. The nature of protesting facilitates their presence, such as by being less time-consuming as single events or by perceived educational barriers being less relevant (Morgan, 2017). Their numbers then become a powerful force (Sutton, 2007). Moreover, as many of the listed cases illustrate, through protesting, WEDs' physical presence pushes female and multiply marginalized bodies to the forefront, resisting systems excluding diverse people from having a voice. They show others an expanded, uniting vision of what activists and those with full rights look like (Fotaki and Daskalaki, 2020). The strength of Čaputová's anti-dumping protesting, for example, came from how she was able to unite people from many walks of life. By addressing how everyone knew someone ill from waste pollution, she mobilized diverse emotions, knowledges, and skills making everybody see and be seen. Protesting succeeded in not only confronting the injustices women faced, but also those faced by all people through publicly uniting against conflict roots.

Formal advocacy such as litigation, legal rights education, and financial activism present distinct challenges and opportunities for WEDs. As Van Allen (2015) explains, criminal and civil justice systems often create contradictions and difficulties for women even when they understand formal law. Formal systems have long been used to reinforce hierarchical domination as well as normalize and perpetuate violence. In retaliation, women defenders challenge systemic injustices through collectively claiming and transforming political and narrative space with pluralist concepts of justice inclusive of shared interests of women, the poor, people of color, and other multiply marginalized groups. Examples include Mutegi and Kaewkao, whose advocacy on behalf of the Chuka people's struggles against logging in Kenya and on behalf of fishing villages' struggles against coal power in Thailand respectively transformed perceptions of justice rooted in custom and culture into meaningful tools for their communities and especially poor BIPOC women to gain more control over their lives. Using a combination of educating them about their rights, litigation, and in the case of Kaewkao, buying stocks to attend shareholder meetings, these WEDs enabled people to talk about their experiences of violence and engage them in political action. Thus, by challenging violent systems and perceptions of justice to be more inclusive, they also increase odds of success for all people and not just for individual women.

Most importantly, every case was nonviolent despite increasing violence against them. Such patterns support findings from previous work on success in environmental justice conflicts, especially those suggesting that nonviolent actions are particularly effective by bolstering legitimacy, making state violence less justifiable (Scheidel et al., 2020). As the Escravos women explained during their Chevron blockade, merely seeming to retaliate with violence would bring even more violence. To avoid perpetuating the same violence, WED pacifism is not merely nonviolent, but rather, antiviolent. Indeed, WEDs succeed because their experiences of systemic failure give them unique perspectives on systemic change. Some WEDs at the intersections of being BIPOC, poor, and rural used cultural rituals to subvert repression. Such strategies give a moral edge to advocacy by also incorporating local cosmologies, extending the effectiveness of their message beyond the act of disobedience itself by affecting long-term social relations. This is especially helpful when protests or lawsuits are shut down quickly and violently or are formally impeded (Abonga et al., 2020). The Escravos women, for example, performed a "naked curse" flashing genitals. Women's bodies are coded with symbolic power as producing life, and can also take life away, effectively rendering targets as dead to society and bearing shame and ill consequences (Tamale, 2016). Meanwhile, WEDs such as anti-mining Baun, anti-dumping Čaputová, and the anti-nuclear Greenham women also used artistic actions to create new opportunities for dissent and culturally embedded expressions of their political voices (Adams, 2002). Cultural rituals and artistic actions alike reframe EDCs within local understandings of morality and relationality,

giving prominence to values beyond economic development (Abonga et al., 2020; Barca, 2020). Besides overt civil disobedience, WED activism also includes networking, public outreach, and dialogue between stakeholders as well as the subtle, everyday resistances that WEDs often employ. Whether through provocative or mundane means, by creating and sharing inclusive counter-narratives, these actions strengthen participation and bolster support amongst growing networks of groups and individuals. WED strategies are thus particularly powerful because their experiences of violence put them in unique positions to see, draw attention to, and confront the hegemonic forces producing faced injustices by using antiviolent tactics.

5. Conclusion

WEDs employ culturally specific strategies and perform cultural scripts to achieve varying levels of success in violent, silencing contexts. Relying on motherhood tropes may inadvertently undermine activism among WEDs non-conforming to hegemonic femininity, but this is constrained to what little flexibility women may have to begin with. Alternative, intersectional narratives also arise through identifying with ethnic groups, professional associations (as lawyers, nuns, interpreters, etc.) and more. Most importantly, WEDs achieve documented success because their discursive and mobilization strategies, which are situated within their intersectionally gendered experiences of violence and injustice, transform environmental justice movements worldwide by countering violent hegemonies with inclusive, antiviolent ones. This is especially visible for bodies in protest, which openly defy structures gatekeeping diverse people from making their voices heard by rendering visible and evoking emotion in response to their visceral, embodied scars. Owing to the sociopolitical specificities and chance behind each outcome, it is impossible to predict whether defenders will sink or swim no matter which strategies they use. Rather, some WEDs tried tactics that deserve celebration even if their tactics do not also work for others. The world's women-led movements stand on the increasingly taller shoulders of giants. Indeed, WEDs continue to rise up as more cases succeed. I would have liked to include more cases as I found out about them, such as Kimiko Hirata, who stopped many coal-fired power plants across Japan; Mayilamma, who helped to defeat Coca-Cola's groundwater depletion in Plachimada, Kerala, India; and Leydy Pech, who fought against Monsanto's Round Up in defense of bees in Campeche, Mexico. Yet the included cases are enough to show how WEDs ultimately resort to their antiviolent strategies because they face a uniform pattern of violent repression. Capitalist patriarchal structures of economic growth resist diversifying forms of mobilization. While women resist violence at the frontlines, recording their struggles undermines the hegemonies perpetuating these injustices.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix

Case summaries

Agvaantseren, Bayarjagal; Mongolia; poaching²

The South Gobi Desert's snow leopards are threatened by poaching, habitat loss, livestock defense, and especially mining. Agvaantseren led an anti-mining movement after interpreting for conservation scientists. The long-term relationships she built with locals led to solutions through dialogue, such as establishing a livestock insurance fund and other programs protecting people and leopards. Agvaantseren campaigned for a nature reserve in the Tost Mountains despite escalating violence and one colleague's murder. On April 14, 2016, after continuous pressure and legal action, the Tost Mountains became a nature reserve, and all licenses were canceled by June 2018.

Amuru women; Uganda; agriculture³

Indigenous Acholi have struggled for decades against land-grabbing and police brutality in Amuru. In February 2012, police burned hundreds of huts to evict several thousand villagers and sell the land for a game hunting park. They committed widespread violence, killing 8. On April 14, officials came to mark the borders for the park when a group of 50 women stripped in protest. Authorities cancelled the boundary marking, ordering police to leave, release those arrested, and compensate all whose properties were destroyed. The investor withdrew from the project. Simultaneously, Acholi were also struggling against a sugarcane plantation and factory. Starting in April 2012, over 60 women performed naked protesting for years, chasing representatives and even the President away despite threats and violence. On August 11, 2017, hundreds of naked protesters, while being fired upon with bullets and tear gas, blockaded the lands minister from surveying for the plantation. The minister then signed an out of court settlement for compensation.

Aquino, Corazon, Broquil, Aurora and Fajardo, Emily; Philippines; nuclear power⁴

In 1976, Westinghouse Electric Corporation won a \$2.34 billion contract to build the the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP). For decades, environmental activists have campaigned nationwide combining lobbying, protesting, media, and international solidarity to stop the project. The plant was completed in 1984, but activists delayed operations for years. In February 1986, a revolution toppled the dictatorship, electing Aquino for president for her promises to scrap the nuclear project. She pursued litigation against Westinghouse, which was acquitted but still agreed to two settlements for \$100 million. Moreover, in 1991, all US military facilities were removed. Plans to reactivate the BNPP re-emerged in 2009, however. Nuclear-Free Bataan (NFB) leaders Broquil and Fajardo conducted protests, prayer rallies, and bike rides while also being stalked and receiving death threats for filing a case for the assassinations of colleagues Alberto Ocampo and Jose Gonzalez as well as the arrest and torture of three other NFB activists. Violences continue, though the BNPP has been delayed ever since the 2011 Fukushima disaster.

Baun, Aleta; Indonesia; mining⁵

In 2004, PT Teja Sekawan, began extracting marble in indigenous Mollo territory without consent. Baun organized over 150 local women for an occupation lasting 3 years blocking miners and weaving art into the stones, preventing equipment from moving. Baun and her supporters

² <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/large-scale-mining-in-south-gobi-desert-mongolia>

³ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/ancestral-acholi-land-rights-conflicts-in-amuru-uganda>

⁴ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/bataan-nuclear-power-plant-in-morong-philippines>

⁵ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/marble-mining-in-indigenous-mollo-territory-in-west-timor-indonesia>

were harassed and beaten, and police refused to intervene. In 2006, she barely survived when a group of men ambushed and attempted to assassinate her and her baby on her way home. Despite these threats, the women-led movement grew as men took over domestic work at home. Even though the police and the military backed the mine, the community outnumbered them. Finally, in 2010, the mines were shut down and the Mollo community has now established a network protecting their land from commercial exploitation and promoting small-scale sustainable living.

Cannon, Caroline; USA; fracking⁶

Point Hope is an Alaskan Iñupiat village that was threatened by the government's 2007–2012 offshore oil and gas development plan selling hundreds of leases. Village president Caroline Cannon argued that with the ocean frozen so much of the year, oil spills could leak until summer when relief wells could be drilled. Cannon traveled nationwide representing indigenous concerns at hundreds of stakeholder meetings and federal summits, sharing traditional knowledge of the Arctic. She united NGOs toward legal action. Her advocacy was rooted in protecting her culture and wild Arctic beauty. Finally, in 2009, the Federal Court canceled all but Shell's lease and banned future lease sales because the government broke laws before it sold drilling rights, such as failure to conduct a proper environmental impact analysis (EIA), omitting information before sale finalization, and other violations. Shell kept their lease because the sale occurred before the lawsuit. Cannon and others are still challenging Shell in federal court.

Čaputová, Zuzana; Slovak Republic; waste⁷

In the 1960s, the town of Pezinok's illegal dump was dug 150 m from homes. The landfill caused diseases at over 80 times the average rates. In 1996, the landfill was privatized by waste company Ekologická Skládka's CEO Ján Man Senior, a sponsor for politicians, through whom he could get fake permits. In September 2002, Man planned another dump without consent. Fearing for her young daughters' health, Zuzana Čaputová, an attorney for NGO Via Iuris, organized a wide variety of artistic demonstrations, protests, and legal action supported by many diverse people. On August 20, 2013, Čaputová won a Supreme Court case declaring the proposal was illegal and shutting down Ekologická Skládka. The Court also ruled that the public must give input to urban planning. Čaputová became president of the Slovak Republic on June 15, 2019.

Cruz, Lucila Bettina; Mexico; windmills⁸

Indigenous Binnizá and Ikjoots peoples in south-western Oaxaca have long struggled against land-grabbing and environmental degradation from wind power projects such as Preneal's government-backed Mareña Renovables project with 132 turbines planned across San Dionisio del Mar to provide electricity to beverage companies (including Coca-Cola). Local leader Cruz, alongside a resistance network, protested, blockaded, and sought litigation against the project as the conflict expanded owing to land leasing contracts intensifying previous agrarian conflicts in the region. Their efforts delayed the project for years despite corruption scandals and increasing violence, harassment, persecution, and arrests. In 2012, Cruz was detained based on unfounded accusations. She was eventually freed, and the project was suspended.

Escravos Women Coalition; Nigeria; fracking⁹

On July 8, 2002, "the mamas" (Queen Uwara, Alice Oyuhe, Christiana Mewe, Irene Ororo, and Anunu Uwawah) founded the Escravos Women Coalition (EWC) leading over 600 women in a ten-day occupation at Chevron's main oil terminal in Escravos, Nigeria. Men were not allowed to join to reduce perceived aggression on their end as well as

⁶ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/inupiat-people-resist-offshore-oil-drilling-and-gas-development-plans-in-point-hope-alaska-usa>

⁷ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/illegal-waste-dumps-in-pezinok-slovak-republic>

⁸ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/marena-renovables-in-san-dionisio-del-mar-oaxaca>

⁹ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/nigerian-womens-war-against-chevrontextaco>

because previous male deals and lack of consent exacerbated the situation. Over 1,000 women also occupied twelve other facilities. Soldiers raped, beat, and murdered protesters. Their last resort was disrobing for the “curse of nakedness” to shame people. Chevron then signed a memorandum ending the occupation in exchange for village amenities. On August 8, 2002, over 4,000 women performed another naked protest because Chevron did not keep their promises. Chevron then agreed to clean the environment, provide reparations, and shut down one oil facility.

Foronda, María Elena; Peru; fishmeal¹⁰

Sociologist María Foronda founded Natura to lead campaigns and foster partnerships between communities, fishmeal producers, and the government finding solutions to fishmeal pollution in Chimbote, where industrial overfishing decimated the ecosystem and factories dump waste and spew emissions in residential areas. Although her approach centered on finding common ground many still threatened her. In 1994, Foronda was falsely imprisoned for terrorism. International pressure cleared her name after 13 months. Afterward, Foronda completed a Sustainable Local Development Plan improving legislation and was elected to Congress in 2016.

Garcia, Linda; USA; oil¹¹

Tesoro Savage was planned as the largest oil terminal in North America, capable of moving more than 40 million liters of oil daily from North Dakota to the port of Vancouver in Fruit Valley, Washington, an isolated, low-income, minority neighborhood heavily polluted by industrial activity. Garcia of the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association challenged the proposal while she and her two children battled serious illness and chemotherapy. She united residents with unions, environmental NGOs, and local government officials. Garcia received near-daily death threats before the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council unanimously voted to deny approval to the project in November 2017, and the Port of Vancouver officially terminated the company's lease.

Giordano, Anna; Italy; poaching¹²

For generations, macho hunting culture turned the Messina Strait into one of the worst “black spots” for illegal honey buzzard poaching despite bans. In response, Giordano organized yearly surveillance camps, supported by international conservation groups, in which volunteers came to monitor birds and catch poachers. She also began demanding authorities to act, but many were hostile toward Giordano for threatening masculinity and hunting culture. Thugs broke into her house, bombed her car, sent death threats, and shot her and her supporters. Such violence convinced the police to cooperate, and they drastically reduced poaching. Giordano improved legislation. A government task force now supports catching and prosecuting poachers.

Greenham Women's Peace Camp, UK; nuclear¹³

Greenham Common was a military base with a long history of contamination coverups and belittlement of women reporting consequences. In response, over 50,000 women occupied the base, establishing the Greenham Women's Peace Camp (GWPC) centered on their authority as mothers. In 1983, the missiles arrived. There were a wide variety of civil disobedience acts even within jails and courthouses when they were arrested. In response, guards followed and attacked them. A tank ran over and killed 22-year-old Helen Thomas at a protest. Eventually, courts decided that tactics used to evict women were illegal. The camp contributed to the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty mandating missile removal. The GWPC shut down the base in 1993.

Henning, Lynn; USA; CAFOs¹⁴

¹⁰ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/fishmeal-pollution-in-chimbote-peru>

¹¹ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/tesoro-savage-oil-terminal>

¹² <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/illegal-hunting-at-the-strait-of-messina-italy>

¹³ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/greenham-common-womens-peace-camp-eliminate-nuclear-missiles-in-berkshire-england>

¹⁴ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/cafo-pollution-in-lenawee-county-michigan-usa>

Concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) are giant feedlots for meat livestock that produce fecal and chemical pollution leading to diseases and groundwater contamination. To address them, Henning founded the Environmentally Concerned Citizens of South-Central Michigan. Educating herself and others about legal action and environmental monitoring, her advocacy was rooted in her identity as a farmer. Her research helped levy hundreds of citations against CAFOs for environmental violations. Yet Henning faced threats such as bombings, gunshots through her grandchild's window, and being run off the road. Regardless, Henning continued citing over 1,000 CAFOs, resulting in compliance orders, fines, shutdowns, and lawsuits. Henning and supporters also continue working on a permanent ban.

Kaewkao, Jintana; Thailand; coal power¹⁵

In 1998, the marine habitat was threatened when Union Power Development Co., Ltd (UPDC) bought rights to construct a 1.4 GW coal power plant in Ban Krut. Another one was planned 100 km away in Bo Nok. A third coal plant had already been built in Mae Moh, which was severely polluted. Kaewkao led protests, marches, and blockades against UPDC, founding the Ban Krut Conservation Group. She also bought UPDC shares for \$7.50 so she could go to stakeholder meetings despite dismissal and harassment. Kaewkao turned down huge bribes, persisted through smear campaigns, and faced jail sentences, even surviving assassination attempts. Thanks to Kaewkao's advocacy blocking construction, the U.S. Export-Import Bank withdrew funding for the Bo Nok plant. On October 9, 2005, UPDC canceled the project and agreed to discuss a land title law against a proposed steel project.

Kajir, Anne; Papua New Guinea; Logging¹⁶

When an indigenous woman showed lawyer Kajir sacred land marked for logging, Kajir began immediate action, rooting her advocacy in a firm belief of justice. She not only educated locals on their rights, but also filed lawsuits against government complicity in illegal logging. Most notably, in 1997, Kajir won a Supreme Court case stopping a foreign company's large-scale logging and accusing the Forest Authority of issuing illegal permits. Kajir is often physically attacked, burgled, and harassed. Despite legal wins, new legislation enables further corruption.

Lalian, Wilfrida; Indonesia; mining¹⁷

In 2010, PT Gema Energy Indonesia (GEI) began mining exploration in Usatnesi Sonaf K'bat indigenous territory in the Oekopa forest without permits. Thousands of thugs bullied the local community into allowing them continued permission to stay. Wilfrida Lalian drove them away alone because husbands did not allow wives to join. She began asking male relatives to reject the mining. Despite police harassment, Lalian organized public hearings while ENGOs investigated the mining permit and contacted the media. Her biggest success was gathering fellow supporters to perform a livestock sacrifice ritual to unite the community and reject GEI. On September 9, 2012, the court ruled that GEI's mining was illegal, and the company was forced to pay \$2,500,000 back to their investors. Individual lawsuits were filed against GEI board members.

Lekalakala, Makoma and McDaid, Liz; South Africa; nuclear¹⁸

In 2014, the South African government made a deal with Russian-owned Rosatom to develop a 9,600 MW nuclear energy project. Nearby communities and indigenous Nama did not consent. Makoma Lekalakala and Liz McDaid of Earthlife Africa mobilized a campaign force of mostly women against the deal. The duo began legal action and were threatened with smear campaigns, violence, and sabotage. Yet

¹⁵ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/proposed-coal-power-plant-in-prachuab-khiri-khan-thailand>

¹⁶ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/uncontrolled-illegal-logging-in-papua-new-guinea>

¹⁷ <https://www.ejatlas.org/conflict/illegal-manganese-mining-in-north-central-timor-indonesia>

¹⁸ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/fight-against-russian-nuclear-deal-in-south-africa>

having experienced Apartheid as a black woman, Lekalakala was unshaken. On April 26, 2017, thanks to Lekalakala and McDaid, the High Court ruled that the deal was unconstitutional. Consequently, all nuclear proposals must go through public hearings and parliamentary approval. They now seek a total ban.

Mindo-Fetalvero, Sherryl “Sweet;” Philippines; mining¹⁹

Canadian company Ivanhoe Mines Ltd. began mining exploration on indigenous Ati land without consent, threatening opposition. In response, teacher Mindo-Fetalvero founded the Alliance of Students Against Mining and the Romblon Ecumenical Forum Against Mining to raise awareness and pursue legal action. This made her a target for harassment, smear campaigns, and threats. Her husband accused her of spending more time on the campaign than with their children and jeopardizing their safety. On September 30, 2011, Ivanhoe canceled their project. She then worked on a moratorium on mining in Romblon, which was enacted on January 13, 2012.

Mutegi, Wendy “Wanjiku” Wanja; Kenya; logging²⁰

On indigenous Chuka land, Kamweru Farm obtained a “forestry research” license and began illegal logging in 2000 despite timber harvesting bans. The Chuka attempted legal action but were beaten and shot. In 2011, lawyer and community elder’s daughter Mutegi filed another lawsuit in April 2014. She also led 400 people in a three-week occupation, during which 19 elders were arrested. Mutegi received bribes, and upon rejecting them, death threats. A dozen captors kidnapped and forced her to swear that she would abandon the case for the safety of her family. Yet she continued representing the Chuka and prevented the construction of two hotels as well as banned five logging companies. On March 1, 2019, the National Land Commission gave the Chuka legally protected rights to part of their land. Many still threaten Mutegi for her advocacy.

Oquelí, Yolanda; Guatemala; mining²¹

In 2011, Radius Gold Inc. was granted a gold mining license for the “El Tambor” mining project in La Puya without local consent. Leader Oquelí gathered residents for an occupation preventing machines from entering and protest police brutality. In June 2012, Oquelí was shot twice during an assassination attempt. On March 2, 2014, the community celebrated two years of delaying the mining with cultural activities such as community theater plays and religious events. On May 23, 2014, the military violently evicted protesters and women at the frontlines praying and singing, injuring 26. The community managed to suspend the mining license on February 22, 2016. Some protestors still occupy the mine entrance and the Ministry of Energy and Mines.

Putla; Cambodia; logging²²

In June 2009, Chinese-owned sugarcane company Hong Lai Huat Group Limited (HLH), was granted rights to 10,000 ha of indigenous Souy land in Kampong Speu. In reaction to the land-grabbing, grandmother Putla gathered women to blockade the roads, preventing the company cars from entering. However, HLH called police to chase away, beat, and arrest them. Women stood at the frontlines thinking they would be less likely to be beaten, but they were still hurt. The women also gathered in front of the district chief’s house to protest arrests. The villagers kept resisting and pursued litigation, also performing spiritual ceremonies, networking with other groups, and attempting to engage with authorities despite police threats and terrorism accusations. The village won their land back on April 12, 2010, after reporting their case to the Minister of Environment. Since then, the government seized and

leased the land to Chinese developers.

Rice, Megan; USA; nuclear²³

Oak Ridge is a military base in Tennessee housing uranium formerly used for nuclear bombs. 90-year-old Sister Megan Rice criticized nuclear weapons facilities such as Oak Ridge, which poisoned locals and the surrounding environment for generations as well as require hundreds of billions of dollars for upkeep. She felt it was her duty as a citizen and nun to practice nonviolent civil disobedience, for which she would be arrested 40 times. On July 28, 2012, she and two other activists entered the Y-12 National Security Complex, a uranium storage building, spreading antiviolence and antinuclear art. Rice and her comrades were arrested, and she spent the next two years advocating from prison. Some Oak Ridge facilities are now demolished.

Swearingen, Terri; USA; waste incineration²⁴

In 1992, Waste Technologies Industries (WTI) built the nation’s largest waste incinerator in East Liverpool, an impoverished minority community. The Tri-State Environmental Council (TSEC), a coalition of grassroots groups led by Terri Swearingen, began peacefully protesting in 1991 during construction. Swearingen and over 50 protesters were arrested dozens of times and faced SLAPP suits. She uncovered that WTI obtained permits illegally, prompting Congress to hold a hearing. An 18-month nationwide moratorium on new incinerators was initiated, while old regulations were overhauled or made stricter. The Environmental Protection Agency then issued the nation’s first federal guidelines for siting waste management facilities.

Ushigua Santi, Gloria Hilda; Ecuador; fracking²⁵

On November 28, 2013, Andes Petroleum bought oil blocks in Sápara land. Ushigua Santi, leader of indigenous Sápara women’s organization Ashiñwaka, led over 100 marchers to Quito to deliver a petition to the president. However, they were falsely prosecuted for terrorism, sabotage, and road obstruction. Since then, authorities, media, and family members have been harassing and discrediting her while police and thugs threatened, attacked, and burgled her and her supporters, even raping and killing her sister-in-law and kidnapping her niece to evoke fear. Still, she managed to delay the project for years. On October 10th, 2019, Ecuador granted a force majeure officially recognizing indigenous rights to informed consent, allowing them to eliminate some extractivism.

Wilson, Diane; USA; waste dumping²⁶

Formosa Plastics Corporation (FPC) built a government-backed petrochemical plant manufacturing plastic in Point Comfort in 1995. Fourth-generation shrimper and low-income single mother Diane Wilson caught FPC dumping toxic wastewater directly into the bay without permits. She teamed up with nonprofits for legal action and performed many acts of civil disobedience, which landed her in jail thirteen times. Neighbors shunned her, smear campaigns undermined her, and she received death threats. In July 2017, FPC’s Point Comfort plant dumped 151 tons of plastic into Lavaca Bay and 1,556 tons of plastic into Cox Creek. After decades of fighting, Wilson and a coalition of environmental groups won a lawsuit against the company for \$50 million on July 9, 2019, ruling that Formosa violated state and federal law.

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¹⁹ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/metallic-mining-moratorium-in-romblon-philippines>

²⁰ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/illegal-logging-in-chuka-forest-kenya>

²¹ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/proyecto-minero-el-tambor?translate=es>

²² <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/logging-on-indigenous-souy-land-in-kampong-speu-cambodia>

²³ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/elderly-antinuclear-activist-nun-breaks-into-a-government-complex-to-expose-nuclear-crimes-in-tennessee-usa>

²⁴ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/toxic-waste-incinerator-in-east-liverpool-ohio-united-states>

²⁵ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/andes-petroleum-oil-proposal-in-sapara-indigenous-territory-in-amazon-rainforest-ecuador>

²⁶ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/formosa-toxic-waste-spill-and-plastic-pollution-in-lavaca-bay-texas-united-states>

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