Survival Peace: The Irony of the Women's School Peace Action

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Abstract

This article investigates the role of the Women's School community in implementing peace initiatives in the outskirts of Lake Poso. These initiatives aimed to reduce tensions and prevent direct conflict between local communities and a natural-resource extraction company. The community played a dual role: engaging in negotiations with the company while simultaneously experiencing the negative impacts of its operations, including land dispossession and the submergence of traditional rice fields. The study examines these contradictions through the lenses of negative and positive peace and Feminist Security Studies (FSS), with particular attention to structural violence. Using a qualitative case-study approach, based on semi-structured interviews and participant observation, the research analyses women's motivations, their moral dilemmas, and the broader impacts on surrounding communities. The findings reveal that the women's community engaged in a form of "survival peace" in which community de-escalation efforts were contingent upon the company's provision of stable employment for their children. The article underscores the importance of women's peacemaking by drawing on FSS critiques of traditional, state-centered definitions of security. It further demonstrates how the women's community redefined security by shifting it from a state-centered framework to the practice of "survival peace", mobilizing their collective agency to secure short-term household economic stability through the company's employment opportunities, despite the risks of long-term environmental degradation.

Keywords: *Survival Peace, Feminist Security, Positive Peace, Structural Violence.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The interplay between natural resource control, land rights, and gender-based peacebuilding creates profound and often volatile challenges in post-conflict, resource-rich environments (Ryan & d'Almagro, 2024; Zelli & Krause, 2025). This article analyzes the complex and problematic situation faced by the Women's Peace School community in Poso Regency. During tensions between residents of Lake Poso who opposed the presence of PT Poso Energi (PT PE) and the company in October–December 2021, the Women's School community formed a small group called Perempuan Damai Poso (hereinafter referred to as Perdapos). This group is committed to de -escalating the conflict between the community and PT PE and fostering local cohesion. Despite their efforts to promote peace between the local community and PT PE, they find themselves caught in a difficult irony: acting as peacekeepers while simultaneously being directly harmed by the very entity they seek to collaborate with.

This tension emerged amidst Poso Regency's broader efforts to rebuild peace following the 1998–2007 conflict, while also facing security threats from the group known as MIT, which has carried out acts of terror linked to past grievances. The primary source of tension in the present case is PT PE's control of natural resources.

The company's operations, particularly through land acquisition and infrastructure development, have led to the submergence of traditional rice fields that are crucial to community survival and cultural practices. The impact is profound, as local residents' rights are neglected or even eliminated. Insecurity persists because structural violence remains entrenched; if residents are not safe, peace cannot be fully realized (Williams, 2015).

For many residents, including members of the Women's School community itself, PT PE represents a real and pressing threat a trigger for environmental degradation and the loss of traditional livelihoods. Evictions and land submergence are viewed as potential flashpoints of conflict, dividing residents into factions strongly opposed to the company's presence. PT PE's control of natural resources is thus perceived not only as the root of the conflict, but also as an ongoing source of tension that undermines peacebuilding efforts (Bruch, et al. et al., 2016).

Despite deep grievances and the direct impact on their livelihoods, the Perdapos women's group actively initiated a peace protest. This action aimed to bridge the gap between local residents who opposed the project and the company. Their motivation stemmed from a pragmatic, albeit conflicting, perspective: the hope that PT PE would not be rejected, as it provided crucial job opportunities for their children. Simultaneously, they also demanded that PT PE heed the demands of local residents. This hope, in turn, promised economic stability in this resource-strapped region.

The strategic pursuit of future economic benefits, even at the expense of current environmental and social damage, places them in a vulnerable and ethically ambiguous position negotiating peace with an entity perceived by many as a threat.

This research employs a qualitative case-study methodology combined with critical discourse analysis to explore the agency, constraints, and moral dilemmas faced by this women's community. It is guided by the following research question: How do local women's peace communities navigate the ironic practice of "survival peace"? We argue that their peacemaking activities are not simply traditional forms of mediation, but rather complex strategies of "survival peace"delicate compromises between protecting ancestral lands and securing a viable economic future for subsequent generations.

By analyzing this specific case, this article contributes to the broader literature on gender and conflict resolution, the problematics of sustainable peace, positive peace, and feminist security. It highlights how the intersection of corporate resource extraction and peacekeeping mandates forces marginalized women to internalize and attempt to mediate conflicts that directly threaten their very existence.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Critical Peace Studies

Critical Peace Studies (CPS) offers a comprehensive approach that goes beyond traditional peace-conflict studies. Its analytical focus is on providing an in-depth critique of the fundamental nature, causes, and dynamics of conflict and peace itself. Conventional peace studies often focus on managing or resolving direct violence. *violence*, referred to as Negative Peace *(Galtung*, 1969; Diehl, 2016). In contrast, Critical Peace Studies seeks to achieve a more robust peace by addressing the deeper, systemic roots of conflict ([insert citation here]). This aligns with the concept of Positive Peace, *which* goes beyond the mere absence of violence to encompass deeper issues of social and economic justice (Galtung, 1969, 1990).

The concept of positive peace, often called structural peace, refers to the absence of structural violence. Structural violence is a core concept in Critical Peace Studies, referring to the indirect harms embedded in social, political, and economic structures that prevent individuals from realizing their full potential (Galtung, 1969). To make the concept of violence and peace more holistic, Galtung later integrated the concept of Cultural Violence (Galtung, 1990). Cultural violence is defined as any aspect of culture including religion, ideology, language, art, and empirical science that is used to legitimize direct or structural violence, thereby making harm appear morally acceptable, inevitable, or even invisible. For example, racist ideologies justify structural discrimination, while the glorification of war in national narratives justifies direct conflict.

In general, Critical Peace Studies focuses primarily on the quality and nature of peace in its cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions, from the international system down to the state and community levels. This approach demands an interdisciplinary investigation of the dynamics of peace and conflict, connecting insights from postcolonial studies, anthropology, sociology, critical geography, critical development studies, and international relations. It also examines how critical peace agents can assert themselves against various forms of power in defense of the needs and rights of marginalized groups in internationally led peace processes.

The relevance of CPS is further expanded by the concept of Sustainable Peace. *Currently,* UN Peacebuilding is moving towards a sustainable peace agenda (Ryan & Dalmagro, 2024; Zelli & Krause, 2025). This general policy framework encompasses all activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account.

Critical Peace and Conflict Studies also provides critical commentary on hybrid peace, everyday peace, and narrative approaches, highlighting the identified weaknesses of all three approaches (Keppler & Hebert, 2019). Other critiques highlight the urgency for peacebuilding scholars to integrate perspectives and approaches from *the Global South* into academic debates (Wolf, 2022).

However, although CPS offers a holistic framework that critiques systemic injustice, the shift to Feminist Security Studies (Feminist Security Studies (FSS) is crucial for filling the gap in the reference objects and dimensions of insecurity. While the CPS targets the quality and nature of peace in general, the FSS makes a critical

intervention by fundamentally changing the reference objects of security shifting from securing the state (*securing) to the state)* to securing individuals and communities, particularly women and other marginalized groups. Thus, FSS brings the concept of *Positive Peace* from CPS to a more personal and gender-specific level of analysis, detailing how structural and cultural violence translates into everyday vulnerability (freedom from physical, economic, and structural violence) and prioritizing "survival peace" *(peace)* through the lens of *Gender-Based Security.*

2. Feminist Security Studies

The term **"**feminist security studies "was only coined in the mid-2000s and is still in constant evolution (Sjoberg 2017), making it a new field of study that is undergoing constant consolidation and evolution. This feminist approach essentially seeks to understand how gender identities and gender politics shape experiences of security and insecurity (Arestizábal et al., 2020). Feminist The Feminist Security Study (FSS) introduces a different definition of security, moving beyond the traditional notion that security is simply the absence of war (Tickner, 2001). The core argument of feminist security is that security essentially means the absence of vulnerability, especially for marginalized and vulnerable groups (Sjoberg, 2009). This expanded definition encompasses freedom from physical, economic, and structural violence. The FSS details the essential conceptual steps of securing the state (*securing the state)* to secure individuals and communities (*securing the individual)*. Security reference object (*referent object of security)* shifted to objects that were traditionally neglected, especially women and children (Hudson, 2005; True, 2005).

The FSS theoretical framework provides a critical lens that moves beyond traditional state-centered definitions of security and conflict (Tickner, 2001; Enloe, 2000). This approach fundamentally shifts the analysis of security from the state level to the lived experiences of marginalized individuals, in this context, women. As Ann Tickner has shown, women's definitions of security are multi -level and multi - dimensional, and they identify security as the absence of violence, whether military, economic, or sexual. Feminist theory views all of these types of violence as interconnected (Tickner, 1992).

Feminist Security critiques the tendency of conventional security studies to prioritize high-level politics. *politics)*, military threats, and large-scale political negotiations. This criticism is based on the argument that the conventional approach is inherently gender-biased and incomplete (Tickner, 2001; Wibben, 2011). The Concept of *Gendered* Security *Security)* highlights how security threats and responses are experienced differently based on gender (Tickner, 2001; Enloe, 2000]). For many people, especially women in conflict and post-conflict zones, the primary insecurity is not a matter of state invasion, but rather structural violence, economic deprivation, and personal physical security (Hansen, 2006). The feminist concept of security is closely aligned with Human Security, *which* prioritizes the safety and well-being of individuals and communities over the security of borders or state regimes (UN, 1994).

Everyday Peace *in* the FSS represents a fundamental shift from conventional concepts of peace and security. It focuses on the ongoing, often unacknowledged, actions undertaken by individuals and communities to manage everyday risks and maintain a semblance of security and normality. Peace is defined not simply as the signing of agreements, but as "survival peace" (*peace)* to manage daily life in conditions of persistent insecurity (Richmond, 2007).

3. Combined Analytical Framework

This article employs a combined analytical framework drawing from CPS and FSS. While CPS provides macro-level tools for analysing negative and positive peace, FSS highlights micro-level experiences, vulnerabilities, and forms of agency that are crucial for understanding women's peacebuilding practices. CPS alone is inadequate for analysing women's peacemaking because it places limited emphasis on lived experience and everyday insecurity. Integrating FSS therefore enables a more comprehensive examination of how women negotiate peace under conditions of structural violence, economic dispossession, and ecological threat.

4. Previous Study Discourse

This literature review charts a fundamental conceptual shift in peace studies. The paradigm has shifted from a static, state *-centric,* and militaristic perspective to a more holistic, bottom *-up perspective* centered on individual vulnerability. This shift in analytical focus underpins this article's argument.

The Evolution of the Concept of Peace from Negative to Galtung's Trichotomy. Debates in peace studies have historically centered on expanding the concept of peace beyond the mere absence of war (Galtung, 1969, 1985; Diehl, 2016; Goertz, 2020). Johan Galtung (1969) introduced a fundamental dichotomy between Negative Peace (the absence of direct violence) and Positive Peace (the absence of structural violence and the presence of social justice). Despite its great influence, this concept has been criticized (Boulding, 1977; Shields, 2017; Bartolucci, 2024; Bayerlein). et al., 2025), because in practice peace is often narrowed down to simply the absence of military conflict (Diehl, Goertz, & Gallegos, 2021, p. 606).

Galtung later refined his framework by adding a third dimension, Cultural Violence (1990), which complements the Triangle of Violence (Direct, Structural, and Cultural Violence). In this framework, the three forms of violence are mutually reinforcing: direct violence leads to structural violence, and both are legitimized by cultural violence, providing a powerful framework for understanding the deeper sources of violence.

Expanding the Meaning of Peace Beyond Galtung. While Galtung has broadened the focus, critical scholars continue to expand the meaning of peace, particularly with the emergence of the concepts of Sustainable Peace and Everyday Peace. Sustainable Peace shifts the focus from simply ending conflict to long-term resilience and prevention, emphasizing ecological harmony and the planet's capacity to sustain life (in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 16). The concept

explicitly links human well-being to the health of the natural environment, arguing that environmental degradation is a key driver of future conflict and structural violence (Ryan & D'Almagro, 2024, Samyra et al., 2023; Yanuardi, 2022).

Everyday *Peace* (Mac) Ginty (2014) focuses on local, informal, and grassroots peace practices. This *bottom-up approach* encompasses everyday actions and small-scale coping mechanisms that enable life to continue even amidst conflict, criticizing the view that peace is simply the result of high-level diplomatic agreements.

A Critical Shift in Focus: Feminist Security Studies (FSS). Despite the advancement of the concept of peace, traditional discourse tends to maintain a state-centered focus as an actor or protected object. This radical shift in analytical focus is driven by Feminist Security Studies (FSS).

FSS strongly challenges the static, militaristic, and masculine nature of traditional security studies (Savu, 2021; Mahmood, 2025), which focuses solely on interstate conflict (Tickner, 1992, 2001; Enloe, 2000). Instead, FSS argues that security should be defined as the "absence of vulnerability"for individuals, not simply the "absence of war"for states (Tickner, 2001). FSS shifts the analytical lens from the state system to the embodied experiences of vulnerability in individuals and communities, highlighting how structural violence is distributed unequally, with certain groups (particularly women) being made more vulnerable (Carver, 2003).

Synchronization of FSS and Human Security. The analytical shift of FSS from the state to the individual aligns naturally with the Human Security agenda, which emphasizes *freedom from want* (*freedom from from want)* and *freedom from fear* (*freedom) from fear)* (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007). FSS provides an important gender lens, demonstrating that women and marginalized groups disproportionately bear the burden of everyday vulnerability due to structural gender inequalities, and urging that their needs be prioritized. Feminist reinterpretations of security identify the ways in which gender norms and inequalities support connections in insecurity across public and private spaces (Swaine, 2019, p. 765).

This review is synthesized to build the article's central argument. The Galtung Framework provides an understanding of the deep-seated types of violence (structural and cultural). The FSS lens reveals uneven vulnerabilities and challenges *top- down implementation.* Galtung shifts the focus of security to individuals and communities. The synthesis of these two concepts underpins the belief that sustainable peace can only be achieved through *bottom-up practices* that explicitly address the everyday insecurities caused by structural and cultural violence.

C. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative case study approach. A single case study (Merriam, 2016) was chosen to understand a case in depth. Considering the objectives of this research, the use of a descriptive case study is intended to present a rich, complete, and detailed picture of a particular phenomenon, context, or event (Yin, 2023/2003). This approach is necessary to thoroughly investigate the involvement of women's communities in peace actions, explain peace actions, and uncover the deeper

structural constraints, emotional labor, and complex motivations that drive their choices. Participants in this study were (can be seen in the following table).

Table 1. Participant Data

Participant Categories	Amount	Purpose of Interview
Members of the Peace Community	3 Persons	Understanding community **peace strategies, members' personal dilemmas,** and **negotiations** with companies.
Affected Residents Reject the Company	2 Persons	Documenting **complaints,** their **perceptions** of the company, and their views on existing peace efforts.
Citizens Driving Demonstrations	1 Person	Gaining perspective from **the leaders of the resistance** against the company, including the reasons and forms of action taken.

Data collection was conducted through interviews and observations. Data analysis was conducted by coding interview data segments into phrases and concepts and then summarizing the meaning of these segments. Data analysis continued with grouping them into broader categories relevant to the research questions. Next, themes were developed using critical discourse analysis. Data were presented in detail and theoretically interpreted.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Residents on the banks of Lake and River Poso's rejection of PT PE was carried out in resistance to the company's practices, namely dredging the Poso Lake river, reclamation of Kompodongi, demolition of the Yondompamona bridge, and construction of a hydroelectric dam called Poso 1 (Liputan PS Mosintuwu.com. Interview DB, Tumonggi, 2021). This rejection was manifested through demonstrations from 2019 to 2021 (VOA, 2021).

The dredging of the Lake Poso river and the Poso 1 Hydroelectric Power Plant Dam have maintained the water level at a specific operating point, preventing the lake from receding since 2019. This is despite Lake Poso's normal water cycle underpinning the lives of farmers and fishermen around the lake (SP coverage. Mosintuwu.com). As a result, agricultural land, rice fields, and livestock areas around Lake Poso have been submerged, leaving farmers unable to cultivate their land. According to data from the Poso Regency Agriculture Office, as of October 2021, 226 hectares of rice fields around the lake have been submerged (VOA, 2021).

The closure *of Kompodongi* meant fishermen could no longer fish and shoot arrows. The reclamation work resulted in the sand material being taken over by PT PE. Local residents, who rely on sand miners for their livelihoods, lost their jobs. During a demonstration on November 21, 2021, the sand miners exclaimed, "Our sand material is gone (it's already taken over by PT PE). What will happen to our

livelihoods if our assets are seized?" (PS coverage, Mosintuwu.com). The following interview excerpts also convey the same sentiment (ET interview):

> ".. Currently, new opportunities/access are opening up one by one. Yesterday, one of our residents committed suicide. Previously, his job was collecting sand. He would go to the middle of the river when the water was low/shallow, then tie his boat to the [fence/barrier] on the riverbank, then collect sand in [area/location] using a scoop and broken jerrycan, while slightly wading into the shallow water. However, after this embankment was installed, the river water volume increased and is no longer shallow even when the water is low, because the water discharge is regulated by the embankment. Because the river is no longer shallow, he lost his livelihood from collecting sand. We also do not accuse that this was the sole cause of his suicide. However, after he could no longer collect sand and lost his livelihood, a few days ago he committed suicide."

PT PE's land acquisition and compensation are also considered to be highly detrimental to residents around Lake Poso. As the following interview excerpt shows:

> "...The village head called us to sign the agreement, but there was a power outage, so we signed it anyway. Only then did the residents realize that the land compensation amount was inappropriate, at Rp1,650.00 per square meter. In fact, if we sell chilies (rica), one square meter can produce two chili plants, and a single plant can produce more than two *catties* (about 1.2 kg), the value of which far exceeds Rp1,650.00. The land acquisition process confused us; suddenly the land acquisition process was complete. They always claimed that there had been an AMDAL (Environmental Impact Analysis) socialization. I did attend the AMDAL socialization at the sub-district office, but it was never clearly explained that our land would be taken or purchased. They only said that there would be further notification later. However, they did not specify which area would be purchased or taken, and there was no price negotiation at all. Currently, new information or opportunities are opening up one by one".

Compensation for submerged rice fields was only 10 kg of rice per are. This figure was considered very low compared to the average farmer's income, which produces up to 40 kg of rice per are (VoA, 2021, interviews with DB, NP, LW).

Residents believe that PT PE's activities and operations have led to impoverishment, insulted farmers with low compensation, disrupted the culture of the indigenous people of Lake Poso, and damaged the environment. Protesters have made various communication efforts, both to the local government and the church. These communications contain rejection of the dredging of the Lake Poso river, which is considered to mean the elimination of the history of *Yondompamona (Bridge over the Lake Poso river), the Mosango (*fishing) tradition, *Wayamasapi* (eel fence), and the destruction of the *Kompodongi ecosystem.* (name of sand mining site) (Liputan, PS.Sintuwu.com 2019).

Furthermore, PT PE's embankment construction is also considered to have diminished local cultural traditions and even erased their identity as local villagers.

Residents complain that they can no longer play in the area that is now the embankment. The area was once a gathering place for residents around the river, whose water levels recede during the dry season. PT PE's embankment construction is considered to have caused the river's water level to remain consistently high, preventing the river from receding. The following is an excerpt from an interview (EWT, 2021).

> "… The problems we face are numerous. The thing that saddens me most is the loss of identity, **a sense of community** that has been created and cannot be found anywhere else. There is a custom in this village: on Sundays like this, children will carry towels to the river when the water is receding. Villagers flock together to bathe in the river. Parents bring food, while others might just sit and watch the children bathe. There are two large trees there, and there are ropes made of tree roots hanging from them for children to play. The habit of children playing there has been passed down through generations, especially when the river is shallow or recedes during the dry season. But now that sense of community is gone. It's gone, so how can we go there anymore? Because there's a company sign there."
>
> "...The identity of the Pamona people, especially the Saojo people, now feels lost. This is because the Sondaka (gathering place at low tide) is a legacy of our ancestors. There is a stone there that was the burial site of our ancestors. The stone has reportedly been moved, even though according to the traditions of our ancestors, that should not be allowed. Furthermore, there are many signs visible and carved on the stone."

Problematic land acquisition, the loss of rice paddies and cornfields, has created a security crisis. Submerged rice fields represent not only the loss of livelihoods but also the dismantling of traditional economic and cultural practices. Community members no longer have harvests, as if their land had been usurped. They must buy the rice they once planted. This illustrates how the concept of structural violence persists (Galtung, 1969). The economic policies and activities of PT PE have caused direct losses to livelihoods. Thus, the actions of the women's peace movement are a response to economic insecurity, not just social conflict, and force them to manage the political repercussions of the disaster that also impact them.

2. Peace Movement Carried Out by the Women's School Amidst Residents' Rejection of PT PE

PT PE's activities and operational practices, which were deemed detrimental to residents, resulted in rejection from local residents through several demonstrations, starting in 2019, and peaking in October–December 2021 (interview with the late IYM, DB 2022, Thesis Tumonggi, 2022). Between October and December 2021, a group of women members of the Women's School were moved to hold a peaceful demonstration as an effort to reconcile the tensions. They then coordinated peace activities, and for this action the women's group called themselves the Poso Peace Women's Association (Perdapos). This group admitted that the enthusiasm and

willingness to form this peaceful demonstration were due to the many lessons they had learned at the Women's School, to take action if they saw any disturbances that posed a threat (interview with LW and NP 2021).

> "...The Perdapos (Poso Village People's Union) movement has been active since October, but arts activities began in December (2021) with scheduled visits to villages. This means the Women's School forms a community, yes, but still under the auspices of the Women's School itself. Thus, this Perdapos moves towards one goal, namely to **mediate** between the company and residents to achieve peaceful action, because we don't want any more unrest namely, mediating between the [Company/Government/Power Plant] and the community.
>
> "...The education I received from this Women's School led me to join. Before, I only knew how to trade, but now I know more after joining this Women's School. When we can directly engage with other communities and provide them with understanding, there's a sense of pride. We feel compassion for these communities, and those of us who still have connections we can reach out to, must do so."
>
> "...This activity is part of the Women's School program, which was temporarily suspended due to the pandemic. We invited journalists to cover this event. This means that the activities at the Women's School are very beneficial for other movements. We learned from it about courage, especially in defending the rights of others."

Agency. The first peacekeeping activity undertaken was organizing a "Peace Action,"a peaceful demonstration by a women's group that mobilized women whose children worked at PT PE.

> "...After we the housewives went into the field, security assistance increased significantly. The action was held in Tentena, specifically at the monument. We simply gave a peaceful speech, attended by around 50 women. These were mothers whose children worked in Bukaka. We didn't bring up any names; these were mothers who also needed attention, and their livelihoods also depended on their husbands and children who worked in Bukaka. In fact, what we were doing was a peaceful action."
>
> "...So, this activity is a peaceful protest? Yes, we're simply voicing our aspirations without holding a demonstration. Since we're housewives, we don't want any disturbances. Our goal is to be able to earn a living freely and joyfully without fear. Because if we hear about a demonstration somewhere, we're already afraid to sell, afraid something might happen during the demonstration."

The demands of this peaceful demonstration are to prevent the residents' rejection of PT PE from escalating into wider unrest and conflict that could result in casualties. If that happens, PT PE could be suspended, and the women's children and husbands would lose their jobs because they work for PT PE. These women also did not hesitate to explain the benefits and advantages of PT PE continuing to operate

around Lake Poso, in the name of progress and the well-being of the community. Interview excerpt:

> "...The Bukaka Company's presence isn't **being rejected** because it's already operating here. Okay, if, as the Traditional Council says, Bukaka must be disbanded, then what will happen to us? Damage has already occurred everywhere due to the existing dredging."
>
> "...It depends on how you want to take it, because we have no interest or involvement there. Just don't make a fuss or cause any unrest.
>
> "...Doesn't Bukaka's presence also bring progress?"

The second activity was organizing meetings and holding Poso arts and cultural festivals in several villages on the shores of Lake Poso, including Dulumai, Peura, and Meko. Residents in these villages had held demonstrations rejecting PT PE because the company's activities were considered to be detrimental to them economically and culturally. The arts and cultural activities included a solo singing competition in the regional language (Pamona Poso) and a Karambangan music competition in which they sang poems full of philosophical meanings for life and education. **The aim** of these activities was to re -establish the Pamona Poso culture through these arts and cultural activities, especially amidst the destruction of the economic and cultural order which they believed was caused by the operational activities of PT LN. Interview excerpt:

> "... The communities along the shores of Lake Poso all stated that their customs had been taken by Bukaka (PT PE)."
>
> "...In response to this, the challenge for the Women's School is: 'If you feel that your customs have been taken over by investors, let's do something about it.' There are villages we visit to conduct activities, the goal being to prove to what extent the village customs you consider strong still survive."
>
> "...We've already organized and funded the event. You just need to come and sing your traditional songs. Our goal is to announce to the public that Poso still holds strong its traditions and that *the karambangan tradition* still exists."

This arts and culture festival is being held as part of the Regional Regulation (Perdapos)'s effort to achieve peaceful reconciliation between PT PE and the residents, so that they no longer reject PT PE's presence and activities. The following is an excerpt from the interview:

> "...The question is how to ensure that we all don't suffer any harm. This means that Bukaka (PT PE) isn't completely rejected, as the company is already operating here. Okay, if, as the Traditional Council has stated, Bukaka must be disbanded, then what will happen to us?"
>
> "...We have no interest or involvement in this matter. Just don't let yourselves cause unrest, which would ultimately lead to fighting among your own brothers; brothers are already on the verge of fighting. This is only because your desires are not being met, while on the other hand, your brothers are also earning a living there. They don't want to lose their jobs or their wages."

"...It's better to stop joining in the demonstrations. Let's organize arts and cultural activities here. So, we intend to provide more meaningful activities and activities, so they will no longer be interested in coming to Tentena to protest."

The Women's Peace Movement seeks to address residents' concerns that the Pamona Poso culture could be extinct simply because certain activities in the fields and gardens are no longer traditional in their residential areas. These arts and cultural activities are expected to provide a platform for young people to rekindle their love for local culture.

"...Let's hold a competition. The goal is to help the younger generation, who have begun to forget the *karambangan tradition,* remember it again. This means ensuring that this preservation effort continues (since those protesting are generally from the older generation). There are still members of our younger generation who understand and appreciate the customs."

3. Motivating Women with Peace Activities

The Women's Peace Movement is an effort to find a middle ground between residents who oppose PT PE and PT PE itself. This peace movement was launched after several demonstrations by residents who rejected PT PE's presence because they felt they had been disadvantaged. The motivation behind this peace action was to create a conducive situation, without harming either party. The background to these women's thinking was their concern that if tensions continued and the demonstrations spread, the power of the residents' actions would force PT PE to close. The closure of PT PE would also harm some residents who depend on PT PE for their livelihood, including the women's children and husbands. They urged the government to immediately address this issue and ensure that no party would be disadvantaged. The following is an excerpt from the interview:

"... What will we eat if the Bukaka Company closes? At the very least, the government should also think about our fate, where our children depend for their livelihood. Where will these children go to have a livelihood? Not only the children, but also the parents who must feed and send their children to school. Many depend on Bukaka (PT PE). Therefore, we came to meet the Sub-district Head, Sir, please think about our fate too. However, that doesn't mean you are not thinking about the people around Lake Poso; in fact, they are the ones who should be prioritized and whose problems Bukaka must immediately resolve".

"...So, that's what we're asking of you. Don't just talk about Bukaka's closure without thinking about our fate. As a government official, you have an obligation to consider that".

They also confronted and had a dialogue with residents who were demonstrating against PT PE:

"...However, what we are urging you to also consider our fate, the people whose livelihoods depend on Bukaka. We are not your equals. Sir, this is the moment leading up to December; please don't let any more unrest erupt. Furthermore,

there are those who want to mediate, even though our son and our uncle are already on the verge of a fight. We don't want that to happen again. We don't want any more unrest. Therefore, we as housewives must respond to this situation wisely."

This peace movement is within the framework of thinking about family economic resilience as well, apart from wanting a conducive atmosphere.

4. Moral Dilemma

The women realized that their actions and movements could be interpreted as a strong defense of PT PE's presence by residents who felt disadvantaged by the company's activities. In fact, this peace movement aimed to ensure that no one was harmed by the tension between residents and PT PE. The following is an excerpt from the interview:

"...However, this doesn't mean we're saying we shouldn't think about the people living around Lake Poso; in fact, they are the ones who should be prioritized and whose problems Bukaka must resolve immediately. However, we, the people whose livelihoods depend on Bukaka, must also be considered."

"... So, the point of this community is to be neutral? Yes, we are neutral. We don't defend Bukaka, and we also want to defend the common people. We stand in the middle to find a solution so that all parties are not harmed."

The women in this community also said they had been accused of representing PT PE. They firmly denied this accusation.

"... Perdapos was once accused of being part of PT PE's corporate network. We immediately made a firm statement that we have no connection or relationship with that company. We are taking a neutral position and choosing a compromise."

On the other hand, Perdapos also conducts negotiations and dialogues with PT PE, regarding fair price negotiations, disbursement and CSR for the benefit of local residents.

"...After we met with PT PE, we learned that the company had not carried out the relevant outreach. We also emphasized that CSR (*Corporate Governance) funds Social "Responsibility* funds should not be allocated for compensation for rice fields, but should be disbursed to the community and not used to buy cars for officials. We also pressure Bukaka to disburse CSR funds to the community. We demand that Bukaka oblige CSR funds to be disbursed to the community, even though these funds are usually distributed in the form of prizes through large-scale lotteries conducted through the Police Sector."

Because of this, they claim they can be a liaison for both parties.

"..."We don't intend to just hold a peaceful protest. We are also trying to find a solution. We have approached **Bukaka** and sought information, as well as approached the community/fellow farmers affected. From there, we found that there was indeed **a mistake** here: a **miscommunication. Bukaka** did not conduct any outreach to the community, and likewise the community does not

clearly understand the role of this company. Therefore, we ask **Bukaka** to **socialize** any developments or important matters."

This accusation is difficult to avoid, given the strong impression that the peace movement is defending PT PE's presence, which is seen as benefiting residents along the shores of Lake Poso. As the following interview excerpt shows:

"**Buka** has also built a hospital for the community. This hospital can be said to be classy/ elite, so we no longer need to travel all the way to Makassar if we want to do **a CT Scan** or more complex medical examination. Currently, for the people of Central Sulawesi, to do **a CT Scan** or special examination, they used to have to go to Makassar. This hospital can be categorized as international standard, has a type [mention the type if there is one, for example Type B], and was built at a cost of billions of rupiah. Specialist doctors will be placed there. Therefore, we should be grateful for this facility."

In fact, they said that the sinking of rice fields was a consequence that had to be accepted as an impact of the presence of PT PE.

"... "It cannot be denied that **Bukaka's presence** has had negative impacts, such as the submergence of agricultural land and rice fields, and the cessation of several livelihoods. However, that is what must be accepted. In everything, there must be a cause and effect, including the existence of impacts. Behind these negative impacts, there are benefits that we can enjoy, and this is what others often do not realize. Therefore, we who are members of **the Women's School** provide this understanding to others."

These peace activists are of the opinion that if PT PE is seen as only bringing harm to the community, its presence should have been rejected from the start.

"...Isn't Bukaka's presence also bringing progress? If this company is truly harmful, why did the previous government accept it and make an agreement?"

They are also faced with a dilemma between sharing the losses of residents affected by PT PE's activities and remaining consistent with the aims of the peace movement.

"We also object to the 'government' exploiting the communities affected by this issue. After all, we are feeling the impact; we are concerned because we can no longer farm in the rice fields, and we can no longer enjoy the harvest from our fish cages. This is all because of this company."

This is the ironic situation facing the Perdapos community. Their role as peacekeepers in the peaceful protests saw them attempting to be neutral mediators, easing tensions, and building local cohesion between residents and PT PE. This role requires a position perceived as fair. Simultaneously, they also share the injustice felt by the affected residents, even seeing the potential loss of land and local livelihoods that have been passed down through generations. This puts them in conflict with the company and with an interest in opposing it. This ironic position and role force them to negotiate peace with the company that is the direct cause of their suffering and loss, working with the party responsible for the loss of their security and resources.

The concept of structural violence is key to understanding why the Perdapos community is caught in the ethical dilemma of carrying out a peace action for survival. Galtung's structural violence refers to the indirect harms built into social, political, and economic structures that prevent people from realizing their full potential (Galtung, 1969). In the context of the PT PE case in Poso, structural violence is closely related to the Perdapos situation.

PT PE controls natural resources and has resulted in the submergence of traditional rice fields. This is not simply environmental damage but a structural denial of the community's right to maintain their livelihoods, culture, and sustainability. Losing rice fields means losing food and economic security, which are basic needs. Structures (land acquisition policies, prioritizing corporate investment over local rights) are what create this loss.

This structural violence has fueled the ironic position and role of the Perdapos community. Perdapos and their families are forced to seek employment with PT PE because the existing economic and political structures provide no safe alternatives, especially after land ownership and the submergence of agricultural land. Structural violence creates a dilemma: if Perdapos joins the movement against PT PE, they face structural violence in the form of poverty and economic insecurity (children and husbands without a livelihood). If they cooperate with PT PE, they compromise the principles of justice and land rights. Structural violence continues, with only minimal compensation.

Cultural violence was also introduced by Galtung (1990), defined as any aspect of culture that can be used to legitimize direct or structural violence. In the context of women's dilemmas with corporations, cultural violence works insidiously to maintain structural violence (land loss, power asymmetries) through investment narratives that justify the company's dominant position (interviews: RD, NP, 2022). Corporate actions and the broader economic system are legitimized through several aspects of cultural violence. First, through ideology with its cult of "development" and "progress". Dominant global economic ideologies often frame large-scale resource extraction and corporate land acquisition as necessary for "progress," "development," and "economic growth" (Veltmeyer, 2013). This narrative constitutes a form of cultural violence because it provides a moral shield for corporate actions, suggesting that land loss by residents is a necessary, if regrettable, sacrifice for the greater economic good of the nation or region (interview: NP/ Perdapos). This moral framework makes structural violence seem "right"or at least "not wrong" (Duer, 2017).

Second, through empirical science and economics. The use of economic "laws" (e.g., efficiency, comparative advantage, property rights) to prioritize corporate interests over traditional land rights or subsistence livelihoods is a form of cultural violence (Galtung, 1990). This seemingly neutral, scientific, and legal framework validates corporate claims to land and marginalizes community claims, which are often based on intangible values such as ancestral heritage or ecological stewardship.

Third, through language and rhetoric. The company uses the phrase "there is no common perception" to imply that the land compensation and land ownership

issues are simply a matter of a lack of consensus. The company insists that the community simply has a different perception and is not expressing their rights.

According to the concept of negative peace (Galtung, 1969), which is the absence of direct violence, this is the state achieved when open conflict, war, or physical clashes cease. The peacemaking measures of the Regional Regulation (Perdapos) successfully achieved negative peace by "reducing direct conflict between citizens and companies". They halted visible direct confrontation. However, this is often characterized as a fragile temporary suspension, as the root causes of the conflict remain unaddressed.

Perdapos effort failed to achieve positive peace because fundamental injustices persisted, namely that residents' agricultural land was taken over and submerged, preventing them from continuing their livelihoods from farming. This impacted sustainable peace. Sustainable peace is often associated with positive peace. Sustainable peace links human well-being directly to the health of the natural environment, arguing that environmental degradation is a primary driver of structural violence and future conflict (Ryan & D'Almagro, 2024). Natural resource management is crucial for peace and sustainable development. Numerous studies link sustainable peace programs to natural resource management and local conflict management (Hachmann et al., 2023; Yanuardi et al., 2022). The context of the Perdapos and PT PE cases demonstrates that improved natural resource management does not automatically contribute to local security, economic improvement, and livelihoods. This reality contrasts with the literature that continues to examine how environmental projects can contribute to peace (Krampe, et al., 2024). al., 2021; Hachmann, et et al., 2023).

True peace cannot exist without justice (Lederach, 1997). Positive peace means the absence of structural violence. Structural violence in this case involves the loss of land and the asymmetry of power with powerful corporations. The inherent superiority of corporations in resources, legal standing, and political influence structurally disempowers the population, despite the cessation of direct violence in community demonstrations (Penados, 2023). The success of the Regional Regulation on Land and Building (Perdapos) in achieving negative peace (the absence of direct violence) is undermined by the fact that the exploitative structure (corporate dominance) remains intact.

Perdapos situation perfectly illustrates the irony of reconciliation often associated with the broader limits of liberal peacebuilding (Mitchell, 2023; Bargues, 2023). Local peace initiatives focused on dialogue, de-escalation, and short-term resolution struggle when confronted with macro-level power structures. Local peace efforts, while admirable, are inherently limited by the profound power asymmetry between communities and corporations.

Reconciliation between the two parties only serves to legitimize the unjust status *quo, while maintaining the structures of injustice (namely, land loss and corporate power). This traps the population in a fragile state of negative peace without true long-term*

justice (Lederach, 1997). Temporary calm only masks the ongoing dangers of structural violence.

In the feminist security lens, the primary threat to security is not military invasion but rather factors that threaten everyday life (Tickner, 1992; Sjoberg, 2009). The results above also show how women's communities define and pursue security, revealing a complex interplay between agency and constraints. The Perdapos community's redefinition of security extends far beyond the absence of war to encompass real and material issues.

Perdapos community, security is manifested in economic security (job stability for children and husbands who earn a living in companies). This reflects a pragmatic effort to protect the future of their dependents from widespread poverty and a lack of support from government elites. Feminist security aligns closely with the concept of human security (UN, 1994), which prioritizes security from chronic suffering such as lack of livelihood, hunger, and sudden disruptions to daily life.

However, they also face threats to environmental security (how to prevent the submergence of rice fields). This directly challenges food sovereignty, traditional roles in agriculture, and the long-term sustainability of farmers' livelihoods. The loss of jobs in this sector represents an existential security threat for them, even greater than military conflict. These findings confirm True 's (2012) observation that the political economy of conflict often creates new forms of gender vulnerability, even in seemingly empowering contexts.

feminist concept of security reveals a crucial redefinition of security within women's communities facing extractive companies (cf. Seck & Simons, 2018). Their security concerns are not abstract geopolitical issues, but rather the intersection of economic needs and environmental survival. The Perdapos community defines security in terms of human security, specifically the material conditions of their lives, which contradicts traditional views (Tickner, 2001).

This framework emphasizes women's agency their capacity to act, negotiate, and organize even within the severe constraints imposed by structural inequality, state neglect, and patriarchal norms (True, 2005). Their community organizing is a form of peacebuilding that sustains lives, rather than negotiating political settlements (Porter, 2003). Feminist security recognizes that women often act as peace agents but under structurally constrained conditions (McKay, 2004; Enapeh, 2025). Their role in peacebuilding is not based on equal political power, but rather on the imperative to protect their families. The actions of Perdapos, whether organizing a peaceful protest, proposing cultural activities, or negotiating for citizens' interests in a company, demonstrate agency. While seemingly ethically ambiguous compromises, from a feminist security perspective, these are the actions of rational agents who utilize the only tool at their disposal peace negotiations to mitigate significant harm. They are not passive victims. They actively use power to manage risk and secure the well-being of their families. The Perdapos' "peace for survival”strategy is a form of political action from a position of weakness. They use the "peace mandate”not for ideal justice, but rather to maintain the physical and economic existence of the community.

Perdapos' peacemaking is best understood as a form of "survival peace" a pragmatic effort to manage daily and immediate risks. Their organizing and engagement with companies constitutes a practice of "everyday peacebuilding" (Richmond, 2007) driven by the principle of "survival peace". This principle recognizes that peace is not an ideal end state, but an ongoing and often amorphous process of managing everyday risks. This feminist security analysis shifts the focus from the grand political economy of extraction projects to the experience of gendered insecurity, where women become the primary architects of everyday, pragmatic peace.

The Perdapos Community also faces a moral dilemma: negotiating with an entity that generates insecurity (PT PE Corporation). This tension highlights the obstacles they face in negotiating with the company. Government elites appear to be turning a blind eye to this situation, despite their inability to provide basic economic and environmental guarantees (Cohn, 2008). The community views the company simultaneously as a threat (to environmental sustainability) and as a potential provider (providing jobs and supporting their economy).

This is a powerful and localized form of security provision that emerges precisely when global and state structures fail to protect it (True, 2005). Feminist security does not judge Perdapos for their difficult choices, but rather explains **that** the dilemmas they face are a direct reflection of how power structures (corporate and state) define threats, and how women must fight for their security from the bottom up. These findings demonstrate that applying established feminist security studies such as *sexual and gender-based violence* shifts to new empirical settings, namely environmental conflicts and economic threats.

E. CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the engagement of women's peace communities in the area around Lake Poso. This engagement is ironic, as it suggests that their peacemaking is a complex manifestation of "survival peace,"a dilemmatic negotiation between immediate ecological loss and future economic security. These findings highlight the shortcomings of current critical peacebuilding models when confronting large-scale corporate resource extraction and the structural violence it generates. They expose the ethical limits of local peacebuilding when confronted with the structural violence of powerful corporations. This challenges feminist security studies and environmental peacebuilding models to account for situations where marginalized actors are forced into transactional and unsustainable peacemaking that sacrifices environmental justice for economic survival. Feminist security addresses not only the physical violence experienced by women, but also the new empirical situation of environmental conflict and economic threats.

These findings have implications for how feminist security studies can expand by illustrating how resource conflicts create new forms of gendered security vulnerability. The FSS should expand its focus from post-conflict reconstruction to active, sustainable management and resistance to corporate-induced structural

violence. Future peacebuilding policies should integrate mechanisms that make environmental justice a non-negotiable condition for corporate-community reconciliation.

The recommendation for implementing Peace Education in Women's Schools is to implement critical peace education that emphasizes praxis. Praxis is defined as a cycle that includes reflection, action, and re-reflection. This is crucial not only for increasing critical awareness but also for guiding concrete action. Therefore, it needs to be integrated into peace education activities in the form of Critical Dialogue-Based Action Planning and Strategic Nonviolence.

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