

WOMEN, RESISTANCE, AND
EXTRACTIVE DEVELOPMENT:
THE CASE STUDY
OF THE MARLIN MINE

A Thesis Submitted to the College of
Graduate Studies and Research
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts
In the Department of Political Studies
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

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Abstract

Women's activism in response to large-scale mining is a topic largely unexplored in the existing social movement literature. This oversight is significant for the Global South, particularly in Latin American where mining expansion has been occurring since the 1990's and is leading to increasing numbers of conflicts between mining companies and the communities hosting them. The strategies that anti-mining activists employ and the responses of their opponents (i.e., community members, mining and state authorities) are influenced by a wide range of factors, and one of these is gender. Using a case study analysis of Goldcorp's Marlin mine in Western Guatemala and drawing on extensive field work conducted in the communities near the mine, this thesis examines women's resistance strategies (categorized here as blockades and protests, legal complaints, and everyday activism) and counterstrategies (violence, criminalization and cooptation) employed by the mine and its supporters against them. The thesis demonstrates that in both the strategies and counterstrategies, gender is a salient component in the tactics of both groups.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Kalowatie Deonandan, for her encouragement and support during the graduate studies program and my field research. I am truly grateful to have had such a wonderful friend and supervisor guide me through the process. Thank you also to my committee members, Dr. Joe Garcea and Dr. Charles Smith, and my external examiner, Dr. Marie Lovrod, for their insight, guidance, and commentary.

I would also like to thank the members of my cohort, particularly Brennan Field and Miriam Muller for their efforts and motivation during the program.

Finally, I would also like to thank Kathryn and Peter, my parents, Kathryn, Phil, Jonah, Keane and Avery Peters and Aaron Tatham, for all their love, support, and encouragement during the last couple years.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all the courageous activists in Guatemala, female and male, who continue to struggle against extractive industries in defense of their land, community and culture.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The most significant expansion of the mining industry in Guatemala in recent decades began with the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996 (Castagnino 2006). These accords signaled the end of a brutal 36-year civil war between the state and the guerilla forces. In a push to stimulate economic growth after the devastations of war and the downfall of one of the country's main industries, the state began liberalizing its resource sector (ibid). The centerpiece to this expansion was a more-lenient mining law which granted huge concessions to transnational mining firms including a reduction in royalties from 6% to 1%, the lowest in all of Central America (Deonandan 2015).

The operation that initiated the resource rush in Guatemala was the Marlin gold mine, a fully owned subsidiary of Canada's Goldcorp Inc. The mine is located in the remote western highlands region, approximately 320km northwest of the country's capital, Guatemala City (van de Sandt, 2009). Since its production began in 2006, Marlin has grown to become one of Goldcorp's highest grossing mines. For example, according to a 2014 report, the company claimed assets of almost U.S. \$28 billion, revenues of more than U.S.\$4.5 billion, and earnings or profits of U.S.\$604 million (Goldcorp Inc 2014 cited in Deonandan & Ortiz forthcoming 2016, 7). In addition to these impressive numbers, the company continues to portray itself as the driving force behind "development" in the region; an image they maintain despite multiple reports that shrouds the company in controversy and conflict.

The proliferation of mining in this region has had devastating effects on the proximal communities, all of which are predominantly Indigenous, living around the site. The destruction

of their lands and the contamination of their rivers and soils are of major concerns to local inhabitants as this environmental degradation threatens not only their livelihoods but also their local culture and capacity for self-determination (van de Sandt 2009). For Indigenous women, a population already located at the margins of society, the negative impacts are disproportionately felt; mining harms them in many ways, not the least of which is in perpetuating their marginalization, which increases the likelihood of their human and civil rights being violated. However, rather than passively accepting this fate, Indigenous women have emerged as primary actors at the forefront of the resistance against mining, despite the gendered challenges and personal impacts their activism brings.

1.2 Thesis Objective, Research Questions, and Importance

The objective of this research is to build knowledge and understanding about women, resistance and resource development using a case study approach. More specifically, the research seeks to identify the various ways that female activists resist mining development at the Marlin site, how the state and mining authorities have responded to their resistance, and the extent to which the strategies on both sides are gendered (where gender is understood as a historically contingent and socially constructed social system;(see French and Bliss 2007; Kuumba 2001).

The specific questions this thesis seeks to answer are:

- 1) What strategies do Indigenous women employ to resist mining and how do state and mining authorities respond?
- 2) How does gender impact the strategies and counterstrategies employed both by women and state and mining authorities?

The theoretical framework that guides this analysis borrows from the literature on gender and social movement strategies. More specifically, it draws on M. Bahati Kuumba's (2001) book *Gender and Social Movements*, which highlights the various ways that gender affects the development of, participation in, perception of and the challenges associated with the movements' strategies. Though Kuumba does not discuss the strategic approaches utilized by the activist's opponents, the same analytical process is applied to their counterstrategies.

This research is relevant for numerous reasons. First, academic research on women's anti-mining activism is largely invisible on a global scale. In the Latin America context, only a few scholars have done empirical work on this topic and they have drawn on the gendered narratives deployed by female anti-mining activists as a means of understanding their activism (see Jenkins 2014(a); Jenkins and Rondón 2015; Comelli 2010). What is evident from these few studies is that women's activism in the mining context is not only under-researched, but under-theorized as none of these contributions apply a theoretical lens (such as gender and social movement theory). Thus, the proposed analysis not only makes visible the voices and life experiences of a group that has been marginalized and silenced, but also makes a significant empirical and theoretical contribution in understanding important aspects related to women's anti-mining activism.

1.3 Research Methodology, Ethical Considerations and Data Analysis

In order to understand emergent factors related to women's activism at the Marlin struggle, this thesis employs a qualitative research method including individual and focus group interviews with female and male activists at the Marlin site as well as document analysis. Semi-structured qualitative interviews are an appropriate choice for this research project as they provide for rich

and descriptive data and because, for example, they allow subjects to provide direct answers on the various dimensions of the strategies they utilize (Archer & Berdahl 2011). Document analysis was used to supplement and verify information gathered through these interviews. Particularly significant documentary sources were the reports done by NGO's that provide some key contextual information on the Marlin resistance.

Potential participants for this project were identified by the researcher prior to conducting this research with the assistance of a third party organization. Through this organization, the researcher was able to obtain the phone numbers of several resistance leaders involved in the Marlin struggle. The first focus group was set up by a male resistance leader on behalf of the researcher prior to her arrival in the region. However, all remaining subsequent interviews (both individual and focus group) were arranged personally by the researcher once she was on site.

Individual and focus interviews were conducted at the Marlin site over a two-week period in July 2015. Interviews and focus groups were also conducted at the sites of two other mining struggles in Guatemala (La Puya and El Estor) during June and August of the same year. Data from these sites are incorporated in the findings section in order to fill some gaps and produce a more comprehensive analysis. Individual-level data sources at the Marlin site include one female leader and three male resistance leaders. This data is supplemented with two focus groups that drew the participation of fifteen female activists and three male activists. In total, sixteen female and six male participants were interviewed at the Marlin site. The vast majority of the activists came from five different communities around the mine¹ in the municipality of San Miguel, each with varying levels of opposition and support for the mine. All participants were

¹ The communities are: San Jose Ixcaniché, San José Nueva Esperanza, Agel, Siete Platas and San Antonio. These communities are in the municipality of San Miguel and hold the closest proximity to the mine.

Mayan Mam and had full proficiency in their Indigenous language (Mam) and basic to fluent proficiency in Spanish. A translator was present for the first focus group as many of the participants were not proficient in Spanish. When the quotes from this focus group are utilized in the analysis, they will not appear verbatim as the translator translated what the subjects were saying in the third person. All remaining interviews were conducted in Spanish and without a translator, after the comfort and language proficiency levels of the participants (in Spanish) were established by the participants and researcher.

Each individual interview was approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length with the average interview lasting 45-60 minutes. Focus groups were approximately 90 to 120 minutes. Specific topics of discussion in the interviews included the perceived impacts of the mine on women's lives; women's views of community dynamics; women's views of family dynamics; women's role in the resistance; women's strategies; female leadership; the state and Montana's response to women's activism; and challenges women face in their activism.

Given that the thesis utilizes human participants in the form of interview and focus group subjects and due to the sensitive nature of the topic, special consideration was given to the ethical implications of the research. The University of Saskatchewan's Behavioral Research and Ethics Board application was approved before commencing this research project. The guidelines presented within the ethics application were applied during all individual and focus group interviews. Interview and focus group participants were informed of the goals of the research, as well as being made aware that their participation was strictly voluntary. All interviews were digitally recorded, and transcribed with permission. The participant's consent regarding this process was obtained through signed or oral consent. If the participants sought anonymity, their

identities were protected through the use of pseudonyms on transcriptions, and all identifying information was edited out to ensure their full protection. Given the sensitive nature of the research, participants were made aware of the potential physical, psychological, and social risks associated with their participation in the study. The right to withdrawal at any point with no penalty (i.e., loss of honorarium) was strongly re-iterated to the participant(s) after stating these potential risks.

Inductive coding was used to analyze the interview data. First, digital audio files were transcribed in Spanish by the researcher. Each transcript was proofread to ensure they were as close as possible to the recorded words of the interviewees. Next, interview data was coded thematically in Spanish using NVivo, a qualitative software program. Given that the same researcher conducted the interviews and transcription, familiarization with the data occurred prior to starting the analysis. This allowed a foundational conceptual framework to guide the inductive coding process, as the researcher was already familiar with recurring themes and strategies present in the data (Ritchie & Lewis 2003). The focus of analysis was to identify the different ways that women are adversely affected by mining as well as the various strategies and counterstrategies associated with their activism.

1.4 Thesis Outline

The thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter one is the Introduction and presents the background of the topic, the thesis objective and research questions, and the rationale for the research design. It then moves to outline the research methodology and ethical considerations for this project and the processes utilized for data analysis.

Following the introduction is the background chapter (Chapter 2), which provides a brief overview of mining in Guatemala in addition to contextual information on the Marlin mine. The chapter then moves its attention to the impacts of mining development and how these have affected women disproportionately. In order to demonstrate this, the section draws on the testimonies of female activists in addition to the existing global literature on women in mining.

Chapter three provides a brief historical overview of the both the political context in which the resistance is operating (for example the racism and impunity for violence that is rampant in Guatemala) and the background and nature of the resistance movement itself (that is, its strengths and weaknesses).

Chapter four is the theoretical chapter, which defines key conceptual terms and reviews the relevant literature on gender and social movement theory, particularly related to strategic approaches adopted by movements.

Chapter five analyzes the original primary research data collected for this thesis and discusses the key findings regarding the strategies and counterstrategies both by women and state and mining authorities in Guatemala.

The final chapter draws the major conclusions of the study regarding women's anti-mining strategies and their opponents' counterstrategies, concluding with a list of recommendations for future research in this area.

Chapter 2: Background

2.1 Mining in Guatemala and Goldcorp's Marlin Mine

Guatemala's turn toward natural resource extraction as a strategy of economic development coincided with a larger regional trend that emerged in the 1990's as Latin American governments vigorously pursued economic liberalization in order to attract foreign capital (Deonandan 2015). The region is an attractive site for such development, as it contains just short of a third of the world's reserves of copper, bauxite and silver, 24% of oil, 8% of natural gas and 5% of uranium (Webber and Gordon 2008). Although Guatemala was known to contain vast and untapped mineral deposits including gold, silver and nickel-ore, it attracted little interest amongst investors due to the violence and instability of the decades-long civil war (van de Sandt 2009). It was not until the 1990s, with the signing of the peace accords, that Guatemala became a more attractive investment destination, a process aided by the new elites who came to power in the wake of the "peace." They ensured the passage of enticing mining legislation in order to guarantee more foreign investment to the country.

The centerpiece of Guatemala's new economic agenda was the 1997 mining law (*Ley de la Minería*) which included attractive concessions such as a "reduction in royalty payments from 6% to 1%, a 10-year tax holiday, exemption from value added and import taxes, equal treatment for international investors under Guatemalan law, no limits on foreign ownership and the right to repatriate profits" (Deonandan 2008, 5). The success of this policy is reflected in the data. As of January 2015, 342 mining licenses had been granted and 552 were pending (MEM 2015). These numbers reflect over a 1,000% increase in metal exploration since 1998 (Dougherty 2011).

One of the first projects to initiate the country's mining boom was the Marlin open-pit gold mine in the Western highlands of Guatemala. Marlin is owned by Montana Exploradora,

S.A, a fully owned subsidiary of Vancouver based mining giant, Goldcorp Inc. The Marlin mine was built in 2004 when it was owned by Glamis Gold, but was sold to Goldcorp two years later in 2006, the same year the mine went into production. This was the first large scale mining investment the country had seen in over 20 years and also the first open-pit mine. The importance of the Marlin mine to Guatemala is fundamental as it is the country's largest mineral operation and the company is its largest taxpayer (On Common Ground 2010).²

The Marlin mine extends across two municipalities in the Western Guatemala: San Miguel Ixtahuacán and Sipacapa. The former, which is the home to the Mayan Mam, hosts 87% of the operation while the remaining 13% takes place in the latter municipality, territory home the Sipacapense Mayan (ICEFI 2014b). Though differentiated by ethnic composition, both of these municipalities have striking similarities in terms of demographics and socio-economic indicators. According to reports done by SEGEPLAN (2010(a) (b) cited in Deonandan and Ortiz, forthcoming 2016), the state planning body that works on development policies, 86.3% of San Miguel's 37,000 inhabitants live in poverty and 32.8% in extreme poverty. Though Sipacapa's population is much smaller (17,500), indicators are still comparable with 83.9% of its inhabitants living in poverty and 26.6% in extreme poverty (Segeplan 2010(b)). When situated on a national scale³, these poverty indices fare as some of the highest in the country (On Common Ground 2010; Yegenova 2012). Subsistence agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for eighty percent of the population in this region and this is supplemented by seasonal work as laborers at the country's coffee and sugar plantations (van de Sandt 2009).

² However, as Deonandan and Ortiz argue, this claim by Goldcorp is highly questionable. Their study found that the company pays a paltry sum, far from the 2% it claims. See Deonandan and Ortiz (forthcoming, 2016).

³ There are 22 departments (states) comprising of 334 municipalities in Guatemala.

Exacerbating these dire conditions are a multitude of negative impacts caused by mining development. Communities charge that mining development is violating Indigenous rights, undermining socio-economic development, destroying the environment, contributing to violence, in addition to producing an array of social problems within proximal communities. In response to these impacts, affected communities began to mobilize and actively resist the mine. In the early years of this resistance, documentation of these problems and the community's resistance was done primarily by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from North America such as Rights Action (2011, 2016), MiningWatch Canada (2011), and Peace Brigades (Castagnino 2006), as well European groups such as the Danish IBIS (2014), Dutch Cordaid (van de Sandt 2009) and the German FIAN (McBain-Haas & Bickel 2005). Resistance in Guatemala has since garnered the interests of scholars from an array of disciplines exploring a variety of macro and micro level issues related to mining in the region (see Caxaj et al. 2013, 2014; Deonandan 2015; Fulmer et al. 2008; Imai et al. 2007; Urkidi 2011; Zarsky & Stanley 2011). However, very little attention has been given to the activists themselves, and women are completely invisible in these accounts.

The following section aims to fill this gap by contributing new empirical material to the field of *women in mining* which draws attention to the ways in which women are disproportionately affected by mining development. A related and nascent scholarly literature on this topic exists but largely focuses on the Asia Pacific region (Australia, Canada, Papua New Guinea and Mongolia). In the Latin American context, the few current scholarly works are restricted to Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia and of these works the authors are sociologists, anthropologists or geographers. Currently, there are no studies by political scientists on this topic. The following section, therefore, represents a major contribution to the scholarly literature as it expands the geographical field of study to investigate and document the effects of mining

development on women in the Guatemalan context. Moreover, this section also lays much of the foundational information needed for the analysis by evaluating the social and economic implications of mining women's mobilization against resource development both locally and nationally.

2.2 Impacts of mining on women

The entrance of the Marlin mine and the contamination it brought has resulted in the destruction of the environment, livelihoods and cultures for many of those living in communities adjacent to the site. While all inhabitants in the surrounding communities are impacted by this development, women are disproportionately affected because the sources of their productivity such as land, water and forests are taken from their control. Olga, an activist from the community of San Jose Ixcaniché underscores this idea:

When mining destroys our land, forests, and water through contamination it destroys our lives. Where am I going to get food from to feed my family? Where am I going to get water for us to drink and cook and bathe? Where I am going to get firewood to cook food and keep warm? So yes, I have a big problem with mining. They [the mine] have already done enough damage...It would be best if they just left us in peace (O.Cinto 2015).

The contamination of land and water caused by mining strains traditional gender roles; this is particularly true in cultures that depend on subsistence agriculture. In Mayan Indigenous culture, it is women who are the primary agriculturists and who are thus the ones responsible for growing crops and tending to animals. When these aspects of their livelihood are destroyed, they become responsible for finding alternative food sources and walking further distances to access clean drinking water and firewood, and they must do all of this in addition to fulfilling their regular household duties such as taking care of the children, cleaning, preparing food, and raising livestock (MacDonald & Rowland 2002).

In some cases, the fulfillment of these traditional roles also has economic implications as evidenced in women's testimonies concerning livestock. One activist spoke of the economic grief she and her family suffered after the death of three of their cows, who frequently grazed near the mine site. Others, such as María Paula, spoke of the mine's gradual encroachment on her land and the impact this has had on her life:

What I fear the most is the gradual encroachment by the mine on my lands...they have bought my neighbors land and they're not respecting the established land borders...because of this, I can no longer have the animals I want...these animals were helping me generate a small income for the well-being of her family...my family has suffered as a consequence of this [encroachment] (Domingo 2015).

The mine's encroachment on land also has a deep cultural significance. Land and attachment to place are two important pillars of Mayan cultural identity (Lovell 1988). While no explicit reference was made in women's testimonies to the cultural importance of these two pillars, they were referenced and largely imbued with notions of "longing" and "nostalgia" (Barrio-Klee Ruiz & Gaviola Artigas 2001, 40). As María Paula noted:

This problem [referring the mine's encroachment of her land] is deeply personal for me...before they came it was a vast field and we used to take care of it... I took good care of it...and it gave us happiness and it provided for our animals...and now our land is reduced... we don't have animals and we don't have happiness (Domingo 2015).

At Marlin, the gendered impacts on traditional gender roles are particularly pronounced for the female activists whose husbands work for the mine. The entrance of a cash-economy has resulted in a shift in the traditional sexual division of labour whereby the women were responsible for the domestic sphere and men were working in the fields. This division of labour is based on the principle of complementarity. That is, while different, these roles are nevertheless

complementary in that they contribute together to the survival of the family unit (Kellogg 2005).⁴ Further, in this arrangement of complementarity, according to Kellogg (2005) both men and women have equal access to economic, political, and ceremonial decision-making with respect to the family. Olga, an activist from the community of San Jose Ixcaniché illustrates this point:

Yes, it affects me more [referring to the impacts of mining]. Because imagine, all the men's work [around the home] is left to the woman. Now, the man goes to work in the mine and the woman has to take care of the corn in addition to the household duties and the man's duties. He does not appreciate this at all (O.Cinto 2015).

As cash becomes more important than subsistence agriculture, women that produce for their family and community start to be treated as non-productive and economically inactive (Shiva 2013). Moreover, as wage labour becomes the stable form of livelihood, women lose their economic independence from men, who are ascribed with new notions of authority in their communities due to their employment with the mine (Lahiri-Dutt 2008, 2011).

Another consequence of environmental contamination relates to health. At Marlin, many of these problems have been attributed to water-related contamination caused by mining activities, in particular the potential for cyanide, mercury and other heavy metals to enter local water sources (see Bianchini 2007; COPAE 2008; Moran 2004; van de Sandt 2009). Activists interviewed during this research confirm the findings of these reports by identifying a wide array of health problems including: gastrointestinal problems, skin rashes, hair loss, as well as respiratory illnesses and cancer.⁵ However, these reports pay very little attention to the ways that women are adversely affected by these health issues (for a rare exception see ULAM 2010).

⁴ Though the idea of complementarity has been identified by scholars as inherently patriarchal, evidence suggests that it was accepted by both sexes as it was needed for the survival of the family.

⁵ The latter two illnesses have been primarily linked to the miner's health.

Evelia, a 39-year-old activist and single mother of five highlights the effect this contamination has had on her family's health:

In 2009, I went to bathe my daughter in the river that they call "el Cuilco" because there was no running water. So, back then I would take my daughter to bathe her and collect our drinking water. It was January and she had just turned 3 months when she started having problems with hair loss and spots (blemishes) on her head... now, her condition has worsened and she does not have any hair at all... rashes also, she has white rashes all over her body (García Lopez 2015).

Women's traditional gender roles as primary caregiver naturally evoke a logic of unselfish nurturance to their sick children, husbands, and family members. But the environmental harms (in this instance the contamination of the river and the resulting health impacts on children) wrought by the mine have a disproportionate effect on them as their time becomes more constrained and daily chores more arduous. Moreover, the increase in their domestic labours can restrict women's mobility to leave the home to complete other daily tasks or seek employment opportunities. This situation becomes particularly precarious for single mothers like Evelia, who must fulfill her role as caregiver, while finding economic resources to sustain her family and their health. She described one such challenge in taking care of her daughter as follows:

Well, seeing as the consult is free and only the medicine has a cost I recently went to the clinic [referring to the Marlin clinic]. I went with this same daughter who still has rashes and the doctor said not to worry as it wasn't a serious sickness and that all kids get it as it is type of chicken pox virus... very quickly he told me: "Here is the medicine, it is 25 Quetzales [approximately CND \$3.50]". I struggled so much to find that money but eventually I was able to pay for the medicine. My daughter's condition remained the same. Even today, she still has the same sickness. I haven't been able to take her to a private hospital because there is no money. I am just waiting and praying to God that help arrives (García Lopez 2015).

Evelia's economic situation is representative of the economic context of the majority of female activists participating in the Marlin struggle. Later in the interview, she explains that she makes barely a dollar a day when she manages to find domestic work cleaning homes, and that this is not enough to prevent her five children from constantly being hungry. Another female activist who lost her husband to cancer, a sickness she attributes to the work he did in the mine's underground tunnels, recounts similar emotional and economic hardships after his untimely death (M.J López 2015). In sum, the contamination of water and land by mining practices exacerbates the challenges women face in their traditional roles, increases their workloads and economic vulnerability, and infringes on their rights to live in a clean and healthy environment.

Social impacts were also identified as another set of consequences due to mining development. These impacts center in the community and include social divisions and violence, threats, harassment, as well as alcoholism and prostitution. It is important to note that while the mine is the root cause of many of these social ills, it is frequently the community members who are the instigators of these violent acts. This conflict is largely occurring between the 'haves,' that is, proponents of the mine who have economic interests in its continued operation,⁶ and the 'have nots,' that is, the opponents that resist mining operations for the array of negative ways it has impacted their livelihoods, communities and cultures (Caxaj 2014). Humberto, coordinator of Defensores de la Madre Tierra,⁷ a branch of the local parish, estimates that 95% of communities in the municipality of San Miguel are deeply divided on the mining issue (H.Velasquez 2015).

⁶ Some of the identified benefits include employment, money, food, construction materials, as well as incentives offered through community projects.

⁷ This is a branch of the local parish that works on community engagement and consciousness-raising around the environmental and gender impacts of mining.

The social divisions and conflicts that have emerged within communities have signaled the gradual disintegration of community values. This has been particularly onerous on women as they not only bear “the burden of maintaining the main markers of Mayan ethnic identity” in their respective communities, but they are also “seen to be (and were) reproducers of the Mayan community, both culturally and biologically” (Smith 1995, 738). In her research on Mayan peoples in Mexico, Nash (2001) notes that women’s defense of the community is typically expressed through a “connectedness to the issues of survival of past traditions and future generations in their lives” (p.25). Both of these motives—protecting both the past and the future— resonated strongly in many of the women’s testimonies and centered on both cultural and biological themes. Olga, an activist from the community of San Jose Ixcaniché, one of the villages near the mine, frames her activism around the latter:

Well, what I’m thinking is about the future of my kids who are growing up, where are they going to live? What type of future will they have? They will also want to have a family just like us...how are they going to survive if the whole region is contaminated? Imagine, they are going to build their homes on our land and they will not last for what we are living right now. Right now our homes are cracked from the ground shaking [referring to underground mining], and when there is another earthquake, things will get a lot worse (O.Cinto 2015).

In their efforts to be the protectors of the community, women have become victims of intra-community conflict and violence. Threats and harassment by men and women who support the mine are among the more common consequences mentioned by female activists in their testimonies. One female resistance member confided that she frequently received verbal threats from two of her cousin’s wives despite her having relocated to another community (Hernández 2015). In another testimony, a female activist recounts how these verbal threats escalated into violence that she experiences at the hands of her own family members:

I no longer live in my family's home for all the problems I suffered last year. Several times my cousin hit me while saying: "You are an anti-mining person and when the mine leaves, when it exits [the region] you will all say that you had the power to get rid of it."⁸ He would say it over and over and hit me again and again. And then one of my nephews would get started. Every time he would get drunk he would pass by the house to threaten me because then I was living in my parent's house but I had so many problems there that I couldn't handle it any longer. It was better that I leave. Now I live in the village of San Antonio (García Lopez 2015).

This testimony corroborates findings in the extant literature that demonstrate a correlation between the influx of a cash-economy due to mining, men's alcohol consumption and elevated levels of domestic violence in mining communities (Hinton et al. 2006; Perks 2011; Scheyvens & Lagisa 1998). However, a cautionary note is warranted here. According to a joint report done by Union Latinoamericana de Mujeres (2010) (ULAM-Union of Latin American Women), a regional network of groups and organizations led by women affected by mining development in Latin America, both alcoholism and domestic violence were prevalent problems in San Miguel prior to the arrival of mining. While many female activists attribute these ills exclusively to mining, it is difficult to assess whether mining is the root cause or whether it exacerbated a pre-existing problem.

Intra-community conflict is also occurring between female opponents and proponents of mining in the same community, a dynamic that is overlooked in many case studies. In speaking of this type of conflict, numerous female activists expressed sadness as it signalled the end of many long-term friendships. Victoria describes a normal interaction with female proponents of the mine in her community:

Well, what they [the miner's wives in the community] do is make fun of us [female activists]. In the streets they will make comments to us about how their lives are better

⁸ Earlier in the interview the participant identified her cousin as a mine worker. It is unclear if her nephew had employment with the mine.

because of mining to which we respond: “Really? Look at what the mine is doing, they have dried up all of natural springs, they have ruined our homes with the cracks in the walls with the underground movement [explosives], and they have killed community members”. But, seeing as the husband has a salary with the mine, they sit and watch their tv’s all day and they don’t work at all. So, you see, mining development serves their personal interests and they respond by saying: “Ayee, if it weren’t for mining, I would be on the coast picking coffee and earning very little”....they have changed so much (V.P. Velasquez 2015).

This testimony is informative as it not only demonstrates the nature of the conflict but also the profound impact mining has had on a community’s whole way of life. Similar to the changes noted in the gender division of labour, traditional female values have also shifted with the influx of a cash economy. As this testimony demonstrates, material possessions have replaced traditional gender values and responsibilities related to the maintenance of the home and tending of animals. Moreover, the testimony suggests that subject’s drive for a small-degree of economic independence, a strong value unique to this region (ULAM 2010), has started to erode. These new values are extremely individualistic and a strong departure from the collective foundations of Indigenous culture. The battle between the maintenance of these traditional values and the individualistic values associated with mining development has also generated new forms power struggles between women in their respective communities that have turned violent.

Francisco, a resistance leader for FREDEMI explains:

Recently, in San José Nueva Esperanza...a group of women started protesting in the streets about the water situation... [and]...in response, the wives of the miners from that community confronted them with arms while intimidating them for reclaiming their rights...[because]...the women that are doing the threatening are the wives of the men that have permanent jobs at the mine. Female activists present a threat to the money that they are now used to having (F. Bamaca 2015).

Another social consequence that was identified by female activists and confirmed by the global literature is the emergence of prostitution in mining communities (Hinton et.al 2006;

Lahiri-Dutt 2012; Perks 2011). According to several women from the community of Agel, a local man has made a lucrative business out of prostituting women in four different communities. The prostitutes, all “foreigners” from various coastal departments in Guatemala, have been working in the region for many years and do not associate themselves with any of the local women. The arrival of prostitution has been the root of family disintegration in the region as one female activist laments:

There are a lot of men that get with these women, a lot... this has resulted in separations and violent conflicts between partners...some women have gotten sick too...we have talked with the mayor and the municipality about shutting down this type of business with the prostitutes but he says that the owner of the business has already taken out his papers to operate out of rented buildings and plus, the local drinking holes are supported by his clients (García Lopez 2015).

Traditionally, the rules of sexual conduct in Indigenous culture are prescribed according to community and ethnicity. That is, cultural expectations are placed on Indigenous women to “wear the emblems of their community identity,⁹ marry local men, and bear and nurture children of the community” (Smith 1995, 740). As evidenced above, the concentration of power and resources by male miners has led them to engage in new social behaviours with women from outside their community. Within the context of overwhelming poverty, the destruction of a marriage brings significant challenges for women who must not only deal with the emotions of infidelity, but must also find economic resources to support their families. Moreover, this behaviour also places women at a higher risk for sexually transmitted diseases, as this activist suggests.

⁹ These emblems include language and cultural attire.

The above section has explained the context for mining in Guatemala and demonstrated how this type of development at the Marlin site has affected women disproportionately. The following sections seek to explain how women have resisted (with a focus on collective strategies) and how their opponents (state, mining and private security forces) have responded to their resistance. However, before presenting the theoretical and empirical evidence collected in this research project, the Marlin resistance itself must be explained, as it contextualizes important internal and external factors that affect the choice and effect of the strategies and counterstrategies utilized by the various actors.

Chapter 3: Historical Chapter

3.1 Introduction

Since 2005, communities from the municipalities of San Marcos and Sipacapa in the Western Highlands of Guatemala have been actively resisting the Marlin Mine.¹⁰ Over the last eleven years, the resistance has experienced tremendous growth and success as well as significant weakening and failure. While a complete review of mining resistance is outside the scope of this thesis, this section will highlight the key structural and organizational foundations of the anti-mining movement in Guatemala, the political and socio-economic environment in which the movement operates, and the trajectory of change that the struggle has undergone over the last decade. Understanding these external and internal spheres is important as they contextualize the conditions under which the movement's strategies emerge, are sustained and contested.

3.2 Marlin Struggle: 2005-2010

The struggle around the issues related to the Marlin mine is taking place in a complex arena in which a large number of actors play specific roles. While the proponents of mining are limited to the transnational company, which is supported by some ministries, high-level politicians and the IFC/World Bank, and its employees, resistance to it is being carried out by a wider variety of players. This section examines these latter groups of resisters, particularly the specific actors, their focuses and organizational structures.

Particularly important is an understanding the actors and organizational structure of the Marlin resistance movement. Since the movement's inception, members of the Marlin resistance

¹⁰ While active resistance to the mine started in 2005, community discussions on mining development date back to as early as 2002.

founded themselves as “communities in resistance,” a claim based on “their shared history, ethnicity, culture, geography, socio-economic status and experiences” (Deonandan 2015, 13). However, gradually over this initial period, four major resistance organizations emerged to lead the struggle: the Association for the Integral Development of San Miguel (Asociación de Desarrollo Integral San Miguelense--ADISMI), the Catholic Church’s Commission for Peace and Ecology (Comisión Pastoral Paz y Ecología—COPAE), the Council for the People of the West (Consejo de los Pueblos- CPO), and the Front for the Defence of San Miguel (Frente de la Defensa Miguelense—FREDEMI).

The first group to join the communities in resistance was ADISMI. However, unlike the other three groups that were formed after the resistance’s inception, ADISMI’s roots date back to 1985 when it was founded as a grassroots development association. In its earlier years, its mandate was to “promote community development through the protection of land, water, and culture” but this objective was expanded to include the promotion of local referendums and increased awareness about the environmental and social impacts of mining, once this industry entered the region (Deonandan 2015, 14). COPAE is an extension of the Diocese of the Catholic Church in the department of San Marcos and it became a key organization involved with the resistance in 2005. Its mandate is to provide “technical, legal and logistical assistance and representation to communities in their conflict with Montana” but was broadened in subsequent years to include support for communities fighting megaprojects in other sectors in the San Marcos Department (van de Sandt 2009, 32). In 2008, the third organization, CPO, was founded as a regional coalition. Similar to COPAE, its geographical reach extends beyond a single resource-related struggle to include those occurring in six other departments around San Marcos.

Essentially, the CPO acts as a platform for dialogue and coordination between the various resistance' movements in the region (van de Sandt 2009). FREDEMI was the last organization to join the resistance in 2009. It is a coalition of three other local groups (i.e., ADISMI, a local teacher's association and a local development group) focused on the protection of Indigenous lands and cultural identity in the context of the Marlin mining struggle (Deonandan 2015).

A list of well-documented grievances powered these organizations' resistance. Most notable were issues relating to their rights as Indigenous peoples and their lands, as expressed through the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention 169 which was ratified by Guatemala in 1996 (Amnesty International 2014). Enshrined in this convention is a provision to Indigenous people's right for right of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) which demands that this group be consulted prior to "exploration or exploitation" of natural resources on their territories (ILO 1989). However, Marlin communities contend that Montana violated the FPIC assurances either through deliberate neglect of this principle or by utilizing variety of tactics which included neglect in consulting certain groups or using intimidation, coercion and threats during the land acquisition process (see Imai et al. 2007; On Common Ground 2010; van de Sandt 2009). These initial claims have since been coupled with an array of additional grievances related to the negative environmental, cultural, social and economic impacts brought by the industry on these communities.

What is important to note is that while the agenda of each of these organizations varied slightly, their membership, leadership, goals and activities had significant overlap (Deonandan 2015). On many levels, this allowed the various organizations and their leaders to form a "coordinated," "organized" and "united" resistance against the Marlin mine (A.D. López 2015). Moreover, the various organizations developed established linkages to local, national and

international groups and organizations, all of which provided significant moral and material support to their cause (van de Sandt 2009).

The initial levels of resistance and struggle at Marlin were extraordinary not only because of the movement's organizational capacities, but also because of its context. The Marlin struggle operates within a framework of severe political constraints, which include endemic racism, corruption and impunity. In Guatemala, the political repression of minority ethnic groups (Mayan) has been the hallmark of a 500- year old ethnic-racist paradigm first established during the Spanish conquest. Guatemalan scholar Demetrio Cuxil (2007) uses biological terms to define racism in Guatemala as: "the supremacy of the white race (the creole) and the "mixed race" [the mestizo or ladino] over the Maya, Xinca, and Garifuna" (p.125-26). This historical pattern of creole/ladino domination and Mayan subjugation has been reinforced through a complex hierarchal system that systematically excludes Mayan peoples from economic, political, social realms of society, a system that remains unabated through to the current day.

The Mayas' repression in contemporary Guatemala is also propagated through state policies. As Cuxil (2007) points out, the mono-ethnic or ethnically creole-ladino character of the current Guatemalan state can be seen through several legal mechanisms which promulgate Indigenous exclusion including: laws that favor ladinos, lack of legislation enforcing linguistic or ethnic criteria for political office seekers, lack of political representation in government, minimal multiethnic projects and social policies, and limited access to budgetary structures. Historically, Guatemala's judicial system has followed a similar trajectory with racism underlying its exclusionary policies and practices (see Carey 2013; Seider and Sierra 2010).

It is also important to note that this racial system was infused with patriarchy that is manifested, for example, in attitudes toward sexuality, reproduction, and responsibilities (French

and Bliss 2007). As such, Mayan women experience the same oppression as their ethnic group but with an additional layer of repression based on their gender. It is therefore not surprising that they are the most detrimentally affected population in Guatemalan society by this wholesale system of economic, political and social exclusion (Castagnino 2006).

Complementing the endemic racism and sexism is rampant corruption and impunity. Transparency International, a non-governmental organization that monitors and publicizes corporate and political corruption in international development, ranks Guatemala 115 of 175 nations on their corruption perceptions index (Transparency International 2015). According to a Human Rights Watch report, impunity remains the norm for human rights violations as evidenced in the 95% impunity rate for homicides committed in 2010 (Human Rights Watch 2012, 2).

It is within this broader, repressive context of patriarchy, racism, corruption and impunity that the Marlin resistance has and continues to mount its battles against the state and transnational mining companies. For the resistance's opponents, specifically state, mining and private security authorities, these structural and institutionalized ills create an ideal environment for them to mount their counter campaign against activists without oversight or accountability.

3.3 Marlin Struggle: 2010-2015

Since 2010, the structure and organization of the Marlin struggle has eroded significantly, a shift that has received no attention by scholars and activists alike. This is reflected in resistance participation rates, which according to several prominent resistance leaders, has decreased significantly. For example, at the time of this research only 26/62 communities in the municipality of San Miguel considered themselves part of the resistance, which marks a significant decline from the five-year period (A.D. López 2015). Moreover, the levels of tension

and conflict in the communities seem to have intensified, as will be demonstrated in the analysis. However, despite these challenges and the virtual disintegration of the resistance, which will be highlighted below, evidence suggests that female activism has remained strong and clusters of women continue to mobilize, albeit sporadically, within their respective communities.

According to testimonies collected during this field research, the decline of the Marlin resistance occurred fairly quickly in late 2010. Underlying this erosion are several key factors that are briefly highlighted here. The first factor relates to internal conflict that stems from a major financial scandal that implicates one of the resistance's major organizations. Aniceto, the current leader of the organization FREDEMI elaborates:

Well, what happened with ADISMI is they started to have internal problems... these problems had to do with two of our "compañeros" (friends) in the struggle being questioned because they cheated us...they [two coordinators at ADISMI] received financial funding[referring to international funding] in the name of the "resistance" because of their status as an association. So, they received funding for the resistance but never made it known to the rest of us...the funds were a significant amount and were supposed to be used to support the "resistance" in our mobilization efforts, for transport, and for snacks when we have meetings...when the other groups in the resistance questioned them [the two coordinators at ADISMI] they immediately closed their doors and disappeared (A.D. López 2015).

The particular incident had a devastating impact on the Marlin resistance. First, in response to the scandal, ADISMI disbanded and closed their doors overnight. Second, COPAE, the branch of the Catholic Church that supported the resistance, gradually distanced itself from the resistance as the local Bishop, Monseñor Álvaro Ramazzini, who was internationally known and who had played an active role on behalf of mining opponents, was transferred to another Department. With his transfer, the Marlin resistance lost a prominent voice and publicity regarding its cause. The local Catholic parish in the township of San Miguel Ixtahuacán, who

had worked closely with COPAE, also separated itself from the broader “resistance” and reformulated its mandate in relation to the mining struggle. Rather than having solely an environmental focus, they moved towards community engagement and consciousness-raising around environmental impacts in addition to social issues including gender equality. Third, FREDEMI splintered off to form as a newly independent political group (civic committee) under the same name. Though their mandate is strictly political, it is the only organization left that is working directly on mining issues. Fourth, the regional coalition (CPO) gradually broke its ties with the remaining organizations, citing concerns over internal accountability and transparency in the resistance. Overall, “distrust,” “disagreement” and “in-fighting” fuelled by this internal scandal led to the breakdown of the once unified Marlin resistance (Peréz 2015; H. Velasquez 2015).

Another major factor that contributed to the decline of the Marlin resistance was the gradual withdrawal of support from local, national and international groups and organizations that had long-standing ties with the Marlin resistance. Informal talks with resistance leaders and employees from other local organizations suggest a couple reasons for this. First, organizations became aware of the corruption scandal, mistrust, and general instability of the resistance and they withdrew their support. Second, the elected president in 2010, Otto Peréz Molina, and right wing media sources, started an aggressive smear campaign against civil society groups in an attempt to deter their support for activists threatening one of the country’s main industries. And third, the gradual increase of militarization in mining communities (i.e., calling for state of siege) and subsequent political and social instability, created security concerns for groups and organizations operating in these environments.

Over a ten-year period, the Marlin resistance has gone from a relatively strong and unified movement to a fragmented and weak one. One crucial incident, namely the scandal with ADISMI, caused significant collateral damage which resulted in the loss of material and moral support from important organizations and, more importantly, the trust and solidarity of the resistance members and other organization leaders. Yet, despite these enormous setbacks, evidence suggests that the intensity and frequency of female activism did not waiver.

Before examining women's activism in Chapter 5, the next chapter provides a theoretical framework is presented in order to explain the gendered nature of one aspect of their activism—their strategies. It also extends the theoretical landscape to include additional actors such mining authorities and community members and analyzes the gendered nature of the counterstrategies they use in response to women's activism.

Chapter 4: Theory

4.1 Introduction

The theoretical lens through which this analysis of women's resistance to mining is examined is that of gender and social movement theory. The aim of this chapter is to briefly explain this theoretical framework, particularly insofar as it helps in understanding mining resistance strategies by women and the counterstrategies used against them. It should be noted that gender and social movement theory has been a field very much under explored in the academic literature, and as such, the elaboration of this framework here relies exclusively on M. Bahati Kuumba's (2001) book entitled *Gender and Social Movements*; it is the only work in the field on gender and social movements that deals with the types of issues raised in this study—that is, the gendered nature of social movement strategies. Further, neither Kuumba's work and very little of the current mainstream social movement literature examines the counterstrategies against resistance (i.e., the tactics used against movement activists). Thus, the current analysis uses a slightly modified version of the principles used to explain how resistance strategies are gendered to also illustrate how the counterstrategies are similarly gendered.

In discussing the theoretical framework, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first provides the definitions of the two key concepts—social movement and gender. The second highlights three major gaps in the emerging literature on gender and social movements. The third and final section presents the theoretical lens used for this thesis and seeks to explain the way that gender interacts with movement strategies (and counterstrategies).

4.2 Conceptual Framework

The first concept that needs to be defined is social movement. However, due to the wide variety of groups that can be categorized as such, there is no consensus on a definition. For the

purpose of this analysis, Tarrow's (1994) general definition of social movements as "collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities" (p.3) is accepted.

Gender is the second concept that needs defining. This concept is also highly contested but scholars working in the field of gender and social movement all agree on certain key aspects. First, gender is an historically contingent and socially developed construct (French & Bliss 2007). In this articulation, gender incorporates numerous elements including social attributes as well opportunities and relationships associated with being male or female. Second, gender operates on a multiplicity of levels in relation to the social movement including the micro, meso and macro levels, and includes the cultural, social, political and economic planes (Kuumba 2001). For example, macro-sociological theory emphasizes larger social structural arrangements such as those outlined in the political process model. Meso-structural theory highlights the importance of movement structures and resources, such as resource mobilization models. Micro-structural theory focuses on the participants and their everyday lives as the starting point of analysis (Kuumba 2001, 50-51). Third, gender interacts with other systems of social differentiation including race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and religion which can alter norms and expectations of men and women (French and Bliss 2007; Kuumba 2001, 2002; Taylor 1998, 1999; Taylor and Whittier 1998).

4.3 Gender and Social Movement Theory

Before elaborating on the theoretical framework employed for this thesis, it is first necessary to identify three major problems in the existing social movement theory. The first problem identified by social movement scholars and critics relates to traditional social movement theory and its gender-biased approaches. That is, mainstream social movement theorists have

largely ignored or overlooked gender as an important factor in social movement analysis. In response to this bias, a growing number of feminist scholars have started to rethink the intersections between gender and social movement theory, resulting in an array of new gender-conscious approaches. Drawing on gender as a “conceptual hinge” for theorizing social movements, scholars have extended this emerging field to include areas such as political opportunities (Abdulahadi1998; Ferree and Roth 1998; Kuumba 2002), organizational processes (Fonow 1998; Irons1998, Meyer and Whittier 1994; Neuhouser1995), leadership (Robnett 1997), interpretive frames, collective identities and discourses (Swindler 1986; Naples 1992), as well as outcomes (Einwhoner et al. 2000) to name a few. This scholarship has increased understanding on how gender is fused into the politics of resistance and the importance of including it as a unit of analysis.

A second problem relates to the emerging field of gender and social movements, and it deals with the type of social movements being studied. Theorizing in this context tends to focus on women’s movements, that is, movements composed of female participants and that deals with gender-specific issues (Einwohwer et al. 2000). This narrow range overlooks the diversity in movement types, particularly those that have different gender constituencies and political foci. Again, the Marlin mine struggle, the case study of this thesis, illustrates this problem because it is a mixed-gender movement, which has women as members and as active leaders, but does not have a central focus solely on women’s rights and gender justice (Horn 2013). Nevertheless, gender continues to be an important and relevant unit of analysis, as the findings in this thesis will demonstrate.

The third problem relates to what is referred to as the academic/activist divide and issues related to the location of theorizing. As movement sympathizers and participants entered

academic circles in the late 1970's, they became very critical of the established social movement theories they found, which were of "limited utility and often contained both inaccurate and unflattering predictions of protest movements and their participants" (Beuchler 1993, 218 cited in Kuumba 2001, 49). But even when activists contributed to theorizing, social movement theory still seemed unable to capture the contextual idiosyncrasies of each movement.

While feminists continue to make advancements in engendering social movement theory, many are still divided as to the starting point of the theorizing process. Some believe that the "location of theorizing" to use Kuumba's phrase (p.58) must begin with the perspectives of the participants or activists in the movement, with the theory emerging from their beliefs, perceptions and actions. In other words, the theory should "emerge organically" (p. 59). This is referred to as standpoint epistemology, where the knowledge informing the theory is derived from the standpoint of movement participants. One leading proponent of this form of theorizing, Simona Sharoni (1995, 29 cited in Kuumba 2001, 58), defends this approach in the following way:

Since women are not a monolithic group any single framework will not be sufficient to capture the complexity and the different dimensions and particularities of their struggles. In other words, we need to move beyond the typologies and into the complex realms and locations where women actually make history and theory...to theorize about women's resistance in this context cannot emerge in academic settings and then be applied to case studies.

Other scholars of gender and social movement theory call for a combination type approach. While acknowledging the importance and significance of the input of activists, they believe that there are many broader structural factors that influence social movements that cannot

be explained by the participants themselves. In the more traditional social movement theorizing, these structural factors are highlighted in political opportunities or political process theory (see Della Porta and Dianni 1999; Williams 2010). Thus, in order to capture both the structural and contextual elements of a given movement, and to incorporate the different voices and actions of the various female activists, some feminist scholars have promoted an alternative approach that pays more attention to the theorizing of the local and particular while still drawing on the strengths of established social movement theory and its attention to the political opportunities structure. This approach, according to Elizabeth Jelin (1987), is appropriated given that social movements are located “in the intermediate space between individualized, familiar, habitual, micro-climactic daily life, and socio-political processes writ large, of the State and its institutions” (cited in Escobar 2005, 11).

Thus, theorizing social movements becomes a “dialectical process” in which women’s social reality informs and re-visions the theory, and vice versa (for examples see: Jelin 1990; Kuumba 2001, 2002; Ray & Korteweg 1999; Taylor 1999). This back and forth process allows for a more nuanced look at aspects related to women’s activism. As Kuumba (2001) asserts, this type of approach to theorizing is constructive because it is able to “build on the gendered critiques, draw from the theoretical strengths, and offsets the limitations of social movement theories” (p.58).

4.4 Gender and Social Movement Strategies

This section is informed by the chapter “Social Resistance Strategies: The Myth of Gender Neutrality” in Kuumba’s (2001) book *Gender and Social Movements*. This chapter explores questions regarding the various ways that gender impacts social resistance strategies. Kuumba begins by drawing attention to an important point stressed by numerous social

movement scholars, namely that “forms of resistance do not magically appear, but are structured and created through the dynamic interplay between factors in the social environment and the movement, including gender” (p.99). Indeed, movement activists and the organizations that support them operate within a particular context of constraints and opportunities that influences the types of strategies that are available or that they adopt. The previous historical chapter of this thesis considers many of these broader social and internal factors in its summation.¹¹ This lays the context for understanding the various strategies and counterstrategies.

Kuumba’s central focus in her chapter lies in her identification of three interrelated ways that gender plays an important role in social movement strategies. First, she asserts that “men and women’s distinct social roles, both personal and public, impact the available strategies that they adopt when they are dominant participants in a movement structure” (p.98). In other words, gender influences the choice of the original strategies implemented by the movement’s actors, particularly those in roles of leadership. Since the Marlin mine’s inception, the leadership positions in resistance-affiliated groups and organizations from the village (development councils COCODES) to the municipal (FREDEMI, COPAE, ADISMI), to the regional level (CPO) have been primarily led by men.¹² Given that men’s social place and roles are associated with the public sphere, it comes as no surprise that this male bias informs the choice of nearly all of the movements’ strategies. The male biases for organizing collective action in the public domain have brought many challenges for female activists.

¹¹ Broader factors include the external societal conditions and institutionalized power relations within the given nation-state, while internal aspects to the movement include organizational characteristics, environmental conditions and strategic choices made by participants, leaders and organizations.

¹² During the course of this research, three female leaders operating at each of these levels were identified. One spoke candidly of the difficulties she faced in attaining her leadership position and the continued gender discrimination she experiences by her male counterparts.

Secondly, Kuumba notes that access to a movement's dominant strategy during particular periods can be differentially accessible depending on gender. This point focuses on the movement participants themselves and the differential access they have to the established strategies. As will be discussed in the analysis, patriarchal notions around the gendered division of labor and the roles associated with this division have relegated many female activists to the confines of their home, thus impacting their access to certain resistance strategies. The specific ways that gender has been institutionalized and structured within a particular social context must also be taken into consideration in this type of analysis.

Gender can also influence the development of the strategy. For example, at the La Puya resistance site in northwest of Guatemala City¹³ the researcher observed that women's actual gender roles have become a strategy. At the resistance site, it is the women who cook, serve meals to the resistance members and international observers, clean the site, and take care of the children. They do all this in addition to their regular household duties. Thus, the strategy is compatible with traditional gender roles, a point reiterated by Kuumba. The tactics used against women activists are also gendered in nature and are strategically designed to have a gendered impact with the intent of deterring women's activism. For example, the strategic criminalization of female anti-mining activists is a particularly effective counterstrategy by the state and mining company in the Marlin struggle, as it has the ability to exacerbate women's position of social and economic disadvantage.

Since gender is a fluid concept, it also has the ability to be transformed through any given resistance strategy. In response to the above mentioned example of women at the la Puya

¹³ For over four years, resistance members from this struggle have taken turns weekly serving 24-hour shifts at the blockade located near the mine's entrance.

resistance, one female activist confides that women's strong role in movement strategies have led to a positive transformation in men's attitudes towards their female counterparts. She asserts that women's "continual presence" in various social protests have been a "form of informal training" that men "would not accept otherwise" (Muralles 2015). On the other hand, evidence suggests that gender can be strategically manipulated in the development of the counterstrategy to have the opposite effect and exacerbate gender relations. For example, at the El Estor mining struggle in eastern Guatemala, mining authorities strategically criminalized the husbands of female activists, despite the fact that they were not involved in the resistance. Criminalization of the husbands places them in a vulnerable position, increases their fears and these in turn cause heightened tensions and pressures in the home.

Thirdly, Kuumba notes that certain acts of resistance "have been made virtually invisible due to the male-based notion of appropriate, legitimate, and/or valued forms of collective action" (p.98-99). In other words, because dominant movement strategies are generally infused with male biases, other forms of resistance headed by women have often times been neglected and devalued. Many times these resistance strategies are an "outgrowth" of women's "productive and reproductive labor" as evidenced in the above-mentioned example of the women cooking and cleaning at the La Puya resistance site (Kuumba 2001, 107), and thus are not deemed to be a form of resistance in the traditional sense. Similarly, certain counterstrategies utilized by the mine also use traditional gender roles as subtle ways of weakening women's activism or in this case, morale. More specifically, they utilize women's more traditional roles and orientations as caregivers and mothers. For example, as part of their corporate social responsibility mandate, Montana built a local hospital that offers free medical consultations to populations living in and

around the mine. By providing the hospital, the company is trying to weaken resistance by appealing to women's maternal nature.

At the same time, testimonies reveal that when women took their children to the clinic because they had rashes the women believed were linked to mine-contaminated water sources, the doctors immediately dismissed the women telling them that their children's rashes were not a consequence of water pollution but rather due to the "dirty environment" of the home (M.S Cinto 2015). In other words, the women were criticized for being bad mothers, for keeping a dirty home that led to their children's illnesses. In this case, the counterstrategy is a form of gendered delegitimization that is reinforced through opportunistic moments of interaction between mining authorities and female activists, increased in frequency through the mechanism of the clinic.

Chapter 5: Analysis

5.1 Introduction: Strategies and Counterstrategies

In this chapter the theoretical framework outlined above is used to guide the analysis of the case study of women's activism in the Marlin mine resistance. This chapter details the strategies used by the women in their resistance and also the counterstrategies employed by the mine and its supporters. In particular, three resistance strategies and their gendered dimensions will be discussed, and each of these will be followed by an elaboration of the gendered nature of the counterstrategy used. The three strategies examined include blockades and protests, legal complaints and everyday activism and the three corresponding counterstrategies include violence, criminalization and cooptation and coercion.

Scholarly literature on women's anti-mining activism is very scant and the few studies that have been published have come out of the Latin American context. For example, a recent study by Katy Jenkins' (2014 (a)) looks at the gender narratives deployed by Peruvian and Ecuadorean women in their oral testimonies about their anti-mining activism. While this work sheds light on the activism of a silenced and marginalized group, Jenkins herself recognizes it is "empirical" and is about the "everyday experiences of activism and activists" (p. 442). In a more recent publication by Jenkins and Rondón (2015), the authors draw on the same data set of Jenkins' aforementioned work and attempt to explain women's activism through the concept of "resilience." Meanwhile, in her work on women's anti-mining activism in Argentina, Comelli (2010) alerts us to the ways in which women's everyday struggles constitutes a type of new activism, one that not only disrupts the mining complex but also the patriarchal structures of women's everyday lives. For example, she notes that while many male activists were unable to balance their activism and gender roles as household earners, women found a way of weaving

their daily lives in with their political activism thus transcending spaces that are traditionally male. While these few studies all make small contributions to understanding women's activisms in the mining context, it is evident that women's anti-mining activism is not only under-researched, but under-theorized.

The following section attempts to fill part of this void. It identifies three prominent strategies and their corresponding counterstrategies, as utilized in the Marlin struggle. In so doing it highlights the role that women play in the Marlin movement, the strategies they employ, and the tactics used, in this case by the mine and its supporters, to counter them. The counterstrategy portion of the analysis makes a significant theoretical contribution as it expands the theoretical lens to include actors that do not normally fall under the purview of traditional social movement theory such as community members and mining authorities.¹⁴ This analysis is largely guided by Kuumba's work on gender and social movement strategies.

5.2 Strategy #1: Blockades and Protests

One of the original strategies used by the Marlin resistance is the blockade. This type of disruptive action is at the core of contention but does nonetheless constitute one of the strongest weapons of social protest that the Marlin movement has to offer. With objects such as tires, barrels, rocks or physical presence (ie their own bodies), anti-mining activists form roadblocks as a means to obstruct the routine activities of the mine. While this strategy gives the activists significant leverage considering the environment and conditions under which they operate, it also broadens the circle of conflict as the next subsection will demonstrate. However, lacking from

¹⁴ In their work on gender and social movements, Einwhoner et al. (2000) argue that this scholarship should be expanded to include "others" (i.e., opponents and the general public) into the gendered analysis.

any public or scholarly accounts on this strategy is the role of women who willingly place their bodies at the forefront of the blockade.

In her research on female anti-mining activists in Argentina, Comelli (2010) confirms women placing themselves physically on the front lines. She also notes that, in the most “threatening situations” related to mining conflict, female activists seem more willing than men to “put their body” on the line despite the consequences they may face (p.15). The question to be asked is: Why do women utilize these particular tactics? Or, put another way, what is the logic that underlies this choice? In answering the question, what becomes obvious is that gender is the basis of both motivation and a strategy for women. A female resistance member from the La Puya¹⁵ struggle explains:

Well, we discussed it in advance and we all decided it would be best that women were at the front [of the blockade] because we are strong and can handle a lot...plus, they [the male police officers] need to respect us as women. Also, men are easily provoked and violence is more likely to break out” (Female resistance member 2015)

In this quote the participant suggests that female activists play a distinct role as a means to maintain peaceful resistance. By placing women on the front lines, the resistance is strategically drawing on essentialized notions of femininity of women as “peacekeepers” as a way to subvert state forces from engaging in explicit acts of public violence against women. It also reveals that the mixed-gender composition of the movement has bearing on the adaptation of this particular strategy (Kuumba 2001). Though this specific logic could not be confirmed in the Marlin blockades, female testimonies uncover different variations of this strategy. Maria, a female activist from the community of San José Nueva Esperanza shares:

¹⁵ The La Puya resistance is a ladino anti-mining movement located in the municipality of San José el Golfo, approximately 20km northwest of Guatemala City.

Yes, not so long ago a group of women from San Jose Ixcaniché put up a blockade but it was on their own terms and it didn't have anything to do with the resistance.¹⁶ It was the organizational efforts of a group of women in that community to demand that the mine pay for the damages caused to their homes, at least the cracks in their walls (M.S. Cinto 2015).

This testimony is revealing as it suggests that women purposefully drew on this strategy as a way to subvert structural gendered barriers (such as patriarchal norms and the ubiquitous lack of resources) that would have otherwise prohibited their activism. This type of tactic is evidenced in a separate interview with one of the women during which time she confesses that the blockade was “convenient” as women were able to mobilize locally “without their husband’s consent” and with “limited resources” (de Leon 2015). It also speaks to the astuteness of the women who drew on a strategy that aligns with “what they have, from where they are stationed, to accomplish specific objectives” (Kuumba 2001, 98).

Another common strategy used by the Marlin resistance, particularly in its earlier years, was protests. Unlike blockades that rely on women for strategic purposes, protests require less coordination, less resources and are conducted in larger public spaces. Though protests are identified as one of Marlin’s most prominent strategies, one male resistance leader revealed that they were “dominated by men” and that women were “largely absent” (A.D. López 2015). Crisanta, a female activist and local coordinator for Defensores de la Madre Tierra (Defenders of Mother Earth), a branch of the local parish shares her thoughts on this situation:

Even though women still make up the majority of the current resistance, there are many more that still would like to participate in it... including in public protests and gatherings... these women have that consciousness but they simply cannot leave the house because of their husbands. Even if the husbands are neutral on the mining issue, many still don't allow their wives to leave the home because in their minds, that is where they belong...patriarchy allows men to “condition” their wives not to have a voice...[and]... this largely explains their absence” (Pérez 2015)

¹⁶ This group of women has since joined the Marlin resistance.

The historical depth of the issues involved in women's struggle to be political actors in the Marlin resistance cannot be understated. As noted in the historical chapter, their struggle is placed against a patriarchal ideology based in the gendered sexual division of labor which separates private and public spheres, the domestic and the political, with women's designated roles and responsibilities occurring in domestic spaces (Jelin 1990). Women's exclusion from the public (political) environment influences participation in the movement's dominant strategic approaches, thus confirming Kuumba's (2001) assessment that dominant strategies are many times differentially accessible dependent on sex. This differential access could have both ideological and structural roots.

In the case of Marlin, the structural dimension of women's limited participation in protests is both social and economic in nature. A local male resistance leader explains:

Here there is a lot of intimidation. The government in power [municipal] has managed local [village] community programs in such a manipulative way, particularly with women to whom they promise either benefits or money. But, when women want to protest in the community, they are immediately pressured in this way. The political representatives, who are funded by the mine, tell these women that they will no longer receive this economic support; this support will be cut off if they participate in the protests (A.D. López 2015).

While many community members, particularly women, are working to build consensus on opposing the mining projects, Montana, the mining company, has built strategic relationships at both the municipal and local level (village) in the communities where mining as a development strategy is heavily contested. Montana focuses its alliances on groups of people who have political and economic power. In this way, it seeks to facilitate its operations. That is,

those in alliance with it will be a social bulwark against mining's opponents at these various levels. Given Indigenous women's overwhelming political exclusion (*On Common Ground* 2010), these local positions of authority are held primarily by men who are profiting economically from their status. Thus, the logic behind the mine's "partnerships" is inherently gendered to favor men who support the mine's presence in the region.

It should be noted that one female activist interviewed for this research held a position of authority at both the village and municipal levels and she spoke candidly about the overt gender discrimination she faces on a daily basis. Thus, patriarchy and sexism combined with corruption not only aggravates women's economic vulnerability but also hinders their potential to become vocal political actors.

However, evidence suggests that in response to this exclusion, female activists have found creative ways to advance their continued anti-mining activism. Within the five communities studied in this research project, clusters of women have carved out their own local spaces as a means to meet and continue dialogue concerning various aspects related to mining struggles.

According to one activist from the community of Agel, one of the villages close to the mine site, at one point the female-only meetings were taking place on a weekly basis and had an attendance of up to 25 women (García Lopez 2015). However, this effort was aided by their affiliation with a national Mayan feminist organization from the near-by department of Quiché. This organization provided a space (community hall), snacks as well as various workshops for these women. After this organization withdrew their support due to financial constraints, the women struggled to find spaces to meet as many husbands did not as permit meetings in the

home. This highlights the class-related structural issues, particularly women's economic vulnerability, as deterrents to their activism.

To end this section, it is important to note that not all men are opposed to women's activism. In fact, organizations¹⁷ and individual men including resistance leaders, activists and husbands have played an important role in advocating for and encouraging women's continued activism. Their support is particularly important given the influence they hold in the home and the pressure they face in the community as they operate against the grain of male mining proponents. Laureano, a former mine worker and husband of a long time female activist shares his story:

Currently, I have nothing to do with the mine. I used to work in the tunnels...inside it was unbelievably hot, full of dust and contaminants and gas. After years in there, I started feeling sick, I had pain in my lungs and body. The mine sent me to one of their doctors to get some exams done... of course, when they came back they said everything was fine, my body was in good shape. So, I went and got another opinion from a private doctor and he said that I had some type of serious respiratory illness that would eventually kill me. He advised me to quit and I did. This experience changed me...I've realized we must think of our children and their future. Now more than ever I support my wife and our family (L.Bamaca 2015)

5.3 Counterstrategy #1: Violence

The dominant counterstrategy that state, mining and private security forces use in response to social protest strategies is violence. In the Guatemala mining context, violence is manifested in a variety of ways including physical, sexual and psychological forms and these incidents have been well-documented by an array of environmental and human rights organizations (MiningWatch Canada 2011; Rights Action 2011, 2016). Lacking in these

¹⁷ The only local organization that is currently and actively working on gender-related issues is the environmental branch of the local parish "Defenders of Mother Earth" (Defensoras de la Madre Tierra). Since their distancing from the resistance in 2010, their mandate has shifted to focus on "consciousness- building" particularly related to gender inequality and women's subordination.

accounts however, is a more detailed look at the gendered nature of the counterstrategy itself both in terms of its development and impact on female activists. For example, in the case of the blockade at the la Puya resistance site, the same female activist said this of the state's response:

At the beginning there were male police officers but after that the authorities caught on [referring to women being at the forefront of the blockade]; they started sending female police officers... They would put female police officers on the front lines face to face with us and they would grab us inappropriately [pointing to her breasts] ...they were also trying to get a rise out of us by demeaning us...it was a deliberate strategy on their part" (Female resistance member 2015)

This response suggests that the gendered logic enforcing women's role in this strategy is inverted by state authorities. The state's response demonstrates the willingness of the authorities to subvert the traditional gender norms by utilizing female police officers in order to counteract the activist's gendered non-violent strategy. In this way, the female police officers become an embodiment of male authority but without the gendered restrictions. In other words, they could, and do, behave violently towards female activists but this aggression is not imbued with the taboos inherent in male on female violence. Though the violence embedded in the strategy was not explicit, it still produced the outcome that authorities were seeking which was the impetus for a violent confrontation.

Explicit acts of violence against groups of activists is another form the violent counterstrategy utilized by state authorities. Women are targets of these too, though the violence against them is often underreported. Marlin's most violent clash with authorities occurred on January 11, 2005 when more than 1,200 soldiers and 400 police agents opened fire on resistance members from Sipacapa (the second of the two municipalities opposing the mine), who had peacefully blockaded the road to the mine for 42 days. This incident resulted in the injury of

several activists and the death of a local man (MICLA n.d.). In February 2010, one of the resistance organizations, FREDEMI, coordinated a protest that saw 700 mining opponents block the entrance of the mine for 13 days. Exactly a year later, another large blockade was attacked by security forces resulting in the detention and beating of many of the activists (Rights Action 2011).

This type of explicit violence has also been felt by individual activists. A 2012 report done by U.S State Department (citing data from the Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (UDEFEHUGUA); (Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit) noted that in the same year, thirteen human rights defenders were murdered in Guatemala, while 291 were attacked and “many of the attacks [were] related to conflicts over land and the exploitation of natural resources” (p.15). Another independent report done by the Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders (n.d.), whose work has a gender focus on the same topic, recorded 633 attacks on female human rights defenders in Guatemala with a more than 50% chance of repeat assaults occurring during a two- year period (2012-2014).

Although these statistics were not specific to the mining sector, they demonstrate that female activist’s strong presence in varying struggles coupled with high rates of gender-violence have made them prime targets for violence and assassinations. For example, in neighboring Honduras, internationally-renowned environmental activist and Indigenous leader Berta Cáceres was shot and killed in her home in March 2016. She was the founder of COPINH (Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras), an Indigenous Lenca organization in western Honduras that defends Indigenous territories affected by various extractive industries including logging, dams, mining projects, and other megaprojects (COPINH n.d.). In the four

months after her assassination, two more outspoken COPINH members,¹⁸ one male and one female, were brutally killed. As many human rights organizations have reported, these political assassinations serve as an effective statement to remaining activists to cease or die.

At Marlin, there have been numerous explicit acts of violence carried out against female activists. For example, in 2010 a campesina activist named Diodora Hernandez was shot in the head at point-blank range by two men¹⁹ because she refused to sell her land to the mine. She survived the attack but lost her right eye, the hearing in her right ear and the feeling in half her face (Rights Action 2016). During a visit related to this research, Diodora and her private security guard²⁰ confided that just days prior, a local neighbor fired numerous shots at her and yelled “terrorist” as she tended to her animals. Another female activist María, recounts how two local men attempted to shoot and kill her mother in late 2010 because she was an open critic of the mine (M.S. Cinto 2015). While the state, the mine, and its security personal have been connected to other acts of mining violence in the region,²¹ it should be noted that it was local mine workers and some neighbors who were identified as the culprits in these three incidents. Again, this reveals the tense and polarized environment that exists between male mine workers and female activists within their own communities.

¹⁸ The male activist was 38-year old Nelson Garcia who was shot dead while walking home. The female activist was 46- year old Lesbia Janeth Urquía. Her body was found in a municipal dump and autopsy reports indicate that she was stabbed to death.

¹⁹ These men were later identified as local workers of the Marlin mine.

²⁰ During my brief conversation with this security guard he claimed that he had been assigned as Diodora’s personal security guard by the state. While the reason for this remains unclear, one possibility could be related to international pressure by civil society groups such as Amnesty International.

²¹ For example, in June 2000, the decapitated body of Pedro Miguel Cinto, an active opponent of the Marlin project, was found lying by the side of the road near his house – his head was found several days later in Huehuetenango; in March 2005, anti-mining activist Álvaro Benigno Sánchez, was shot and killed by an employee of a private security company working for Montana; in May 2007, Byron Lionel Bámaca and Marco Tulio Rodríguez, two local men working as cooks in the mine, disappeared while sent on an errand for Montana – to this day their cases remain unsolved (Rights Action 2007; Rodríguez 2008).

As described earlier, mining development at Marlin is occurring within a context marked by tremendous poverty. For those individuals who are able to better their family's existence as a result of employment at the mine, any challenge to the mine represents a threat to their livelihood, regardless of the detrimental impacts the industry brings to the environment and their community. Thus, male community members employed by the Marlin project view women's resistance to mining as a threat to their job security and their family's livelihood.

These incidents also shed light on the shift in community dynamics since the arrival of the mine. When discussing their communities, many testimonies simultaneously present two opposing images: one is of the pre-mining period when the communities were "poor" but "peaceful," "hard-working," and "cooperative", and the other is of the mining period when the communities are "divided," "violent" and "money-driven" (F. Bamaca 2015; Bautista 2015). For some, the latter has created a culture of economic privilege that fosters violence. As Juan explains:

Mine employees think that they can just pay a fine or a sum of money [for hurting or killing someone] because they make so much. We make about 35.00 Quetzals a day [\$4.50 Canadian] for work in the field but they make Q300.00 a day [\$38.50 CDN], that's why they figure they have enough. This is how they see it. It's not like they are going to maintain the family of whoever dies. They have the power of money" (cited in Caxaj et al. 2014, 53)

Another form violence that has been noted with the arrival of large-scale mining activities and that has had particularly serious consequences for women is sexual violence (Hargreaves n.d; Lahiri-Dutt, 2008, 2011; Mahy, 2011). For example in 2007, 11 women from the remote community of Lote 8 near the Fenix nickel mine in Eastern Guatemala were allegedly gang raped by police and private security personal from the mine during a violent eviction in

their community.²² Sexual violence, particularly rape, was a common tool of war used by counterinsurgency forces during the country's violent 36-year civil war. As Claudia Card (1996) notes, rape not only "breaks the spirit, humiliates, tames, produces a docile, deferential, obedient soul" but is also used "to send a message" (p.6) to those populations who are being victimized. Interviews with female activists at the El Estor struggle reveal the long-lasting effect of this incident as many women still expressed fear of the possibility of a recurrence of that incident. The gendered nature of this counterstrategy must be understood as connected to, rather than separate from, the country's violent history and the contemporary political and economic situation that Indigenous women face.

It is important to mention that men can also be victims of sexual violence. For example, in February 2016, three men from Papua New Guinea's Porgera mine, a subsidiary of Canada's Barrick Gold, claim that private security personnel forced them to perform sexual acts on each other despite one of the victims disclosing he was HIV- positive at the time of the alleged incident (Vice News 2015). This case also highlights an emerging area of research related to sexual violence (and prostitution) and the increase of HIV-AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in communities around mining sites (Hargreaves n.d; Hinton et al. 2006).

5.4 Strategy #2: Filing Legal Complaints

Another strategy used by resistance members is the filing of legal complaints with the local municipal authorities. Evidence suggests that female activists' participation in pursuing this strategy has been extremely strong (F. Bamaca 2015). These complaints vary in nature²³ but have recently centered on the issue of their cracked homes. In 2014, more than 80 members

²² These women are one of three sets of plaintiffs currently suing Hudbay Minerals in precedent setting civil suits taking place in the Ontario Supreme Court regarding the above mentioned incident.

²³ Other complaints filed at the municipal level include cases related to violence, threats, extortion, theft, land sales and water issues.

(mostly women) from the community of Agel filed a legal petition with the municipality against the mine for cracks in their homes, which they claim are caused by underground mining. A similar claim was filed in 2015 by a group of 16 women from the community of San Jose Ixcaniché with the assistance of FREDEMI. The gendered nature of this strategy is particularly surprising given the many challenges women face in trying to implement it.

First, the filing of a legal complaint requires travel from their village to the municipal capital of San Miguel Ixtahuacán where complaints are filed. In this region, public transport is intermittent and economic resources for the return fare are limited given the high levels of poverty. Second, the strategy requires time. As demonstrated in the background section of this analysis, women's lives are dictated by the 'triple burden' of productive, reproductive and care labor (see Moser 1993). Many female activists speak of these burdens and the difficulties that ensue. Third, this strategy requires a certain amount of knowledge regarding the process, in addition to skills related to language and literacy. While any comment on the degree of women's processual knowledge would be speculative, their monolingual and illiterate status creates a specific set of gendered challenges related to this strategy (Yagenova 2012).

Given these numerous barriers, how have women been able to move forward with this strategy? Evidence suggests at least one possible way. During an interview with FREDEMI leaders, they revealed that the organization had supported a few of the women from the village of San Jose Ixcaniché with this process²⁴. For example, male leaders from FREDEMI accompanied the women to the municipality, guided them and paid for their transportation costs (F. Bamaca 2015). However, there is reason to believe that the official number of women utilizing the legal

²⁴ This strategy also produced tension as certain women from other communities such as Agel felt that FREDEMI was favoring and supporting women from one specific community which also happened to be the home community of one of the main resistance leaders.

strategy does not fully capture the extent to which women are opting for this form of resistance. Anecdotal evidence, amassed during the course of this research, suggests this is a tactic used by large numbers of women. This, then, prompts the question: Why are women mobilizing as primary actors in this strategy despite the multiple challenges?

The answer to this question can be found in a report by the Union Latinoamericana de Mujeres-- Union of Latin American Women (ULAM 2010), a network of grassroots women's groups working with women affected by mining development. According to the study the home holds a particularly strong material, cultural, and symbolic significance for women in this region. It is one of the only material possessions that women share and claim rights to with their husbands. Their economic contribution to the home comes from a lifetime of long, hard, and exploitative seasonal work they perform on the country's sugar and coffee plantations (ibid). Thus, the destruction of the home by mining development represents the disappearance of a patrimony that represents women's life work. Their struggle to protect their homes can be understood in this context.

5.5 Counterstrategy #2: Criminalization

The legal equivalent as a counterstrategy used by mining companies and the state has been the criminalization of anti-mining activists. Criminalization is defined as "the arbitrary use of the law, the threat of using it, or the stigmatization of acts, ideas, and proposals of human rights defenders" (MIWHRD n.d., 50). In the mining context, criminalization generally involves legal action taken against activists by other actors including state and mining officials. While the phenomenon is largely conceptualized in its legal form, there are also social forms of criminalization. These include the stigmatization, ostracism, harassment of individual activists or the entire movement, as well as slander and smear campaigns against them. All of these counterstrategies have been identified in the Guatemalan context (FAU-AL 2015; Solano 2015;

Sibrián & van der Borgh 2014). However, unlike its legal form, which is enforced by state and mining forces, the social forms of criminalization generally come from mining proponents within the community. In the case of female activists at the Marlin struggle, all three types of criminalization are used against them, and have become a part of their everyday life. The following section sheds light on this reality while paying special attention to the gendered nature of the development, effects (impacts) and challenges that complement this counterstrategy.

One of the most well-known cases of legal criminalization cases at the Marlin mine involves a group of eight women from the community of Agel. In June 2008, the community witnessed a conflict develop between these local women²⁵ and Montana over the installment of some high-voltage power lines that provided electricity to the mine. According to the main instigator of the alleged crime, one of the electrical towers, which fell directly on her property, was put up without her consultation and without consideration for the potential health hazards it may cause her and her family. After her concerns were repeatedly ignored by the mine, she sabotaged the power lines, effectively cutting the power supply to the mine, which halted production and led to the eventual suspension of mining operations for several months (On Common Ground 2010). In response to this action, the woman who shorted the electrical line was charged. On the day of her arrest, she was supported by several other women activists who tried to block the police, and, as a result, all were not only threatened by local police forces and private security personnel but were charged with aggravated usurpation, coercion and conspiracy to commit a crime (Yagenova & Garcia 2009).

Criminalization of female activists has a specific set of gendered impacts that makes them easy targets for retaliation by those in power. The first relates to their economic

²⁵ After this incident, these women were commonly referred to as the “Marlin 8”

vulnerability. Criminalization cases require substantial sums of money for legal representation and additional costs related to the judicial process itself including transportation, accommodation, and food to name a few. While mining companies have unlimited funds to mount these campaigns against activists, the impoverished state of Indigenous women becomes a major obstacle in this type of legal battle, a fact well documented by other scholars (see OACUND n.d.; Seider and Sierra 2010).²⁶

Criminalization of mining activists also has a negative physical impact on the criminalized individual. The stigma of being criminalized can produce an array of physical and psychological burdens including “fear, anxiety, insecurity, frustration, and impotence as well as stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, isolation, and insecurity” (IACHR 2015, 107). At Marlin, the fear and uncertainty of being torn away from children and family were expressed by women who had been criminalized as well as those had not. Evelia, a single-mother of five and anti-mining activist, questions this possibility: “If something happens to me or the state authorities take me away, who is going to take care of my children? Who is going to prepare their food and make sure they are safe? No, no, this just can’t happen” (García Lopez 2015).

Criminalization can also have a negative effect on the family. The separation of the defender from the family has the ability to change the family dynamic and daily life. Roles and responsibilities normally assumed by the criminalized defender (male or female) are left void and must be assumed by other family members, including children. This could have broader negative implications including the withdrawal of children from school in order to take care of their siblings, maintain the home or seek employment. Moreover, the detention of a family

²⁶ In the Guatemalan context, the Centro de Acción Legal Ambiental y Social (CALAS), a human rights organization based in Guatemala City that provides legal support for criminalized activists, has played a key role in the fight against transnational mining companies operating in Guatemala.

member forces the family to use its very limited economic resources to secure the release of the family member who has been criminalized (IACHR 2015). While these incidents capture the ways that legal criminalization directly impacts the activist both directly and indirectly, they do not capture the more nuanced ways that gender is manipulated in the development of this counterstrategy.

Such a gendered tactic is captured in an interview with a female activist at the El Estor struggle in Eastern Guatemala where mining and state authorities have been strategic about whom they criminalize. One vocal, female activist from this struggle reveals that the mine criminalized her husband, not her, despite the fact that he was not an active member of the anti-mining resistance in that region. She recounts how his criminalization caused significant strain and tension on their relationship which almost led to their separation. He became extremely paranoid and fearful of the possibility of recurring criminalization and insisted that she withdraw herself from the resistance. This strategic move to criminalize her husband, she asserts, was a deliberate attempt by authorities to exacerbate gender relations within the home in the hopes of deterring her personal activism (Cholom 2015).

Prominent anti-mining female leaders are also affected in a particular way by the criminalization strategy. In a response to the UN Commission on the status of Women, the Union of Latinamerican Women (ULAM 2014) notes that several prominent female activists in Peru lost social support from their community after being criminalized. One female leader recounts how after her arrest, her role in the movement started to be questioned due to rumors circulated by mining proponents. This community response heightened her fear for her family, especially her father, who was a community leader opposing the same mining project.

The second pattern of criminalization involves social stigmatization. The intent of this form of criminalization is to simultaneously discredit the legitimacy of both the movement and the activist by damaging their public image (FAU-AL 2015, 16). This type of criminalization tactic seemed to have had a significant impact on female activists as it was a central element in their testimonies of mining's impact, and it seemed particularly effective against the women leaders. One of them related the life altering impact of this strategy for her:

Well, here for people involved in the resistance and us here in the community of Agel...they say we are terrorists, that we are criminals, that we are anti-mining, and tonnes of other names...these are the names the state and mine workers give us. In my case I was threatened by family members who called me these things and I have since abandoned where I used to live.... I used to live in Agel but now I don't live there anymore (García Lopez 2015).

As evidenced in an earlier testimony, this type of stigmatization has led to inter-familial and domestic violence between men who are not in the movement and female activists. One activist recounts how male family members used to beat her regularly because she was a “terrorist” and “traitor.” Evidence suggests that opponents have also become creative in the way they stigmatize anti-mining activists. For example, at the La Puya struggle, several female activists identified the use of social media as a means for malicious smear campaigns brought against them both individually and collectively. This, however, is not a strategy at Marlin as the levels of poverty and literacy in that region are extremely high and thus social media practices have not yet penetrated the region—at least not amongst the communities that are the focus of this analysis.

The third form of criminalization is harassment. Similar to social stigmatization, harassment is intended to problematize activists' lives in an attempt to deter their activism. Many of the activists at Marlin spoke candidly about the various forms of harassment they have endured over the years as a result of their anti-mining activism. These experiences were

particularly pronounced among activists who had regularly participated in blockades against the mining company or had been active in mobilizing other women to participate in the resistance.

Patrocina, one of the eight women criminalized by the mine in 2008, spoke movingly about the harassment she receives in the form of threats:

Ohhh yes, I have received many threats for speaking out against the mine...usually they call me...they have threatened me with violence and death...many of us face the same problem and we live in constant fear especially after what happened to Diodora²⁷ (Mejilla Perez 2015).

Even for female activists who were not personally threatened, the fear of being victimized was evident in their testimonies. For some, this constant fear has taken its toll and was identified as one of the main reasons for women withdrawing from the resistance (Pérez 2015).

5.6 Strategy #3: Everyday Activism

Another strategy that female activists utilize is “everyday activism,” a concept introduced by Katy Jenkins (2014(b)), one of the few scholars doing empirical work on women’s activism in the mining context. According to this scholar, “everyday activism” refers to the practices and discourses that are less self-evidently “activist” but are nonetheless making a significant contribution to the broader struggle.

This idea appears to build largely on the research done by James Scott (1985) in his seminal work *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Through his extensive field research conducted in Malaysia in the late 1970’s, Scott identified “everyday forms of peasant resistance,” which he described as “informal, and often covert” commonplace forms of resistance utilized by marginalized groups (p.33). These forms of resistance have three common features: they “require little or no coordination or planning; they often represent a form of individual self-help; and they typically avoid any direct symbolic confrontation with authority

²⁷ Diodora Hernandez is a female activist that was shot in the head by two mine workers in 2010.

or with elite norms (1985, 29). However, Scott does not consider the gendered dimensions of these less-evident types of strategies or against the backdrop of more dominant strategies that could also be a part of the movement's internal structure. Kuumba (2001), for example, claims that the virtual invisibility of these subtle acts of resistance enacted by women can be largely attributed to the "male-biased notion of appropriate, legitimate and/or valued forms of collective action" (p.99). As mentioned earlier, the Marlin resistance's vertical structure of leadership and decision-making by men has not only reinforced their dominance but also allowed male biases to influence various dimension of the movement, including its strategies.

Nevertheless, the broadening of the conceptualization of activism proved useful for this analysis. When the testimonies of female activist were analyzed through this lens, an array of small everyday acts that constitute everyday forms of resistance became visible. Maria, an activist from Agel, shared a story that highlights this idea:

Years ago, mining authorities approached [my mother] while she was working alone in the field. They said: "Look Senora, we want to buy your land...it's the law and the order of the mayor. It's also the law of the government that you sell to us, although you may not like it, you are obliged to follow the law." So, my mom responded: "Excuse me sir, you cannot come here and boss me around because this is private property and I bought it with my own money and I am the rightful owner... I don't want to sell my land and you will not oblige me to do so!" My mom always used to tell me that we have to be vigilant, watch the mine's every move. She would say to me: "If those men come back Maria, I will take my broom and hit them over the head like I sometimes do with the animals, that's exactly what I'm going to do to them if they step foot on my land again!" (M.S.Cinto 2015).

This example is insightful as it demonstrates that women's everyday activism, as a collection of individual acts or behaviours, are often embedded in the rhythms of everyday life. Here, the activist is speaking of wielding her broom to defend against mining aggression. One of the most well-known examples of women using such household objects of their quotidian

existence in protest is that of the Chilean women who took the streets in 1973 brandishing pots and pans to show their opposition to Salvador Allende.

Maria's story about her mom also demonstrates the everyday, constant nature of women's activism. Her mom refers to women's continual vigilance, their ongoing attention to the behavior of the actions of the mining authorities, their unceasing daily struggle to defend their rights (of property, for example), and their endless efforts to preserve their traditional roles amidst a tense and polarized environment. Indeed, this conceptualization of activism blurs the lines of what constitutes "activism" and highlights the "more mundane gestures of everyday life [that] reveal significant sites of political struggle." (Amoore 2005, 7 cited in Jenkins 2014(b)).

These small acts of resistance can also become a source of inspiration and strength for other female activists. Patrocina, a long-term activist from the village of Agel, speaks of her admiration for fellow activist Crisanta Pérez, the woman who shorted the power line and who is one of the few female leaders from her community:

The mine used to come regularly to try and convince Dona Crisanta to stop resisting because she has a lot of influence in our community....one time they came and offered her 24,000 quetzales [approximately \$3,200CND] so that she would quit resisting the mine, so she would quit speaking poorly of the mine....but Dona Crisanta wasn't convinced, she wasn't convinced at all...she said herself, 24,000 quetzales is a lot now but that does not guarantee the futures of her kids and grandkids....ohh my, it is so much money but she was so strong against the mine...(Mejilla Perez 2015).

Crisanta's refusal of the mine's bribe is a significant act of everyday resistance. In the context of abject poverty, this is a very significant amount of money. It demonstrates the strength and will of individual female activists, but also becomes the source of strength and inspiration to others. However, to limit this type of analysis to women's small acts and behavior alone misses

much of the point regarding the consciousness of their acts and the meaning they give to them (Scott 1985). The goal here is not to enter a complex debate about the relationship between thought and action, but rather to assert that women's consciousness, which is deeply rooted in the protection of their cultural identities based on land, attachment to place, and community, serve as the basis for their activism. Humberto, a male coordinator at the Parish confirms this idea:

We have realized here at the Parish that women are more thoughtful than men...men are bought out very quickly with small gifts from the mine....whereas the majority of women think, ask questions and analyze the long term effects mining on their land, livelihoods and families....[Men] do not see what is written behind all of this[referring to the mine's tactics] and the consequences whereas women do...these abilities are part of their consciousness...and it is for this precise reason that the mine does everything in their power to suppress women's participation in the resistance and their ability to make decisions, particularly those related to the home and land (H. Velasquez 2015).

5.7 Counterstrategy #3: Cooptation and Coercion

Similar to women's everyday activism, the mine's counterstrategies can also be "subtle" and "covert" in nature and hard to identify against the more dominant counterstrategies. As the following section suggests, these everyday acts of coercion and cooptation are embedded in "normal" interactions between female activists and mining officials. These types of interactions were particularly pronounced in the land acquisition process that has been ongoing between the Marlin mine and community residents.

The land acquisition process at the Marlin mine has been shrouded in controversy. These accounts have been well documented in two prominent reports done by the *On Common Ground* (2010) report and Cordaid (van de Sandt 2009). However, in terms of evidence related to women, the *On Common Ground* (2010) report had the following to say:

According to Marlin personnel, it is up to each landowner to determine who will participate in the negotiation, with some involving all immediate family members and other negotiations taking place with a single individual. Nonetheless, company representatives confirmed that Montana has no policies or procedures that would ensure the consent of women and wives is obtained prior to completing land sales or resettlement (p.123).

In fact, evidence collected during this field research finds that the mine not only ignored getting the consent of women, but they strategically excluded, coerced, and manipulated women during the land acquisition process. Humberto, a coordinator at the local San Miguel parish, explains that one common way the mine achieved this was by dividing men and women when consulting on the sale of the land. Male-only “community meetings” were held as a means to divide women and men after the mine’s many failed attempts in joint negotiations during which many women were vocal actors (H. Velasquez 2015). Thus, this counterstrategy was gendered as it sought to exclude women from the process on the recognition of their strength on understanding issues related to land.

Testimonies also reveal that even when the process was inclusive of women, it was founded on lies and coercion, another fact highlighted in the above-mentioned reports but without a gender-focus. Patrocina, one of the oldest female activists shared her experience regarding this particular type of process:

When the mining officials came to buy land here in San Miguel and they visited me they never said anything about gold...oh no, they insisted that they were wanting the land to plant orchids...they kept on saying “wouldn’t you want your home to look pretty with orchids?”....they came back several times but I refused to sell them my land (Mejilla Pérez 2015).

This testimony not only demonstrates the manipulative nature the mine’s strategy to attain land but also suggests that notions of femininity were utilized in a coercive way in attempt to attain consent. More specifically, the mining official’s discourse draws the state of the woman’s home and its surroundings (i.e., looking pretty), in an attempt to influence her outlook

on the sale of tracts of land around her home. Other female activists reported that the mine's approach was much more explicit and based on intimidation and threats. Marcelena, an activist from San José Ixacaniché said this:

When the mine arrived [to purchase the land] I was not in agreement and made it known to them...their response was an attempt to scare me...the engineers would say "if you do not want to sell your land that's fine, no matter what, your home will be buried when the mine starts its operations...go wherever to make a complaint, the authorities won't pay attention to you...so it would be in your best interest just to agree now" (M. Hernandez 2015).

The testimonies also suggest that some women's struggle to protect their land becomes even more difficult when the mine strategically coerces male family members in the process. Similar to other counterstrategies, the strategic targeting of male family members is a means of exacerbating patriarchal relations in the home, where men have all the authority. The intent behind this strategy is that women will eventually be forced to concede to the demands of their husbands, or other male authority figures in the home, and sell. Maria Paula, a long-standing female activist recounts her story:

Translator- Maria Paula is declaring that the mine also tried to make her sell her land. She did not want to sell because this was her family's land and it provided for them her whole life. But without her knowledge, her sons signed a [land] agreement [with the mine] because she is a widow; her husband already passed. They told her that the mine would not leave them alone and they were fed up of dealing with them ... so, her sons were the ones that gave authorization for this type of transaction...they were the ones that gave into the mine and sold the land to the mine despite Maria Paula's resistance for years and years. She says her sons showed no pity for this act as they kept all the money (Domingo 2015).

While the gendered nature of this counterstrategy is noted above, it should also be pointed out that the root of many women's problems lie in national patterns of land inheritance which tend to favor men over women (On Common Ground 2010). This is particularly pronounced within the complex system of Mayan land use and inheritance in which women's

rights remain secondary (On Common Ground 2010 citing Davis 1997). In other instances, the mine did not need to act as a coercive force, as broader ills related to patriarchy such as male dominance and domestic violence, was the core problem. Patrocina shares her story:

Translator: Patrocina is declaring that her life was threatened. She was beaten because she did not want to leave her land. She didn't want to sell the home or land to the mine and as a consequence, she suffered many beatings by her husband until he abandoned her and their children. And in the end it didn't matter...[because] the husband made the decision on his own to sell the land and their home to the mine. So, she is saying that she has suffered so many problems in her life because of mining including being abandoned...she says that she and her children have cried and suffered immensely in this time. This is what she is declaring (Mejilla Pérez 2015).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Conflicts in Guatemala's mining sector and at the Marlin mine, in particular, continue to rage despite the negative publicity the company has received from various actors in the international community. Sadly, this trend shows no signs of abating as the company's profit margins continue to rise and the country continues to attract foreign capital to its resource sector. Yet, some of the country's most marginalized populations, living in communities adjacent to the mining site continue to mobilize and resist mining development. Indigenous women continue to play a central role, not only in this struggle but mining struggles globally. Yet, their activism remains largely invisible on a global scale, both in terms of empirical and theoretical scholarly contributions.

This thesis contributes to efforts to giving greater visibility to such activism. It has examined the gendered nature of three different strategies (blockades and protests, filing legal complaints, and everyday activism) and the accompanying counterstrategies (violence, criminalization, and coercion and cooptation) utilized in the struggle between local community member and state and mining authorities linked to Goldcorp's Marlin mine in Western Guatemala. In so doing, it brings to the forefront the very prominent roles that women have been playing in these struggles, the gendered nature of their resistance, and the ways in which the counterstrategies used against them are also gendered.

This thesis has also contributed to efforts by some academics to underscore that while gender and social movement theory continues to grow as a field, more attention needs to be paid to case studies that are not centered around women's movements, but have intersectional gender-based foci. This analysis has demonstrated that even in movements with different gender

constituents and political agendas, gender continues to be an important analytical tool. When this analytical concept is applied to theory and when this theory is then informed by women's lived experience, a rich and insightful picture of women's activism emerges. While this understanding alone is not capable of creating structural change related to women's gender inequality and subordination, it can create awareness not only the gendered impacts of the mining industry- but also the gendered nature of women's activism. Such awareness can have significant practical consequences.

As there is a clear void in gendered analyses and literature surrounding this topic, further research in the wider context of other nation states in Latin America and elsewhere is not only possible, but needed. Potential topics that be explored include the role of men and masculinities in aspects related to anti-mining struggles; the role of gender in female leadership; the role of gender in movement mobilization; and studying the role that gender plays a role in movement outcomes.

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