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Actions by women against violence in agribusiness contexts in northwest Argentina. A study in Santiago del Estero

Acciones de mujeres contra las violencias en contextos de agronegocio en el noroeste argentino. Un estudio en Santiago del Estero

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the actions undertaken by rural women belonging to the Unión de Trabajadores/as de la Tierra in the province of Santiago del Estero, Argentina, against the violence they suffer in agribusiness contexts. It reconstructs the context of the social organization's emergence and addresses the women's actions, the tensions between private life and social activism, and their capacity to build care networks. The theoretical contributions come from Latin American ecofeminism and Latin American feminist political ecology. The methodological approach is qualitative, combining a literature review with the use of secondary sources and on-site fieldwork through participant observation and semi-structured interviews conducted between 2019 and 2022. The study concludes that these organized women move beyond being victims of patriarchy to become key actors who weave care networks that empower their subjectivities. They also carry out training activities aimed at preventing such violence, where support in critical cases is essential, along with the development of productive and food-related activities.

Keywords: Women, resistance, gender violence, agribusiness.

Resumen

Este trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar las acciones que despliegan las mujeres rurales que conforman la Unión de Trabajadores/as de la Tierra en la provincia de Santiago del Estero (Argentina) contra las violencias que sufren en contextos de agronegocio. Reconstruye el contexto de emergencia de la organización social y aborda las acciones de las mujeres, las tensiones entre el espacio privado y de militancia social y la capacidad de construcción de redes de cuidado. Los aportes teóricos provienen de los ecofeminismos latinoamericanos y de la ecología política feminista latinoamericana. El abordaje metodológico es cualitativo y combina la revisión bibliográfica con la utilización de fuentes secundarias y el trabajo de campo in situ mediante la realización de observación participante y entrevistas semiestructuradas entre los años 2019 y 2022. El estudio concluye que las mujeres organizadas se desplazan de víctimas del patriarcado para constituirse como actoras clave que tejen acciones en redes de cuidado que potencian las subjetividades. Asimismo, despliegan actividades de formación orientadas a la prevención de dichas violencias, donde los acompañamientos en casos críticos resultan fundamentales, junto con el desarrollo de actividades productivas y de comercialización con el objetivo de generar ingresos y fortalecer su autonomía económica.


Palabras clave: Mujeres, resistencia, violencia de género, agronegocio.


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Introduction

The emergence of the heteropatriarchal capitalist system brought with it ways of organizing life, human and non-human relationships, aimed at guaranteeing the accumulation and concentration of capital and wealth (Paredes, 2010), while severing the interdependence and eco-dependence necessary to ensure survival (Puleo, 2008). This penetration fused a low-intensity patriarchy (characteristic of village-based societies) with Western patriarchy, giving rise to renewed forms of exploitation of common goods and of women's body-territories (Cabnal, 2010; Paredes, 2010), in order to guarantee the historical project of capital (Segato, 2018).

From this point onward, a hierarchical binary lens was established through which social and ecological reality came to be viewed (Puleo, 2008), generating a rupture between productive/reproductive, public/domestic, mind/body, and reason/nature spheres (Tardón Virgil, 2011). Within this context, man (male, white, and heterosexual) became the rational subject who displays his sexual, economic, moral, intellectual, and political power before other men (Segato, 2018). It is through this division that women and feminized bodies are relegated alongside nature, becoming subject to patriarchal and capitalist predation (Segato, 2016).

In Latin America, capitalism gradually took shape until reaching its current phase of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2005). Since the end of the twentieth century, a cycle of intensified extractive dynamics has been observed through processes of economic re-primarization. This predominance of primary-product exports as a means of integration into the global economy has led to growing environmental and territorial conflicts linked to the dynamics of production, distribution, and consumption within their global-local interrelationship (Giarracca & Teubal, 2010; Svampa & Viale, 2014).

In Argentina, the consolidation of the agribusiness model (Gras & Hernández, 2013) entailed increasing transnationalization of the agricultural inputs industry and scientific developments, alongside greater technological dependence among producers. This production model has resulted in soil degradation, water contamination, and health risks due to the

massive use of agrochemicals. Their use has increased steadily since 1990, exceeding 400 million liters/kilograms in recent agricultural cycles and directly or indirectly affecting more than 13 million people (Schmidt & Toledo López, 2018). Other consequences include land concentration, biodiversity loss, population displacement toward urban peripheries, and the dismantling of peasant and Indigenous ways of life (Giarracca & Teubal, 2010; Svampa & Viale, 2014).

The expansion of this hegemonic model intensifies violence both against women's bodies and in relation to access to, use of, and ownership of common goods (Ulloa, 2016; Navarro, 2012). In the province of Santiago del Estero, located in northern Argentina, violence associated with the expansion of the agricultural frontier under an extractive logic and multiple forms of dispossession in rural territories is particularly evident. Increased social vulnerability has been documented as a result of the destruction of livelihoods and land grabbing, with institutions often acting as accomplices in these processes of dispossession (Isac & Canevari, 2018). These dynamics reconfigure care-related activities (Pérez Orozco & Del Río, 2002) and generate water inequalities due to resource appropriation by agribusiness actors (Castillo Oropeza & Hernández Gamboa, 2020).

Such forms of violence become especially acute in women's body-territories, manifesting in the breakdown of social ties, the reconfiguration of family dynamics, and the destruction of livelihoods, assets, and income sources (Isac & Canevari, 2018). In these rural territories, women's work is characterized by precarious conditions and inequality (Logiovine & Bianqui, 2025), accompanied by an excessive burden of care responsibilities that remain concealed by patriarchal state and social structures, despite their contribution to the economic survival of their families (Muñoz-Madrid, 2025). The sexual division of labor remains deeply entrenched, assigning the vast majority of unpaid work to women. A recent study on women's time use and labor in rural and semi-rural areas emphasizes the overlap and simultaneity of productive and care-related activities, concluding that

women bear substantial unpaid workloads, averaging 6.27 hours per day (Isac et al., 2024).

Another important antecedent emerges from agricultural censuses, which fail to recognize women as economically active subjects, a situation that becomes even more pronounced when examining land ownership and tenure. According to a study by Nobre and Hora (2017), only 20% of rural women own agricultural land and they generally lack access to the means of production. In Argentina, the 2018 National Agricultural Census revealed that only 20% of agricultural holdings across the country are managed by women, despite the fact that 80% of food production comes from their labor (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de la República Argentina, 2018).

Despite these forms of violence reflected in limited access to common goods such as water and land, Latin American feminist political ecology (Fernández Bouzo, 2020; Ulloa, 2016) highlights the leading role women play in actions undertaken to defend their territories. It emphasizes the creation of self-managed, assembly-based, and plural spaces that transform women into spokespersons and stewards of what has been interpreted as a historical project that is dysfunctional to capital. Within this project, territorial rootedness and the centrality of life emerge as strategies for defending common goods, guided by an ethic of care (Navarro, 2012). By recognizing interdependence and placing life at the center, women reclaim care-related activities and conceive of nature as part of a complementary whole rather than as a commodity (Shiva, 2016; Puleo, 2008).

Against this theoretical and empirical backdrop, this article focuses on the actions undertaken by rural women who are members of the social organization Unión de Trabajadores/as de la Tierra (UTT) through and within its Secretaría de Género in the province of Santiago del Estero, Argentina, to confront the violence they experience in agribusiness contexts.

The study offers several interrelated contributions. By analyzing these actions, it sheds light on the lived experiences of women as they navigate barriers to accessing and engaging with state institutions in order to exercise their rights. It also examines the tensions

between the private sphere and spaces of social activism, highlighting the construction of care networks. Furthermore, by focusing on one of Argentina's most rural provinces, this study demonstrates how the agribusiness model places peasant ways of life under strain in their encounter with capitalist modes of production (Isac & Canevari, 2018), thereby exacerbating violence against women.

Methodology

This article was developed on the basis of our prior relationship with the organization, through which we participated as workshop facilitators within a project funded by the Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad of the Argentine Republic and implemented in 2019. This involvement provided privileged access to the field, enabled the establishment of trust-based relationships, and allowed us to participate in the actions described herein. This relationship remained consolidated even after the conclusion of the funding period.

In addition, interviews and excerpts from a study conducted in 2022 as part of the requirements for one of the authors' undergraduate degrees were incorporated. To this end, narratives from organizational leaders with more than three years of involvement in the organization and holding responsibilities at the provincial level were utilized.

From a qualitative and feminist ethnographic perspective, the study combines a literature review with interviews and participant observation carried out during field visits in the province of Santiago del Estero, specifically in the departments of Atamisqui, Robles, Silípica, and La Banda.

The analysis draws on contributions from Latin American ecofeminisms and Latin American feminist political ecology. These theoretical perspectives make visible the forms of violence inherent to the productive model and their impact on women's body-territories (Cabrejas, 2017a; Cabrejas, 2017b; Moore Torres, 2018), revealing the breakdown of social ties, the destruction of livelihoods (Isac & Canevari, 2018), and the reconfiguration of care-related dynamics (Pérez Orozco & Del Río, 2002). The study also relies on a variety of secondary sources. These include

interviews conducted through digital media with women leaders of the UTT, social media posts, and documents produced by the organization (booklets, informational materials), as well as statistical data generated by institutions related to the subject under study. Internal audiovisual materials from the organization were also examined, together with a review of interventions by the interlocutors on social media platforms and in the press.

Fieldwork was conducted within the framework of the project “*Cultivating Seeds for Sovereign Harvests: Women and Rights in Territories of Violence in Santiago del Estero*,” implemented during 2020 and funded by the Ministry of Women, Genders, and Diversity of the Argentine Republic. Within this context, one of the authors served as a workshop facilitator, which made it possible to participate in various activities carried out by UTT women and facilitated access for conducting semi-structured interviews. A total of 20 field visits were undertaken, consisting of one workshop every two weeks between 2019 and 2021. These activities required preliminary agreements concerning workshop topics, teaching strategies, and transportation arrangements. During these stays, field notebooks were used to record women’s narratives regarding the violence they experience, as well as observations and anecdotes that were later incorporated into the analysis.

Participant observation, in its dual role, allowed us, on the one hand, to become involved in a variety of activities and integrate into the dynamics of each context, and, on the other hand, to maintain a degree of analytical distance (Restrepo, 2018). These moments constituted a methodological challenge, as they required heightened attentiveness during ethnographic interactions in order to understand what women say and narrate about the violence they experience. This involved the development of a patient and attentive mode of listening (Quirós, 2014).

Throughout the article, excerpts from field notes are included in quotation marks and italics as a means of clarification or reference. Verbal informed consent was obtained on site after explaining the objectives of the research. In order to respect this consent, the

names of the women appearing in the study are pseudonyms used to preserve their anonymity.

Results and Discussion

The contexts of the Unión de Trabajadores/as de la Tierra in Argentina and Santiago del Estero

Although the Unión de Trabajadores/as de la Tierra (UTT) originated between 2008 and 2010 in the horticultural belt of La Plata, with a social base composed of small-scale vegetable producers, it draws from the new cycle of protests that emerged in rural Argentina during the 1990s. This cycle was characterized by the formation of collective rural actors, including peasants, Indigenous peoples, and family farmers, who, while resisting exclusionary dynamics, also generated alternative forms of life, economic activity, and political organization. For this reason, the revitalization and recovery of local agri-food systems, the struggle against violence against women, and access to land constitute the central pillars that summarize its organizational principles (Escobar, 2025).

Beginning in 2013, the UTT started to consolidate its presence in various localities across fifteen provinces of the country. By 2023, participation had reached approximately 200,000 family farming and peasant households, including beekeepers, poultry, swine, goat, and cattle producers, as well as textile weavers, artisans, and producers of jams and preserves.

In Santiago del Estero, the organization was established in 2017. Geographically, it is present in the departments of Figueroa, Río Hondo, Robles, Banda, Silípica, Loreto, Atamisqui, and Capital. It brings together a total of 85 grassroots groups and more than two thousand members, who are organized into two major regional divisions: Salado and Dulce.

As at the national level, the organization in the province develops a grassroots and mass-building methodology known as the *organic structure*. The basic organizational unit within this framework is the *base group*, whose formation requires the participation of at least three farming families from a given locality. The central component of these grassroots groups is the assembly. Through these spaces of meeting, debate, and discussion, members

elect by vote the spokespersons of each group, who hold the positions of Delegate, Secretary, and Treasurer. Each grassroots group also includes representatives of the organization's various secretariats or areas: Gender, Marketing and Commercialization, Press, Administration and Projects, Agroecology, Social Affairs, and Youth Affairs (UTT, 2019).

The secretariats emerged as a result of the organization's qualitative growth. They serve to organize and streamline tasks that had previously been carried out in a less structured manner, concentrate and focus strategies on specific issues, consolidate working teams, and maintain relationships with other institutions and organizations in pursuit of defined objectives. These secretariats were established progressively as the organization expanded. It should be noted that not all territories have every secretariat, nor are all secretariats at the same stage of development.

Actions Undertaken by the UTT Gender Secretariat in Santiago del Estero

The Gender Secretariat emerged within the UTT as part of a struggle for voice, representation, and participation in decision-making, given that positions of leadership and representation had largely been occupied by men. The importance of gender issues within the organization's political participation is reflected in the testimony of one of its first gender promoters:

“One of the main debates we have within the Secretariat is the need for women to be part of the decisions made regarding production in our work. During our meetings, we emphasize that the hegemonic agri-food production model makes us sick—us, our families, our sons and daughters—as well as those who consume the food we produce” (Alianza Biodiversidad, May 10, 2020).

In 2018, during the National Assembly of Delegates, the creation of the Gender Secretariat was approved with the purpose of training gender promoters,

providing support, and intervening in cases of gender-based violence.

In Santiago del Estero, the Gender Secretariat has been operating since 2019. Within this space, individual interests and organizational demands are interwoven through collective tactics and strategies that combine community organization with socio-productive alternatives aimed at combating violence in agribusiness contexts. These actions function as mechanisms for sustaining networks of care and protection for women. They are grounded in a comprehensive understanding of equality and equity and are oriented toward ensuring effective access to rights through the identification, prevention, and response to gender-based violence. Such violence is understood not as an isolated phenomenon but rather as a structural expression and a direct consequence of the hegemonic production model.

Among the Secretariat's principal activities are the support and accompaniment provided by Promotoras Territoriales de Género, as well as training workshops focused on the identification, prevention, intervention, and management of gender-based violence. At the same time, the Secretariat plays a fundamental role in disseminating relevant information on a wide range of issues of interest to members of the grassroots groups.

Within this framework, the Secretariat has developed a series of pedagogical and methodological tools, including educational booklets, recipe collections, participatory activities, and games that are implemented in grassroots groups during workshops, as illustrated in figure 1. Based on their evaluation, these tools are continuously adjusted, redesigned, and strengthened in accordance with the results obtained, allowing them to be adapted to local contexts.

Furthermore, productive spaces have been developed through the recovery of medicinal plants and native foods. These spaces are configured as settings for ongoing learning and teaching, where women's knowledge and labor are valued, horizontal exchange is encouraged, and close and intimate forms of communication are fostered. “That's where we talk. We walk through the forest together, and things start

coming up—things that happen to us, things that worry us” (during the in-person Gender Workshop, Yakuchiri Grassroots Group, Atamisqui Regional Division, February 20, 2021).



Figure 1. Gender Workshop. Source: UTT Press Team, 2021.

These words reflect how the consolidation of productive working groups contributes to the economic livelihood of women in situations of vulnerability. Moreover, through self-managed production and income generation, the organization creates its own marketing and distribution channels, with the aim of generating revenue and strengthening women’s economic autonomy. These strategies are aligned with the organization’s political principles, which enable producers themselves to decide not only the methods and pace of production but also the value assigned to what is produced.

Last but not least, special attention should be given to actions that intervene in the public sphere, such as marches, walks, vehicle caravans (*bocinazos*), and other forms of collective mobilization.

In summary, the Gender Secretariat focuses its efforts on training aimed at the identification, prevention, intervention, and response to gender-based violence. It also highlights the leading role of women in mobilizations and demonstrations within their territories and underscores the creation of self-managed, assembly-based, and plural spaces as strategies for the defense of common goods (Navarro, 2012).

On Accompaniment and Support Processes

The forms of violence associated with agribusiness that are exercised against both nature and the bodies of peasant women are manifested through the precarization of care work, domestic violence, the loss of economic autonomy, and the violation of rights related to food and health, among others (Carvajal, 2016).

In Santiago del Estero, changes can be observed in intrafamilial dynamics concerning the generation of economic income. While women migrate to nearby urban centers to work in domestic cleaning services, men travel to Argentina’s Core Grain-Producing Region (*Zona Núcleo Granífera*). These displacements alter family functioning because, in the absence of men, women assume the role of “providers,” thereby intensifying productive and reproductive labor as well as care responsibilities that extend beyond their own households to encompass the broader community (Pérez Orozco & Del Río, 2002). The absence of men also makes women targets of community surveillance, whereby their activities are scrutinized and disapproved of. Such scrutiny seeks to “cage” them through social control over their bodies, their use of time, and their social relationships. Within this framework, the Gender Secretariat recognizes that, as the production model devastates common goods, violence against women’s bodies also intensifies, giving rise to the need for accompaniment and support mechanisms.

Débora, a 28-year-old Gender Promoter, shared during a workshop a comment allegedly made by her neighbors that eventually reached her ears: “Look at her. Now that her husband is away, she’s involved in all sorts of things, attending those meetings and everything, instead of taking care of her children.” This statement refers to her participation in the organization and encapsulates the surveillance exercised over women by their social environment in the absence of their partners. In many cases, this surveillance becomes part of what has been described as “cultural pacts of silence” (Hernández García, 2017). These occur when communities and family members witness acts of violence against women but fail to intervene, instead rendering women’s suffering

invisible or minimizing it by relegating the issue to the private, intimate, and family sphere.

Another form of control exercised over women's bodies, identified through discussions held during workshop circles, concerns unwanted pregnancies. Numerous accounts indicated that, prior to departing for seasonal harvest work, men would deliberately leave their partners pregnant in order to ensure that the body-territory would not be claimed by others, thereby reaffirming notions of ownership and possession. These unwanted and unplanned pregnancies are encapsulated in a recurring phrase frequently heard during workshop discussions: "I've filled her [made her pregnant] with children; who would want her now?"

These mechanisms of control become even more pronounced when men return and find their position as "heads of household" challenged by women who have assumed new responsibilities and, in doing so, have transgressed the prescribed gender role. In an effort to reassert their authority, men resort to various forms of violence.

Within this context, and particularly during the initial stage of the Secretaría, the primary role of the gender promoters was to accompany women experiencing gender-based violence as a consequence of the transformations described above. To support this work, a *Gender Handbook (Cartilla de Género)* was developed, providing tools to identify different types and settings of violence, as well as step-by-step guidance for intervention in each case. These accompaniment processes are conceived as spaces of trust, aimed at providing emotional support and ensuring the confidentiality of the testimonies shared by women who seek assistance from the promoters. Participation is voluntary and initiated only when requested by the woman concerned; it is neither imposed nor mandatory. Accompaniment generally consists of weekly visits to ensure that women and their children have access to food, health-related care, and, above all, emotional support through group conversations and activities such as bingo games, breadmaking, and other collective initiatives designed to strengthen self-esteem.

During 2020, in collaboration with the Programa Articular, a survey was conducted through an online questionnaire (Google Forms) to characterize the profile of the women participating in the Secretariat. The findings revealed that most respondents were between 20 and 40 years of age. Their primary occupations included unpaid domestic work, family horticulture, and the artisanal production of jams and preserves. Most were mothers of between two and five children and, in educational terms, a large proportion had not completed secondary school. Regarding access to healthcare, these women primarily relied on public services available in their local communities, such as rural health posts. Nevertheless, a significant prevalence of gynecological health problems associated with the non-use or inadequate use of contraceptive methods was identified.

By 2021, within the framework of the registry promoted by the Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad de la Argentina through Tejiendo Matria (Red Nacional de Promotoras Territoriales) ⁽¹⁾, approximately thirty gender promoters had been registered throughout the province. These women received training through workshops and meetings facilitated both by the organization itself and by provincial and national government agencies.

Water Scarcity and Women's Actions

Santiago del Estero is part of Argentina's Northwestern region. According to the 2022 National Population Census, 20.6% of households lack access to piped drinking water, placing the province below the national average and among those with the lowest levels of service coverage. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of households do not have running water inside the home and must therefore rely on hand pumps, cisterns, water tanks, or wells for their supply (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de la República Argentina, 2022).

It is within these contexts that UTT women have been struggling against water inequalities, which pose significant risks to household food security, given that local populations depend largely on family farming, crop cultivation, and livestock raising. This situation directly affects access to a dignified life and influences

whether families decide to remain in or leave their territories. To obtain water, residents often pay up to eight times more than those living in urban areas. When they lack the financial resources to do so, families may walk up to six hours per day in search of water for consumption from unsafe sources (United Nations, 2021). The consequences of water scarcity affect women in particular, as they are primarily responsible for securing water for their communities. Women travel between 5 and 20 kilometers daily in search of water, often without success, forcing them to purchase it instead (Esber et al., 2017). These realities are reflected in the testimonies of the women themselves:

“We have gone several months without water. We survive by paying for water; we have no other choice because we need it for cooking and drinking. We get together, collect what we can, and then store it in wells.” (Gabriela, 49 years old)

“I wake up very early to tend to the pigs and goats. We have to manage the water carefully because there are times when not a single drop falls from the sky, and we have to give them less so that our supply lasts.” (Virginia, 36 years old)

The words of the women of the UTT reveal not only that local communities face water-related challenges on a daily basis, but also that women, in particular, are required to develop hydrosocial survival strategies. When we visited the home of Cecilia, a member of the organization, we observed the proximity of a canal to her house. She explained:

“The canal is right there. Plenty of water flows through it when it arrives, but we often end up without any because the workers from the soybean farms divert it to their fields. Then we’re the ones who have to walk around carrying buckets afterward.” (Cecilia, 39 years old)

The voices of the women within the organization demonstrate that it is they who place their body-territories at the forefront of water-related struggles in contexts shaped by agribusiness extractivism

(Fernández Bouzo, 2020). Moreover, research has shown that both surface and groundwater sources are contaminated by pesticide spraying associated with agribusiness production systems (Mas et al., 2020). This means that, in addition to developing hydrosocial survival strategies, women must also confront environmental contamination generated by agribusiness activities.

These water-related problems mobilize the entire community, although women play a particularly prominent role. One example was the *Walk for Water* held in Sumamao on the occasion of World Water Day in 2021, as illustrated in figure 2.



Figure 2. Walk for Water. Source: UTT Press Team.

These collective actions produced a significant shift in the perceptions of the organization’s members, and even fostered a new understanding of their lived experiences. During a workshop, one Gender Promoter recalled:

“Around here, we don’t remember anything like this ever happening before. Since people aren’t used to it, they’re surprised, but at the same time they support it because it affects them too, and if the problem is solved, they will benefit as well. In my case, I had never taken part in a roadblock or a march, but since joining the UTT we’ve gone to Feriazos, women’s marches, and now the Walk for Water, because I’ve learned that if you don’t make a claim—or at least make visible what is happening—it’s as if everything were fine.” (Gender Workshop, April 3, 2021).

In addition to the mobilizations carried out locally, it is important to highlight the organizational capacity that has enabled the creation of care networks for water collection and supply. These strategies combine social organization, local knowledge, and low-cost technologies aimed at reducing the need for transportation, improving water quality, and ensuring availability during periods of drought.

Among the most common rainwater harvesting methods is the household construction of cisterns or storage tanks connected to rooftops through gutter systems. Following this approach, programs such as SEDCERO, as well as projects promoted by the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) and other organizations, support the construction of larger-capacity plate cisterns. Their implementation includes technical training for families, collective self-construction workdays organized through rotating family and community labor, and the training of community promoters—frequently women—who disseminate the technology to other rural settlements. These initiatives make it possible to store water for several months and significantly reduce the need to travel long distances in search of it.

The SEDCERO Program is a collaborative public-private network aimed at guaranteeing the right to water in a broad sense—that is, for consumption, sanitation, production, and ecosystem sustainability. The network operates in Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay, particularly within the Greater Gran Chaco region.

In turn, there are not only technical but also organizational strategies, such as the creation of water committees or water-management groups. Their main responsibilities include organizing the use of stored water, maintaining cisterns and reservoirs, establishing priorities for water use (consumption, hygiene, home gardens, and livestock), and coordinating access among families.

These actions demonstrate that rural women not only assume the everyday responsibility of obtaining, transporting, and managing water for household consumption and family production, but also play a leading role in collective organizational processes designed to confront this situation. Furthermore, the

evidence shows that access to water is not merely a technical or infrastructural issue; it is also a site of contestation over rights. Within this arena, rural women emerge as central actors in the defense of natural resources, the sustainability of family production systems, and the reproduction of life in rural territories.

Conclusions

Drawing on the theoretical framework employed in this study, it was possible to understand and demonstrate the multiscale nature of violence, rooted in colonial processes and reactivated through the extractivist agribusiness model, which becomes inscribed on the body-territories of women and feminized bodies. The analysis also revealed how this model reconfigures territories, displaces labor, deprives communities of biodiversity and the resources necessary to sustain life, and even affects intrafamilial relationships.

This study shows that, in rural settings such as the province of Santiago del Estero, violence against women is not limited to the forms of social relations imposed by patriarchy. Rather, it emerges from the simultaneous and intersecting convergence of territorial, economic, and water-related forms of violence. Through participation in the project funded by Argentina's Ministry of Women, Genders, and Diversity, it became evident that public agencies tend to focus on tangible and immediate outcomes, often assigning less importance to the processes involved in the creation and development of organizational spaces.

Fieldwork revealed how women organized within the UTT move beyond the position of victims of patriarchy, transforming their own subjectivities and strengthening both individual and collective forms of autonomy. Through the everyday implementation of diverse organizational and (re)productive activities within the Gender Secretariat, women are able to improve their living conditions in the short term while simultaneously anticipating and experimenting with alternatives to the hegemonic model. These processes foster autonomy and critical reflection within spaces of socialization. They also generate meaningful employment and knowledge related to agriculture and animal husbandry for both self-

consumption and commercial purposes. Furthermore, the study highlights the creation of networks of care and support developed specifically through the Gender Secretariat.

At the same time, socio-territorial actions oriented toward the common good address immediate needs. A tangible example is the collective mobilization around access to water, including both public demonstrations and the management, administration, and construction of water-harvesting systems. Nevertheless, these initiatives do not resolve the structural problem of water access. Rather, they provide community-based solutions that are commonly adopted among peasant families.

Fieldwork also underscored the implications of putting one's body on the line to confront these forms of violence, guide community processes, and sustain collective commitment. Particular attention was drawn to the physical and emotional burden borne by the Gender Promoters, who provide support and accompaniment to other women. This raises important questions regarding care and the overload assumed by women themselves: How are the care and emotional support needs of the promoters addressed within community action processes? What policies, strategies, and organizational spaces make it possible to sustain their work and well-being? These questions emerged from the analysis and represent promising avenues for future research. The empirical problem addressed in this study also opens up additional lines of inquiry. One possibility is to incorporate the narratives of male members of the UTT in order to explore how they experience and interpret women's actions against violence, given that the present study privileged women's voices.

Another avenue would be to integrate quantitative data on forms of violence embedded in historical processes. For example, future research could examine how many rural women hold legal title to land and how those pursuing land ownership organize collectively, thereby complementing the qualitative findings presented here.

Finally, existing research on this topic tends to focus on victims or the most vulnerable populations whose collective actions seek to place the violence

experienced by women on the public agenda. However, we identified a significant gap in the literature regarding the strategies employed by agribusiness actors and corporations to neutralize or mitigate collective resistance. Large corporations frequently implement narrative and management strategies designed to generate public support for their extractivist activities. These practices, carried out beyond the boundaries of production sites, may include food donations, training workshops, community services, infrastructure improvements, and similar initiatives. Bringing into academic debate studies that investigate these mechanisms for neutralizing the very problems generated by the model itself constitutes a novel and important challenge for scholars researching violence against women.

Article note

1. The Red Nacional de Promotoras Territoriales on gender and diversity at the community level works in coordination with provincial and municipal agencies responsible for these issues, as well as with civil society organizations. The registry makes it possible to coordinate with registered individuals in the implementation of policies aimed at preventing and eradicating gender-based violence, as well as policies promoting equality and diversity.

Author contributions

Draft preparation, methodology, data analysis, presentation of results, and conclusions: all authors. Final review and editing: HP.

Data availability statement

The information provided in this study is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Peer review comments

This article underwent an anonymous peer-review process in accordance with the journal's editorial transparency policy. The reviewers, who participated anonymously in this process, consented to the publication of the comments issued during the review.

Reviewer Comment 1: The topic is interesting and original, particularly in its approach from the perspective of agribusiness. The language, however, requires improvement.

Reviewer Comment 2: Publishable with revisions. The reviewer's comments are included in the attached file.

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