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Body Territorial Markings: Navigating the Waters of Rural Women in the Aconcagua Valley

Marcas territoriales corporales: navegando las aguas de mujeres rurales en el Valle del Aconcagua

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to address the mechanisms of collective resistance that rural women deploy because of the transformations in rural habitability in the Aconcagua Valley in Chile. The research is developed in the rural areas of Pullalli and Olmué —based on a collaborative embodied ethnography— through life history techniques with rural women in collective workshops and open interviews to key agents to account for the agencies that are generated from the habitability of the body. The findings show that women mobilize their agencies from the linkage of the body, territory, and the inequalities of the sex/gender system. Establishing the sustainability of life as a gear that generates dynamics of crisis and exposure, but also mobilizations and actions that are based on territorial processes arising from water scarcity, body territorial marks, and the creation of solidarity networks.

Key words: rural women, sustainability of life, gender, body, resistances.

Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo abordar los mecanismos de resistencia colectiva que las mujeres rurales despliegan a partir de las transformaciones en la habitabilidad rural del Valle del Aconcagua en Chile. La investigación se desarrolla en las zonas rurales de Pullalli y Olmué —con base en una etnografía encarnada colaborativa—, mediante técnicas de historias de vida con mujeres rurales en talleres colectivos y entrevistas abiertas a agentes clave, para dar cuenta de las agencias que se generan desde la habitabilidad del cuerpo. Los hallazgos evidencian que las mujeres movilizan sus agencias desde la vinculación del cuerpo, el territorio y las desigualdades del sistema sexo/género. Se establece la sostenibilidad de la vida como un engranaje que suscita dinámicas de crisis y exposición, pero también de

movilizaciones y acciones que se asientan en los procesos territoriales que devienen de la escasez hídrica, las marcas territoriales corporales y la creación de redes de solidaridad.

Palabras clave: mujeres rurales, sostenibilidad de la vida, género, cuerpo, resistencias.

Introduction

Studies have examined challenges faced by rural women through the lens of sexual difference hierarchies within the broader sex/gender system (Rubin, 2015). These investigations have sought to understand processes related to precarious emancipation in the 21st century (Valdés, 2015), the feminization of rural areas (González, 2014; Vizcarra and Loza, 2014), and productive entrepreneurship (Mora *et al.*). (2016; Mora and Constanzo, 2017), along with accessibility and flexible work arrangements for rural women (Rodríguez and Muñoz, 2015), have led to significant transformations in rural household and environment spaces due to deagrarianization of the countryside (Carton de Grammont, 2009).

This study gathers the findings of the doctoral thesis on organizational practices and experiences of rural women in the Aconcagua Valley in Chile, during the period 2021-2022. In particular, it is a study on and from corporeality based on a methodological proposal from embodied and collaborative ethnography (Rodó, 2023). It is a methodological process that is inserted in the contributions of feminist epistemology (Collins, 1986; Harding, 1987 and 1995; Haraway, 1988) and decolonial feminisms. As Lugones (2008, 2011 and 2014) points out, it is of interest to observe and recognize aspects of women's resistances and actions that emerge from the habitability of the body and territory (Cabnal, 2019), in order to identify the ways in which women resist gender coloniality (Lugones, 2008 and 2011), but also the historical hierarchies that are framed in compulsory heteronormativity (Rich, 1996), by increasing Cartesian dichotomies around bodies.

These dynamics made it possible to think about women's bodies from the conjunction: body, sex/gender system and territory, in order to make visible the experiences and practices of women¹ in the rural territory. In this way, the findings that in women's experiences the situated knowledge that marks the personal biography, but also the

1 I speak of women's experiences because I start from the recognition of diversity within a theoretical-methodological analysis that considers the systemic aspects of the functioning of oppressions, from this, women know from a specific situated place.

collective history, by being inserted in the exchange of the common memory, through the temporal conjunction past-present-future (without the linearity of such a reading), are recognized. In this sense, women's bodies are expressed from sensorial, emotional, material, and discursive aspects that come from thinking the research categories in processes of constant interrelation, observing action as the capacity of understanding (Arendt, 1995) that derives from thinking the exposure of bodies as a condition of human life (Butler, 2006b and 2018), a process that immerses itself in the ways of affecting and being affected.

In this process, the exposure of bodies is not unrelated to the exposure of the territory, so it was decided to consider the aspects of transformations in habitability as different features that intersect and configure dynamics in the lives of rural women. That is, habitability refers to consider the processes of collective interdependence that link the lives of women, from emotional, sensory, and material aspects in relation to the current characteristics that develop in the territories of Pullalli and Olmué, in the region of Valparaíso.

Such characteristics are presented considering the emphasis of the agro-export system (Valdés, 2015), the growth of monocultures, the decrease of agricultural land of peasant families, the privatization of water and water scarcity, the occupation of new devices and technologies for the management of life in the rural territory, and aspects related to the repercussions of national and local policies coming from official public institutions. By considering the links of the territory with the body and the sex-gender system, the research led to the following understanding: How is the corporeality of rural women linked to the habitability of the territory, and from this, what are the meanings and memories that remain within the register of experience, establishing territorial-corporal memories and marks?

These questions allowed us to advance in the contributions of the body-territory (Cabnal, 2013, Gómez, 2014; Paredes and Guzmán, 2014; Colectivo Miradas Críticas del territorio desde el feminismo, 2017), the sustainability of life (Carrasco, 2001; Pérez Orozco, 2012 and 2015; Dobreé, 2018) and the reproductions of heteronormativity. On the one hand, observing the actions that women carry out to sustain, life in rural territories. On the other hand, the processes of collective interdependence.

In this way, navigating the waters of the body places the emphasis on the feminist ethnographic methodological process in relation to

the study of the body-territory linkage. A process that makes visible the dynamics of collective interdependence between women and the non-human. For instance, the specific relationship of women with water, from which the territory makes visible the dichotomies: public/private, productive/reproductive, man/woman, by subverting and destabilizing the heteronormative violence of the modern capitalist system that affects rural territories. Therefore, the pluriversity of feminized corporealities in their relationship with the living ecosystem highlight the processes of sustainability of life in rural territories, specifying the relationships State-market-households and territory, from a political, social, and economic perspective that reduces violence against women and the rural territory.

The sustainability of life: from care work to the body-territory

From the feminist economic viewpoint, it is recognized that the capitalist system has led to deepen the dichotomous division between productivity/reproductivity, which has historically made invisible the non-existence of a real distance between the productive and reproductive (Carrasco, 2006). Such an imposed and sustained division has been affirmed in women's corporeality, as it is part of the division of roles that are sustained through the sex/gender system (Rubin, 2015). In this sense, and based on feminist economics, the process of the extended economy circuit is made visible from households, which are transformed into producers of goods and services (Esquivel, 2011). This not only evidences the economic relations that occur within households, but also how families and communities expand their benefits in relation to their needs. For this reason, the units of analysis from the perspective of economics take up the units of market, State, and households, which allow us to rethink this circuit of relationships.

As Carrasco (2006: 33) points out, "the historical and analytical blindness of classical thinkers prevents them from seeing and categorizing the decisive economic contribution of women to social and family reproduction". This androcentric logic of sustaining the economic gaze makes invisible the practices and actions of women from the home, and the very space that is inhabited, by hiding the relationships that are woven from the territory, to think about the sustainability of families and the community.

In this sense, Federici (2018) analyzes the aspects of salary, labor force and production relations, to identify that salary functions as an instrument for social organization. The wage sustains hierarchies that are framed by inequalities and power relations coming from the configuration of the sex/gender system, “of creating groups of people without rights, which invisibilizes entire areas of exploitation such as domestic work by naturalizing forms of work that are actually part of a mechanism of exploitation” (Federici, 2018: 15).

In the case of rural women, such conflicts also raise the question of peasant and agriculture, which has been called peasant economy. Primarily the peasant (Heyning, 1982; Chayanov, 1986) has also overlapped the economic practices and actions of peasant women, especially when considering aspects of studies associated with agricultural production, subsistence production, the urban/rural divide, and control and decision-making over land (Deere, 2019).

When considering gender divisions and control over resources, land tenure is an example of a historical element of control and surveillance over women’s bodies. Such inequality poses a gap between men’s and women’s production: business and peasant, a space that from studies on new rurality (Kay, 2009) have addressed the incorporation of women into the labor market from the agro-export sector.

In this way, work is erroneously approached from the point of view of women’s access to the labor market, forgetting their diverse forms of production in the home. Even more important, gender stereotypes biologically associated with women are reproduced, based on a patriarchal vision of the nuclear family within the heterosexual system, which is based on the exclusion of care work (Esquivel, 2011).

As Espino (2011) points out, linking the category of gender to economic analysis leads to questioning the false liberal notion of the sustenance of basic human needs, in the sense that it is precisely these needs that have historically been covered by women’s unrecognized and unpaid work. Since the creation of the International Association for Feminist Economics in 1992, new indicators and concepts have been configured to reveal the linkage and visibility of women’s work, considering the dynamics and experiences that arise from the conflicts of the sex/gender system.

Therefore, “care is the cornerstone of the economy and society” (Esquivel, 2015: 64), an articulation that has made it possible to observe issues that link the State, households, the market, and

communities, delving into the conflicts of capital and life. In terms of care, Rodríguez (2007) establishes that it occurs in a space that is not delimited, since it leads to think about “goods, services, activities, relationships and values related to the most basic and relevant needs for the existence and production of people, in the societies in which they live” (Rodríguez, 2007: 230).

Care also includes the functioning of material elements in their relationship with the body, as well as the emotional and sensory processes that arise from affection, since these delimit the ways in which women and societies establish their economic, social, and political relations. In this sense, care rests on women or on the public services of the state, with limitations that do not allow us to observe that “care is provided not only in the home and the community, but also in the public and commercial spheres” (Esquivel, 2015: 68-69).

For this research, the vision of feminist economics is recognized since the starting point comes from the sustainability of life. Understanding the sustainability of life (Carrasco, 2001; Pérez Orozco, 2012) as the articulating concept that makes it possible to make visible the actions and practices of rural women, showing that the ideal of the liberal economy has superimposed the relations of interdependence, maintaining the notion of independence; a notion that belongs to the modern liberal subject, a subject that is framed in the figure of the male worker/wage-earner. With this, the sustainability of life makes it possible to think about the tensions between capital and life (Carrasco, 2001; Pérez Orozco, 2015), based on care, social participation, care networks, affections and relationships that arise from the main needs of societies.

These ways of sustaining life generate an impact on women's corporeality, an impact that refers to what it means to sustain life: “Life is vulnerable and precarious, so it does not exist in a vacuum, and it does not move forward if it is not taken care of” (Pérez Orozco, 2015). As Butler (2006b) points out, understanding vulnerability as a condition of human life allows us to recognize that life depends on others, and it is the body and space that live this exposure, the body that moves between exposure and resistance as a form of agency.

In this context, it is the body that is set in motion and that which mobilizes affects and emotions, the material body, the subjective body. Dobréé (2018) specifies that caring “requires time and dedication, in addition to concrete knowledge and a remarkable ability to solve

problems creatively and with the resources at hand” (Dobreé, 2018: 73). This generates, as the author points out, a direct link between body, mind and emotions by identifying the processes of coexistence and the ways in which affects function.

As Butler (2006a) explains, the body has a public dimension, especially when the materiality of the body is recognized and identified, because it is through the body, as a living organism, flesh, and skin, that labor actions for the sustainability of life are developed. Quiroga (2019) specifies that the bodily dimension must be involved in economic processes, because it makes it possible to ask, “which bodies do which work, in order to think about the differential ways in which feminism and the recognition of coloniality contribute to the understanding of popular and social economies” (Quiroga, 2019: 157). This means recognizing that research and events are lived from the place of being, and that it is women’s own situated knowledges that generate, from being embodied (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1995), the multiple positionings that emerge from the interrelationships between body, mind, subjectivity, and materiality in personal and collective relations.

In this sense, thinking about women’s corporeality and the sustainability of life in its direct relationship means identifying those catalysts that are part of the sexual practices of the heterosexual binary logic. That is why the body territory (Cabnal, 2010) identifies the discursive and symbolic elements on women’s bodies, but also alludes to the body as the first materially usurped territory. From community feminisms, the body becomes the central axis of feminist theory, understanding that the personal is political (Cabnal, 2010 and 2013; Gómez, 2014). For the body to exist, it needs an understanding of what makes its life possible, an aspect that makes visible the reproduction of life in a broad sense; that is why the territory body-earth also emphasizes the place of dignity and resistance (Cabnal, 2010 and 2017) in the face of the economy of domination that imposes a logic of expropriation on the territory.

The capitalist system destabilizes and endangers the relationship of social subjects with territory and the notion of sustainability of life from the *territorial body earth* (Tzul, 2015; Bolados and Sánchez, 2017). This is because the notion of development affects nature and, therefore, the “notion of care for the world that transcends the edges of the merely human and extends to life in its broadest and most comprehensive dimension” (Dobreé, 2018: 19). As specified by authors

of feminist economics (Pérez Orozco, 2015; Rodríguez, 2015; Carrasco, 2007), it is transcendental to understand that care does not speak of people who are only dependent, on the contrary, care makes visible the historical location of patriarchal violence that is assigned to women from the production and reproduction of life.

Methodology

The results presented here are part of the doctoral thesis on the experiences and bodily practices of rural women in the Aconcagua Valley, Chile. This research sought to observe how rural women resist from the habitability of the body and the territory in personal and collective actions. For this purpose, a sample was taken in the provinces of Petorca (Pullalli) and Marga Marga (Olmué), in the region of Valparaíso. The fieldwork consisted of three phases that took place in 2021 and 2022. The first corresponds to the approach of the women's collectives and groups in the Aconcagua Valley; the second was the accompaniment of the women's collectives and groups for four months, which subsequently allowed the selection of the groups and localities; and the third was the beginning of cycles of collaborative workshops for eight months, a space from which to apply qualitative research techniques based on feminist epistemology.

The collaborative sessions and fieldwork considered the research categories: body, territory, and sex/gender system. Based on these categories, cycles of workshops (see Table 1²) and territorial approaches were carried out with the women from their daily lives, using an ethnographic approach based on bodily itineraries (Esteban, 2008), embodied experience to account for situated knowledge (Harding, 1987; Haraway, 1988; Esteban, 2004) and *corpobiographies* (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2021). These included life histories, participant observation, body mapping, and body-earth mapping. These were conducted with the "Manos de mujer" group in Olmué (six participants) and the "Mujeres del Agua" group in Pullalli (seven participants).

The methodological process included instances of dialogue and listening, since navigating the waters of the body and the territory means identifying the currents and countercurrents that mark human and non-human corporeality in the rural environment. This means that an embodied and collaborative ethnography (Rodó, 2023) was constructed

2 The table can be found in the Annex at the end of this article (Editor's note).

from the exchange with the women, locating the sensory, emotional, and reflexive experience of the transformations in rural territories in direct relation with the material and subjective body. Therefore, the sessions proposed corporeal cartographies, body-earth, aesthetic construction elements of clay work, and linking the discourse with the body through the ater or joint walks in the territory.

It should be noted that in order to deepen the study and observe the structural dynamics surrounding the sustainability of women's lives and resistance processes, nine in-depth interviews were conducted with 1) Official institutions: Fundación para la Promoción y Desarrollo de la Mujer (hereafter: Fundación Prodemu); 2) independent organizations: Warmikuti feminismo comunitario, Mujeres y Ríos Libres, Mujeres Modatima; 3) government institutions: Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario (Indap), Programa de Desarrollo Local (Prodesal) and the Gobernación Regional de Valparaíso.

Results

The analysis of the information was developed according to the subcategories that formed the theoretical body of the research categories. The analysis in the Atlas.Ti software allowed us to identify the experiences and practices of women that generate their individual and collective resistance processes. In relation to these processes, the concerns of corporeality are taken up in the subcategory of *sustainability of life*: 1) creation and occupation of solidarity networks; 2) dedication to care and domestic work; and 3) forms of containment. Likewise, as part of the category of corporeality, *resistances*: 1) territorial-body-land conflicts, and 2) organizational practices and actions. In its direct relation to the territory, the subcategory of *rural habitability*: 1) Rural experiences and practices; 2) Transformations in *rural habitability*; 3) Devices and technologies for life management; 4) Meanings in rural habitability, and the subcategory of memory: 1) Territorial/corporeal marks. In a transversal way in the research, rural women's actions were imbricated with gender coloniality (Lugones, 2011) and heteronormativity, in order to make visible the reproductions of violence (Table 1).

Water scarcity and land-body-land conflicts

One of the most relevant findings, which was not considered at the beginning of the research, is the *scarcity of water*. This phenomenon marks the bodily trajectories of the rural women of the Aconcagua Valley because of its importance for the sustainability of life in the territories. It is from the exposure of the body and the territory that the women generate practices and actions to reduce the conflicts derived from the current policy of water privatization in Chile. In this sense, water scarcity was part of the analysis around the category of territory and the processes of resistance from corporeality, and because of the research modified the subcategories that were initially identified.

The privatization of water in Chile was enshrined in the Constitution of 1980 and began with the elaboration of the Water Code in 1981. At the same time, the privatization of water affects the families living in the rural areas of the Aconcagua Valley, not only because of the concentration of water ownership, but also because of the environmental water scarcity in the localities, which generates changes in the rural habitability. “In the rural areas we have serious water problems, the water trucks do not give enough, we do not take care of the poor distribution of water, we prioritize monoculture instead of human consumption” (Coordinator of Quillota Province, Prodemu Foundation, 2022).

Thinking about water scarcity requires a gender mainstreaming approach, capable of recognizing the existing inequalities between men and women in relation to one of the most important assets of the rural territory, water, since it is women who are responsible in these territories for the family agricultural work, care and domestic work, which must be done with water from water trucks that currently deliver 20 litres of water per day for family consumption.

We began to work on this process because all our colleagues who live in the area, most of them, are experiencing the lack of water very close to home. It affects their families, it affects their bodies, it affects their daily life, do you understand? We began to see what the first problems were, for example, defecating in plastic bags. And when we were declared a water disaster zone in 2009, it was because people were defecating in plastic bags. But no one asked about menstruating women, for example, their sexual and reproductive health (Lorena, Mujeres Modatima, 2022).

Water scarcity has led to problems related to sexual and reproductive diseases, forced migration, rural exodus, environmental conflicts related to agro-exports versus peasant economies, as well as the weakening of family food security and the disintegration of the family unit itself. This is exacerbated by the fact that women do not have access to discussions on water management, as their low level of economic autonomy does not allow them to do so. This is due to the current prices of water use rights in Chile, water accreditation, and the current percentage of rural women with land tenure in the country.

I believe that this vision of the land territory is to bring this ancestral memory that we are connected to the spirits of the forests that speak to us. So, when you go to the forest, you communicate with these spirits, the fact that you connect with them and validate their existence does not leave you indifferent. So, for me, my body will always need this, this body mobilizes and lives in this place, that is why we are always in the resistance of the rivers now that they are plundering our water, and what will happen not only with the body but with the community? (Mayra, Warmikuti, 2022).

It is currently unthinkable to sustain life in rural territories without water, which is why neoliberal economic tensions over bodies and territories are maintained within the conflicts of body-land territory. Women's resistance and mobilizations arise from what women's bodies experience in the territories: "Seeing how everything has changed, how everything has been taken away, how we have the conviction to stay together despite all the difficulties" (Raquel, Women of Water, 2022). These difficulties have an impact on the collective organization of women, as they mark aspects that lead to thinking about the sensoriality of bodies (Sabido, 2019).

In this way, sensoriality is mobilized in affections and emotions that mark performativity (Butler, 2006a) in social manifestations, through the new meanings generated by inhabiting a new rural context. The performative act is expression and action, a process of manifestation of heterosexual and colonial normativity that is imprinted on rural territories, by settling dynamics of precarization and inequalities on rural communities and women.

Drought and water stripping, along with territorial changes, are part of rural women's lives. Scarcity affects the activities of their daily lives and mobilizes emotions with which women live in their daily lives: "Passing through the lagoon and seeing how the lagoon has come down, I was able to realize the drought, the theft that the territory

has suffered, passing through planted places and the dry front” (Priscila, Mujeres del Agua, 2022).

Through the relationships between categories of analysis, it is identified that *water scarcity* is part of the *transformations in habitability*, and it is from it that women generate solidarity networks, since it impacts on the decrease of food production and the daily management of peasant family agriculture. The valorization of the body is generated in the material/subjective relationship that goes in safeguard of the defense and resistance of the territory, understanding the relations of collective interdependence that exist in the territory.

We can no longer sow the same as before, we didn't harvest the amount we used to. Then, I began to live the emotional life of the river, I began to see the lack of water, how was that affecting not only my life and that of my family, but that of the whole people and peasants? (Marcela, Mujeres del Agua, 2022).

In this sense, the transformations that have settled in rural territories are directly associated with the agro-export model in Chile and the privatization of water. This model has privileged —as collected from the in-depth interviews— the privatization of water, monoculture, real estate development, a working vision of those who work the field, overexploitation of agriculture and inequalities arising from the urban/rural divide. This model of economic and social public policies creates a vulnerability that results in precariousness for rural areas. The research framework reveals that this precariousness reinforces power relations and determines the livability of certain lives and conditions from a historical perspective.

From this, Butler (2009) establishes that precarity is constructed and reproduced socially, through the infrastructural conditions of human existence. From research and as a finding, precariousness is also built towards rural territories, based on an agro-export economic model that generates negative impacts on the habitability of communities in rural territories.

It's very terrible, people are migrating, they are engaged in other types of activities, they come to the city, to study university careers, because they are the only possibilities to develop you, because this is how the system has built it. Then there are fewer and fewer people in the countryside and associated with the fact that we have less and less water, less and less raw material (Director of the Valparaíso region, Prodemu Foundation).

These problems are deepened with heteronormative reproductions by not considering the hierarchies that exist between men and women.

These inequalities are identified in the relationship of men and women with access to goods and resources; therefore, rural women experience directly in their lives *the neoliberal economic tensions on the body and territory*. These invisibilities are produced and reproduced by the modern colonial gender system (Lugones, 2008; Curiel, 2014), since there is a systemic imbrication that develops from capitalism, gender, race, and class. These categories do not intersect in isolation, that is, one by one, but serve as a systemic matrix that highlights the substantive differences between the same women who inhabit the rurality.

However, heterosexual politics intersects women's groups in Pullali and Olmué, as the construction of their bodies and experiences in the territories. That is why, from the findings, it is demonstrated that the current public programs of the Prodemu Foundation with Indap, together with those developed by Prodesal, emancipate, and develop a precarious autonomy (Valdés, 2010) in rural women.

This is due to multiple factors, among the most important are: sewage accreditation, water accreditation, land tenure accreditation and the visibility of economic autonomy. Such requirements prevent women from entering public programs, which —as the authorities of Prodesal de Olmué point out— is unthinkable, because “in the rural sector that does not have sewers, they will never be able to develop, then they will always be breaking the law to be able to sell jams, for example” (Representative Prodesal Olmué, 2022).

These *neoliberal policies on the body and territory* show the lack of protection for rural families and women (Valdés, 2010; Caro, 2013; Rodríguez y Muñoz, 2015; Rodríguez *et al.*, 2019) because the current transformations manifest the unsustainability of the Chilean agrarian model. This is in complete relation to the modern colonial gender system (Lugones, 2011), as it continues to support an anthropocentric look at nature and androcentric around women, a model that privileges the processes of capitalist accumulation, promoting individuality and making invisible the relationships of collective interdependence that exist between human and non-human beings.

Sustainability of life and territorial body marks

Water scarcity is a great challenge for the sustainability of life in rural communities, and at the same time it shows what it involves for women, from their material and subjective processes, to sustain life.

Through the collective sessions we worked on body cartographies, body-earth cartographies, and in the case of Women of Water, the body was recorded through the expression of theater and movement. The records account for body movement and emotion. In this sense, how anger and pain become mobilizers of collective action: “How in spite of our realities, of all our tasks, the pains, shortages and bustles, we are able to do positive and beautiful things, and that go in pursuit of a common good” (Marcela, Women of Water, 2022).

Most of these pains, tiredness, fears, and violence come from the heteronormative division between productive and reproductive work, supported by the sexual division of labor (Carrasco, 2017); the care work imposed on women directly impacts their lives, generating territorial body marks. These marks are defined, based on the findings, in the impacts generated by heteronormativity on the body of women, considering that the body is the first territory of conquest (Cabnal, 2010). This body mobilizes, acts, and is exposed from the existing power relations within the matrix of interweaving oppressions (Espinosa, 2016), which mark their life trajectories.

In this sense, the actions of women arise from that space of understanding (Arendt, 1995), which leads to thinking about violence and how to live them from material aspects, sensory and subjective evoke mobilization as a way of subverting power relations. They are territorial marks because they are housed in the body, occupying a specific space, an organ, a specific area, a place from which women identify and recognize emotion. This emotion also leads women to think about the conflicts in the territory that affect the body, including water scarcity and the direct impact it has on rural families, causing the decrease in food security and life in the territory.

In this way, life in the territory transcends the notion that the *territorial body marks* are only dynamics and movements of what happens to and from the body of women, because they lead to think the *notion of land body territory* (Cabnal, 2010 and 2017) and understand that the body cannot live or move without what sustains it. Such a process includes in the research the recognition that *territorial body marks* are interrelated with processes of collective dependence, which are part of the territory and life of women.

I have lived through two stages, one as a slave in the house and the other as an entrepreneur, one can demonstrate as an entrepreneur that she can do many

things and put herself on the same level or even higher than a man. Because since men don't give you money, you think you won't be able to do anything, or survive. They often look for ways to put their foot down on you. (Manuela, *Manos de Mujer*, 2022).

The care work and the elements that derive from the sustainability of life must also think about the impact they generate on women. The dedication and care they perform are accompanied by emotions that affect and expose women in the territory: "You question yourself every day if you do it wrong, you know every day that you did it wrong, but someone from outside to tell you that you do it wrong is not necessary" (Prisicila, *Mujeres del Agua*, 2022). These culpabilities mobilized as a force of patriarchal coercion hinder the organizational action of rural women, by recording how heterosexual politics generates forms of control and surveillance over women's bodies. This policy reproduces the sexed female body (Torras, 2007) and the gender roles that derive from the social construction of sexual difference, through a binary logic that is naturalized from the normativity of bodies.

This is a multiplicity of feminized bodies that take root in the home space, as if the work that women or girls do in caring for children and siblings does not figure in such a place, in domestic work and household food derived from agricultural work. The control and surveillance mechanisms identified in the research stem from an overemphasis on masculinity (Segato, 2016), which restricts women's agency. Furthermore, this issue prompts reflections on the composition of couples and the societal mechanisms that assign gender roles and shape opportunities for action, ultimately supporting the functioning of the present economic system (Carrasco, 2006; Federici, 2018).

This logic of domination was observed in the research, establishing the private space as the only passable place for women, a process that develops low economic autonomy, unpaid work —and therefore invisible— physical, symbolic, and psychological violence together with dynamics of imposition associated with gender roles. Some of the women highlight these elements and make visible the absence of their presence (Carrasco, 2001; Pérez Orozco, 2015): "My mother took on the responsibility of creating the elastic and covering all expenses. In addition to caring for her children, grandchildren, and tending to the animals, she also watched over the Medieros land" (Javiera, *Manos de Mujer*, 2022).

These social and cultural allocations permeate the continuous invisibility of women's actions, concealing the illusory separation between the public/private. This is because women, from their life stories, have shown that their collective actions arise from their homes; women gather, manage, and act out forms of collective resistance. Such processes make it possible to identify political elements from households and not from outside. On the contrary, the public/private separation is functional to the domain of man, because men exercise violence in this space that are invisible, with the premise that what is hidden is not seen. In this way, the heterosexual policy on corporalities and territory hinders the action of women, but at the same time demonstrates how corporalities in their relationship with the territory are intersected by historical, political, economic processes, cultural and symbolic, which impact on the materiality of women's bodies and their subjectivities, from their embodied positions.

Due to the connection between sensations, emotions, and bodily sensations, the location of bodily findings is believed to be the space and starting point for generating agency. Exploring how the material, subjective, and territorial aspects of the body interact, women gain a deeper understanding that motivates them to take action. However, these moments of understanding are often accompanied by negative sensations, such as pain, guilt, fear, and sorrow.

This allows us to understand the place of the body as the space of memory, that space that sustains the *territorial marks of the body*: "I felt that strength came out in my heart and mind, because it is to draw strength and my stomach because I was thinking that I would regret it, but we came out ahead" (Celestina, *Manos de mujer*, 2022). This doubt and restlessness in the moment of understanding is the element that generates spaces of depatriarchalizing, which disrupt male domination without there still being a clear border between the personal and the collective.

At that moment I had to get strength from my stomach because I felt I had no strength, but I was moved by emotion, the emotion I had to create at that moment to be able to get away from them. I did it, otherwise they would have a very bad time with me. At that time, I was, because my whole family was against me, because I had left a baby that was not my husband's, we were already separated, but then I said to myself: my children are going to suffer, and I don't want that for me! They turned their backs on me, no one would talk to me (Lorena, *Manos de Mujer*, 2022).

Women's resistances are from and with the body; they create actions from the space of care work and for the sustainability of life in their territories, families, and communities. "To be a mother is to protect something, there is a theme that is to protect life, water is life and what it is to be a woman, the human being itself is 90% water" (Priscila, Women of Water, 2022). In the rural areas of Olmué and Pullalli, this care goes beyond the personal. From the exposure of the body and the territory, women generate collective actions such as the creation of care networks, environmental defense, economic development, and co-management of daily life. Care, from the group Manos de Mujer and Mujeres del agua, includes the ability to generate forms of containment and solidarity networks that consider what is necessary for the sustainability of life.

Based on feminist economics, it has been possible to record, observe and understand the diversity of work that women do, even though most of it is unpaid, as well as the dedication, the time devoted, the sustaining of life in communities through the exposure of the body itself. This makes it possible to identify the impact of the sustainability of life from the body, and the mobilizing force in personal/collective actions. In this sense, as Espino (2011) points out, women are producers of goods and services from their homes, because they generate food for the food security of their families, dedicating time to planting and harvesting, to the use of new devices and technologies that allow elements of sustainability in territories without water, and to changes in productive items due to the problems of rural territories.

The sustainability of life in rural territories from bodily territorial marks responds to the question: How do families ensure the continuity of the territory in the face of transformations in rural areas? In this sense, thinking about life and what is needed to continue existence allows us to observe the mechanisms of agency generated by women. "Women begin to participate with the creation of urban gardens, family gardens, where they have their gardens mainly to supply their own consumption and that of their families" (Indap representative, Los Andes, 2022). Women occupy the commons by reusing water, co-managing urban gardens, creating devices for managing animal feed, for example: hydroponic green fodder and the use of barley or oats for animals.

Through interviews with social organizations and the collective work carried out in the territory, it has been identified how care goes beyond human care; that is, it involves the recognition of all living

beings that allow the sustainability of life. These processes of collective interdependence explain the body-land-territory relationship (Cabnal, 2010 and 2017), which makes it possible to leave the anthropocentric vision and make visible that it is women, from their socially assigned positions, who are mostly caretakers, cultivators, and providers. These actions advance environmental defense in the face of water scarcity, since the current developmentalist model of agro-export —based on a rational Eurocentric capitalist conception— generates marks, memories, practices, and signs in women's corporealities.

The current agro-export model in rural areas finds its foundations in the processes of agrarian counter-reform (Bengoa, 2017) that began under the Chilean military dictatorship (1973-1989) and deepened in 1990 by the country's first democratic governments. This led to the privatization of agriculture, encouraged, and supported by foreign and national capital (Valdés, 2015); this led to the delocalization and relocalization of investments to continue reproducing a development model supported by exports from south to north. At the same time, the implementation of the current neoliberal system has generated conditions of precariousness and instability in rural areas, due to the types of jobs and contracts, poor access to social security for temporary jobs, the high percentage of rotation and working conditions (Hernández and Pezo, 2010); these processes have a differentiated impact on men and women. This is mainly because it is the feminized bodies, youth and children that are exposed to the impacts of agribusiness.

Solidarity networks and sustainability of life

Solidarity networks are part of the result of women's action for the sustainability of life, such networks are characterized by common objectives, including the development of productive activities for economic autonomy and the defense of water from the standpoint of environmental justice. Indap and the Prodemu Foundation seek to strengthen associativity in order to empower women and strengthen economic autonomy, for which "we have groups of women who work together, who produce together. Here in San Antonio, we have several sectors, in Bucalemu I was recently in a vegetable group where they all produce and sell together" (Regional Director, Fundación Prodemu, 2022). Strengthening associativity makes it possible to address wage

justice by recognizing the existing inequalities between men and women in relation to work and, therefore, wages (Federici, 2018).

In terms of groupings, *solidarity networks* enable women's organizational action by mobilizing resistance to the exposure of their bodies and territories through shared experiences. In the case of water scarcity and changes in rural habitability, practices and actions emerge from the exposure of the body in the territory, from vulnerability as a condition of human life (Butler, 2006b). The notion of collective interdependence shows how water scarcity mobilizes solidarity networks to confront the dynamics of developmentalist violence that affect the territory and the multiplicity of corporealities, in the impact of water privatization and its hoarding and, consequently, the decrease in food production. In this way, based on the daily management of care, women achieve a positive valuation of their bodies and the territory.

It makes me realize, day after day, that it is more than just one person, that we are women who have come together by chance with a common goal, and that we are all different. There are children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, children, families who do not remember the water here in the territory, it is a generation that has already lost the memory of water, what about the rest who have no idea? (Priscila, Women of Water, 2022).

The members of Mujeres del Agua report that the mobilization of organizational action is directly related to the water problems in Pullalli. Through theater, physical movement, and acts of denunciation, they try to instill in people "important actions, such as bringing out emotions, changes in thinking, when you manage to see this, you reaffirm yourself and you have to continue as long as you can" (Marcela, Mujeres del Agua, 2022). Such processes are accompanied by dynamics of frustration and internal conflicts, since the collective organization itself must face heteronormative dynamics that limit women's actions. In this sense, the women recognize that the care and sustainability of life are socially given positions that generate ways of affecting and exposing women's corporeality. "The most exposed is the feeling of guilt, of going out, of knowing that they are going to say something to her, it is a very big weight" (Tania, Mujeres del Agua, 2022).

It is important to note that in the findings, the sustainability of life generates a dialectical dynamic that transgresses and is strained by the understanding of care as agency and normativity. For this reason, women's organizing practices and actions seek to generate spaces of contestation among themselves by making visible that this tension

is present in the same capacity for collective action. In this way, the spaces seek to create processes of solidarity, “because this collapse must have a solution, just go on, we will see how we can help you and how we can do it” (Raquel, *Mujeres del Agua*, 2022). In the same way, collective action links the normativity that come from the sex/gender system, and how from the feeling —and the living of these violences— there is a mobilizing force that is generated from corporeality in its direct relationship with the territory, through emotions, perceptions, and affections.

Finally, considering the biographical and collective narratives based on the findings, the sustainability of life is defined as a cog in the exposure of women’s bodies, a historical space where the patriarchal system has generated processes of control and surveillance, reproduced violence, and established bodily markers through the reproduction of roles derived from the sex/gender system (Rubin, 2015). What sustains the body? Through this questioning, from the reproductive division framed in the sustainability of life, rural women make visible historical elements of resistance that settle in collective memory and co-create the biographical record through the emotions that stress, mobilize, and affect them. This capacity for action was registered in the research through the creation of solidarity networks, forms of containment that include a notion of collective interdependence between the material body and the territory inhabited.

In this way, the sustainability of life (Carrasco, 2001; Pérez Orozco, 2015; Varela, 2017; Dobréé, 2019), in its definition from rural territories, understands that the appearance of rural women involves the rational and anthropocentric developmentalist model; that is why rural women think about the complete functioning of the web of life (Cabnal, 2017). This makes it possible to identify the hierarchies of sexual difference, the use of devices and technologies for life management, water scarcity, care work, transformations in rural habitability, and how these processes mark their bodies and territories.

Thus, the sustainability of life moves between Butler’s space (2006b and 2018) of vulnerability and resistance, a space that makes visible and establishes the affirmative capacity of rural women by exposing the conflicts between capital and life daily (Pérez Orozco, 2015). This aspect of vulnerability recognizes that there are relationships of dependency, that is, the sustainability of life makes visible the relationship between life and loss (Butler, 2006b). This loss is observed

in the exposure of women's bodies to the transformations of rural habitability, and it explains the loss also experienced by the rural territory in terms of water, land, living beings, and forest. This notion in the research leads to think, from the results, that the sustainability of life allows identifying the chains of care, as chains that sustain life itself, being the organizational action and, therefore, the agency the main gear that conflicts the exposure of the body.

Through the sustainability of life, power relations based on the Cartesian dichotomies of male/female, productive/reproductive, paid/unpaid, make visible the ways in which women mobilize their emotions and efforts to secure life. This is why heterosexual politics generates, out of care, forms of action that affect the multiplicity of women's corporealities, who, as the main sustainers of life, think of life as regenerative, not without first feeling frustration, guilt, pain, and fatigue. The sustainability of life then does not only refer to the satisfaction of women's basic needs (Pérez Orozco, 2004), as some researchers express it, because rural women mean life from an intimate interrelation between body and territory, it hurts in the body and affects expropriation, water scarcity, the increase of monocultures, they feel in the body the insecurity that comes from the decrease of food. This idea goes beyond the occupation of human life, it explains the vision and the way women care for life; therefore, there is not only crisis and exposure in care (Pérez Orozco, 2015), there are cogwheels, mobilizations and actions that highlight the collective resistances of women.

Concluding Remarks

This article explored the question: How is the corporeality of rural women related to the habitability of the territory? This research was carried out with women's groups in the Aconcagua Valley, Chile, whose organizational objectives are linked to socio-environmental issues and the development of productive activities to generate economic autonomy. In this sense, the results show that in the lives of rural women there is no distinction between material, subjective and sensory aspects related to corporeality and territory. Moreover, rural women have a notion of collective interdependence, a notion that develops in the very exposure of the body and the territory. Such exposure marks the meanings and memories that remain

in the record of the experience, establishing memories and territorial-bodily marks; that is, the body mobilizes and acts from the exposure, generating concrete actions that derive in the women's organizational action.

Transformations in rural habitability, factors linked to rural-urban migration, youth migration, decreasing agricultural work, reduction of agricultural land, and increasing monocultures are among the topics discussed. The decrease in agricultural land is also attributed to factors correlated with real estate expansion and changes in families' productive activities aimed at generating economic income. The agro-export system, and the resultant effects of the neoliberal system on family farming units, pose a threat to sustainability in territories and households alike. Of significant concern is the issue of water scarcity, which underscores the interconnectedness of body and territory.

Water scarcity particularly impacts women who perform care and domestic work, resulting in bodily territorial markings that emphasize the role of emotions and affections. This research shows how emotions and affections operate in rural women's collective resistance, considering the space of bodily and territorial memory. There is an interesting continuity of research in this area. Thus, although women's actions and agency are shaped by the sustainability of life, it also reveals the historical roles assigned to them. This highlights the fact that sustainability of life can reinforce unequal relations surrounding heterosexual politics and bodies.

Finally, the importance of solidarity networks and containment forms as spaces of agency in the lives of rural women allows us to comprehend that the sustainability of life and conflicts arising from the earth generate gears for collective action. This is a part of women's resistance to gender colonialism and heterosexual politics that demarcate the spaces of control and surveillance in the lives of rural women. Technical terms will be explained upon their first usage.

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Table 1

Research Outline for Group Sessions

Session	Data collection techniques	Subcategories
“Making Life Stories Visible” - Women’s hands Olmué - Women of the Pullalli Water	Life stories Participant observation Photography	Sustainability of life Resistances Feeling the body Work Occupation of spaces Heteronormativity
“Corpobiography” - Women’s hands Olmué - Women of the Pullalli Water	Life stories Body mapping Participant observation Photography	Sustainability of Life Vulnerability Feeling the body Rural habitability Memory Heteronormativity Gender Coloniality
“Sensory Experiences” - Women’s hands Olmué - Women of the Pullalli Water	Life stories Participant Observation Photography	Sustainability of life Resistances Vulnerability Feeling the body Work Heteronormativity
“Our Body Earth”	Life stories Participant Observation Body-ground mapping Photography	Sustainability of life Resistances Vulnerability Feeling the body Rural habitability Work Memory Heteronormativity

Source: Author’s elaboration based on the theoretical framework and methodological approach.

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