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## “Women are those who lose their sense of shame”: resistance and fulfilment of gender expectations in dissident initiatives in a rural district of Argentina

*“Ce sont les femmes qui n’ont plus honte” : résistance et accomplissement des attentes liées au genre dans le cadre d’activités dissidentes dans un district agricole de la Pampa argentine*

*“Las mujeres son las que pierden la vergüenza”: quiebre y cumplimiento de expectativas de género en actividades disidentes en un distrito agrícola de la pampa húmeda argentina*

*“As mulheres são as que perdem a vergonha”: quebra e cumprimento de expectativas de gênero em atividades dissidentes num distrito agrícola da pampa húmida argentina*

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### Resúmenes

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The present article analyzes how and why women are those who “lose their sense of shame” to coordinate and take part in social interventions and dissident activities based on the notion of “participation” in the peripheries of La Laguna, a rural agro city in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Supported by extensive ethnographic fieldwork, this article asserts that an emic worldview in which women are associated with mothers and mothers with care enables women in La Laguna to withstand stigmatization and oppose hegemonic views on agricultural production and health in a district where social protest is nearly completely absent. The political maternalisms that we describe let women “take care” of “society”, the “neighborhood”, their “children” and even themselves. When doing so, they put themselves at risk, but such social risk is much less than it would be for men, who, with identities linked to notions of “real work” and “discretion”, do not have time for “stupidities”. Women are, thus, doubly able to both resist and fulfill gender expectations.

Cet article analyse comment et pourquoi ce sont les femmes qui « n'ont plus honte » quand elles coordonnent et rejoignent des interventions sociales et des activités dissidentes fondées sur la notion de « participation » dans la périphérie de La Laguna, une ville rurale dans la province de Buenos Aires en Argentine. Cet article s'appuie sur une vaste étude de terrain ethnographique afin de montrer qu'une vision du monde émique, dans laquelle les femmes sont associées aux mères et les mères à la notion de soin, permet aux femmes de La Laguna de résister à la stigmatisation et de s'opposer à des vues hégémoniques concernant la production agricole et la santé dans une région où la protestation sociale est pratiquement inexistante. Les maternalismes politiques décrits ici laissent les femmes « prendre soin » de « la société », du « quartier », de leurs « enfants » et même d'elles-mêmes. Se faisant, elles prennent des risques, mais un tel risque social est bien inférieur à celui qui existerait pour les hommes dont les identités sont liées à des notions de « vrai travail » et de « discrétion » et qui n'ont par conséquent pas de temps à consacrer à ces « stupidités ». Les femmes sont ainsi doublement capables, dans un même temps, de résister aux stéréotypes de genre et de s'y conformer.

En este artículo se analiza cómo y porqué las mujeres son las que “pierden la vergüenza”. Así pueden coordinar y participar en las prácticas de iniciativas de intervención social y disidencia centradas en la “participación” puestos en marcha en La Laguna, un distrito del interior rural de la provincia de Buenos Aires. Tras realizar un trabajo de campo etnográfico prolongado, se sostiene que desde una visión emica que asocia mujer a madre y madre a “cuidados”, las mujeres pueden resistir a prácticas de estigmatización, y a visiones hegemónicas de la producción agropecuaria y de la salud en un distrito que no tiene casi protestas sociales. Los maternalismos políticos que describimos permiten a las mujeres “cuidar” a la “sociedad”, al “barrio”, a “sus hijos” y hasta a ellas mismas. Al hacerlo, se ponen en riesgo social, pero éste es menor que el que experimentarían los hombres si lo hicieran. Atada su identidad al “trabajo en serio” y a la “discreción”, los varones no tendrían tiempo para “pavadas”. Las mujeres en su doble movimiento pueden así quebrar y cumplir las expectativas de género.

Este artigo analisa como e por que as mulheres são as que “perdem a decência”. As mulheres que consideramos neste trabalho podem coordenar e tomar parte em ações e iniciativas de intervenção social e dissidência, centradas na participação e postas em prática em La Laguna, distrito rural da província de Buenos Aires. Após extenso trabalho de campo, este artigo sustenta que desde o ponto de vista emico, onde mulheres são associadas a mães e mães a cuidados, as mulheres podem resistir às práticas de estigmatização e às representações hegemônicas da produção agropecuária e da saúde, em um distrito onde quase não há protestos sociais. Os maternalismos políticos que descrevemos dão às mulheres a faculdade de cuidar da sociedade, do bairro, de seus filhos e até mesmo delas mesmas. Desse modo, elas se expõem ao risco social, que ainda assim é menor do que aquele que enfrentariam os homens na mesma situação: atados a sua identidade de trabalhador sério e à discrição, os homens não teriam tempo para brincadeiras. As mulheres em seu duplo movimento podem assim quebrar e cumprir as expectativas de gênero.

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## ***Entradas del índice***

**Mots-clés :** care, femme, maternalisme politique, initiatives d'intervention sociale, Argentine

**Keywords :** care, woman, political maternalism, social development initiatives, Argentina

**Palabras claves :** cuidado, mujer, maternalismo político, dispositivos de intervención social, Argentina

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## ***Texto completo***

# **I/ Introduction**

- 1 With a foundation in ethnographic work, this article analyzes the gender moralities and subjectivities that are produced, updated and disputed in the practices of social intervention and dissidence centered on “participation” set in motion in the peripheries of an agro city in the rural interior of the province of Buenos Aires. In this context, we examine how and why it is women who “lose their shame” in order to coordinate and participate in the activities studied. In this way, there exists a sexual division of labor and

participation; it is women who can do “social work” and publicly express dissidence with less social risk, while it is men who must “work for real” with “force,” technique, science and money, greater respecting the hegemonic notion of “discretion.”

- 2 In order to carry out such a proposal, first we will offer a description of the area of study where ethnographic work was carried out, including the intervention initiatives analyzed. Then we will continue by demonstrating our reasons behind proposing a study of “shame”, understood not as an essential feeling, but rather as a starting point to comprehend and unravel a series of social relationships that occur in the community we analyze and that can be associated with a political economy of emotions. Next, we will describe the coordinators of the social intervention initiatives studied. These coordinators characterize their work by “commitment” that erases the borders between the public realm and the domestic realm as they look to transform all of society by “raising doubts”, showing that there are “other alternatives” and “generating awareness” on issues like discrimination, environment, health and gender in a district characterized by an absence of social protests. Lastly, we will dive into further analysis of the logics of participation of the women that partake in the activities we study.

## **II/ La Laguna: an agro city dedicated to genetically-modified soy for export**

- 3 La Laguna<sup>1</sup> is a district<sup>2</sup> located 260 km from Argentina’s capital in the northwest of the province of Buenos Aires where agricultural activities geared for export largely predominate.
- 4 According to Gomez Lende, the surface area of Argentina dedicated to soy cultivation increased by 196.6% between 1996 and 2014; in the same period, soy production itself grew by 385.2%. This oilseed currently represents between 54% and 60% of the country’s total crop production and half of its grain production. At the same time, 99% of soy fields are sown with a genetically modified variant, engineered to tolerate the herbicide glyphosate, which also accounts for 90.1% of the total production of genetically modified crops throughout the country, in terms of surface area, as explained by Gomez Lende. Burahik points out glyphosate’s environmental benefits. Associations like Semilleros Argentinos, part of the agricultural industry that lobbies for greater biotechnological development, affirm that this herbicide allows increased production, lower costs and ecological practices (cited in Mucci). Taking a radically opposite position, authors such as Verzeñassi and Mac Loughlin et al. point out that glyphosate is proven to have toxic qualities and to cause cancer, allergies and other serious conditions. Legislation that should protect the population from land or air fumigations both in La Laguna and throughout Argentina is not respected. In our fieldwork, we have personally heard first-hand testimonies confirming that the population lives surrounded by this controversial substance, breathing it in, handling it without protection or even drinking it.
- 5 According to Gomez Lende, Argentina has become the third largest producer of soy behind the United States and Brazil, and the top seller of oil (81%) and flour (36%) made from soy, with more than 95% of its production destined to international markets. In the district of La Laguna specifically, 69% of the surface area is used for planting, especially soy.
- 6 As part of a process that started in the mid-1990s, the leasing of land via sowing pools intensified agricultural production, absorbing areas that had been previously destined to cattle grazing. Family households that typically lived in productive areas were displaced from the fields and small towns, and forced to move to the district’s head city and its outlying areas. Men that were able to continue working as occasional field hands began to travel daily or seasonally. This new production dynamic enabled, as will we show, a transformation in the agency of women.

- 7 Many factors have led to the populating of the outlying neighborhoods of La Laguna. Firstly, the expansion of genetically modified soy and its displacement of other activities such as *tambos* or dairy production<sup>3</sup> have played a prominent role; as a consequence of land concentration and agricultural mechanization, rural employees have found themselves unemployed or underemployed (Hernández 2007 and 2009). Secondly, the historic floods of the early 2000s also caused migrations from nearby fields or small villages to La Laguna’s periphery. Thirdly, social sectors in the city center with low or medium-low income levels could only access land or leases in the periphery, or they were granted social housing in the city’s outskirts.
- 8 The 12,000 inhabitants who live in the outskirts of this district occupy territory with public infrastructure that is either deficient or nonexistent, where there is no public transportation nor hospitals, where the streets are unpaved, where houses often do not have natural gas connections, where sewers frequently back up, and where there are no banks or public administration offices. Men mostly live off informal and temporary farming or construction jobs and women clean houses in other, higher-income areas of the city.
- 9 Following Argentina’s socioeconomic crisis of 2001, initiatives emerged throughout the country that have attempted to implement symbolic and material strategies in order to expand rights for marginalized sectors. In the following section, we will describe the social intervention initiatives we study.

### **III/ Social intervention initiatives based on “participation” in a context of “discretion”**

- 10 In the chosen area of study—the outlying neighborhoods of the city of La Laguna—we will analyze the characteristics and participation dynamics of several social intervention initiatives (SIIs) in which the action of women predominates. The SIIs we study by implementing an ethnographic approach are the following:
1. A community theater group, in which various residents of these marginalized areas have been performing since 2004. This group is called together by certain members from the city center to create plays with themes that speak about what they consider to be their problems. Some have dealt with the “identity” of the outlying neighborhoods as well as gender issues, presenting ideas that contrast with the city’s hegemonic beliefs. These neighbors/actors perform in both the periphery and in the center of the city, well as in other parts of the country. Curiously, in everyday life, little thought is given to the public repercussions of their work; beyond formally stating that community theater looks to transform society, those who are first and most drastically changed by the group are the amateur actors themselves.
  2. A gymnastics group, in which doctors and neighbors participate in the national Community Doctors program. They socialize and share information and discussions about “healthy habits”. This program was launched in 2004 both in this district as well as throughout the country.
  3. A family farming support group, which, while not new, was systematically implemented during this period (Juárez et al.; Barros et al.). For the past four years, a market for agroecological vegetables has operated in the main square of the city’s historic center. Additionally, technical coordinators from the ex-Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries together with others coordinators from the Ministry of Social Development have organized groups of vegetable farmers. They

encourage family farmers to continue living in their places of origin, stimulating regional production both for self-consumption and for sale. At the same time, they look to spread agroecological perspectives<sup>4</sup>.

11 These three initiatives are modernization proposals that serve as alternatives to the hegemonic configuration in which only a few can be artists of “high culture” who “cultivate” or enlighten the rest of the population; in which doctors maintain their superiority in a constant power hierarchy with their patients, putting emphasis on curing rather than preventing; and where the dominant production model proposes an agriculture based on genetically modified crops, chemical fertilizers and exportation. In this sense, the coordinators of the SIIs propose that “things can be done in other ways.” The idea is that people must always be “active” participants and not passive recipients of public actions. In addition, “horizontality”<sup>5</sup> is emphasized between coordinators and participants; all community members can be actors and write plays about their own problems, doctors must take off their white lab coats to do gymnastics with their patients to help them prevent obesity, and the wives of field workers can obtain their own income by growing agroecological vegetables in their homes and selling them to their neighbors in the city’s main square. The initiatives we analyze are based on Paulo Freire’s notions and practices of popular education. These SIIs seek to “improve”, “liberate” and “awaken” those who live in the city’s outlying neighborhoods, as well as those who live in the district in general, and are based on repertoires that stem from feminism, agroecology, new age movements, the return to “nature” as a redeeming utopia in the face of the advance of “technology” and the Argentine “psychology culture” (Visacovsky). While the circulation of these types of ideas has been studied in large metropolises in Argentina and their peripheries (Seman; Vargas and Viotti; Funes; D’Angelo), studies about their appropriation and implementation in the interior of the country are very recent (Noel; Quiros; Trimano).

12 By promoting a culture based on an “active” rather than “passive” stance, these initiatives and the efforts of their participants favor the political discussion of fundamental issues linked to gender, health, the environment and food production. The activities are centered on the native notion of “participation”, which, according to the coordinators, implies that all those who “participate” in the SIIs will necessarily improve their lives; they will increase their self-confidence, positively value their “neighborhood”, have new opportunities for economic gain, provide good food to their neighbors, have a new space for socialization and prevent diseases. Participation is understood, above all, as the physical, bodily presence with a high level of public visibility, whether it is to fight for recognition against discrimination or for the right to health care, or to promote alternative forms of agricultural production and consumption. Not only do they believe in the positive validity of participation, but also in the value of public visibility in the media and on social networks. Coordinators are often publicly known in the city and this can potentially further alienate those who are “ashamed” of being associated with this group of dissidents in a context that almost completely lacks a tradition of social activism and rebellious politics. The activity coordinators we study are often criticized for their lack of “discretion”<sup>6</sup>, because they “complain a lot”, they are “fundamentalists”, “creators of panic” and “*quilombas*”<sup>7</sup>, among other things.

13 Within the hegemonic mindset of La Laguna, public space was planned and organized with streets to travel to work or to visit friends and family; the squares are intended to be used for civic celebrations or shows organized by the local government. On the contrary, with their activities, the coordinators propose notions that present public space as a place to show oneself and thus attain pride and recognition for seeking “a better world”. As Lefebvre observes, the contradictory, conflictive and political character present in the production of space is evident. The moralities about what “can” or “cannot” be done in public are put into discussion thanks to the intervention initiatives we study.

## IV/ Studying shame as a non-essential emotion

- 14 As Lutz argues, in the West, emotion has been considered the opposite of that which is mental, of rationality, of control and objectivity. This contrast presents the emotional as inferior to the mental, mirroring, to a certain degree, the western distinction between nature and culture. But, Lutz explains, emotion has also been, paradoxically considered contrary to distancing and lack of commitment. Here, the opposites are inverted. “It is better to be emotional than to be dead or alienated” (Lutz 290). Emotion implies vitality, “when seen with a positive assessment, it becomes a source of personal power that can intervene in the construction of social power” (Pita 79). In the case studied, shame is understood not as an essential or natural feeling, but as a point from which one can unravel social relations within a political economy of emotions (Scheper-Hughes) or as a discourse of emotion as a social practice (Abu-Lughod and Lutz). We study vernacular definitions of “shame” and its “loss” in order to understand them situationally. Those who “lose their shame” are those whose emotions overflow, the indiscreet, but those who feel “awakened” and are seen both as brave and as “crazy”, “lazy” or “fussy”.
- 15 As Pita (80) points out, emotions and feelings are part of what produces subjectivity; they are also capable of generating emotional communities and, therefore, moral worlds. Those who “lose their shame” feel; they give meaning to what they feel and they connect with the world as situated subjects. As Scheper-Hughes (431) explains, without culture, we would not know how we feel. Specifically, shame as a research topic has been the focus of various disciplines. From a sociological standpoint, Scheff observes that shame is what regulates the state of our social ties (cited in Bericat 168). For Simmel, shame —or modesty— also appears as an emotion that is largely social; shame begins when some aspect of the subject catches the attention of others. From then on, the excessive gaze of others, and their corresponding perception, generates for the subject a sensation of extreme exposure, of total visibility, which becomes a sanction, given that it is “such shame that, in the form of spontaneous punishment, attacks those who have wanted to stray from the general tone that others maintain” (Vergara 38-39).
- 16 In our case, the participation initiatives attract this “excessive gaze”. For Simmel, mass acts are characterized by their shamelessness, and shame as modesty is diluted in the homogeneity of the amassed crowd. This is very useful when considering what happens with the “protection” the group of participants feels when “losing their shame”. For Elias, shame and scrupulous misgivings form a crucial part of the great transformation of the civilization process within the subjects. In anthropology, the pioneer Pitt-Rivers studies honor and shame as a system of social values in an Andalusian town. He establishes that one facet of the social structure is the dichotomy of the “sexes”; men have to defend their honor and that of their family, and the loss of honor of a female family member affects everyone (Pitt-Rivers 141). Moral positions within the community are derived from the *shame* of the woman, an essence of femininity that is complementary to the husband’s manhood and that can be lost but not recovered.
- 17 Stolen studies a rural town in the province of Santa Fe, Argentina where sex is a crucial object of moral reflection on human behavior. Men, as in other ethnographic cases, carry out their activities “outside” (Stolen 180) while women do so “inside” the home; being chaste and being at home are the highest qualities pursued by the women the author describes. This contradicts our own case where women are the few who dare to display themselves in extraordinary ways outside the home.
- 18 In relation to the specific juxtaposition of development initiatives with participation and shame, Prins analyzes the unexpected consequences of a participatory photography program in El Salvador, where the peasants were “ashamed” to participate. Those who did, “lost their shame” and finally became proud; they overcame the fear of real or potential



criticism from their neighbors and could “express themselves” and “develop their minds” (Prins 438). The similarities with our case are evident.

19 In the next section, we will describe the coordinators of the initiatives studied and why this type of work is analytically considered as global political maternalism.

## V/ Global political maternalism, or how to “lose shame” taking care of the “neighborhood”

20 The majority of participants in these activities are women or men with alternative masculinities. It is interesting to think, then, of the native notion that women are the ones who “put their bodies on the line” (“*ponen el cuerpo*”). Women learn to show and outpour their emotions (Zenobi 2010; 2013) publicly in these initiatives. Their moral consideration is ambiguous; they are the few that venture to put themselves on display and that is why they are “brave” but lack “shame” and are “crazy”. In this ethnographic case, the idea of femininity linked with passivity and docility as seen in other cases is reversed (Ortner; Rosaldo; Previtali). Not all women can lose their shame. In fact, those who do are few in number, but our subjects of study affirm that all of the men are afraid of “what people will say” when people start to “*cogotear*”<sup>8</sup>, and therefore do not participate.

21 Those who lead the participatory intervention initiatives studied here are, in general, a group of local residents from La Laguna’s “center” who have spent time living outside of the city to study or work<sup>9</sup> either in the nation’s capital or in other metropolitan areas where these coordinators—most of them women—began to think about the outlying neighborhoods of their own city as places to “transform”. Before, they had been girls from the countryside or from “well-to-do families” from the city center, but in the years that followed the 2001 crisis, they found themselves shocked to see people sleeping in the streets of the big cities and the sense of urban anonymity gave them an “interesting liberation” that allowed them to “begin again”. In large cities, they made their first incursions into activism, study or work. Their subjectivities changed and they began to project new plans for the periphery of their city of origin; they wanted to “transform the neighborhoods that nobody saw”. Before leaving, however, many admit that they lived in “a little bubble” and had never set foot in the outlying neighborhoods of La Laguna. They then returned to their city with a moral project and with political connections at national, provincial or local levels in a historical period marked by greater recognition of the material and symbolic rights of the inhabitants of marginalized areas of the country via different social intervention initiatives. They say they left because they were “thirsty” for many things that their district of origin could not offer them and they indicate that they returned with the intention and desire to create such spaces. For others, the compatibility between the dissident knowledge they acquired and their return to practically implement such knowledge at first seemed inconceivable because they considered their city to be “shallow”, “repressive” and “conservative”. Others have returned to form a family and have found relatively stable job opportunities in the outlying neighborhoods in public sectors such as education, medicine or recreation. Given the stigmatization of these neighborhoods, almost no other local resident with the required qualifications wanted to work there. Additionally, among the coordinators, there are those who were born and raised in the metropolises and have moved to La Laguna looking for a life “in the countryside,” calmer, more “authentic” and more “natural”<sup>10</sup>.

22 In a context of expansion of state employment positions related to “social” issues in marginalized areas following Argentina’s 2001 crisis, some coordinators attained what was for them at first “just a job opportunity”, but that would later become something “much more than a job”. They feel comfortable and relaxed in the city’s outlying and marginalized

areas, it is the place where they manifest their “commitment”. There, they redefine their local identities as inhabitants of the center who have returned to the city. In fact, many describe themselves as “from the neighborhood”<sup>11</sup> in relation to the city’s periphery, although most of them do not reside there. Transiting these areas is unheard of for their families or childhood friends who never circulate along the city’s outskirts, considering them to be dangerous or empty. For this reason, they admit to having a deep sense of loneliness. The outlying neighborhoods of the city form part of their identities despite such lack of understanding among their circles of origin. These neighborhoods are also the place where the coordinators “lose their shame” in freedom. Or at least, the place where they take their first steps towards losing shame, which they will then continue in the dominant city center.

23 The coordinators we interviewed admit that, thanks to the intervention initiatives they implement, “it’s like you dream for a little while.” They see that there are “other possibilities”, “there is another reality.” They feel that, despite living in a “stagnant” city whose inhabitants “do not take action”, slowly and thanks to their activities, people are beginning to “revive”, to “wake up”.

24 Sooner or later, their proposals for dissident social interventions result to be much more than a job; there is dedication and “total commitment”. They say that “they give their all for the community.” They do not have established working hours, they use their own money to improve their work environment and to help people from the outlying neighborhoods. Their houses are also used for meetings, for feeding guests and lodging district’s foreigners who arrive to “stir up” the periphery of the city. Separation between work and family is not possible and even undesirable. In this way, there are no fixed boundaries between their productive work and reproductive work. The limit between what is public and what is domestic is diffuse. Thus, “commitment” is understood as an obligation in terms of moral logic, which also becomes a political logic. As in the case of Pita, “commitment” can be exhibited as a value because it ratifies moral integrity. The more it is expressed as a lack of individual interest and oriented towards collective benefit, the more positive consideration it receives. What is curious about the notions of work is that, while the coordinators outwardly display total commitment to their activities, which implies complete devotion that is “much more than a job”, for most of those both from the center and the outlying neighborhoods, the coordinators are “lazy” and do not work, or they do not work enough and even “receive money without working”. The moral integrity of their actions is sometimes questioned and for this reason the coordinators feel that sometimes they are “persecuted” institutionally.

25 It would be impossible for “true men”<sup>12</sup> to work in positions like those of the coordinators, or to participate in the activities they organize. This is explained by the fact that hegemonic masculinity is associated with an emic concept of work, understood as exerting physical effort or generating what are considered abundant economic returns.

“This must be embarrassing for the men [and that’s why they don’t participate. If] it’s work, they’re not ashamed.”

“We [men] are afraid of being teased. What are you going to do, start selling [vegetables] in the square? Women are more entrepreneurial. They have other strengths. Men are afraid of what others will say.”

26 Men would also be “ashamed” to participate in dissident activities that focus on popular education and have playful overtones. It is thought that “because they work, they don’t do anything else.” Women, on the other hand, are presented as those who “have permission to do *pavadas*”<sup>13</sup>, who “will try anything” and who “believe that there are a lot of things still left to experience”. Women also have the potential to motivate their husbands to participate. The practices and discourses of men who do coordinate and participate in the initiatives can be linked to alternative models of masculinity (Connell) and these men suffer different rumors and comments from others about their virility and seriousness. Others compare themselves with their friends and feel “lesser” and, sometimes,



“uncomfortable”<sup>14</sup>. As Scott maintains, gender is the primary field within which or through which power is articulated. For this author, there is no women’s world separate from that of men; information about women is inexorably information about men.

27 Those coordinators who are also teachers find resistance to their dissident initiatives among their students’ parents, in the board of directors of the rural school, or among their own coworkers. For example, the majority of male agricultural engineers who work as teachers are in favor of fumigating with agrochemicals and view vegetable gardens or agroecology as things that are “feminine” and not “real work” like the large-scale production of soy, cattle or pork. That is why their network of friends and family is so important for the female coordinators. Many times, the same person coordinates more than one initiative simultaneously or rotates from one to another. Something similar occurs with the participants. They feel that they are “always the same”, that “they are few” and that they are perceived as “strange” both in the center and in the periphery of the city.

28 Certain coordinators are identified by others as the “dentist who looks into the mouths of *negros*”<sup>15</sup>, “the one who performs with the *villeros*”<sup>16</sup> and does not shave her legs”, “the Zapatista”<sup>17</sup> who always complains”, the one who cheats (“*currar*”<sup>18</sup>) with those who claim to sell vegetables from their own gardens, the “crazy” agricultural engineer.

29 The coordinators’ practices and discourses are based on education, caregiving and awakening of “all”, and involve what we call practices and notions of *care*<sup>19</sup> that we will name global<sup>20</sup> politicalmaternalism<sup>21</sup>. They struggle and strive for the specialized care of those who are most “unprotected” or “the whole of society”, which they are able to do as “women”. That is to say, from an emic perspective that associates women with mothers, and mothers with “care givers”, they can resist stigmatization and the hegemonic views about health and agricultural production as “women” having jobs that are not “real”. They are the “crazy women” who “lose their shame” and “take initiative”, but they can do so because they are “giving care”, unlike the men, who run a greater social risk in doing so.

30 After describing the global political maternalism of the coordinators of the SIIs, in the next section we will delve into the logics of participation of the women who form part of the activities. We will describe how their “loss of shame” is associated with behaviors traditionally related to motherhood and we will present the maternalisms we characterize as maternalisms for a better future for their children and for personal relief.

## **VI/ I participate as a mother: maternalisms for a better future for their children and for personal relief**

31 When analyzing the motivations expressed by the participants interviewed in relation to the activities studied, we found two main factors that justify their actions that we call maternalism for a better future for their children and maternalism for personal relief. First we will describe the former.

32 The family farming support group meets at the city’s main square every fortnight. The participants are presented as “the women gardeners of La Laguna” and most have vegetable gardens next to their houses<sup>22</sup> on lands that generally belong to their husbands’ employers while their husbands often work as laborers in fields that are nowhere near agroecological. Women say they garden because they are mothers and want to give their children healthy food. They also want their children to learn skills that will offer them job opportunities beyond what is typical. Their challenge is to “motivate” their children:

“If I do it, my children will also do it.”

“I want my child to be an agricultural fanatic.”

“First [I think] about the quality of life I am giving to my children, who I nourish as their mother. It is the woman who becomes aware of what her children are eating and who chooses their nutrition.”

33 One of the mothers urged her husband to change jobs after suspecting that their daughter was born disabled because of his work; he went from being a fumigator to a truck driver. First, the “discreet” and “strong” rural women outpour their emotions in public and fight for the health of their children, but afterwards they adjoin their voices to those of the coordinators to demand change for everyone. Agroecological practices remind older women of how their parents worked the fields “without so many chemicals,” sometimes causing them to shed tears of emotion during training courses. Others say that when they were girls, their families did not use “weed killers” in the garden because they could not afford them. Through the city’s agricultural secondary school where they send their children, the coordinators recruited many to go to the market. Several work or have worked as domestic servants in ranches or houses in the city center while they simultaneously “dedicate themselves” to their households. Today they are part-time gardeners. At first, they thought selling their vegetables in the main square was unimaginable. “We were embarrassed to unload the vegetables from the truck in public. It wasn’t appropriate.” But when seeing customers recognize their vegetables as quality and “healthy”, they began to feel proud<sup>23</sup> of their production and started to look at vegetables planted by others with “suspicion.” As time passes, they value the group of market vendors as a space of socialization and contention, even though there are problems related to “coexistence”. Faced with the coordinators’ more scientific or “ideological” views of agroecology (“against” the dominant model as argued by Goulet *et al.*), the gardeners emphasize the language of motherhood to justify their adherence to agroecological practices. This may be only a matter of time, since this group has only existed for four years.

34 Guétat-Bernard and Prévost warn that, in other cases, some women have stated that agroecology implies an additional burden to their domestic obligations. Thus, they make an analogy between the care they give to children and the elderly and the care they give to plants and nature. They show a concern for future generations that the authors describe as environmental care and that the women studied characterize as “feminine”; the women demonstrate “essentialist” discourses relating women with care and mobilize values such as “love for nature” beyond environmental care in their discourses. These values “legitimize their total devotion to productive work that must be carried out with an affective dimension, without vacations or holidays” (Guétat-Bernard and Prévost). According to these authors, this valorization can bring risks, since women can be transformed into “consecrated” labor, indoctrinated and cheap, or even completely unpaid. In this way, productive work can also be made invisible with the difficulties, effort and time it demands. Laugier (7) also points out that this is how a new burden falls upon rural women who, in addition to producing, educating and feeding future generations, must also preserve the environment.

35 In the case of the second type of maternalism that we describe, that of the participants’ personal relief, we consider it maternalism because their way of understanding these spaces is a mirror of their motherhood; they participate as exhausted mothers looking for space “for themselves”. Women who are part of the activities of the community theater group, for example, understand it as a way to relieve their unrest by allowing them to “feel that they are in another world”:

“You have so many problems and you’re rehearsing and you forget about them all. I love it when we act. We jump; sometimes my legs are exhausted, but I tough it out just the same. Concentrating on that, you don’t think about anything else.”

“I’m happy because I let go of everything. I release everything that bothers me. I don’t depend on anyone when I come here to the theater. I free myself even more.”

36 The “anyone” of “not depending on anyone” that the neighbor and amateur actress refers to clearly reflects that the time she spends rehearsing or acting is time that women feel is “just for them”, compared with the rest of the day when they feel their time belongs to “others”:

“My own time is when I come here. That is when my time begins because the rest of the day I am running all over the place.”

“I have to tend to my family. Then I come here and I relax.”

37 The idea of participation as a means of relief is recurrent in members of the group, especially when “letting out” what one has inside or when “putting one’s body on the line”.

38 On the other hand, in the gymnastics classes led by doctors geared towards preventing cardiovascular disease and “creating community”, a space of feminine sociability was formed with sentiments similar to those of the theater group. Sometimes the participants throw dancing “kicks” imagining they are alongside their husbands. Or they say that chatting among each other they “put problems into words until they are able to find a solution.” They value getting together with a group that is different from their nuclear or extended family.

“The gym distracts me. I don’t think about anything. It’s an escape from the everyday.”

“You leave the household routine. You laugh with the girls. I don’t get out much. If I go out, it’s with [my husband]; otherwise, I don’t go out.”

“At gymnastics class we can unplug.”

“It’s time just for us.”

39 For our interviewees, it seems that “putting one’s body on the line” and “putting things into words” are ways of solving certain types of uneasiness or difficulties for those who achieve it. This could be the influence of a common sense of “psychology”. As stated by Visacovsky, psychoanalysis exists in Argentina as practical knowledge, not only in institutionalized forms or as therapeutic or teaching systems, but also in the ways of acting and thinking of many Argentines, nurturing their social identities and lifestyles. This practical sense helps constitute a daily ontological reality while also providing solutions for facing possible setbacks (Visacovsky 57-58). The idea of “catharsis” has become a positive value.

40 In the following section, we will briefly review why we consider these cases of participation with “loss of shame” to be justified under the native maternalist logic that is linked with Argentina’s recent history of social movements led by women influenced in one way or another by maternalist discourse.

## **VII/ A recent history of women’s activism and maternalist discourses in Argentina**

41 According to Di Liscia, by tracing the appearance and absence of Argentine women throughout the twentieth century, one sees that mobilized groups and organizations consistently express the woman/maternity equation, with specific views and terms in different contexts (143).

42 One of the most significant groups of women in recent Argentine and world history is that of the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo. Appealing to blood relations as a principle of collective adhesion, a dispersed group of citizens formed civil associations that have fought and struggled to achieve recognition in their demands during and after

the last Argentine military dictatorship (Vecchioli 19). For Zarco, the women renewed the maternal values that the state urged them to practice in their private life and took them to a new realm, the public realm, while the mothers moved from a biological or “natural” environment to the political playing field. “The mothers of the disappeared were ‘reborn’ as political mothers, their children ‘gave birth’ to them as political subjects who used their maternal role and maternal thinking as a base condition for constructing their citizenship” (Zarco 236).

43 As Vecchioli points out, the naturalization of the basic constitutive principle of this political community is one of the keys to its effectiveness; its interests appear as if they were naturally derived from the blood relations between the victims and their families and not as a result of a position within a wider spectrum of competing interests. Vecchioli, however, does not consider sufficient the analysis that the creation of and care for human life is what explains the constitution of the mothers as political actors. For this author (19), the use of the family model cannot be thought of as a simple discursive strategy used by groups to maximize their protesting potential. “Appealing to family is based on the beliefs shared by the state and by those who make up civil society organizations about the strength and positive value of kinship and the place of family within the nation” (Vecchioli 19). In line with Vecchioli, we recognize the need to account for the enormous symbolic work carried out by activists to build an imagined political community as being founded on ties of kinship and qualities such as “blood”, “instinct” or “pain”. This symbolic work is part of a social process that must be made explicit to denaturalize the participation of women as mothers (4).

44 Those who coordinate and take part in the activities we study justify their participation with the logic of care and motherhood, but this would not be understandable without comprehending elements such as the sexual division of dissident, “social” and “moral” work; land possession; the association of masculinity to scientific and technical advances; the current production model in the Argentine countryside and the displacement of populations that it has triggered; national initiatives that have attempted to implement symbolic and material strategies to expand rights for marginalized sectors, especially agendas that identify women as a significant group to “reach”<sup>24</sup>; the moral imperatives experienced by participants and coordinators; or the biographical trajectories of the returning migrant coordinators, for example. Family is, both for Vecchioli and in our case in La Laguna, a significant source of collective mobilization (19), but it can only be understood if the symbolic dimension of the politicization processes is put into focus to understand the singular ways in which people imagine and argue through the metaphor of family (Vecchioli 20) in Argentina.

45 Another case worth mentioning is that of the small and mid-scale landowners who faced the auctioning of their fields alongside the Movement of Farming Women in Struggle (*Movimiento de Mujeres Agropecuarias en Lucha*), a social movement created in Argentina in the 1990s. They always clarified that they were defending “the land for their children”, explaining that that “the men don’t dare argue, they are ashamed,” and that “the men lower their arms” (Ringuelet and Valerio 2008). In the cited work, the authors explain that participation in the movement appears to be facilitated by previous family situations and circumstances that favored greater female independence (households centered on women with husbands who were absent or ill, etc.).

46 Faced with the corporate privatizations that took place in the 1990s among populations in the Argentine countryside that depended on large companies for work, collective actions with a high female presence were initiated leading to new forms of protest, such as blocking highways and picketing, that have become distinctive marks of Argentine popular belligerence in recent years (Di Liscia171). Andujar studies the role of women in the protests that took place in 1996 after the massive layoffs that followed the privatization of public oil and natural gas companies in the province of Neuquén, in southern Argentina. Women attested that their husbands became depressed, died, abandoned their families or became nuisances within the home, while they “had to become stronger” (Andujar 163).

Expulsion from the productive sector strongly altered not only the economic situation of laid-off workers, but also their gender position as heads of household. On the other hand, the same author states that when the survival and care of their sons and daughters was put in check, the women had to “go out and resolve the sustenance of family life. While gender has naturalized their role as guarantors of community reproduction as an explicit interest of feminine existence, in this context of social disarticulation, the demands and capacities of feminine confrontation acquired a disruptive and moving prominence within the current social order” (Andujar 163-164). Andujar indicates that the fact of seeing their “sons and daughters without a future or in misery” was “used by all women to raise roadblocks.” In this way, the author affirms, they politicized motherhood (174).

47 Pita problematizes the naturalization of the native category of “mother” and “family” when analyzing a contemporary organization that fights for justice in cases of young people killed by the police in Buenos Aires. She explains the participation almost exclusively of women by paraphrasing Pitt-Rivers and his moral division of labor, “which determines the way in which moral qualities are distributed between the sexes and, consequently, what behavior is considered adequate or conceivable for each” (cited in Pita 101).

48 Pita analyzes how the complaints of women are symbolically constructed as “inevitable” because they are guided by blood relations (17) in a complex language that, combining emotionality and moral evaluations, demands rights. Pita also reflects on the different forms in which authority and legitimacy are constructed, as well as on the obligations and rights related to these forms. In our case, we consider the technical, scientific, bureaucratic and “political” knowledge that gives the coordinators authority and legitimacy. Similarly, we can also find explanations related to the authority and legitimacy given by “blood relations” as well as the need of women to “relieve themselves”, “empower themselves”, “have time just for them” or “provide healthy food” for their children, which are often expressed in the language of emotion and feelings.

49 For Pita, the category of “family” can be thought of as a moral entity, a sphere of social action, an ethical space endowed with positivity and, as a result, capable of awakening emotions, feelings, reactions and a whole series of duties, obligations and prohibitions (19). In our case, the notion of woman/mother/caretaker empowers the participation and coordination of the SIIs and almost always disempowers men. Moreover, Pita thinks that “family” is also a native political category that sets limits and establishes alliances in such a way that it manages to configure the field of protest by influencing inter- and intra-group social relations (19). The terms we highlight in this study can be thought of in a similar way. “Women” can “be daring”, “do stupid things” and morally challenge others in the name of “the future of their children” or even of “society”; they do not have “real jobs”, which makes it easier for them to rebel and participate in a city where “discretion” prevails.

50 The issues inherent to “blood relation” (as “mothers”) or to gender (“women are more daring”, “we are stronger”) are what often explains the participation of our interviewees; for them and for others, these are indicators of “courage” and “bravery” but also of “madness” or lack of attachment to what “should” be done. As in the case of Pita, “not being afraid” is what makes it possible to face what feels like an obligation and “there, blood relations can be wielded as a value” (Pita 103). Thus, blood relations —or, in our case, blood relations and gender— acquire a political quality. “Not being afraid is what makes it possible to fulfill the obligations imposed by blood. This is what leads to ‘not being silent’, to making ‘quilombo’, to ‘demanding’, to ‘not to allowing’, to ‘go on fighting’, and to ‘not stopping’” (Pita 104). In the case we study here, the “loss of shame” demonstrates that emotions and feelings are the language that functions as a condition to enable participation and dissidence, and it appears to be a value that “works by manifesting the forms in which moral worlds function effectively for the legitimization of certain actors [and] for the politicization” (Pita 107) of actions in public space, putting into evidence, as Di Liscia (175) proposes, new forms of the politicization of motherhood.



51 In the next section, we will present some conclusions about “shame” and its loss through maternalism in the case we are studying.

## VIII/ Shame and its loss through maternalism: a morally efficient logic

52 In this article, we have described and analyzed the moralities of gender and the subjectivities produced, updated and disputed in the practices of social intervention and dissidence initiatives focused on “participation” and put into action in the peripheries of an agro city of the rural interior of the province of Buenos Aires. We have studied how and why it is women who “lose their shame” and are able to coordinate and participate in the activities analyzed. Thus, there exists a sexual division of participation and “moral” work; it is women who can do “social work” and publicly express dissidence with less social risk, while men must “work for real” and more closely respect more the hegemonic “discretion”.

53 We agree with Spataro’s request for epistemological surveillance to avoid concluding that all of the women’s experiences we describe are “cultural resistance” (Spataro 75), categorizing all practices as liberation or submission (Spataro 42), as do many coordinators in our case and even some analysts. The coordinators propose visions of care or maternalisms that are more global, or even more “ideological”, of “transforming” all of society by the “putting one’s body on the line”, “empowerment” and “participation”. On the other hand, most of the participants in the neighborhood initially begin for reasons that are less “global”, such as in order to have time for “themselves” or to look for better nutrition options or work prospects for their children. This result is similar to Spataro’s considerations (42) when she points out the need to remember that femininities can “challenge the established order, or celebrate it, but most of the time they do neither.” Silla (116) feels the same way when warning that freedom and liberation do not mean the same thing for different social groups, which could potentially unearth solutions not contemplated by a paradigm that highlights the values of autonomy and awakening of the consciousness. In this regard, Sutton clarifies that, “to understand whether women’s embodied practices have a transgressive effect or not, it is important to examine the social context of activism. Women activists may draw on aspects of normative femininity that are important parts of their identity (e.g., maternal embodiment); but in certain political circumstances, such images may contest dominant ideas” (Spataro 152).

54 Grieco studies the case of women who protest against extractivist mining developments in Peru and explains that their participation is also reflected as a consequence of their “maternal nature” (Grieco 107). This legitimizes their public commitment but also, as the author warns, reduces such commitment to an instinctive and emotional expression. Thus, the difficulties and real limits of their activism are covered up along with gender hierarchies within the activist sphere (Grieco 107). For Grieco, the productive, reproductive and political work of women is hidden in this way, consigning them symbolically to the private sphere and to a “maternal nature”, considering them to be vectors of a social change that only benefits others (men, their children). Although we adhere to most of the affirmations of this author, we maintain that, in our case of the “loss of shame”, the three types of maternalism we describe are alternatives on the horizon of what is possible; they are intelligible to our interviewees and to their fellow citizens and, only for this reason, they have validity and political force—not because maternalism in any of its forms is natural, but precisely because it is perceived as so. Therein lies its power. The social risks implied by the “loss of shame” for these women is mitigated by the language of maternalism. This can only be understood with situated knowledge from perspectives that are not metro-centric and without the academic or political cravings of Northern feminisms<sup>25</sup>.

- 55 It is worth noting that class as a category of social classification also intervenes in the playing field of social risk; for the coordinators who organize dissident activities, coming from a “well-to-do family”, having university studies or holding a position as a public servant or teacher allows them to assume an activist discourse of care by “losing shame”. The participants, often residing in less-valued areas and with informal and less-prestigious jobs, also constitute a new political subjectivities when participating, but with public behaviors that are not as mediatized as those of the coordinators<sup>26</sup>. They are all, however, a minority among the women in the district. The vast majority do not dare to participate because of “shame”.
- 56 Regarding the near totality of men who do not participate, we can consider what Rice Oxley proposes about the “mysticism of masculinity”: being dominant, strong and successful is the only valid way to manifest manhood and doing so makes many men unhappy. “Notions of pride, shame and honor still greatly hurt men [... who] need to know that it is okay to show vulnerability, to lose, to cry and to express emotional discomposure” (Rice Oxley). This explains male “shame”, the silence of many men and why the logic of public political scripts, as Scott suggests, are insufficient in this territory of “discretion”. “Losing shame” and participating are part of public scripts, but scripts that are dissenting.
- 57 It is not possible to “lose shame” and participate in dissident activities in just any way. The social risk in an environment as “discreet” as the one we research makes the essentialization of “blood relations” and “gender” the factor that explains the language of different maternalisms as a language of care, but also as a vector of political possibility. As argued by Daich, Pita and Sirimarco (77), “emotion can only manifest itself embedded within bonds of sociability, because it is the knowledge of these bonds and relationships that provides the very possibility of such emotion.” “Shame”, as Sibila indicates, has not lost moralizing efficacy, but rather is becoming more effective in modeling behaviors and subjectivities. In contemporary public space, everyone can —or should— see who they are and the place of truth tends to be determined by the eyes of others (Sibila). The maternalisms we describe allow women to both break with and fulfill gender expectations simultaneously. They are those who “lose their shame”, are “crazy” and run social risks, but they can do so as “women”, “brave women who care”.<sup>27</sup>

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## Notas

1 We have decided to change the names of both the subjects and the city studied. As Fonseca indicates, there is no reason to reveal verifiable names and places where we have worked for the information collected to be "more solid". "The true moral offense is to judge without comprehending" and doing our work does not in any way involve revealing literal names (51). Within the framework of the study of shame and its loss, providing the identities of our subjects of research is, at the very least, ridiculous, and even possibly dangerous for the reputations of those we interviewed. The detailed description of social life is what comprises the truthfulness of the account (Fonseca 44). As this author states, "The pretention of 'neutral' science that surpasses political debates is even more questionable in the current context where we act both as researchers and as fellow citizens of our subjects of research" (50).

2 La Laguna is one of the 135 administrative districts of the province of Buenos Aires. It has a total of 47 000 inhabitants. Its principal city is also named La Laguna and concentrates a population of 36 000. Additionally, there are 12 small towns in the district with populations that do not surpass 1 000, or in some cases not even 100 inhabitants.

3 In Argentina, a *tambo* is a livestock establishment where cows are milked and milk is sold, generally wholesale.

4 We have carried out more than 100 formal interviews in addition to registering informal conversations with the coordinators and participants of each group studied. In the framework of our research, we were invited to perform with the community theater group, travelling alongside the actors and participating in national events, negotiating with local functionaries, and acting in performances and in rehearsals, among other activities. With the family farming support group, we attended their biweekly markets in the city's main plaza and participated in training sessions over the course of one year. With the gymnastics group and Community Doctors social program, we were observant participants for one year. We have followed and interacted with these three groups via social networks and private internet communications. We have participated in the daily social lives of the coordinators, visiting their homes, their places of work and sharing exchanges with different social actors in a variety of different events. We have also interviewed actors involved in one way or another with coordinators or participants as politicians, government officials, social workers, union representatives, teachers, and inhabitants of the outlying neighborhoods who do not participate in the activities studied, etc.

5 Horizontality is understood by the coordinators of the activities we study to be a positive moral value.



- 6 The importance of vernacular knowledge regarding what and how to make visible and “invisible” in the public realm is important given the positive social value attributed to “discretion”. “Doing” doesn’t present as much social risk as “being seen doing”, especially when considering actions that stray from the dominant ideology.
- 7 Those who make *quilombo*, a vulgar term that implies mess, racket, uproar and disorder.
- 8 An informal term that implies elevating ones neck (*cogote*) to observe others with inquisitive or demonstrative motives.
- 9 There are those who have not lived in large metropolises but, for example, travel every fortnight to the national or provincial capital to visit their children, take classes and meet with artistic organizations and social dissidents. There is a direct relationship between mobility, in a wide sense, and moral repertoires.
- 10 For a similar case, see Quiros .
- 11 Many coordinators are “from the neighborhood” because it is where they project themselves; they feel recognized (or at least try to) and it is there where they dream and have the space of freedom and liberation they were looking for.
- 12 Other studies that analyze the relationship between gender and the native notion of “work” in rural environments are, for example, those of De Heredia and Sherman. Perelman also offers insight into the relationship between shame, work and dignity for those who sort through trash in urban areas.
- 13 *Pavada* is a colloquial term for something stupid or foolish.
- 14 Unfortunately, for reasons of length we are not be able to expand our scope to include the men who participate and the people who do not participate.
- 15 *Negro* is a derogatory term that is very polysemic in Argentina. Its meaning is in no way similar to that of France or the United States. For further explanation, see Frigerio.
- 16 A disrespectful term that refers to inhabitants of marginalized areas that implies correlation between the space itself —the metropolitan slum, or *villa*—, its residents, and negative moral qualities.
- 17 A term whose use began after this person travelled to Mexico, when she started to spread ideas from the Zapatista movement. Afterwards, the term was used as an accusatory category implying a “seditious person”, without having any particular relation with the Zapatista movement itself.
- 18 *Currar* is a vulgar term used in Argentina to refer to one who tricks or swindles.
- 19 We use the term “care” in this article in line with the proposal of Laugier et al., who explain that care is a “distinctive activity of the human species that includes all we do in order to conserve, continue or repair our ‘world’ so that we can live as best as possible” (Tronto cited in Laugier et al.). The work of repairing and maintaining is often conferred to women within the domestic realm and is often made invisible (Laugier *et al.*:115-116).
- 20 Both in this case as well as in the other two types of maternalisms that we describe, we clarify that these are not the only logics our field subjects mention to explain their participation. They are, however, the predominant logics in each case.
- 21 Nari affirms that political maternalism looked to liberate women and transform both society and the state, and was pushed forward by different branches of feminism in Argentina towards the beginning of the twentieth century. This author further explains that political maternalism was based fundamentally on two premises: on one hand, that fact that by being real or potential mothers, women should have social rights, civil rights and even, for some, political rights. Equality was then based on the biological, spiritual and moral differences produced by maternity. On the other hand, women/mothers would radically transform politics, introducing sexual differences, that is, maternal thought and morality (Nari, 239-240). Here, we use and update this notion to argue that the naturalization of certain characteristics attributed to women regarding care by means of a dichotomic vision of gender relations enables agency and politicalness by permitting women to become dissidents who are perceived as those who “take care” of “society”, “the neighborhood”, “their children” and “themselves”.
- 22 Prévost y Guétat-Bernard warn that in family agriculture, the productive and reproductive work of women is often made invisible. Thus, many women are deprived of access to citizenship, given that they are not recognized as rural workers or farmers. Similarities are found in our case, given that the “vegetable garden” is understood to be just another domestic chore for a woman in her “home” and not a “job”. Being a vegetable gardener who sells at the market in the city square is a form of becoming a citizen in public space.
- 23 Munt (2008) explains how shame can be transformed into pride as part of both a group and an individual strategy to revert discourses. She gives the famous example of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* in which the pathological homosexual comes out as a proud gay man (4). Giddens (2000:89) identifies the existence of a tension between pride and shame within social interaction.

Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Saguy conceptualize coming-out narratives both as strategies to overcome everyday stigmatization as well as a tool for political movements. In our case, the pride comes after the “losing of shame”. Varying from the cases of the mentioned authors, there is no previous secret that is revealed, posteriorly generating pride, but rather there is a “discreet life” that becomes much less discreet and more “noisy”, implying changes in subjectivity. These transformations, however, do not necessarily imply a fundamental change between one state and another. One works towards “losing shame” continuously through public performance. The more one performs, the more shame one “loses”. There is no interior secret that is brought out into the open, but rather pride is created by performing the “loss of shame”. In relation to the cases analyzed by Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Saguy, the “loss of shame” of many participants is similar to the intimate forms of gay sexual identities’ disclosure and visibility that the authors describe (824), while the coordinators reveal their “loss of shame” through more mediatized public announcements. It is interesting to note how the word “pride” can have alternative meanings in Spanish, in this case similar to that of shame, when one says, “I don’t participate because of masculine pride.”

24 There are those who recognize that “participation” is not meant nor planned for men.

25 As Gonon points out, some researchers were hesitant to perceive women’s sense of commitment to protecting their children as maternalism after the nuclear disasters of Chernobyl and Fukushima (164).

26 This differs from the case described by Siliprandi regarding agroecology in Brazil, for example.

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### *Artículos del mismo autor*

#### **Desigualdad medioambiental en la pampa húmeda argentina: metodologías cualitativa y cuantitativa para evaluar la exposición a pesticidas de estudiantes de una escuela rural**

[Texto completo]

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