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Understanding Gender Violence in Latin America: Challenges and State Responses

Master's Thesis

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Year of defence: 2024

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on

Marica Farini

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Abstract

This Master's thesis explores the persistent challenges of gender violence in Latin America while shedding light on the diverse responses implemented by states to combat this deeply entrenched issue in the first decade of the 21st century. The study delves into two compelling case studies: the feminist political party *Kuña Pyrenda* and the phenomenon of *Las Residentas* in Paraguay, alongside the influential *Ni Una Menos* movement in Argentina.

Following the feminist theory, and particularly liberal and radical feminism as the theoretical base, such as Graham (2023), Lagarde (2006), and Carcedo (2002) this research examines the multifaceted dynamics of gender violence, encompassing cultural, political, and socio-economic dimensions. It seeks to show the impact that these movements had at both the regional and international level, highlighting their role in redefining the discourse on gender equality and women's rights in Latin America.

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce zkoumá přetrvávající problémy genderového násilí v Latinské Americe a zároveň osvětluje různé reakce, které státy zavedly v boji proti tomuto hluboce zakořeněnému problému v prvním desetiletí 21. století. Studie se ponoří do dvou působivých případových studií: feministické politické strany *Kuña Pyrenda* a fenoménu *Las Residentas* v Paraguayi spolu s vlivným hnutím *Ni Una Menos* v Argentině.

V návaznosti na feministickou teorii a zejména liberální a radikální feminismus jako teoretický základ, jako jsou Graham (2023), Lagarde (2006) a Carcedo (2002), tento výzkum zkoumá mnohostrannou dynamiku genderového násilí, zahrnující kulturní, politické a sociální -ekonomické dimenze. Snaží se ukázat dopad, který tato hnutí měla na regionální i mezinárodní úrovni, a zdůrazňuje jejich roli při nové definici diskurzu o rovnosti žen a mužů a právech žen v Latinské Americe.

Keywords

Violence, Gender, Feminism, Women, Latin America, Argentina, Paraguay

Klíčová slova

Násilí, gender, feminismus, ženy, Latinská Amerika, Argentina, Paraguay

Title

Understanding Gender Violence in Latin America: Challenges and State Responses

Název práce

Porozumění genderovému násilí v Latinské Americe: výzvy a reakce státu

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Introduction

This thesis wants to analyze the phenomenon of gender violence in Latin America, particularly in Paraguay and Argentina, as well as the impact that feminist movements and parties such as *Ni Una Menos* and *Kuña Pyrenda* had within these two countries. For this reason, the intent of this thesis is to better understand gender inequality and what legal and political mechanisms states have used, especially the two case studies of Paraguay and Argentina between 2000 and 2010.

Moreover, to show the impact that feminism has had in Paraguay and Argentina, this thesis will focus on three fundamental points. First, the Paraguayan feminist political party *Kuña Pyrenda* will be analyzed in terms of how it has brought a new "wind" of change to the country. Furthermore, the focus will move on the phenomenon of *Las Residentas* and how these women became a symbol for the reconstruction of the country. However, it will also be evaluated to what extent *Las Residentas* are to be considered a symbol or a tool that institutions continue to use to fuel a message of sexist rhetoric.

On the other hand, by focusing on the feminist movement *Ni Una Menos* it will be possible to notice how the power of social media has managed to make the issue of femicide in Argentina a global reality and what impact it has had for the future of the country and in the world.

For the purpose of this research, the theoretical framework is based on the feminist theory, with a particular attention to radical and liberal feminism. Instead, the methodology approach utilized is a mixture between qualitative and quantitative methods.

Furthermore, this research will try to give gender violence a definition. For this reason, this research will try to provide a comprehensive understanding of gender violence by drawing upon various scholarly perspectives and institutional definitions. The thesis will primarily adhere to the definition of gender violence provided by the United Nations (UN). However, in recognition of the diverse sociocultural contexts within Latin America, this study will also explore alternative conceptualizations of gender violence offered by organizations such as the Economic Commission for

Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). On the other hand, the research will delve into the insights and analyses of scholars including Exposito (2011), Merry (2003), Toledo Vazquez (2009), Barcena (2010), and Carosio (2013), offering nuanced perspectives that illuminate the societal factors and structural issues perpetuating such violence.

Finally, concrete data will be derived from quantitative methods, especially utilizing statistics obtained from reputable sources such as the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) as well as other international organizations including the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE), the Inter-American Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. This data will shed light on the situation and condition of women in the region, specifically identifying the areas where states still need to take action to ensure the recognition and freedoms of women.

The questions that this thesis project will try to answer will be the following:

1. What are the main problems related to gender violence within the Paraguayan and Argentinian society?
2. Which resources did *Kuña Pyrenda* and *Ni Una Menos* use to address gender violence?
3. How are these two movement different from each other?
4. What are the legal and institutional responses to gender violence in Paraguay and Argentina, and how effective have they been in addressing the issue?

Chapter 1

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework draws upon the feminist theory, particularly liberal and radical feminism, to examine the intricate dynamics of gender-based violence in Latin America, with a specific focus on Paraguay and Argentina. The incorporation of these feminist perspectives is not only foundational but also reflects a broader academic discourse where other authors have followed a similar line of inquiry. Graham's seminal work on *Liberal vs Radical Feminism Revisited* serves as the main thought that surrounds this theoretical framework, offering insights into the pervasive nature of women's subordination and the necessity for dismantling systemic barriers to gender equality. Furthermore, the inclusion of additional authors such as Toledo (2009), Lagarde (2006), Nkansah (2023), Elshtain (1985), and Carcedo (2002) enriches the theoretical underpinning by providing diverse perspectives on the structural and institutional dimensions of gender violence in Latin America.

Graham's study *Liberal vs Radical Feminism Revisited* applies the concept gender and gender inequality to liberal and radical feminism. In his observations, he underscores the pervasive nature of women's subordination to men, attributing the widespread acceptance of this inequality to a belief in its inevitability.

For this reason, he contends that the distribution of wealth, power, and responsibility between genders, as viewed through a liberal lens, should result from fair competition on a "level playing field." To achieve this, Graham (2023) states that *the world in which patriarchy has ended is a world of free and equal persons where the terms of social intercourse, including both social institutions and cultural norms, are such that differences in gender and sexuality are properly recognized, given proper weight, but do not arbitrarily determine the education, fortune, mode of life or sexual relationships of adult individuals. Certainly in such a society both norms and institutions, especially that of marriage, may have to be reconciled.*

In addition, he observes that the society in which we live need to eliminate legal and social barriers that hinder women's participation in education, politics, and employment. Emphasizing the need for a shared social existence between men and

women, he claims *men and women must continue to share a social existence. (...) It requires a reconstructing of the ways in which social institutions are conceived to allow for these different approaches to employment, election (...)*, calling for a reconstruction of social institutions to accommodate diverse approaches to employment and political participation.

Having said this, the fact that this thesis implements such thoughts and focuses on liberal feminism as part of its theoretical framework is particularly important since it will help provide a nuanced framework to understand and address the challenges that surround gender violence, such as legal reforms problems that women could encounter in Paraguay and Argentina.

Graham's insights can be particularly relevant to this thesis, since it compares the implemented legal and political mechanisms by both countries. In addition, Graham's observation about women's subordination and the belief in its inevitability resonates with the societal attitudes that may contribute to the perpetuation of gender violence. In the context of this thesis, this could be linked to entrenched cultural norms and beliefs that perpetuate violence against women and what legal and political mechanisms have been enacted to address the issue in the Paraguayan and Argentinian society.

However, in addition to the incorporation of liberal feminism, this thesis also draws upon the tenets of radical feminism to comprehensively address the issue of gender violence in Latin America. According to Graham (2023), radical feminism, with its emphasis on the root causes of women's oppression and the need for transformative social change, brings a critical perspective to the analysis of gender-based violence. Consequently, for the purpose of this thesis, radical feminism becomes an interesting tool to know the consequences of gender violence in the context of Latin America.

Gender violence and gender inequalities are two topics that have long been studied by many theorists and professionals from various fields of analysis. Violence against women, according to the scholars Toledo Vazquez (2009) and Lagarde (2006), constitutes a consequence of the social and gender inequalities present in the structure of society. In fact, they affirm the presence of a patriarchal society in Latin

America in which there is impunity and difficulty for women to access institutions and justice, which turns into institutional violence.

However, Lagarde (2006) states that this type of violence is evident above all within the existing justice system in Latin America. Nevertheless, feminist theories consider that the causes of violence against women do not depend on psychological factors present in men, but rather on a system of repression in which men are led to show their superiority within society (Carcedo, 2002. p.11).

Feminist theorists have developed broader and innovative social frameworks that challenge the premise that man continues to be an interpersonal agent. The concept also explores how both oppressive and power systems combine. Consequently, Nkansah's insight regarding the feminist theory states that it is concerned not just with patriarchal influence and authority, but it also focuses on the ways in which relationships between genders connect with racial prejudice, the socioeconomic structure, and sexual orientation. (Nkansah, 2023. p.3).

Furthermore, Elshtain (1985) analyzes the fact that within society there are standards belonging to masculinity and other preconceptions that are more appropriate to femininity. The woman is seen as a docile individual who must be protected, while the man symbolizes virility and courage. The existence of such a structure means that women reside in an unrealistic marginalized space, in which the female gender is seen as incapable of fighting.

Carcedo (2002) also states that in every society there are social and gender inequalities and this depends on the fact that within these societies there is a division of labor, in which women and men are associated with a role and a position within the company. However, living in this system means being subject to repression and violence against women, resulting from the fact that men, in order to maintain their virility and social role, are forced to violently force women to assume positions appropriate to their gender (p.11).

For this reason, violence against women and, in the most extreme cases, femicide, must essentially be classified as gender crimes because in this way the existence of a problem is recognized not on the part of the single individual who commits the crime, but but rather that there is a problem at a social level, which includes the power structures that make-up society (Carcedo, 2002. p.12).

Another very important point that theorists focus on when dealing with the topic of gender violence concerns institutional violence. Lagarde (2006) states that impunity is present within the Latin American justice system. This means that women cannot enjoy full access to justice as they should because there is a discriminatory system against them (pp. 223-224).

Furthermore, institutional violence, and especially impunity, according to Carcedo (2010) constitute forms of violence and are the result of crime in various countries in Latin America. In fact, the presence of impunity within a State makes us understand how the responsibility and duty that that entity has in protecting women's rights is lacking (p.443).

Another topic which surrounds gender violence regards the corruption present in Latin America. This factor leads to inefficient incentives to fight the problem. As can be seen from the analysis of Agrast et. Al (2013, p. 25), people's perception of security in their respective countries is among the lowest in the world. This highlights how violence, corruption and inefficiency on the part of justice institutions in Latin America has been lower than average, causing waves of crime and a system in which women's rights take a backseat.

Finally, another very interesting theory for understanding violence against women in Latin America is the ecological model of violence. According to the WHO (2012), through this model, we can discover the causes that push people to commit violence against women. In particular, the novelty that this model brings concerns the fact that violence in this case is seen not as the action of single factors, individual or socio-cultural, but rather as the link between individual, relational, community and social factors. The combination of all these aspects of the structure of a society can constitute the result of violence against women (WHO, n.a).

The individual factors analyzed in the ecological model are: witnessing marital violence as a child, being abused oneself as a child, being in an environment where an absent or rejecting father is present (Heise, 1998. p.265). On the other hand, however, the aspects concerning the relational apparatus are: male dominance in the family, male control of wealth in the family, marital verbal conflict (Heise, 1998. p.265). From a community point of view, the issues examined by Heise (1998) are: low socioeconomic status or the presence of unemployment, the isolation of women

and the family, delinquency. Finally, social factors concern sense of male entitlement/ownership of women, masculinity linked to dominance, rigid gender roles, acceptance of interpersonal violence and physical chastisement (Heise, 1998. p.265).

Having said all this, the theoretical framework of this thesis is intricately woven with feminist theories, primarily emphasizing liberal feminism as a foundational lens. Rooted in the insights of Graham's perspective, liberal feminism addresses the complexities of gender-based violence in Latin America, with a special focus on the society of Paraguay and Argentina by championing individual rights and advocating for the dismantling of systemic barriers perpetuating gender inequalities. Finally, the incorporation of radical feminism adds a critical perspective, delving into the state limitations which constitute a main cause of women's oppression and emphasizing the necessity for transformative social change through the political and legal mechanisms adopted by the two states.

Chapter 2

Methodology

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach to analyze gender violence in Latin America. In fact, the research design integrates qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a holistic understanding of the issue and the effectiveness of various responses and interventions. For this reason, an extensive review of existing literature on gender violence in Latin America will be included, and this will constitute the foundation of this study. This includes academic articles, books, reports, and policy documents. The purpose behind this particular type of data is to provide a historical and theoretical context for understanding the dynamics of gender violence in the region.

Furthermore, statistical data developed from research studies on issues affecting the Latin American context will be analysed. This data will come from databases of international organizations or from government sources that are responsible for drawing up reports on violence against women and gender violence. Finally, descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the survey responses, while inferential statistics will be employed to identify significant relationships and patterns. This quantitative analysis will help quantify the prevalence of gender violence and assess the effectiveness of specific interventions.

Moreover, this thesis project presents a study of two particular cases: Paraguay and Argentina. Through the analysis of these two entities, it was possible to clarify and deepen fundamental aspects of how feminism and the role of women within society constituted a step forward in establishing new measures and a new mentality to combat violence gender and provide more rights for women in many community settings. Furthermore, the aim of research on two case studies is to understand different political, socioeconomic contexts and cultural characteristics of Latin American countries and to correlate numerous connections with the relationship between gender violence and feminism which can be immediately useful in case new case studies were carried out.

However, this thesis project faced many limitations regarding obtaining precise data for a correct study analysis. Indeed, it strives to offer a comprehensive analysis of gender violence in Latin America, emphasizing Paraguay and Argentina. It must be

acknowledged that certain limitations constrain the depth and breadth of this research.

Firstly, the geographical scope is confined to two countries, which may not fully represent the complexities of gender violence across the entire Latin American region. Additionally, the temporal constraints of the research, based on information available up to September 2021, may not capture more recent developments in the dynamic field of gender violence. Data availability remains a challenge, given the underreporting of gender violence incidents and difficulties in accessing reliable and up-to-date information. Furthermore, the specificity of the case studies may limit the generalizability of findings, and the language barrier in accessing native sources introduces potential limitations in interpretation.

The qualitative methodology utilized here carries inherent subjectivity, and the nuanced dynamics of feminist politics may not be fully encapsulated. Lastly, the global impact of movements like *Ni Una Menos* may not be comprehensively explored. These limitations emphasize the need for further research to offer a more holistic understanding of the issue.

The choice to analyze Argentina and Paraguay as case studies starts from the fact that both countries have a very different feminist culture. On the one hand, Paraguay presents a more historical culture in which the role of women has had a particular impact on the reconstruction and rebirth of the country following a period of profound difficulty. Furthermore, the two countries are an emblematic case for talking about feminism from two different points of view. In fact, if on the one hand Paraguay has only recently seen the birth of feminist struggles and new measures for women's rights, Argentina brings with it a wealth of history in which feminist struggles date back to the early years of the 20th century.

Moreover, it is interesting to note the impact that the different types of feminism in both countries has had within society, in terms of changing people's mentalities and the development of new measures, institutions and laws aimed at decreasing gender violence and to provide new freedoms for women and all the most vulnerable categories.

Finally, this thesis project is significant because it can bring new and different perspectives regarding understanding the socioeconomic and political landscape of gender violence in Latin America.

Furthermore, it provides different aspects and perspectives regarding the responses that states are giving to combat violence against women, particularly the effectiveness and impact that such measures are having within society.

Subsequently, by examining the issues that women face in Paraguay and Argentina and the role they have within society, as well as the development of feminism in the respective countries, it is also possible to apply these elements to other countries in Latin America.

On the one hand, sharing historical, linguistic, cultural aspects and, on the other, capturing the diversity of the various environments in terms of the local regulatory systems and the historical and cultural heritage that each country presents.

2.1) The definition of gender violence

For the purpose of this work, the definition of gender violence will be analysed by a comprehensive review of institutional resources and scholarly literature regarding the concept of gender-based violence. Drawing from diverse sources such as the United Nations, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and a range of scholars including Exposito (2011), Wilson (2014), Merry (2003), Toledo Vasquez (2009), Barcena et al. (2010), Morrison et al. (2005), and Carosio (2013), this study adopts a multifaceted approach to understanding and addressing gender violence.

Moreover, the definition that this project will operate with will be a mix between two definitions. On one hand, this project will follow the definition stated by the United Nations in 1997: *gender-based violence is defined as any act of gender-based violence that causes or is likely to cause physical, sexual or psychological harm to women*. The reason behind this choice resides in the fact that this definition encompasses the three main aspects through which violence against women acts: both at the physical, sexual, and psychological level.

On the other hand, this thesis will be based on the definition of gender violence given by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in 1993: *Gender-based violence is defined as violence that reflects the existing asymmetry in the power relations between men and women and that perpetuates the subordination and devaluation of the female as opposed to the male*. In fact, this definition is essential for the work behind this thesis in trying to identify the fact that gender violence comes from a patriarchal environment in which women are seen as a subordinated individual compared to men.

According to Exposito (2011), gender violence has acquired a social meaning, leaving aside the relationship it has with gender. For this reason, an interpersonal, underlying and structural inequality was obtained which led to the combination of violence and gender coming to the fore. Exposito (2011, pp. 20-22) includes patriarchy in his definition of gender violence, stating that it constitutes a key factor in which violence is normalized, becoming something inevitable.

Furthermore, the combination of patriarchy and capitalism causes female subordination within the family to increase. This happens because capitalist society provides work opportunities for women and the possibility of earning a salary, but this can worsen the patriarchal situation in the domestic sphere, leading women to be economically dependent on men (Exposito, 2011).

For this reason, we can say that gender violence, and in particular violence against women, includes structural violence that places women in a subordinate position towards men. This position can be seen in various areas of society, both in the public aspect and in the private and domestic one (Wilson, 2014). Furthermore, Wilson (2014) states that gender violence can appear in many forms and, consequently, it can be seen as femicide, torture and domestic violence.

On the other hand, however, Merry (2003) states that gender violence must be reconceptualized within domestic relations because it depends on the structural conditions present within the private and family space as well as in the public space, i.e. internal political economy, globalization, the expansion of capitalism and social inequalities between rich and poor (Merry, 2003. pp. 943-944).

However, from an international law point of view, in the definition of gender violence we must also include the responsibility that the state has when certain acts occur. In fact, the State is to be considered responsible when violence against women occurs because it is a sign that the latter has not adopted the necessary measures to prevent, sanction and remove such an act (Toledo Vasquez, 2009).

For this reason, the existence of a State that does not take care of the right to life for women and that is incapable of dealing with the violence taking place in its country must be held responsible (Toledo Vasquez, 2009). In fact, among the obligations that the State has we find: due diligence in the investigation of crimes, guarantees of free access to justice, without discrimination, making effective the need to hold officials accountable for negligence and improving information and analysis systems within the justice system, including gender considerations.

According to Toledo Vasquez (2009), violence against women was thought to be only physical, consisting of physical or verbal abuse. In reality, violence can also be expressed as more extreme acts such as murder, injuries and acts in which the woman can be raped. Since this other aspect of violence has also been examined, the criminal system of several countries (for example, Sweden and Spain) has intervened in these issues.

Barcena et. al (2010) define gender violence, and specifically violence against women, as a preconception in which women's inferiority exists within an unequal and discriminatory culture present in various global societies. In this definition, therefore, the notion of impunity is highlighted which prevents women from having their rights fully recognized and their abilities recognized.

Furthermore, Barcena et. Al (2010) introduce, in their definition, another component that penalizes the condition of women: the lack of trust. In fact, in many societies, women are blamed when they report to the police and, consequently, many of those who commit violence remain without guilt or a sentence. This is due to the fact that violence is seen, within those environments, as something that only happens in private.

Morrison et. al (2005) refer to violence against women as a type of gender violence in which women experience a lack of relational power within the society in which they live.

Carosio (2013), however, defines gender violence as a social problem that influences the lives of both women and men. In fact, violence against women is linked to their situation of subordination and is the result of stereotyped traditions and cultures that place masculinity as a value superior to that of being a woman. This means that man, precisely because of his virility, can legitimately use his domination and violence to recognize and affirm his position and identity. On the other hand, however, the role of the woman falls into a position of acceptance of this behavior.

Consequently, Carosio (2013) relates violence to misogyny, in which the former results because fear arises for the abilities that women may have compared to men. This control towards women connects with the concept that being a man is a human being and that it is not the same as being a woman, but something better. Only men, according to this thought, can feel complete.

Misogyny, according to Carosio (2013), can lead to an immense anger that can cause feminicides, that is, murders of women out of hatred, contempt or because women are seen as property. An interesting point in Carosio's (2013) analysis is the fact that femicide also exists because the society in which it is committed has policies that accept that there is violence against women, ignoring or taking away value from the real problem that is penalizing women. conditions of a category of individual within society.

Chapter 3

Gender Violence in Paraguay and Argentina: state responses

Although many women in Latin America continue to face a multitude of issues related to gender-based violence, many countries in this area are committed to implementing public and national policies to improve gender inequalities within the various sectors of the state. For this reason, Latin American countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (ECLAC, 2023). However, some countries, including Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Bolivia have taken a step forward, including some points of this Convention within their respective Constitutions, in particular the points regarding gender equality (ECLAC, 2010. p. 21).

In this regard, this thesis will focus on two main analytical cases-studies: Paraguay and Argentina. Specifically, we will try to present these two scenarios from a comparative point of view, capturing the legal and political mechanisms which the two states adopted in order to fight gender violence and gender inequality.

Moreover, through the analysis of statistical data, this project will be able to offer a complete picture of the most critical issues that women have to face in the various Latin American countries, as well as their outcomes.

Nonetheless, in Latin America there is another Convention, which unlike the previous one, is limited only at a regional level: the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Sanction and Eradicate Violence against Women "Belem do Pará Convention". Through this initiative, it is highlighted that gender violence is an issue that states must try to resolve because it is due to the discrimination that women suffer within their societies. Consequently, Latin American states must proceed in developing useful mechanisms to protect and guarantee women's rights (Arango et. al, 2011). Subsequently, another fundamental step forward at the regional level concerns the 8th session of the Regional Conference on Women (2000). The reason for its importance is because through this mechanism gender equality is recognized as a right within the human rights plan.

However, a widespread issue in the Latin American region concerns the long-term effectiveness of such cooperation between states. In fact, in several countries, the

influence exercised by the Catholic Church is still very strong. This particular element constitutes a kind of insurmountable "wall" that blocks governments' efforts in implementing policies aimed at promoting women's rights, particularly regarding reproductive rights and sexual health (Caivano et. al, 2012).

For this reason, in many countries, words such as "abortion" or "contraceptive pill" are still seen through a conservative point of view. As cited in a recent study of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), "*The vast majority (91.2%) of pregnancies were unintended; this figure reached 94.8% among adolescents aged 10-14 years. However, 62.1% of the adolescents and young women in the sample had not used any contraceptive method, being the highest percentage among adolescents (92.3% among young adolescents and 87.1% among older adolescents).*" (PAHO, 2023).

The labor market is another area where women in Latin America are at a disadvantage compared to men. This is due to the presence of a stereotyped vision that associates women with the responsibility of being a mother, a caregiver, and housewife. As indicated in a study by the Inter-American Development Bank, "*Las mujeres latinoamericanas y caribeñas dedican más del doble de horas que los hombres a responsabilidades domésticas y de cuidado no remuneradas*" (Latin American and Caribbean women spend more than twice as many hours as men on unpaid domestic and care responsibilities). (Inter-American Development Bank, 2020. p. 1).

As can be seen in the graph, in most Latin American countries women suffer greatly from the wage difference compared to the number of hours men work. In fact, according to what is analyzed by this study, almost all the values corresponding to how much women earn in Latin America present a negative sign and oscillate between -4.1% corresponding to Argentina and -48.3% in Honduras.

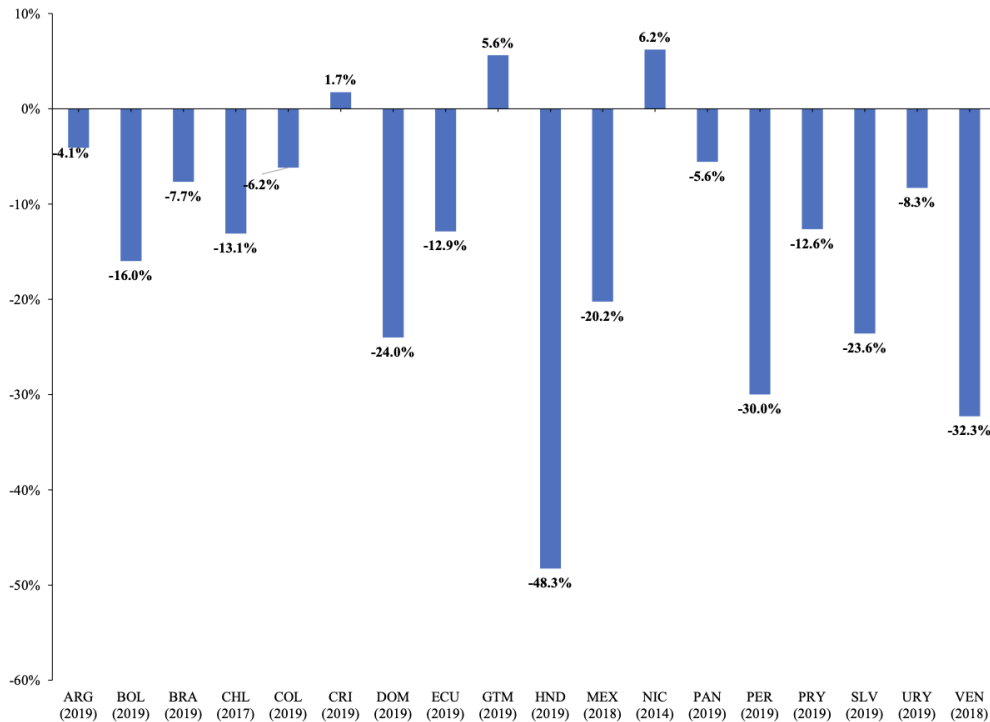


Figure 1: Urquidi et. al. (2023), *Labor income gap by gender in Latin America and the Caribbean: an analysis of its components*. Inter-American Development Bank.

<https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/viewer/Brecha-de-ingresos-laborales-por-genero-en-America-Latina-y-el-Caribe-un-analisis-de-sus-diferentes-componentes-y-determinantes.pdf>

Furthermore, very often women are forced to accept jobs with very harsh and harmful conditions. This happens for various reasons: on the one hand it may be due to the need to try to overcome a situation of poverty within one's family unit, but it may also depend on the lack of economic opportunities and an environment in which women feel excluded socially within their own country (Giles, 2006. pp. 11-16).

A problem that still persists in Latin America today concerns gender violence, in particular violence against women. In an estimate developed by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), “entre el 17% y 53% de las mujeres entrevistadas reportaron haber sufrido violencia física o sexual por parte de sus parejas” (between 17% and 53% of women interviewed reported having suffered physical or sexual violence from their partner). (PAHO, 2013). Furthermore, we expand this data globally, we can see that out of 25 countries with the highest femicide rate, 14 are made up of Latin American countries.

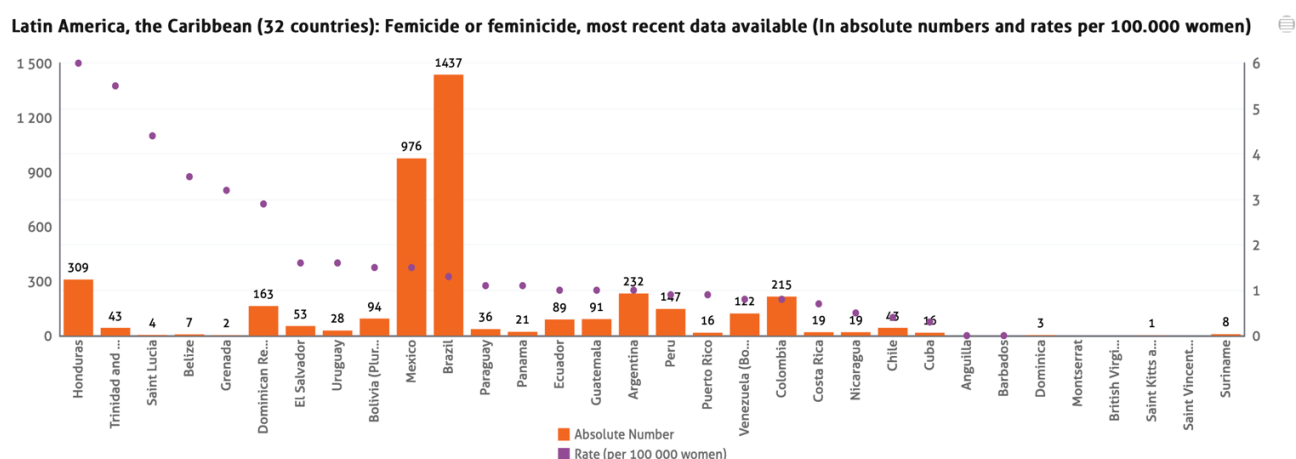


Figure 2: *Femicide or Feminicide*, Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC. <https://oig.cepal.org/en/indicators/femicide-or-feminicide>

One response that Latin American states provided to try to address this problem was the creation of the OAS (*Organization of American States*) which forms part of a political, legal and social corpus in which member states can discuss. In this context, the Inter-American Human Rights System (IAHRS) plays a fundamental role as it operates through two main agencies with the aim of carrying out investigations into possible human rights violations between the various member states. This constitutes a very important step forward given that states are now involved in the correct application of measures aimed at preventing and redressing gender violence violations (Reale, 2023).

However, to delve deeper into the topic of gender violence, this thesis project also wants to show what has been done to combat it and, therefore, how feminism in countries such as Paraguay and Argentina has carried out campaigns that improve the situation of women.

3.1) *Legal issues and mechanisms*

Paraguay faces a critical problem in terms of the laws concerning violence against women: in fact, these rules are only of a civil nature, which implies that when it comes to typifying the acts (murder, injuries, threats, for example), the law enforcement interference apparatus is only of a supportive nature. Domestic abuse is not specifically included in the Criminal Code, hence it is not classed as a crime.

As a result, there may be numerous situations of women who have been victims of domestic abuse in whom criminal intervention is only conceivable if domestic abuse is classified as an ordinary offense.

However, in Argentina, the subject of domestic assault was addressed legislatively with the passage of Law No. 39, which introduced a particular process of justice for the safeguarding of victims of this infringement. Furthermore, these laws are significant because they specify the several forms of violence covered in the broad definition, namely emotional, physical, sexual, financial, and figurative harm.

Another critical issue that Argentina faces regards the fact that it is not feasible to create a sex differentiation in the prosecution of crimes. This indicates how Argentine criminal procedure appears to be foreign or ambiguous in terms of gender (Alméras et al., 2012. pp. 183-184). As a result, this also illustrates that in Argentine culture, there is still a conventional family paradigm that circulates not just around the pair man/woman, but as well as how the woman is connected with ensuring the safety of her kids and preserving of the household's property (Alméras et al, 2012. pp. 181-182).

Instead, within the Paraguayan judiciary there is an increase in complaints from men, therefore a clear distinction between victimized men and women. In this case, men are demonstrating their rapprochement with the legal system and their recognition as victims. Despite this, the concept of "victim" in this case is very different from that of women: in fact, while for the male gender there is a percentage of men who are victimizers towards their own family (sons, uncles, brothers, fathers etc.), in the case of women, however, the majority of the accused are their partners, further reinforcing the concept that women are in a constant situation of inequality (UN Mujeres, 2016).

Nonetheless, the Argentinian State managed to address the problem of gender violence through various national laws. Ley 26,791 was passed in 2012, making it harsh when a male murders a woman using tactics that involve gender violence. Furthermore, under Ley 27.363, any parent who is lawfully deemed the creator, co-author, initiator, or accessory of the crime of violence towards sons-in-law loses the duty of parenthood (Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad de la Nacion, 2020. p. 28).

As a result, two crucial legislations in Argentina's battle against femicide were enacted in 2018. The initial one is the Ley Brisa, which was named after Brisa, a two-year-old child whose mother was murdered by her former lover. This law introduced a financial restitution procedure for all children bereaved as a result of murdering women. This mechanism can be considered a significant step towards gender equality by addressing specific inequalities arising from gender violence and providing reparation and protection measures for indirect victims, thus contributing to building a more just and equal system (Gobierno de Argentina, 2020).

Lastly, the Ley Micaela, named after Micaela Garca, a political activist of the *Ni Una Menos* campaign and a femicide victim. This law mandates gender violence schooling for any individuals who hold public office at any rank of the managerial, judicial, or legislature branches. (Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad de la Nación, 2020. pp. 28-29). This training is designed to raise awareness about gender biases, stereotypes, and violence, fostering a more inclusive and equitable understanding of gender roles. Educating public officials about the dynamics of gender inequality contributes to a more informed and sensitive approach in dealing with issues related to discrimination, harassment, and violence.

The Micaela Law establishes a legal framework that actively supports gender equity initiatives. By institutionalizing gender training, the law emphasizes the importance of ongoing efforts to achieve equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination within public institutions (Ministerio de Obras Públicas Argentina, 2022).

Moreover, Law 24.417 was passed in 2009 with the goal of giving actual support to all women who encounter themselves in a violent circumstance. In addition, this law defines that this legislation may be used not just in the personal sector, but in all settings where women might face any sort of violence (for example, the working and public spheres) (Alméras et al, 2012). Furthermore, with the passage of this act, the issue of gender violence became prevalent and brought the fight for equality not just to the private sector but also within the private encounters as well as to the forefront of the nation's consciousness.

On the other hand, the Paraguayan State created a similar law in 2016: the *Ley de Protección a las Mujeres contra la Violencia* (Law for the Protection of Women against Violence). This law consists of useful mechanisms established to prevent

violence against women in any context, both political and public (Ministerio de la Mujer, n.a). Through these laws, we can see how the two states are managing to address the problem of violence against women both at the public and private level.

A fundamental detail that was not present first of the existence of this law refers to the conciliar accusations of violence at the moment in which there is a lack of denunciation. Infact, according to the Ministerio de la Mujer (n.a), “(...) *the moment in which a woman goes to a judicial instance to request protection, is perhaps one of the most critical and most vulnerable. Her own state of vulnerability can lead her to reconcile and accept conditions of disadvantage and generate greater danger to her life and physical integrity.*” With this mechanism it is prohibited to any judicial body to effect mediation or negotiation at the moment in which you file a complaint for violence (Ministerio de la Mujer, n.a).

By establishing a comprehensive legal framework, this law addresses and condemns various forms of violence against women, contributing to the creation of a safer and more equitable environment. It goes beyond punitive measures, likely incorporating prevention and educational programs that challenge societal norms and promote gender equality. The law is designed to improve access to justice for women, providing mechanisms for reporting and prosecuting gender-based violence. Additionally, it may include support systems such as shelters and counseling services, empowering women to escape abusive situations and rebuild their lives (ONU Mujeres, 2016).

3.2) Political issues and mechanisms

In Argentina, the pervasive issue of gender-based violence and inequality is exemplified by the persistent challenges in addressing and adjudicating cases of violence against women. One of the central political problems in this context is the alarming rate of case dismissal. According to Alméras et al. (2012), a staggering 89% of reported cases are rejected, highlighting a systemic failure to provide justice for victims of gender-based violence. This high rate of dismissal contributes to an environment of impunity, where perpetrators often go unpunished. A critical aspect amplifying gender inequality in Argentina is the limited scope of legislation, which predominantly focuses on domestic abuse. This narrow legal framework excludes various other instances in which women may fall victim to violence.

Consequently, not only does this result in a minimal percentage of criminal punishments for the accused parties, but it also translates into a lack of adequate measures to ensure the safety and security of the victims. The systemic deficiencies in addressing a broader spectrum of gender-based violence not only perpetuate inequality within the legal system but also leave countless women without the protection they need and deserve. As a result, the prevailing issues of case rejection and legislative gaps contribute significantly to the broader narrative of gender inequality in Argentina (Alméras et al, 2012. P. 203).

Nevertheless, the State has witnessed a new current, created through new essential national measures to help and ease the predicament and circumstances of all women victimized of abuse.

The Argentine administration established the Unidad de Coordinación para la Prevención, Asistencia, y Erradicación de la Violencia contra las Mujeres in 2009. On an annual basis, a National Action Plan is developed in conjunction with this body, with the goal of developing a socially responsible tool that offers tangible solutions and aids all women and LGBTI+ persons who are suffering from gender violence. (Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad de la Nación, 2020. p. 35).

Furthermore, the introduction of Centros Integrales de la Mujer, venues wherein women victims of abuse may go for mental health services as well as complimentary judicial and advocacy representation, was a major breakthrough in women's support. Additionally, another significant step forward was taken by the Argentine government in 2017 when a cost-free telephone line, line 144, was set up to allow women's help to be streamlined and expedited. (Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2018).

Similar to the challenges faced in Argentina, Paraguay grapples with institutional rigidity that hampers the development of comprehensive plans for social transformation. This rigidity not only impedes progress in broader societal changes but also significantly affects the well-being of women. One key aspect is the evolving structure of family units in Paraguay, as highlighted by Serafini (2005). The roles women play within these units have undergone a transformation, turning the family space from one primarily dedicated to coexistence and socialization into an arena for paid work. This shift marks a pivotal change where productive and reproductive roles

become separated, creating new challenges for women in balancing their various responsibilities.

The institutional challenges in Paraguay extend further to the labor market, compounding gender inequality. The state's failure to provide essential information exacerbates the already existing problems within the labor market. Occupational segregation persists, limiting women's access to certain professions, and there is an inefficiency in the allocation of human resources.

Additionally, wage discrimination further deepens the gender divide within the workforce in Paraguay (Serafini, 2005). The combination of institutional rigidity, limited support for women regarding family roles, and systemic issues within the labor market underscores the broader landscape of gender inequality in Paraguay. The inability to address these interconnected challenges hampers the advancement of women's rights and perpetuates disparities within Paraguayan society.

However, Paraguay has faced some current of progress regarding gender violence and in particular against violence against women. In fact, in Paraguay there is a Ministry of Women that operates through various public and free services. One of these was created in 2011 and as happened in Argentina, also in Paraguay there is a hotline for women victims of violence, called SOS Mujer 137. This service received more than 40,000 calls in the years 2011-2015 (UN Women, 2016). Furthermore, it was recorded that 54% of the women who were assisted reported being victims of psychological violence, followed by physical violence, especially in the age group between 20 and 39 years.

Subsequently, a very innovative initiative developed in Paraguay in 2010 was the "Casa Abrigo Mercedes Sandoval" project. This is a hotel for women experiencing domestic violence. In this space, women find temporary accommodation, as well as psychological support and work guidance. Furthermore, this project identifies not only women as victims of violence, but also the children of women who are victims of domestic violence. In fact, in addition to medical and legal advice, scholastic accompaniment is also included for all those boys and girls whose mothers do not have the possibility of providing them with sufficient school education.

This provision points a larger issue – the intergenerational impact of gender inequality. When mothers are victims of domestic violence and lack the means to

provide sufficient education for their children, it perpetuates a cycle of disadvantage (Escriche et. al, 2004).

According to what was recorded by ONU Mujeres (2016), in 2014 this hotel welcomed 43 women and 60 children, but in 2015 these numbers increased and 47 women and 72 minors were assisted.

Furthermore, the Paraguayan government has established the “Centros Regionales de Atencion”, particularly in the cities of Curuguaty, Philadelphia, Ciudad del Este and Pedro Juan Caballero. Within these centers there is a team of lawyers, psychologists and specialists who provide help to all those women victims of violence, including indigenous women.

Finally, another phenomenon that appears within the Paraguayan and Argentinian political system is a slow bureaucracy and poor communication between the House and Senate, which results in slow approval of regulations or changes to existing regulations. This phenomenon has an impact especially when it comes to very delicate and urgent issues, such as the fight against violence against women (Isuani, 2019).

Generally speaking, Paraguay, despite being part of a group of nations that are committed to combating violence against women, signing conventions and carrying out various institutional mechanisms, still today struggles to implement these rules, limiting their coverage only within more populated areas. Viera (2021) states that in Paraguay there is still no unified register that can provide a general framework regarding violence against women, in particular referring to the various cases of violence.

For this reason, the fact that the government does not have statistics capable of identifying the situation of women makes it very difficult to develop mechanisms aimed at protecting the condition of women within the country. On the other hand, since 1996 Argentina has shown that it is very important the presence of a Register for cases of violence against women and the Single Registry of Cases of Violence against Women (RUCVM) is a demonstration of that. In fact, this represents a joint work of the organizations that provide assistance to women victims of violence. gender, including the National Institute of Women (INAM) and INDEC.

The limited political participation of women in both Argentina and Paraguay, as highlighted in the graph, underscores a shared challenge that contributes to the broader narrative of gender inequality in the region. Despite women's significant contributions to the economic development of these countries within societal roles, the realm of politics remains a stronghold where their representation is notably lacking. This disparity manifests in the struggle women face to assert their importance, often relegating them to secondary positions within political spheres (Villagra, 2015, pp. 225-226).

Examining the graph's depiction of women's participation in Paraguay and Argentina reveals a commonality in their intermediate positions within Latin American countries. This positioning reflects a systemic issue limiting women's influence and decision-making power in both nations. The comparison between Paraguay and Argentina, while showcasing a slightly higher percentage of women within ministerial bodies in Paraguay, emphasizes the regional challenge rather than providing a substantial improvement in gender equality. The disparities in political representation mirror broader societal inequalities, indicating the need for comprehensive efforts to address and rectify gender imbalances in both Argentina and Paraguay.

América Latina, El Caribe y La Península Ibérica (39 países): Participación de mujeres en gabinetes ministeriales, último período presidencial disponible (En porcentajes)

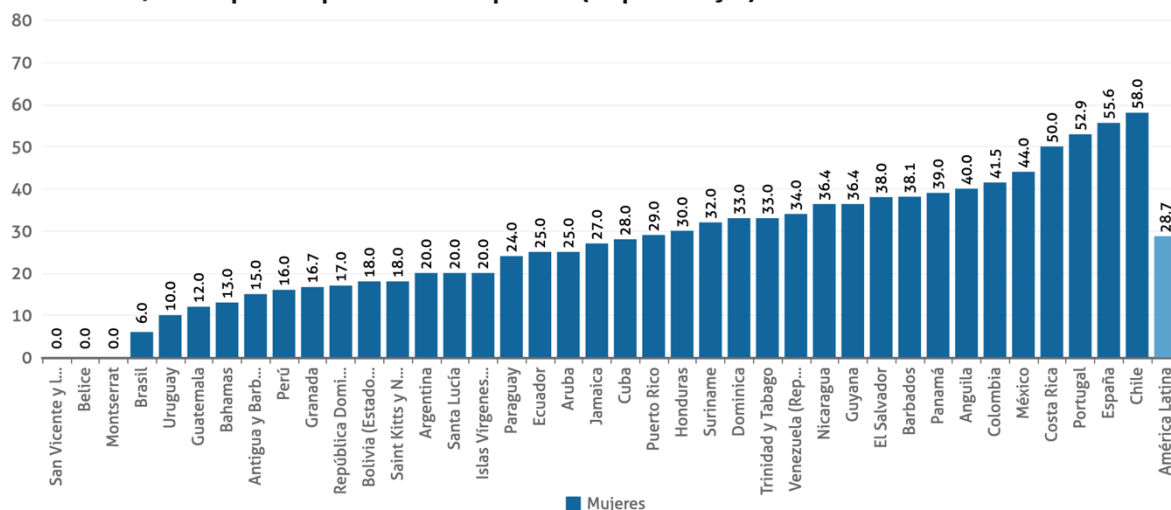


Figure 3: *Executive power: percentage of women in ministerial cabinets* (2023). ECLAC.

<https://oig.cepal.org/es/indicadores/poder-ejecutivo-porcentaje-mujeres-gabinetes-ministeriales>

The urbanization process in Paraguay, while bringing about increased job opportunities for women in the service and trade sectors, has simultaneously

exacerbated gender inequalities, especially in rural areas. The shift away from rural employment has resulted in the segregation of women into traditional roles as housewives, limiting their access to economic opportunities and perpetuating a gendered division of labor. This trend highlights a significant disparity between urban and rural settings, reinforcing the concept of inequality in Paraguay.

Furthermore, the persistently high illiteracy rates in rural areas, as indicated by the 11.1% rate reported by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística Paraguay (2020), it contribute to the challenges faced by women in these regions. The figure, which has seen an increase over the last 15 years, suggests that women in rural areas continue to be associated with the role of peasants, lacking the opportunity to enhance their education and social standing. This educational inequality reinforces a cycle of limited advancement for women in rural Paraguay, further entrenching the existing disparities and hindering their ability to improve their overall conditions and social positions.

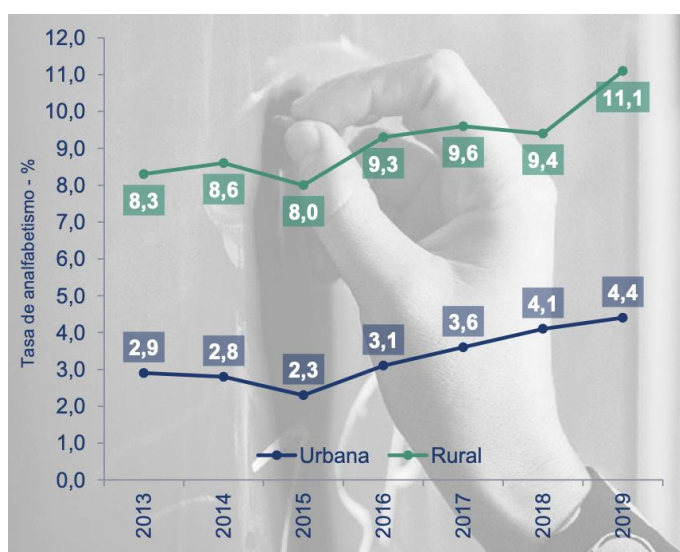


Figure 4: *ILLITERACY RATE BY AREA OF RESIDENCE. PERIOD 2013 – 2019.* Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Paraguay),

<https://www.ine.gov.py/download/Analfabetismo%20en%20Paraguay%202013-2019%208%2009%202020.pdf>

Nonetheless, as we have already mentioned in the case of Argentina, also in Paraguay the woman is associated with the carrying out of domestic work and as an individual who takes care of the family. This constitutes one of the main obstacles because it prevents women's free access to the job market. Not only that, but it also

creates inequality between men and women, as work is seen based on a sexual division that relegates women to domestic responsibilities (Serafini, 2005. p. 40). The fact that there is an increase in female participation is not the result of a decrease in inequalities. In fact, as in Argentina, in Paraguay too women are willing to accept jobs that offer fewer job protections but with greater flexibility which they compensate for with the role they occupy in the domestic sphere.

However, if we look at the levels of inequality present in Argentina and Paraguay, we can see that the female gap is greater in both countries than the male one but slightly larger in Paraguay than in Argentina.

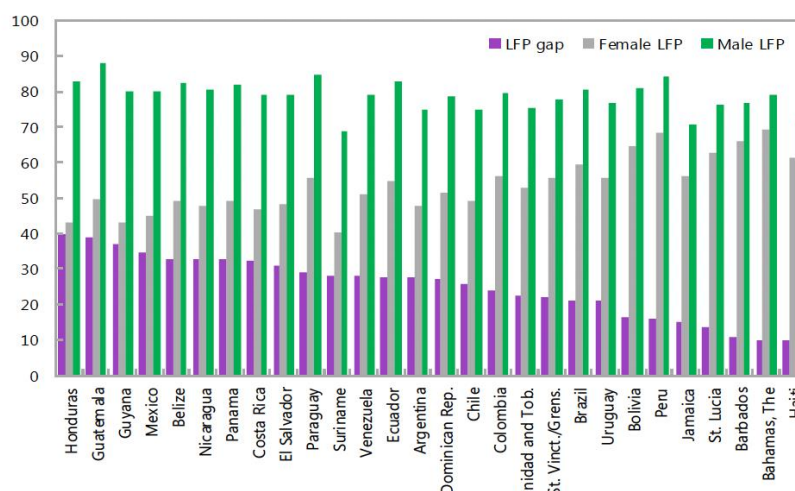


Figure 5: Labor Force Participation, by gender, and the gender gap. International Monetary Fund Working Paper, 2017, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2017/02/14/Women-at-Work-in-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean-44662>

Secondly, employment discrimination against women can lead to the reduction of those advantages that women have in working in formal occupations. Furthermore, the amount of salary they receive in such jobs within the two countries does not always allow them to pay the expenses incurred by women who work in these types of jobs. For this reason, the opportunity cost that women have to leave their jobs is greater than that of men.

However, the wage inequality between men and women in Paraguay and Argentina is also due to the profound unemployment rate which affects both men and women, but in different ways. In fact, for women, this figure has increased more rapidly than for men. In fact, if we look at the graph below we can see an increase in the unemployment rate during the COVID-19 pandemic but, in any case, the unemployment rate of women compared to men remains increasingly higher.

Furthermore, the criticality of this situation and of the role that women have in the labor market consists of a worsening in Argentina compared to Paraguay.

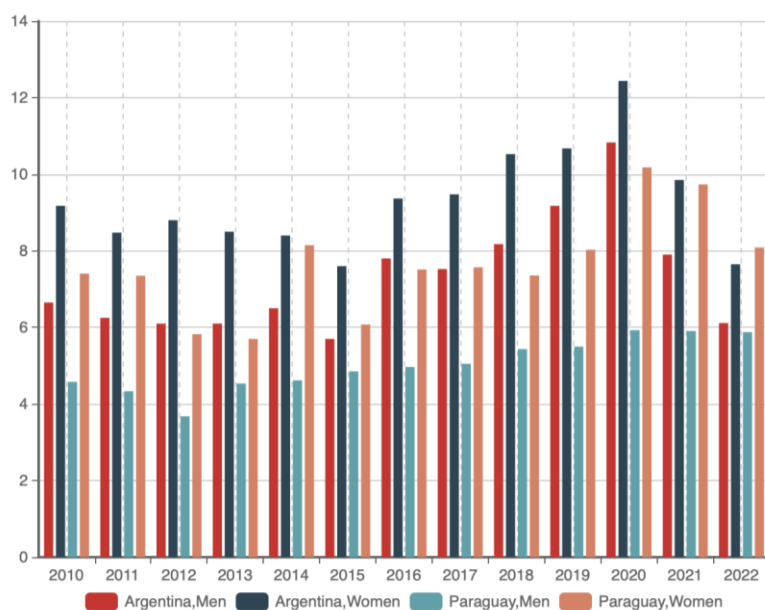


Figure 6: *Tasa de desempleo abierto urbano según años de estudios y sexo*, ECLAC.

<https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/dashboard.html?theme=4&lang=es>

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of Argentina and Paraguay in this chapter reveals stark contrasts between these neighboring countries. Argentina stands out for its substantial progress in addressing violence against women, having initiated this process earlier than Paraguay. The country has developed comprehensive mechanisms aimed at prevention, protection, and redress for the damage caused by this pervasive phenomenon. In contrast, Paraguay, while demonstrating a commitment to combating violence against women, grapples with challenges in fully establishing and operationalizing these crucial mechanisms. The nation is still in the process of refining and strengthening its efforts to prevent, protect, and address the consequences of gender-based violence.

Chapter 4

Kuña Pyrenda and *Las Residentas*: two examples of feminist movements in Paraguay

This chapter will try to understand the importance that women have had in its history of Paraguay and that they continue to have today, especially from a political point of view. For this reason, the first part of this chapter will focus on the history of the country and the role that women have had since the country was colonized by the first conquistadors. Feminism will be analyzed from a sociological point of view, i.e., how it is conceived and seen within Paraguayan society.

Subsequently, the chapter will go on to identify a key phenomenon in the contextualization of the role and image of women present in Paraguay: *las Residentas*. This phenomenon will be seen with respect to the importance it had for the country and the reason behind this importance. Finally, the Paraguayan political system will be explored in relation to feminist-based political movements, such as *Kuña Pyrenda*. This party was born in 2011 thanks to the support of several women from 12 of the 17 Paraguayan departments. Its agenda, presented at the presidential elections in 2013, wanted to generate a “wind” of transformations to promote and fight violations against women’s rights.

It must be stated that one notable limitation of this section lies in the lack of available information regarding *Kuña Pyrenda*. The dearth of diverse sources poses a challenge to a comprehensive understanding of the organization. The primary source of information for this study was *Kuña Pyrenda*'s Facebook page, which stands as the sole official platform through which they operate. Regrettably, the organization lacks a dedicated website, limiting the accessibility and variety of data.

Consequently, the analysis primarily draws upon content disseminated on their Facebook page, supplemented by information gleaned from academic papers

4.1) The evolution of Paraguayan Feminism and its impact on the society

In Paraguay, women have been considered protagonists in the history of the country. In fact, the indigenous women present in the territory during the conquest of the

Spanish led to the establishment of love relationships with the conquistadors, with whom cordial relations were maintained.

However, it was during the War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870) that Paraguayan women took on a leading role in society. In fact, in this period women were considered true heroines, who helped and accompanied the soldiers during the battle. Nonetheless, the status of Paraguayan women has been stereotyped very often (Villagra, 2015. p. 222). In fact, if on the one hand the relationship they had with the Spanish was peaceful, on the other we can say that many other women were enslaved or sent to work camps. However, many centuries later Paraguayan women have continued to occupy themselves in various sectors within society, both in politics, in the economy and in the culture of the country, even if their efforts have not been fairly highlighted by of the male part (Villagra, 2015. p. 223).

From a political point of view, Paraguayan feminism is very different, as it remains crystallized within a conservative society. For this reason, the fact that in Paraguay there is a system of parties with a totally traditional and Catholic political vision also suggests the existence of an electoral system in which voters align themselves with these values and ideologies. Added to this is the lack of female participation within the electoral body and the highlighting of a gender perspective within electoral campaigns (Villagra, 2015. p. 223).

Unlike Argentine feminism, Paraguayan feminism is much more recent. In fact, it dates back to the birth of the United Nations Decade of Women in the 1980s. The first feminist meeting was developed through the use of the motto "Por nuestra igualdad ante la Ley" (For our equality before the Law). At this meeting, a body called Coordinacion de Mujeres del Paraguay was created, fundamental for the fight against gender inequalities between men and women within the Paraguayan Civil Code (Villagra, 2015. pp. 232-233).

Furthermore, Paraguayan feminism managed to survive during the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989), a time when feminist movements were closely monitored by the police. For this reason, feminist mobilization in Paraguay during the thirty years of dictatorship was concentrated in meetings at trade union, party, or peasant organizations level. In these groups, always supervised by the government,

there were discussions about human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression (Leon Szwako, 2012. p. 94).

The Civil Code adopted by Stroessner strongly discriminated against the role that women had within society, especially in relation to their rights. As Leon Szwako (2012) states, a woman's legal capacity and will once marry depended on her husband; furthermore, the *Stronian* legislature provided an image of a vulnerable woman within the scenario of concubinage, penalizing her position compared to that of men. This means that women did not have decision-making power over men because it was precisely the law in the country that dictated it.

To deal with this situation, at the end of the 1980s, the *Centro Paraguayo de Estudios de la Mujer* (CEPEM) was created, in which representatives of feminist NGOs met and debated to effect changes in the country's Civil Code. Furthermore, with the development of the *Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres*, the Civil Code became a catalyst for a series of initiatives aimed at combattere la discriminazione giuridica e le disuguaglianze sociale in cui le donne si trovano in Paraguay (Leon Szwako, 2012. p. 103).

The birth of the Encuentro Nacional was responsible for the establishment of the Coordinacion de Mujeres del Paraguay (CMP), which included various feminist organizations that fought for the rights and discrimination of women at all levels of society. This body was fundamental for the subsequent changes within the country's legal system, as if today in Paraguay there is a law that protects women from domestic violence, it is also thanks to the struggles and contribution that the CMP has achieved in the years since its creation (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Paraguay, 2021).

Consequently, Paraguayan feminism, in addition to having managed to carry out reforms in the Paraguayan Civil Code, has had an important role in the country's democracy.

In fact, it is precisely thanks to feminist organizations that in 2008 there was a radical change to Article 32 of Law 834, with which the minimum percentage of female participation for the electoral candidacy of political parties was brought to 50% and no more. to 20% (OAS, n.a).

This institution was also very relevant because it highlighted the fact that in Paraguay there was a problem that only the government could solve by taking steps forward from a political and cooperative point of view. The impetus was the ratification of the Convention against all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), together with the Belem do Para convention and the Optional Protocol to CEDAW in the early 21st century. Furthermore, it is thanks to the Coordination of Women of Paraguay that it was possible to talk about gender inequalities from a legislative point of view, introducing this topic into political debates (Villagra, 2015. p. 233).

Another interesting point to analyze the Paraguayan political vision lies in the functioning of its system. In fact, according to Villagra (2015), traditional political parties have never been incentivized to improve Paraguayan political quality, that is, they have always been faithful to the status quo. As a result, it was not possible to carry out a program that would increase political democracy within the country.

Furthermore, the fact that the same two political parties have existed in Paraguay since the 19th century (the Partido Colorado and the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico) are all right-wing makes a change of ideology within society difficult for many.

In this context, the appearance of a feminist political party in the 2013 elections resulted in a change within the Paraguayan political system. In fact, the ideological line adopted by Kuña Pyrenda was composed of a combination of feminism and socialism. (Villagra, 2015. p. 232). Furthermore, the fact that this party also resonated on a media level highlighted everything that Paraguayan feminists have done for their country, especially for the recognition of political and civil rights within the history of Paraguay. Not only that, but the existence of a feminist-based political party within a society in which political spaces are permeated by traditionalist and patriarchal values, which give little importance to issues relating to gender equality, is notable.

4.2) Kuña Pyrenda and *Las Residentas*: redefining women's roles within the Paraguayan society

Kuña Pyrenda is a special case of how feminism managed to get into the politics of Paraguay. In fact, this political party, born in 2011, is the result of a collaboration of several women who wanted their rights to be recognized. With them, it established its own manifesto, through which it outlined its objectives and its mission: fighting violence against women and violations that touch women's rights.

In the first plenary of the party, in which 400 women participated, the organizational structure was also created, with the development of circles of women and men whose sole target was to engage with the movement, especially when the latter he ran in the 2013 elections (Villagra, 2015. pp. 234-236). The political character of this party veers towards a feminist, socialist, environmentalist and ecologist program. Furthermore, over the years it has also been characterized by profound activism, made up of protests, marches and demonstrations in the center of Asuncion.

Furthermore, Kuña Pyrenda constitutes a political initiative of women, whose objective is to achieve gender equality from a political point of view, with the election of a female president (Corvalan, 2013. p. 48). This would be a turning point in the political history of Paraguay, given the conservative and patriarchal system that permeates the society; a society made up of parties which, despite taking different positions, are very similar in terms of the way they act.

In addition to this, Kuña Pyrenda fights for a more democratic country, in which women are more involved in the society and politics of the country, in which patriarchy and machismo are eliminated. As Gün (2017) states, Kuña Pyrenda has the same objective that women compromise: the desire to pursue a democratic society where the desires of the patriarchal and machista state are eliminated. It's the same game with different soldiers. For this reason, the lists that make up Kuña Pyrenda's candidates are mostly represented by women and the president, Lilian Soto, is a leading figure in Paraguayan feminism and activism.

Secondly, as Villagra (2015) states, *Kuña Pyrenda's movement also brings forward another aspect: that of visibility. In fact, through his campaigns, all those "categories" of women who were placed on the margins of society, such as indigenous and peasant women, were able to make their voices heard and fight for their rights.*

Furthermore, it is precisely within the popular demonstration that moves through such diversity that a political party like Kuña Pyrenda has marked a turning point in the vision of women and feminism within society.

Furthermore, according to Villagra (2015), Kuña Pyrenda is not just a political party, but a movement that has been able to build a political agenda starting from the needs that women require in Paraguay, both from a political and social point of view. In addition to this, having admitted the existence of various types of women and given them a political and social status, has also opened up the possibility of fighting in other types of feminist battles, such as indigenous and LGBTQ+ ones.

For this reason, we can say that Kuña Pyrenda represents an innovation within the political scenario of Paraguay, because he has carried forward and continues to fight, through its campaigns, for little discussed issues within the Paraguayan political elections, for example abortion, equal marriage, the adoption of children by homosexual couples.

Las Residentas, like Kuña Pyrenda, is a concept that has a fundamental importance in the Paraguayan imagination, especially because it refers to women who played a fundamental role in a very difficult period for the country, as well as being become an essential figure in the fight for women's rights within the nation.

The word *residenta* does not exist in most dictionaries, given that it is a term that derives purely from the Paraguayan lexicon. In fact, the small number of Spaniards within the Paraguayan territory during the era of the conquistadors and the strong coexistence between the two groups (the Guarani and the local elite) endowed the Paraguayan culture with an intense Guarani influence, which manifests itself in the daily use of the indigenous language in any strata of society (Potthast, n.a. p. 79).

According to Beitez (2011. p. 13), what surrounds *Las Residentas* derives from the local idealization of the war, together with the romantic cult for all those Paraguayan women who accompanied the men during the difficulties they encountered, as well as fighting for their country. *Las residentas* is also synonymous with pain, sacrifice and the will of the Paraguayan women who took up arms to go and fight.

According to Posa (2004), *Las Residentas were those who had not entered the good graces of Marshal López, also suffering the horrors of war, since the evacuation of*

Asunción ordered by López under pain of death in 1868 forced them to follow the soldiers and eat miserably with their leftovers.

However, two lines of interpretation have been analyzed regarding the figure and role of *Las Residentas* in Paraguay. On the one hand, they seem to be exalted within an image of women associated above all to what they have done for their country. As a result, we notice a romantic ideal and more associated with the deeds that these women voluntarily performed. On the other hand, however, *Las Residentas* are bound to the idea of "victim" of Mariscal Lopez's barbarism, as previously suggested. The condition of victim means that they are placed in a position of suffering, that is, not as heroic women who fought each other, but rather as women who suffered for their country due to the difficulties that arose during the war (Benitez, 2011. p. 15).

Nonetheless, *Las Residentas* have given the role of women an ideal model, which if seen from the point of view of feminist theory, creates an image of women relegated to the domestic sphere, as a woman dedicated to taking care of the family unit and of the house while man fights in war. For this reason, Benitez (2011) states that the representation of the role that women had in the context of the battle has brought forward an idealization of the female body within a patriarchal discourse created purely by men. Consequently, this has caused the historical construction of the sexual image of women at the basis of a masculine and universalist discourse, leading to the birth of stereotypes and models that have male thought as their point of origin.

Subsequently, in Paraguay the image of women does not belong only to the role of *Las Residentas*, but it is indisputable that that role was fundamental in subsequent interpretations regarding the construction of a female model within society. Indeed, within the country, there is a veneration of the Paraguayan woman as the rebuilder of the homeland at the end of the 19th century, a homeland that presented an enormous demographic imbalance, with a number of women, children and elderly people that was four times greater than that represented by men (Potthast, n.a. p. 89).

Finally, the mentality and culture present in Paraguay are indispensable factors for understanding the power dynamics and political relations that derive from these

roles. Las Residentas seen on the one hand as saviors and repairers of a nation and on the other as victims of a tyrant make it clear that in Paraguay there is no culture of criticism that emphasizes and admits the precariousness in which the country and the population find themselves regarding the position of women in society (Benitez, 2011. p. 18).

. This chapter has attempted to provide an overview of how gender violence, and in particular violence against women, is still a very present factor in Paraguay. According to World Bank data, between 2019 and 2022 approximately 143 women died in Paraguay for reasons related to gender violence, in other words a femicide is committed in the country every 10 days (World Bank Blogs, 2022). Although the number of women killed or harassed has decreased from year to year, the phenomenon still represents an issue to which the government appears incapable of providing effective responses.

Furthermore, in this chapter we have tried to identify the role that women have had in the country, in particular we have provided general guidelines on how feminism was born and developed within the country. Bodies such as the Coordinacion de Mujeres del Paraguay, as well as institutions such as the Ministry of Women are all centers whose development is due to the processes and innovations that Paraguayan feminism has brought forward.

Subsequently, the chapter analyzed two "products" of Paraguayan feminism. First, we saw how Kuña Pyrenda's political program was a reason to highlight the poor conditions faced by women in Paraguay, particularly in relation to the rights of women and other minority groups. Furthermore, keeping alive issues considered taboo such as legal termination of pregnancy, gender equality demonstrates the fact that a radical change is needed in the country

Finally, the chapter analyzed how the image of today's Paraguayan woman in political discourse is reflected in the phenomenon of Las Residentas. On the one hand, the woman takes the form of mother of the Paraguayan land for having fought and repopulated her homeland (Gün, 2017. p. 26), but on the other the representation of the woman is exploited and stereotyped as a victim of a political regime and not elevated to heroine.

All these factors show how the position of the Paraguayan woman within society is still underdeveloped. In fact, even after the thirty years of dictatorship that Paraguay suffered, the community is still steeped in machismo and gender violence and those who are stuck in the center of all this are women, who together with little political will to solve the problem, they are unable to come out of this oppressive context.

The rhetorical discourse on which Paraguayan politics has been nourished throughout history regarding the image and role that women represent in society demonstrates the existence of macho discrimination even within politics. (Gun, 2017. p.27) Furthermore, the efficiency that the government has in providing responses that generate concrete changes for the rights of women and other minority sections of society suggests that Paraguayan society leads to the marginalization of such groups, resulting in a well-structured social hierarchy in which women's voices are heard by many people in the streets but not by those who should be committed to the cause of a world freer from violence in Paraguay.

Chapter 5

The power of resistance: *Ni una Menos* and the feminist wave in Argentina

The last chapter of this thesis project will be focused on another Latin American country: Argentina. In fact, this particular nation stands as a shining beacon in the global struggle for gender equality. Its rich history of activism and resilience has birthed a feminist movement of remarkable vigor, one that has seized the world's attention and ignited a fervor for change. At the epicenter of this seismic shift stands the *Ni Una Menos* movement, a force of nature that has swept across the nation and beyond, heralding a resounding call for justice, equality, and the end of gender-based violence.

In the following paragraphs, the development of feminism in Argentina will be analyzed through its changes within its history, cultural influences, and political landscape. We explore the rise and evolution of the *Ni Una Menos* movement, a movement that has transcended borders to become an emblematic symbol of feminist resistance. In doing so, we will not only uncover the origins and milestones of this remarkable movement but also delve into the complex web of social, economic, and political factors that have fueled its unprecedented growth.

In the chapters that follow, we will trace the roots of feminism in Argentina, examining its historical foundations and the role of prominent feminist figures who laid the groundwork for the modern movement. Moreover the feminist movement *Ni Una Menos* will be analyzed, in particular the movement's strategies, successes, and challenges, shedding light on the unique characteristics that have made it a transformative force in Argentina and beyond.

5.1) *The main developments of feminism in Argentina (from 1970s to 2010s)*

Feminism in Argentina, like in many parts of the world, was influenced by the global wave of feminist activism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

At this time, women in Argentina were demanding their rights to education, participation in public life, and political representation. Key figures such as Juana

Manuela Gorriti and Julieta Lanteri played pivotal roles in advocating for women's suffrage and broader gender equality (Ministerio de Cultura Argentina, 2018).

This latter, together with a group of women, managed to get to the creation of the First Feminist Congress, held in 1900 in Buenos Aires. This congress brought together women from various backgrounds to discuss issues related to women's rights and gender equality. The event marked the formal beginning of organized feminist activism in Argentina (Blanco Corujo, 2018).

However, one struggle that Argentine feminism fought for during the early years of the 20th century was the right to vote for women. Lanteri gave an enormous push to obtain this right through two key events: one was the creation of The "Voting Shirt" Movement and the other, more direct, through the attempt to register to vote in the municipal elections wearing a white shirt with the phrase "Voto Femenino" (Women's Vote) emblazoned on it (Ministerio de Cultura Argentina, 2018).

Argentina granted women the right to vote in municipal elections in 1912, making it one of the first countries in the world to do so. However, full suffrage was not granted until 1947 during the Peronist era, when women gained the right to vote in national elections (Ministerio de Cultura Argentina, 2021).

In the late 20th century, Argentine feminists increasingly focused on reproductive rights. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a surge in feminist activism demanding access to contraceptives and safe abortion. For this reason, the National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe, and Free Abortion (Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito) was founded to advocate for the decriminalization of abortion. This campaign gained widespread support and became a driving force behind the eventual legalization of abortion in Argentina in 2020 (Tarducci, 2018).

The return to democracy in 1983 marked a turning point for Argentine feminism. Women's organizations gained momentum and began to advocate for legal reforms. In 1991, Argentina ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), further solidifying the commitment to gender equality (Sutton et. al, 2019. p. 40).

In the same year, women's participation in politics increased. In fact, Argentina implemented a gender quota law, which mandated that 30% of candidates on

political party lists must be women. This law aimed to increase women's representation in legislative bodies and promote gender equality in politics.

For this reason, women became more involved in the political scenario and their participation increased during this period. , Argentina implemented a gender quota law, which mandated that 30% of candidates on political party lists must be women. This law aimed to increase women's representation in legislative bodies and promote gender equality in politics (Schwindt Bayer, 2009. p. 6-7).

In recent years, many steps forward have been done to fight against gender inequalities and violence against women. Other than the Right to Abortion in 2020, in 2012, Argentina passed a groundbreaking Gender Identity Law that allows individuals to self-identify their gender identity and access gender-affirming healthcare without undergoing psychiatric or medical evaluations. This law has been praised as one of the most progressive in the world regarding gender rights. In fact, it meant a great contribution on an international scale in matters of sexual and civil rights, and in particular, in matters of trans policy (De Mauro Rucovsky, 2015).

5.2) *Ni Una Menos: the birth of a global response to gender violence*

The feminist movement *Ni Una Menos* was born in Argentina on June 3, 2015, representing a country's discontent with gender violence. The fact that this movement achieved excellent results in terms of popular participation since its first demonstration, according to Accossatto et. al (2018), is due to the violent wave of feminicides and, on the other hand, to the development of an organization made up of women who managed to establish communication strategies that led the movement to reach many public and private spheres of Argentine society.

The name comes from the phrase “Ni una mujer menos, ni una muerta mas”, a slogan brought forward in 1995 by the Mexican poet Susana Chavez, victim of femicide in 2011. It was, in part, thanks to this woman that the Mexican movement *Ni Una Mas* was formed (Palmeiro, 2019).

In the period 2014-2017, almost 1000 feminicides were recorded in Argentina, including transfeminicides, which translated into more than 400 per year and 20 per month (Pineda, 2019). In the first months of 2015, however, there was an increase

compared to the previous year which led to the death of 8 women, so that the issue of femicide and gender violence reached public opinion very easily. As we can see in the graph, between 2008 and 2015, there was an increase of 38% (Monfort Sanchez, 2021).

Furthermore, Argentina went through a trail of misogyny that was based on the one hand in the restoration of the patriarchal order regarding female and feminized bodies, placing them in an inferior position. On the other hand, however, the foundations were being laid to make all those privileges legitimate towards the old oligarchies of power, and not towards the new minority political subjects (women, LGBTQI+, migrants etc.) (Palmeiro, 2019).

From an economic point of view, Pailmeiro (2019) also reports the fact that Argentina was also faced with a deep cut in social spending and the cancellation of many programs aimed at preventing violence and taking care of victims. For this reason, a climate formed by a profoundly macho, racist and classist discourse was spreading, in which femicide was seen as a media object and not as a problem to be solved.

For this reason, even before *Ni Una Menos* was founded, a group of women, including writers, journalists and activists, organized a marathon in the square in Buenos Aires with the aim of highlighting the problem of femicide.

However, the factor that pushed *Ni Una Menos* to take to the streets globally was her use of social media and the links made with other feminist organizations within the country.

Furthermore, the very name of the movement signals intolerance towards feminicide, that, together, we can all defend ourselves and fight gender violence and in particular violence against women. For this reason, the birth of such an expressive power leads to the creation of a new political language, a language that comes directly from the feminist and queer tradition (Palmeiro, 2020). With *Ni Una Menos*, women have succeeded in becoming a new political collective and a new political subject constituted by the connection they possess with feminism.

5.2) The Spread and Impact of the *Ni Una Menos* Movement Worldwide

The way in which *Ni Una Menos* managed to spread and become a recognized entity throughout Argentina coincides with the massive demonstration in the Plaza de Congreso in Buenos Aires, in which almost 300,000 people participated, various women's and feminist organizations were also present, as well as political and trade union associations. From this demonstration, another 120 were developed in various parts of the country, reaching more than 400,000 people (Accossatto et. al, 2018). Nonetheless, the *Ni Una Menos* movement also spread to other Latin American countries, including Mexico, Peru, Chile and Uruguay.

However, what *Ni Una Menos* managed to create was a new wave of feminist activism in other parts of the world. In countries such as Italy and Portugal, the name of the movement has been translated into their respective languages, to which English has been added. The scale and grandeur regarding the public outreach of *Ni Una Menos* has led to an enormous growth of feminism as a social movement. In 2016, when the Non Una Di Meno movement emerged in Italy, the hashtag #InternacionalFeminista was created which constituted the main connection between languages, identities and countries, representing the political subject that has spread the most over the years. (Palmeiro, 2020).

In Brazil, women demonstrated in the *Marcha das Margaridas* on August 12, 2015. Many rural workers and peasants participated in this protest, demanding greater access to rural areas, as well as food sovereignty and greater control over the protection of the land, as it is very often poisoned by neo-extractivism (Palmeiro, 2019).

Ni Una Menos' march continued the year following its formation, organizing an international action in which several feminist assemblies in more than 22 countries participated, in which forums were opened in which women could discuss this issue. that they were not willing to tolerate.

A key date to understand the impact that *Ni Una Menos* brought with it is March 8, 2017, the year of the first *Paro Internacional de Mujeres*, in which 55 countries participated. In Argentina, according to Palmeiro (2019), more than half a million people mobilized to share the cause. This constituted a purely Latin American regional movement where a community of women united for the same cause stands

out, without any difference between ethnicities or groups, aimed at negotiation, inclusion and feminist radicalization.

Furthermore, through this strike it was possible to associate violence against women and the exploitation that women suffer in the field of work. In fact, as previously mentioned, the housework that women do at home is not paid or recognised, even though it is thanks to that work that the family unit can move forward, as can the global economy (Palmeiro, 2019).

5.3) *The Tools and Strategies Utilized by Ni Una Menos*

If we look at the tools used by *Ni Una Menos* to spread women's voices and make the issue of femicide public, we will realize that social media played a fundamental role. In fact, it is precisely thanks to dissemination through digital campaigns that the work and objective of *Ni Una Menos* began to emerge. Not only that, but the use of social media was also due to the group's desire to summon as many people as possible to the demonstration, i.e. the maximum concentration and mobilization possible (Accossatto, 2018). This particular method is completely different compared to the one used by *Kuña Pyrenda*, which mostly utilized just traditional methods of campaigning, such as protest and public demonstrations in the streets.

The use of social media was also an efficient way to speed up the transmission of messages and facilitate internal communication, including speed in receiving responses and compiling information. Furthermore, through the digital campaign, the hashtag #NiUnaMenos was able to reach a wider audience and at a much lower cost, also managing to reach the eyes of other feminist organizations and political movements.

Reaching a diverse audience through social media has meant that the *Ni Una Menos* project has also reached several Latin American countries, including Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay. Not only that, *Ni Una Menos* has also become an international movement, crossing borders and reaching as far as Spain and France (Cabral et. al, 2016).

Furthermore, the mission of *Ni Una Menos*, according to Lopez et. al (2016), is to carry forward a type of popular-based feminism with an international vision. The

power that the movement had was such that even at a political level, many of the institutional representatives began to participate in the mobilization (Accossatto, 2016).

Subsequently, *Ni Una Menos*' digital activism favored the beginning of a new form of mobilization, consisting of the commitment of all those political figures who had participated during the march. In this case, the hashtag was #DeLaFotoALaFirma and the objective was to develop a list of five points in which political leaders committed themselves to providing policies against macho violence (Palmeiro, 2019).

Furthermore, the protests also veered towards concrete protection of the space in which women suffer violence and called for the creation of infrastructures and shelters to house all those fleeing violence (Cabral, 2016).

5.4) “Alive, free, and without fear”: the aims of Ni Una Menos

Firstly, it called for the implementation and monitoring of Law 26.2485, regarding the Prevention, Assistance and Eradication of Violence against Women. Subsequently, women pushed for greater access to justice, a justice in which they are victimized twice and have to wait a long time before receiving a sentence (Palmeiro, 2019). Furthermore, greater protection is needed when many women report an act of violence and monitoring of the efficiency and compliance with precautionary measures.

A problem that Una Menos pointed to was also regarding the statistics on femicide. Indeed, according to Palmeiro (2019), there is no single official register in which the numbers regarding violence against women in the country can be seen. Consequently, having a single register is essential so that we can provide answers and establish public policies that address the problem.

Finally, there was a push towards greater implementation of Sexual Education programs in schools given that, quoting Palmeiro (2019), the most profound change to break with patriarchal logic is to start with education.

However, the strength and communication strategies of *Ni Una Menos* also reside in the internal composition of the movement. In fact, one of its peculiarities lies in its structure, made up of various journalists and communication specialists who had various contacts at an international level. Consequently, the repercussion that *Ni Una Menos* had on a global level is also due to the development of a media agenda by these professionals (Accossatto, 2018).

The main aim of *Ni Una Menos*'s mobilization was to make the problem of femicide and gender violence visible throughout Argentina. In fact, following the movement's many protests and campaigns, developments occurred at an institutional level. Furthermore, the power of *Ni Una Menos* results in the dismantling of those beliefs that were against the Argentine juridical power, since, according to Costa (2022), *we have seen that there are many patriarchal ideas both on the part of women and men, causing a less access to justice and empowerment. As a result, Ni Una Menos managed to highlight issues that were placed in the background, adopting a strategy that started from the gender perspective.*

5.5) The achievements of Ni Una Menos: Argentina's Response to Gender Violence

The developments that *Ni Una Menos* brought within the country began with the establishment of the Unidad de Registro, Sistematización y Seguimiento de Femicidios was created, an organization thanks to which it was possible to produce official statistics regarding gender violence and femicide (Cabral et. al, 2016).

Furthermore, the Unidad Fiscal Especializada de Violencia contra las Mujeres was established, with the aim of providing investigative strategies that could target the various forms of gender violence (Ministerio Público Fiscal Argentina, n.a). In addition to this, new measures were created in some provinces of Argentina to combat gender violence. In fact, in the province of Mendoza, free legal aid was established for all victims of violence, while in Neuquén a new shelter was built and a protocol against gender violence was approved in some public universities. (Cabral et. al. 2016).

Among the many issues that the *Ni Una Menos* protests touched on, there was also that linked to legal and free abortion. In fact, before 2020, Argentina had an ancient law from 1921 that allowed the possibility of abortion in the event that there had been violence. With the *Protocolo para la Atencion Integral de las Personas con Derecho a la Interrupcion Legal del Embarazo* (ILE Protocol), the outlines of what would later be Law 27,610 were drawn up, where abortion was permitted even in all cases in which no a gestation period of fourteen weeks is exceeded.

However, the protocol highlighted women's health, emphasizing the physical, psychological and social aspects, as well as the conditions in which women find themselves in an illegal abortion (Costa, 2022).

In 2017, law 27.412 on gender equality in political contexts was approved in which it is established that the lists of candidates of the National Congress and the Mercosur Parliament must be balanced, i.e. the names must be placed at intervals between women and men starting from the first full candidate to the last alternate candidate (Costa, 2022).

In conclusion, the journey through the rich tapestry of feminism in Argentina, with a particular focus on the *Ni Una Menos* movement, reveals a remarkable story of resilience, activism, and transformation. Argentina's feminist movement has its roots in the global waves of feminist activism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with pioneers like Juana Manuela Gorriti and Julieta Lanteri advocating for women's rights, including suffrage.

The struggle for women's suffrage eventually bore fruit in Argentina, with women gaining the right to vote in municipal elections in 1912 and full suffrage in national elections in 1947. The return to democracy in 1983 marked a turning point for feminism in Argentina, with women's organizations gaining momentum and advocating for legal reforms, including the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1991.

In recent years, Argentina has made significant strides in the fight against gender inequalities and violence against women. The passage of groundbreaking laws, such as the Gender Identity Law in 2012 and the legalization of abortion in 2020, has positioned Argentina as a global leader in gender rights.

As well as the Paraguayan political party *Kuñia Pyrenda*, the *Ni Una Menos* movement emerged as a powerful force against gender violence, fueled by the alarming rise in feminicides. It harnessed the power of social media to mobilize and unite people, both in Argentina and across Latin America. The movement's name, "*Ni Una Menos*," which translates to "Not One Less," reflects its unwavering commitment to ending gender-based violence.

Ni Una Menos' impact transcended borders, inspiring similar movements in countries like Mexico, Peru, Chile, and Uruguay. It also sparked a global wave of feminist activism, with international movements adopting its name and hashtags to rally for gender equality.

The movement's mobilizations, including the International Women's Strike on March 8, 2017, drew attention to the intersection of violence against women and economic exploitation. *Ni Una Menos* used social media as a powerful tool for spreading its message and organizing protests, connecting with diverse audiences and driving the movement's growth not only in Latin America but also in Europe.

Internally, the *Ni Una Menos* movement demonstrated unique strengths, with its structure comprising journalists and communication specialists who facilitated its international outreach. The movement's demands for institutional change led to the creation of agencies and protocols aimed at combating gender violence and providing support to victims.

In the end, the *Ni Una Menos* movement not only made gender violence visible but also dismantled patriarchal beliefs that had perpetuated inequality and injustice. It spurred legal reforms, statistics collection, and the establishment of organizations dedicated to addressing gender violence. Moreover, it played a crucial role in the fight for legal and free abortion in Argentina.

It is essential to understand that the *Ni Una Menos* movement is not an isolated phenomenon; rather, it is part of a broader global feminist wave that has been reshaping societies, challenging entrenched patriarchal structures, and redefining the boundaries of gender equity. By situating Argentina's feminist movement within this international context, we gain valuable insights into the interconnectedness of feminist struggles worldwide and the power of grassroots activism to ignite change on a grand scale.

Argentina's feminist journey, as exemplified by *Ni Una Menos*, is a testament to the power of collective action and international solidarity in advancing the cause of gender equality. It stands as a shining example of how grassroots activism can effect profound change on a global scale, offering hope for a more equitable and just future.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This thesis has delved into the complex and critical issue of gender violence in Latin America, with a particular focus violence against women in Paraguay and Argentina. The project began by establishing a comprehensive definition of gender violence, drawing from academic and institutional sources.

In fact, the analysis presented in this study, drawing on the work of Exposito (2011), sheds light on the social construction of gender violence, emphasizing the role of patriarchy in normalizing and perpetuating violence, rendering it seemingly inevitable. The intersectionality of patriarchy and capitalism, accentuates the economic dimension, with women often finding themselves economically dependent on men, exacerbating their subordination within the family.

On the other hand, Morrison et al. (2005) contributed to the analysis of this thesis by framing violence against women as a manifestation of relational power dynamics within society, while Carosio's (2013) exploration connects gender violence to broader social problems, emphasizing the influence of stereotyped traditions and cultures that perpetuate the superiority of masculinity.

Subsequently, this thesis presented the two case studies mentioned above: Paraguay and Argentina. In particular, it first tried to see how these two states responded to the issue of gender violence, as well as tracing the challenges within the two countries.

In fact, as notice throughout this project, in Argentina, legal frameworks have evolved to address domestic assault, introducing laws such as *Ley 26.791* and *Ley 27.363* specifically targeting femicide and violence towards sons-in-law. The groundbreaking *Ley Brisa* and *Ley Micaela* demonstrate a commitment to gender equality by providing financial restitution for children bereaved due to murdering women and mandating gender violence education for public officials. However, systemic challenges persist, including a high rate of case dismissal, legislative gaps, and a prevailing conventional family paradigm that hinders the prosecution of crimes with a sex differentiation. The establishment of support mechanisms like *Centros*

Integrales de la Mujer and the hotline (line 144) represents a progressive mechanism to help and assist women in problematic situations.

Paraguay, on the other hand, grapples with the limitation of laws concerning violence against women, as civil laws predominantly govern this area. The emergence of the *Ley de Protección a las Mujeres contra la Violencia* in 2016 and initiatives like *SOS Mujer 137* and "*Casa Abrigo Mercedes Sandoval*" signify a step forward. The creation of *Centros Regionales de Atención* and the focus on indigenous women's assistance further emphasize the commitment to addressing this issue. However, challenges such as slow bureaucracy, poor communication between legislative bodies, and the struggle to implement rules in less populated areas hinder comprehensive progress.

In addition to this, this thesis showed the impact that feminism had both in Argentina and Paraguay, through the *Ni Una Menos* movement, the political party *Kuña Pyrenda* as well as the phenomenon of *Las Residentas*.

The roots of Argentina's feminist movement explored in this thesis trace back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with advocates like Juana Manuela Gorriti and Julieta Lanteri championing women's rights, including suffrage.

In 2010s, the Argentinian State has been seen at the forefront of global progress in gender rights. Landmark laws, such as the Gender Identity Law in 2012 and the legalization of abortion in 2020, positioned Argentina as a trailblazer in the fight against gender inequalities. The *Ni Una Menos* movement emerged as a powerful force against gender violence, leveraging social media to mobilize a diverse audience and sparking similar movements across Latin America and beyond.

Ni Una Menos not only made gender violence visible but also dismantled patriarchal beliefs perpetuating inequality. The movement's impact led to the creation of agencies and protocols addressing gender violence, statistical tracking, and the implementation of measures in various provinces to combat gender-based violence.

Moreover, the movement's digital activism played a crucial role, utilizing social media to spread its message globally, connecting with diverse audiences, and inspiring similar movements worldwide. The mobilizations, including the International Women's Strike in 2017, underscored the intersectionality of violence against women

and economic exploitation. The movement's demands for institutional change, protection of spaces for victims, and increased access to justice highlighted the multifaceted nature of the struggle against gender violence.

Similar to Argentina, this thesis has investigated the issue of gender violence in Paraguay. Despite the ongoing challenges that the State confronts and the commendable efforts of organizations such as *Coordinación de Mujeres del Paraguay* and the Ministry of Women, femicides persist as a significant concern in the country.

However, the evolution of the Paraguayan political party *Kuña Pyrenda* analyzed in this project has emphasized the importance of solidarity, unity, and the amplification of voices to create meaningful change in the fight against gender violence.

Moreover, it represents a political initiative with a feminist, socialist, environmentalist, and ecologist agenda. The party's commitment to achieving gender equality through the election of a female president challenges the conservative and patriarchal norms prevalent in Paraguayan society.

Kuña Pyrenda's activism extends beyond traditional political spheres, advocating for the rights of marginalized groups such as indigenous and LGBTQ+ communities. The party's innovative approach addresses issues like abortion, equal marriage, and adoption by homosexual couples, pushing the boundaries of discourse within Paraguayan political elections.

On the other hand, *Las Residentas*, symbolic figures in Paraguayan history, embody both heroism and victimhood. The image of women taking up arms during difficult periods is revered, yet it also reinforces traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The representation of *Las Residentas* as saviors and victims reflects the complex dynamics of gender in Paraguayan society.

The research presented here can be seen as the analysis of the multifaceted nature of gender violence in Paraguay and Argentina and the diverse responses and initiatives aimed at eradicating it. It is evident that gender violence remains a pervasive issue with deep-seated roots in those two countries. However, the resilience and determination of individuals, communities, and states, as showcased through the case studies and the *Ni Una Menos* movement and *Kuña Pyrenda*, offer hope for a future in which gender violence is progressively dismantled.

In addition, this thesis wanted to underscore the necessity for continued efforts, research, and policy changes to address the issue of gender violence in Latin America effectively. The fight against gender violence requires a multi-pronged approach, rooted in understanding, awareness, and a commitment to ensuring that every individual, regardless of their gender, can live free from violence, fear, and discrimination. It is our collective responsibility to work towards a future where gender violence is but a dark chapter in history, and this research contributes to the ongoing dialogue and activism to make that vision a reality.

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