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# Emotional Management Strategies and Care for Women Defenders of the Territory in Jalisco

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**Abstract:** The struggles of several women defending their territories and lives are marked by family tensions and reactions to the overload of care tasks and community rules according to their socially established roles. In this qualitative research, we analyze and discuss the cases of three women's collectives from different suburban and rural communities in Jalisco. Information recollected through the new ethnography approach over six years was coded and analyzed with the Atlas ti program. Results: Women's defense of their land involvement, organizing, and social mobilization actions move to an overload of care and raise adverse reactions in their community and families in response to what is seen as a transgression of women's roles. This increases dominant demobilization emotions: fear, sadness, loneliness, guilt, and shame. Through emotional management strategies linked with alternative forms of appropriation of space, starting with their bodies and sharing emotions and actions with their companions, the women in these collectives produced emotions of resistance: pride, hope, friendship, and anger, which led to reconfiguring their identities, family relationships, and roles within other place domains: bodies, family, and community. Conclusions: Women defenders, as principal carers of life, have produced and inherited a set of strategies that configure a growing "politics of the ordinary. "These strategies, through emotional management, subvert dominant emotions, feelings, and acting rules, gradually questioning and reinventing their roles and human and nonhuman relations in their most immediate contexts.

**Keywords:** women defender; territory; emotional management strategies; care; dominant emotions; emotions of resistance



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## 1. Introduction

This paper will focus on the emotional dimension of the struggles of women land defenders in Jalisco. Women defenders are challenged and aggrieved by the implications of socio-environmental issues in their daily lives. It has been identified that the grievance or feeling of collective injustice [1,2], propels the defense of their land and place, as well as life and survival itself. This process has diverse implications for the relationships and work that unfolds, especially in the family, the group, and the community [3–5].

Women have developed various emotional management strategies [6] to nurture and transform the affective bonds and care relationships woven in the defense of the territory and the socio-spatial domains it crosses and impacts [7]. Through these emotional management strategies, women defenders manage hegemonic emotions that can be in or demobilizing, among them fear, shame, guilt, and loneliness [4,5]. Such emotions are part of their affective cultures and are patterned by various rules of feeling determined by gender and other factors such as geography, class, and ethnicity [6,8].

First, we will contextualize the socio-environmental crisis and, with it, a crisis of care—both within the framework of a civilizational crisis—that is being experienced worldwide and has a differentiated impact on the lives of women in Mexico, Latin America, and

the world. Subsequently, we will outline a specific context about the realities and problems of women defenders in the Lerma-Chapala-Santiago basin.

Thirdly, we will detail the theoretical-analytical perspective to analyze the emotional dimension of the struggles for the defense of women's territory. Fourthly, we will elaborate on the methodological approach from which both investigations were developed. Finally, we will discuss the results and conclusions regarding the strategies of emotional management and resistance emotions of women defenders in the face of dominant emotions such as guilt, fear, loneliness, and shame.

### *1.1. Women Defenders in the Face of the Socio-Environmental Crisis and the Care Crisis*

As a response to the inequalities rooted in gender as a determining social construct to sustain relations of power, exploitation, and dominance, women currently stand out as leaders of multiple struggles, among them those for the defense of territory in scenarios of socio-environmental conflict [9,10]. We understand the territories that go through socio-environmental conflict as social spaces in environmental affectation, where community resistance is present, and disputes operate at multiple levels. They are not only distributive conflicts but also situations where diverse actors dispute forms of appropriation of space, inhabiting and producing the place or territories [11,12]. In addition, aspects related to gender, history, and community culture, as well as economic models of production and reproduction of life, are disputed and reconfigured [13].

The appropriation of space and the defense of territory operate in different domains or socio-spatial dimensions: body, home, community, group, nature, and public space, as well as meshes of solidarity and affection [4,5]. In the case of women, care is the basis for the reproduction and maintenance of life; therefore, it is a dimension in and from which politics is made and became possible, especially from the domains of body, home, and community. Simultaneously, this sphere becomes more complex in the face of their political participation in the framework of the struggles for the defense of territory and life since it is the source of diverse tensions in the family and the community [13]; we will go into this in more detail later. Movements and groups that defend their territory in the world and Latin America struggle for survival and life. Some are perceived as a "resistance of the daily life" (Personal communication, Sara, 2020); the simple fact of surviving in spaces of profound devastation is understood as an act of resistance. In addition, these groups and collectives defend and practice alternatives to relate to nature, inhabit, and produce territories—others [4].

Strong women's leadership characterizes these struggles. This is because, on the one hand, women continue to be the main family and community caregivers [13,14]. They constitute 67% of the labor force that provides social and health care [15] (p. vii), accordingly with socially established gender roles, historically reproduced, although discursively renewed, to sustain the production and reproduction of life under the capitalist and patriarchal system. This task becomes especially complex in the face of diverse sociocultural, economic, health, environmental, and political aspects of social inequality, which is reflected in the fact that women perform 76% of unpaid care activities [15] (p. vii). Access, distribution, and appropriation of nature's means of subsistence have also been unequal between men and women [16]; this is deepened according to their geographic, ethnic, and socioeconomic situation [17].

In today's post-pandemic context, which is marked by a civilizational crisis that in turn integrates migratory, health, environmental, cultural, and security crises [18], among others, women's daily balances are pretty fragile, especially for those who are caregivers [19,20]; because of their gender, they tend to live in conditions of social vulnerability, which vary according to their position. Socio-environmental impacts always mean an increase in care burdens, a fact observed as one of the first triggers of their reactions and involvement in struggles for the defense of the territory [13]. These care burdens, added to their work as defenders, became more complex and alarmingly pronounced with the COVID-19 pandemic when their central role in sustaining family and community care became

evident [19,20]. Something that at the same time placed with greater force the issue of the necessary collectivization and politicization of care in the world [21], Latin America, and Mexico [22] and also called for a change in the academic way of thinking about knowledge and researching [23].

In contexts of pronounced socio-environmental affectation, women face diverse impacts on family health and forms of community life due to the lack of access to natural goods and means of survival, such as clean water and healthy and accessible food, environmental contamination, dispossession, and forced displacement [17,22]. This aspect becomes more noticeable in rural and peripheral communities. Given the double or triple working days of women, these conditions imply additional challenges of care and self-care, which also work to the detriment of their quality of life and increase the difficulties of access to education, health, political participation, and employment, and distance them from the possibility of building a life project of their own [17].

In this context, women worldwide are positioning and maintaining themselves as leaders in scenarios of territorial defense and socio-environmental conflicts [24]. Some of these struggles are linked to eco-feminism, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and community feminism [13]. At the same time, they propose alternatives for the production and reproduction of life, based on community and ancestral knowledge, traditional medicine, herbal medicine, traditional agriculture, agroecology, the construction of ecotechnologies, and a social solidarity economy [25]. Faced with their constant links with universities and NGOs, women often train their intellectuals and spokespersons to ensure their own representation. A necessary action since they recognize the danger of being used and manipulated for other purposes that perpetuate colonialism, exploitation, and dominant ideologies and interests [26].

Some women-defenders gradually and with difficulty incorporate or claim alternative forms of consumption and production in their care and household reproduction activities. However, they also develop and mobilize knowledge and skills that impact their identity [4,5]. Thus, the emotional and care burdens derived from environmental affectation and their political participation and leadership in these struggles deepen the social vulnerability of women defenders of the territory. In the fabric of both aspects, they face a series of family and community difficulties that involve different types of overloads, tensions, and violence as a response to their political participation and the threat to the stability of family and community life, as well as the current care systems [5,27]. Thus, in this panorama, it is fundamental to consider women defenders in the specific contexts of the struggles for the defense of territory in Latin America, Mexico, and Jalisco, which we will delve into in the following section.

### *1.2. Socio-Environmental Conflict in Latin America, Mexico, and Jalisco*

Knowing the number of socio-environmental conflicts in the world, regions, and specific countries is a pending subject for an essential part of the observatories and researchers who have devoted themselves to this task. This section aims to show the growing number of socio-environmental conflicts in the world, Latin America, Mexico, and Jalisco. We also need to focus on the socio-environmental situation experienced in Jalisco, especially in the Lerma-Chapala-Santiago basin, among other populations of this state.

In the Environmental Justice Atlas [28], 4000 cases of socio-environmental conflicts have been documented worldwide so far. In 2020, this figure was 3331 [4]. Topping the list is the United States (403 cases), India (396), Mexico (281), China (253), Brazil (221), Spain (171), and Colombia with 169, among other countries in Latin America and the world [28]. Although it is evident that the number of conflicts at a global level far exceeds the documented figure, this platform provides two main pieces of information: first, it shows that Mexico and Latin America are in a situation of pronounced environmental emergency and, second, that both socio-environmental impacts and conflicts are constantly increasing.

In Mexico, from 2017 to 2018, the number of registered socio-environmental conflicts increased from 320 to 560, with an increase of 33% [29]. Regarding those territories in

a situation of environmental affectation, which does not necessarily involve conflicts or resistance by the population, 913 sites recognized by the government as contaminated are reported; of these, 756 are located in rural territories [30]. Although a good part of the mappings carried out in Mexico point to the fact that the most significant number of socio-environmental conflicts are related to water disputes [2,31]. It is increasingly evident that the effects linked to them are multifactorial and involve various types of interwoven actors, including governmental, organized crime, and private sector actors.

In the case of Jalisco, Martín [32] identified sixty-four organizations and communities in defense of territory in Jalisco (pp. 128–196). The central dispossession dynamics in these conflicts are (1) water dispossession, with seven cases; (2) dispossession in the countryside, with six cases; (3) dispossession of Indigenous peoples, with five cases; (4) mining concessions and projects, with three cases; (5) public and private infrastructure megaprojects, with seven cases; (6) energy projects, with four cases; (7) dispossession by real estate capital, with ten cases; (8) urban-industrial waste, with seven cases; (9) privatization of beaches and coasts, with nine cases; and (10) illegal capital projects with six cases [5]. However, these dynamics of dispossession and plunder are coexistent in what authors and collectives have pointed out as "territories of environmental sacrifice" that are naturally vast territories in a state of siege, dispossession, and constant spoliation from multiple fronts.

Along the Lerma-Chapala-Santiago watershed, there are around 10,000 companies, ranging from family businesses to transnational corporations [33,34] (p. 15). In the upper basin, the El Salto Industrial Corridor brings together more than 300 factory companies in the auto parts, metal-mechanical, chemical, pharmaceutical, and food and beverage sectors [34]. The housing conditions of a significant portion of the populations surrounding this corridor are precarious and represent a constant environmental and health risk, especially in terms of access to drinking water supply services, drainage maintenance, quality of the water accessed, mobility, air quality, as well as safety [34]. In addition to poor air quality due to industrial and brick-making activity in the area, the abundant presence of organic waste and heavy metals has been identified and verified in the Santiago River [34] as a consequence of the discharge of toxic and untreated waste from factories in the corridor.

Populations near this corridor and the Santiago River face a growing number of diseases due to multiple pollutant sources in the area. Among the most common are different types of cancer, kidney failure, and respiratory and skin diseases [34,35]. Official data that would undeniably confirm the correlation between morbidity and mortality in this area was finally released and published after the expiration of a confidentiality clause implemented by the State of Jalisco for ten years in January 2020. This data is part of the results of the "Methodological proposal for the implementation of a battery of health indicators that favor the establishment of diagnostic, intervention, and epidemiological surveillance programs for the populations located in the area of influence of the Arcediano Dam project in the state of Jalisco", requested by the Jalisco State Water Commission (CEA) through an inter-institutional agreement with the Autonomous University of San Luis Potosi (UASLP). Based on a battery of tests applied to 330 children between 6 and 12 years of age from El Salto, Puente Grande, Juanacatlán, La Cofradía, Colonia Jalisco II, and Jardines de la Barranca, this study found the presence of heavy metals such as arsenic, cadmium, benzene, and lead (Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí & Comisión Estatal del Agua de Jalisco, 2010) [18] (pp. 98–271). Nearly half of the children in the populations mentioned above suffer from intestinal, dermatological, and respiratory conditions [36].

An added problem for this basin's populations and various towns in Jalisco is the expansion of agribusiness. National and transnational companies have participated in processes of dispossession and plundering of peasants' lands, who have been forced to give up traditional forms of cultivation, rent, sell, or become day laborers in the face of the impossibility of competing [32]. The most notorious socio-environmental impacts are the overexploitation of the area's water, environmental contamination, damage to local flora and fauna, and affectations on the health and daily life of the surrounding communities.

Monocultures are increasingly common in these regions, with avocados, red fruits, and agave growing in multiple areas.

A recent example of human health effects caused by agrochemicals is the finding of glyphosate, a chemical distributed by Monsanto and banned in several countries, 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid, picloram, and molinate in urine samples of 53 students from the "Telesecundaria" school of the community "El Mentidero" in the municipality of Autlán de Navarro Jalisco, a site adjacent to a plot where cucumber is grown [37] (p. 3). Similar toxic agrochemicals were found in urine samples of 178 children from the José María Morelos elementary school and kindergarten in El Mentidero and in 103 preschool and elementary school children in the community of Ahuacapán, in the same municipality [37] (pp. 11–12).

Thus, socio-environmental impacts are multidimensional, as they impact the environment and dignified life in general, the landscape, community life, health, security, the economy, essential services and people's livelihoods, the composition of the population, and housing, among many others. The conjunction of these aspects means a more significant burden of care work for women and a consequent deepening of their conditions of gender inequality and socio-environmental vulnerability [17].

The political participation of women defenders in Jalisco, Mexico, and Latin America adds a layer of complexity to the situation of socio-environmental conflict in which they find themselves immersed: women who manage to mobilize for the defense of their territory are forced to rethink or limit their time to carry out daily domestic, community, and self-care activities, which aggravates their social vulnerability and those of those they care for and exposes them to multiple forms of violence, especially gender-based [16,27], concerning their political participation in socio-spatial domains traditionally led by men, such as the family, the community, or the public space.

### *1.3. Theoretical Analytical Perspective: Emotional Management and Emotions of Resistance*

The discussion will focus on the emotional management strategies and emotions of resistance that women defenders deploy in the face of dominant emotions that immobilize or demobilize them. Thus, the central concepts to articulate the discussion will be emotions, rules of feeling, emotional management, dominant emotions, and emotions of resistance.

According to Hochschild [6], emotions are bodily orientations or signals toward a real or imaginary action; they are ways of locating oneself in the world around internal or external events [6] (p. 28). Interpreting a situation according to the emotions demonstrated allows access to the subject's interpretative frameworks and behavioral patterns; these respond to the way the subject feels or interprets a reality or how they correctly perceive and feel it [6] (p. 32).

The rules of feeling are socially and culturally determined norms and patterns of emotionality. They fix an emotion's duration, direction, strength, time, and place [6,8]. They precede action and regulate how people do or do not try to feel according to what is socially established as appropriate in a particular situation. The subject incorporates the rules of feeling to comply with the official definitions of what should be felt in a series of situations. These rules become evident at the intersection between "what I feel" and "what I should feel" [6]. Thus, the rules of feeling are recognized in how subjects evaluate their emotions, as other people consider the emotional displays and the social sanctions that result from such evaluations.

When people do not feel what it is prescribed to feel, to avoid sanctions, they can try to adjust through what this author calls emotional management, which is presented in two formats: (1) superficial performance, emotional demonstration through bodily expression, or (2) deep performance: working on the emotion in such a way that it is expressed spontaneously but is self-induced [6]. The rules of feeling can be obeyed half-heartedly or disobeyed and are the terrain of political struggle. The "should feel" reveals the dominant rules of feeling in communities, groups, or families and also points out the dominant emotions and rules of feeling. From what was raised by Whittier [38] and expanded by

Gravante and Poma [39,40], based on Hochschild's proposal [6,8], we arrive at oppositional emotions, the "emotions of resistance", from emotional management strategies. Resistance emotions are emotions linked to the experience of resistance, in this case, that of territory defense [38,40]; they can usually be identified in pairs, or what Jasper [41] calls moral batteries, which, when opposing, coexisting, or overlapping, propel collective action; for example, love-hate, fear-anger, distrust-trust [4].

## 2. Participants and Methods

The qualitative research methodology was inspired by the critical and new ethnography approaches; therefore, the researcher's implication was collaborative and committed to the participating social groups. The methodological approach focused on the contextual, dialogical, and self-reflective validities and dimensions of social research [42]. This approach aims to understand their connections as complex processes instead of linear or hierarchical. This "network" perspective to understand the data production (instead of collection) and analysis enables the comprehension of the diverse data production techniques as dynamic and articulated "continuums" or "flows". This processual perspective helps to underline how the data production and analysis stages and their elements complement each other through the fieldwork phase throughout the data analysis and interpretation phase instead of perceiving them as separated information blocks or fragmented sets.

### *2.1. Study Contexts and Participants*

The fieldwork of the first research stage was conducted in several communities—in the municipalities of El Salto and Juanacatlán—in the Lerma-Chapala Basin from 2016 to January 2020 through various meetings and interviews with its members. Continuous participant observation was conducted and registered on fifteen ethnographic reports. Fourteen individual semi-structured in-depth interviews and two group interviews were conducted with members of the defenders' families and the defenders themselves. 40% of these women are 20 to 39 years old, and 60% are from 40 to 65 years old. They speak Spanish and belong to the lower middle and middle socioeconomic classes. They live in formerly rural communities in the peripheries of the central urban areas; some often refer to their communities as "towns" in contrast to "the city". Around 70% of them have children and grandchildren and are principal caregivers in their families. Half have university or technical studies; 10% of these women have postgraduate studies, regardless of age. Most of their jobs grant them relative time flexibility; they work as teachers, administrative assistants, freelancers, and in family businesses. These communities are often contested by political parties through proselytism. The interests of big industries are the main determinant in changes in the territory and geographical setting. There is also a strong presence of drug cartels that reflects the insecurity conditions in the area.

Fieldwork for the second research period was conducted from September 2017 to February 2020 with women from the state of Jalisco, particularly from the Central, South, and Highlands regions—in the municipalities of Tequila, Ciudad Guzmán, Tapalpa, Sayula, and Atoyac. During this stage, eleven ethnographic narrative reports were generated based on participant observation, and eight narrative, semi-structured, and in-depth interviews were conducted. Most of the women of this network live in small cities of the state or rural communities, where agriculture and livestock farming are the main activities. The age of 80% of this group is between 45 and 70 years, and 20% goes from 25 to 44. 80% of the interviewed women have technical or university studies. They speak Spanish and belong to the lower middle and middle socioeconomic classes. Throughout their lives, most of them have had several experiences of community involvement. All participating women in this group are mothers, grandmothers, and principal family caregivers. Most of them work in their family or personal businesses and as government social workers visiting remote rural communities. The communities of this network are affected mainly by agroindustry, among other industries. The local government is often complicit with these industries' lack of socioenvironmental care and responsibilities. On the other hand, in these

communities' political violence, especially against women, is characteristic and common. Based on the bibliographical review conducted and the exploratory approaches towards the social reality to be studied, the selection of the empirical contexts of this research was guided by three principal axes of inclusion criteria. These criteria aimed to ensure the diversity of the cases to be studied regarding the groups' antiquity, personal age, economy, environmental problems, location, and diversity of socio-cultural profiles. This, in turn, provided greater comparative richness.

1. Antiquity: This criterion made it possible to observe the relational dimension throughout time, their internal culture, memory, and the emotions and place attachment related to the group domain. This way, groups in different stages of evolution were integrated into the studied sample.
2. Geographical aspects: The geographic location of the groups or individuals defending their territories determines the type of conflict, resistance practices, and place attachments. Including groups and individuals with attachments to different territories implied observing different ways of emotional bonding with places, which also determines their resistance and political strategies.
3. Sociocultural diversity: This criterion considers the diversity of sociocultural profiles regarding class, age, gender, education, history, and community practices. This helped identify differences and similarities between the types of attachment to the place, their defense of place practices, and their motivations and meanings linked to specific cultural configurations.

According to these criteria, two groups that work as networks were selected. The first network covers several urban, suburban, and rural communities of Guadalajara's Metropolitan Area, the state of Jalisco's capital, and its surroundings, specifically around the Lerma-Chapala-Santiago basin. This group of communities has more experience in direct activism and is presently in a time of generational succession. Therefore, around 60% of its members are women aged 20 to 45, and around 40% comprise women aged 46 to 70.

The second network integrates groups belonging to communities of the South, Cienega, Lagunas, and Center regions of Jalisco; a majority are integrated by women between 40 and 60 years. Some of these collectives and the network are younger than the first described. However, in these regions, there is a great history and legacy of land defenders because agriculture, livestock, and fishing were, and in some cases, still are, their primary source of economic activities.

### *2.2. Coding and Analytical Approach*

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, marking and emphasizing the emotional reactions during the moment, and the interviewer also made time-referenced notes in this regard. The data was later compiled and organized using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas Ti 22. Based on an initial theoretical frame, preliminary categories and subcategories for the analysis were formulated to roughly orient the first stages of fieldwork, which consisted mainly of participant observation. Inspired by grounded theory, in vivo or emergent categories were integrated into the process, and fieldwork was concluded. Thus, open, axial, and selective coding was implemented, and accordingly, a coherent second version of the theoretical and analytical frame was developed. Prior to the analysis, these categories were validated by a qualitative, specialized, and multidisciplinary research advisory board, integrated by six researchers. The data coding was then conducted by groups of subcategories (codes) belonging to the several theoretical and empirical categories.

The total analysis in this research was comparative and oriented by each category and their respective sub-categories group and their interrelation. This broader analysis of the research process consists of four main dimensions: (1) interaction, bonds, and emotions inside the group; (2) rituals and group symbols; (3) experiences that determine place attachment and its disruption; and (4) emotions and meanings that determine place attachment and its defense. This article mainly focuses on the interrelation between

the first and fourth dimensions, specifically care and gender-related issues in women defenders' trajectories and experiences. Thus, the main concepts were emotions and rules of feeling and the main categories: emotional management strategies, emotions of resistance, dominant emotions, moral emotions, moral batteries, and care, each of them with their corresponding group of subcategories, as shown in the following semantic network (Figure 1).

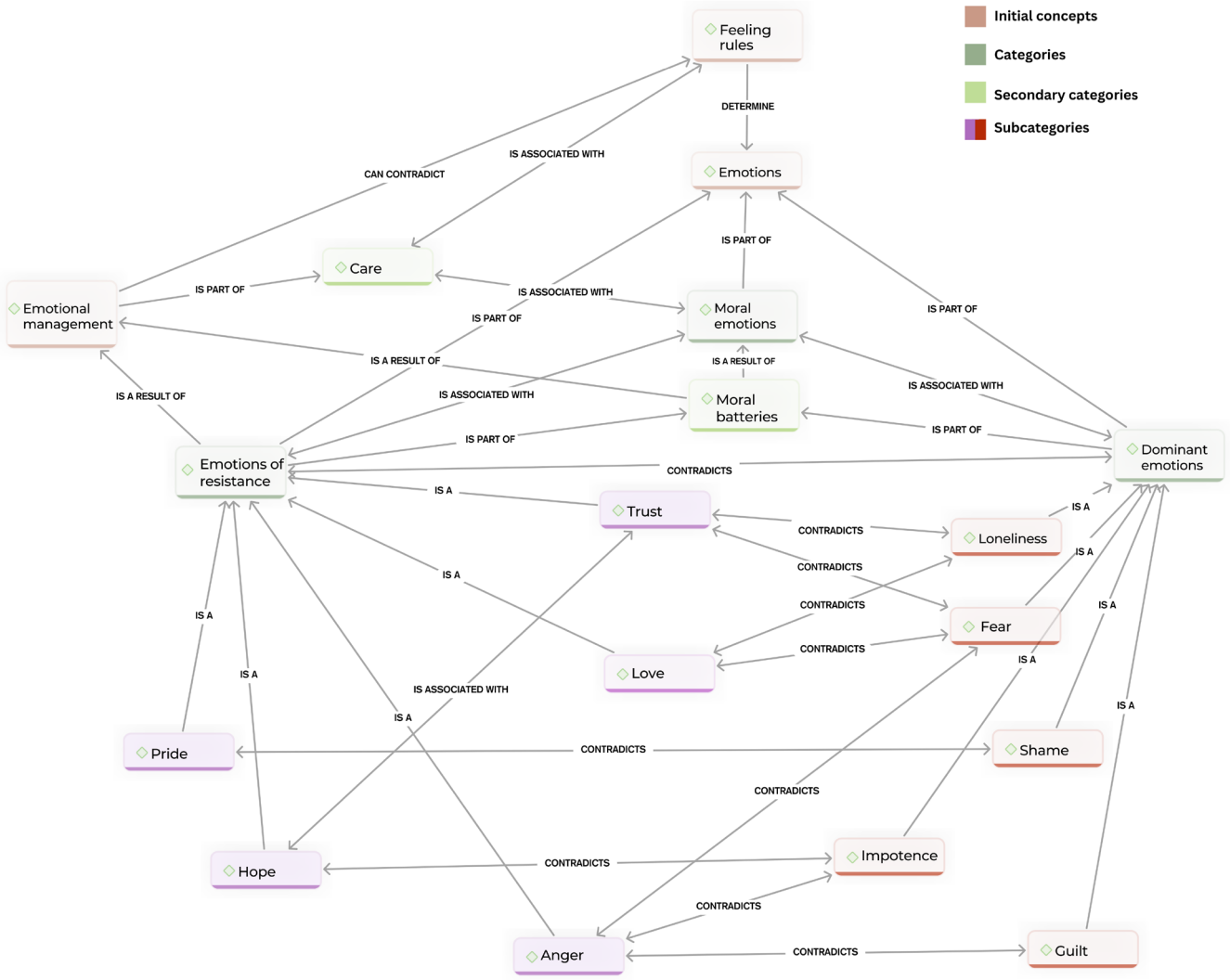


**Figure 1.** Semantic network of concepts and categories.

Nevertheless, the analysis presented here does not disregard the other analytical dimensions. This work presents a later step to comparing these women defenders' networks and their diverse groups by focusing on identifying constants in their emotional dynamics related to care and gender-determined issues. This advance will provide a starting point for former analysis and research explicitly centered on this subject.

The researchers' position implied not thinking of themselves as static or alien to the internal dynamics of the groups but rather from an active and constant critical involvement. This led to working with the groups from their academic, professional, and personal knowledge and skills, contrasting their scope of possibilities and limitations. Working with the emotional dimension in processes of struggle for the defense of the territory is a process that should not be free of self-criticism and open learning. The affective and vulnerable approach with and towards the people collaborating in these research processes has been fundamental and a long-term commitment.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Dominant and resistance emotions in women defenders in Jalisco.

This section discusses the dominant and resistant emotions related to work and caregiving tasks that women defenders have referred to in their processes. The dominant emotions described in this section are (1) fear, with its different variations and associated emotions; (2) guilt and shame; and (3) loneliness. We mention the emotions of resistance that arise in response to these dominant emotions and that are part of the emotional management strategies of women defenders to cope with the rules of feeling and doing linked to dominant emotions.

The last section corresponds to women's leadership role in the struggles for the defense of the territory and all its implications since, within their groups, they are also usually the principal caregivers.

### *3.1. Fear: A Multilayer Emotion*

Fear is the first emotion to be discussed in women's territorial defense trajectories, especially in their initial involvement stage. Fear has multiple forms and presentations; it is one of the first emotions women mention when recounting their experience of territorial defense. Fear of environmental impacts and seeing their future and that of their families diminished is identified as fear of uncertainty [4]. This fear is accompanied by the fear of illness and premature death, especially when environmental impacts involve environmental contamination. These fears combine with the grievance or feeling of collective injustice, and then anger, to give rise to women's decision to act and mobilize in the face of environmental impacts, emotions documented in other countries' research [43–45]; fears can also be in or demobilizing [44,45]. Emotions such as these and affective bonds such as love and attachment to the territory are central to the impulse of the people who decide to defend it.

In the case of female primary caregivers, the possibility of illness, especially the development of chronic diseases, or premature death in the family is especially painful, as it implies an affront to motherhood, love, to the work of care and upbringing completed so far, and the personal costs derived from it.

"If what surrounds me is damaged, then I also have; I am rotten, right? I mean, it is like, I cannot be healthy in the rottenness, and I am really scared of that" (Martha, personal communication, 30 September 2019).

The fear of the disease is concatenated with fear of different types of family suffering, and the disease also implies an additional burden of physical, economic, and emotional care for the families.

By sustaining the action for some time and by recognizing the extent of socio-environmental impacts, as well as the power of those responsible, people who organize often experience fear again, but in the form of "fear of the magnitude of what they are going to face" (Perla, Personal communication, 2021). Many women have described it as a "thousand-headed monster or a hydra" (Perla, personal communication, 2023). An emotion related to this fear is helplessness; this is presented as a state of mind [41,46] that is associated with concern about the present and future conditions of the affectations to the site and the poor reaction of the people in their communities.

"But suddenly, you begin to see that the problem is much deeper and much bigger than you thought, and it makes you very impotent. That is, not. . .not having maybe the. . .the ways, the necessary weapons to be able to confront yourself, to be able to make people understand you at the same time that this is a . . . let's say, it is a problem eh, in terms of health, in terms of emotional issues as well" (Perla, Personal communication, 13 April 2019).

Additionally, guilt as a moral emotion is experienced by women defenders concerning impotence, not having enough time and resources to dedicate to collective action and network activities, as well as being physically distant from the territory to which they feel attached and want to defend.

When faced with unexpected deaths, different mourning and shared emotions come into play, such as anger but also hope. As Flam [47] points out, anger, in this case in the form of "fed-upness", rage, and resentment towards those, directly and indirectly, responsible for the affectations, as well as towards the affectations themselves, is capable of replacing self-destructive and immobilizing feelings such as fear or guilt and mobilizing the subjects. Anger becomes an emotion of resistance [38,40] that allows the emotional management of the different types of fears, understood as dominant emotions, that the subjects face while defending the territory.

Faced with the national and international pre- and post-pandemic panorama, the women of the world, especially those in less economically privileged countries and communities, daily face a thousand-headed monster that generates frustration, impotence, and discouragement. This is exemplified in the gender-based inequalities and violence that, as women, in different ways and measures, are experienced daily and the situation of social vulnerability that is experienced when a woman becomes the primary caregiver of children, older adults with high dependency, chronic illness, or disability in the family context [19,20].

The situation of socio-environmental affectation aggravates this vulnerability but also provides a space for sharing with women and men in different situations and positions, but with whom they share a territory, affectations, feelings, and concerns. Fear, frustration, and helplessness are often associated with loneliness. In this sense, the spaces of collective expression, sharing, maintenance, and construction of affective bonds, such as trust and friendship, enable the possibility of emotionally managing loneliness and fear as dominant emotions, as González and González Villamizar [48] point out regarding women's struggles in Colombia. Communication with the community is fundamental to coping positively with anxiety, frustration, and sadness about environmental degradation in children and adolescents, and it could be the same for adults [45]. In conflictive or unexpected personal or family situations, such as the illness or death of a family member, the collaborating groups form increasingly closer and more personal bonds of affection with some people of their companions' families. As Nightingale [49] highlighted, affective relations, common practices, and performances nurture and develop political communities, cultivating new relations and subjectivities.

Fear of illness and death are mobilizing emotions that, when managed through love for family and friends, give rise to alternative ways of doing politics and caring for and defending the territory. The experience of several members coincides in that acting directly on the territory makes it possible to manage paralyzing emotions such as fear, pain, and impotence in the face of the overwhelming problems they face and their magnitude. Carrying out localized actions that have a direct impact on the place is an emotional work strategy that (1) allows them not to be overwhelmed, frightened, and paralyzed by the immensity, complexity, and lack of control over the problems and (2) leads to the reconstruction of links with places and people that result in the reconstruction and maintenance of attachment to the place [4].

In order to carry out this emotional management, other types of actions and practices of women are identified that operate at the identity, family, and community levels. Women who decide to defend their territory practice this defense in multiple socio-spatial domains [3,4,7], but the first space that is appropriated and inhabited is the body, a body culturally domesticated and educated not to occupy too much physical or sound space, which finds it difficult to ask for and receive attention and care from others and oneself. Social and internalized judgments and sanctions against women who make themselves seen, heard, and exist in family, community, and public spaces often stimulate moral emotions such as guilt and shame, which I will address below.

### *3.2. Guilt and Shame to Preserve Care Systems*

Many of the women defenders who collaborated in this research have worked on overcoming fear as a first significant obstacle and, with it, the shame of public judgment,

of speaking out, and of existing or being visible in public and private spaces. This is related to rules of doing and feeling linked to moral emotions such as shame and fear of discrediting or social humiliation. According to what the collaborating women defenders in both investigations have shared, these rules dictate that a woman who communicates her point of view and emotion in a public or community space beyond socially accepted family and community work—for example, traditional religious or community activities, sale of products, and family and community care—should be socially sanctioned. In the discussion spaces among women defenders, it is shared that they have received similar social judgments and accusations: "old gossiping woman", "crazy", "unhappy", and "quarrelsome". Thus, the rules of community sentiment dictate that one should feel ashamed upon receiving the social gaze and, with it, a possible social judgment:

From here in the neighborhood, they are still very apathetic; they say, "Oh, these old women are crazy; what are they going to achieve? And now that our land is flooded, they say, "Oh look, just now their land is flooded". Because the other day I went, and a lady said to me, "That's where you were going to plant?" And I said, "I'm going to plant", and then she said, "How, it's really bad. I don't think they're going to get anything out of there", and I said, "You'll see, you'll come and see". Hey, and then they say, "I hope so", that is, they still challenge us (Ana, personal communication, 17 October 2014).

Emotional management of this type of situation implies, at the same time, a recognition and distancing from various gender mandates and their role as caregivers, as well as an identity separation from those who receive their care and from the family in general. Socially, she who brings shame to herself also brings shame to the family. For some, this task has been easier than for others due to their life trajectory and personality. However, all the collaborators in this research share that being seen and existing through the use of voice and space has brought conflict and tensions, which often work to the detriment of self-concept and self-esteem.

When in collectivity—groups and collectives—listening to the voices of all is of common interest, then women begin to nurture affective bonds with themselves; such is the case of self-confidence and self-esteem. This makes it possible to gain momentum to open these same spaces of expression in their homes and families, a socio-spatial domain where criticism emerges and hurts. Many of the women defenders who collaborated in this research, and who are mothers, have faced criticism within their families or community spaces regarding their work as mothers and grandmothers and how this can be affected by their involvement in the defense of the territory. Female family members, especially daughters, mothers, or sisters, help to make up for absences so that the members of the groups can continue their participation.

Based on her role in relation to the family, we are fine outside the group that she has. In the group that she has, everyone is all over me because when she has to go out, I am the one who goes: "and go, and I take you and go and don't worry, I take care of the house and my dad and everything", and they tell me that I am the procurer (Alexa, personal communication, 17 October 2014).

These criticisms within families and communities are aimed at producing moral emotions such as guilt about the reduction of time dedicated to caregiving and the physical and mental absence of women caregivers from their homes. Additionally, they seek to generate guilt around the investment of material or economic resources in their activities and advocacy groups and the possible exposure of their own person to violence in the public space and from opposing actors.

One of the reasons for this reaction of incomprehension and moral judgment that stimulates guilt and, at times, shame has to do with an established sociocultural mechanism, which is activated when the survival of the family and its stability are threatened; that is, when the caregiver focuses on caring for and attending to something other than the family and domestic dimension. This includes the actions or decisions she takes to care for herself. Although, in many cases, there is some level of community support, guilt, and shame are also provoked by people in the community.

These reactions respond to three coexisting factors: (1) the protection of the status quo of community life, or at least its cultural, ideological, and economic bases; (2) emotional and identity-based distancing from taking action or responsibility for the socio-environmental impacts faced by women defenders [4,50]; and (3) actions of co-optation, infiltration, and community division by opposing actors with direct interests in what is being disputed, congruently with other research's findings about gender and ecological activism [13,17].

Thus, in making one's voice heard and becoming visible in the family, community, and public space in general, women have had to defend themselves from their own family and community and distance or isolate their political involvement from socially established gender roles. The latter generates overload, fatigue, and frustration. In many cases, there is internal resistance to stopping, pausing, delegating, or asking for help to carry out family care activities when, at the same time, they have responsibilities and activities corresponding to their process of defending their territory. This separation of spheres is problematic regarding the family's understanding and willingness to support. However, there are also women whose entire families, including their partners, mothers, and fathers, are part of the groups, which brings its own difficulties.

Guilt is presented as a recurrent emotion that is difficult to manage because, although they were not politically involved, it is an emotion that is experienced and stimulated on a daily basis when one is a woman and, especially, when one assumes most of the burden of care in the family. As research in other contexts highlights, this emotion is associated with rules of doing and feeling about care that go hand in hand with gender mandates [14]. Batthyány [51] points out that caregiving tasks have been socially constructed as "natural" functions of women and have enormous value for the economy. It is expected that social systems, capitalist, extractivist, and patriarchal, have deeply embedded mechanisms to maintain this balance and react when it is threatened or challenged [52]. Guilt, as a moral emotion, meshes with loneliness in the face of the feeling of incomprehension that women frequently experience in the face of rejection and social sanction in the family and community, which I will address below.

### *3.3. Loneliness, Friendship, and Motherhood*

Coming to defend themselves from family and community involves a long road in which women defenders have recognized and pooled a sense of injustice, which becomes collective. Empathizing through communication is vital in terms of the emotional management of moral emotions; this means sharing with others who have similar experiences and feelings and recognizing the injustice and inequality that is experienced distinctively—being women—but also the recognition of one's rights to expression, organization, free transit, individuality, and autonomy—beyond being the mother of, the daughter of-, the wife of- and the encounter with other people:

I feel that if I stay here in the house, as I was before, my life could go back to the same, and I don't want to be the same, I want to be different, that is, to be free more than anything else and that they respect my decisions that I want to make because that is what is important to me. That if I tell them, "I want to do this" they don't tell me "you can't do this" (Ana, personal communication, 17 October 2014).

In these spaces, collective narratives and arguments are woven around the care work they perform on a daily basis and how the defense of the territory, based on their multiple activities, also implies objectives and care work directly linked to the family and the communities. A practical example of this is the demand or negotiation by women for space in the home for the implementation of domestic eco-technologies or family gardens in some of the cases analyzed, which women have used as an example to argue to their husbands, sons, and daughters that they benefit directly from these actions that are part of their political participation. In other cases, the women argue that the members of the collectives welcome the families with open arms, are attentive, and support them in case of any difficulty, especially concerning illness.

Sharing among defenders stimulates other collective emotions, such as sadness, anger, and hope. The latter two can be brought into play as emotions of resistance and affective bonds such as trust and friendship are generated through sharing. These dialogues do not necessarily take place in the temporary and physical "official" spaces of the collectives, especially when they are mixed, but in moments of coexistence: breaks, walks or excursions, meals, celebrations, or spaces specially dedicated to caring for the emotional health of the group and its members.

Regarding the affective bonds that develop among women defenders in these contexts, two forms of love stand out that go against the forms of love legitimized by the community, mainly linked to their social role as wives and mothers: self-love and love among friends: "with love, we can heal the land, on the land we are working (. . .) the important thing is to love each other, it is not only to love the husband, it is a different love" (Ana, personal communication, 7 October 2014). These are emotions of resilience, as they help to overcome the feeling of incomprehension and fear of loneliness often associated with family and community. Affective bonds such as friendship and the time dedicated to nurturing them, physical and emotional demonstrations of affection, and spaces for collective expression and listening stimulate self-love as an emotion of resistance.

Working on self-esteem makes it possible to overcome fear, guilt, shame, and loneliness; it also impacts women's perception of self-care in terms of interdependence—if I am not well, I will not be able to support everything and everyone who depends on me—through attention to health, bodily and emotional needs, and personal image. Although this is not necessarily a permanent attitude, several advocates have mentioned that these are emergent moments when they face oversaturation.

In groups composed of women, moments of "collective embrace" or "nonconformities and hugs" are usually dedicated to maintaining individual and group emotional health; in these, a greater number of experiences related to leadership disputes have been observed [5]. When dealing with mixed collectives, the self-care dimension tends to be relegated; personal needs and their expression are encapsulated in favor of sustaining collective processes.

The groups reproduce certain organizational forms as well as gender roles through which many women defenders "mother" their own collectives:

It is something I had to learn to assume because I could not handle it, I did not know how to face it, and. . . I had to learn. I don't stop; a lot of things still happen to me. I still remember your comment that day at the meeting for the concert, do you remember? And you said to me, "Like a mom. You behaved like a mom". It stuck with me. So, after that day and that comment, simple or simple, I took two or three steps back. I said, "no, let it flow, if it flows well, that's good, and if not, that's good" (Martha, personal communication, 30 September 2019).

One of the hidden implications of this role is, on the one hand, the main responsibility for important processes and decisions in the groups and the tensions or conflicts that may arise as a result. On the other hand, there is the responsibility of sustaining the physical and emotional care of the members. Although women's leadership has been recognized and celebrated, the subjective implications in their intimate lives are not addressed; there are multiple costs that are rarely discussed.

The overload of activities, especially caregiving, is a widespread situation among women defenders, and this places them in a position of greater social, economic, physical, and mental health vulnerability. The overload not only generates fatigue but also tensions and stress in addition to that already experienced in the face of unfavorable and violent responses from the family and the community to their political involvement, as well as the permanent threat and recurrent harassment from opposing actors who see their interests being violated. Women defenders tend to attend to the emotional dimension of care in their groups, as they are also concerned about the comfort of the other members and ensuring they feel good, content, listened to, and loved.

While this has been perceived as a positive feature [5], when family and grouping are combined, the boundaries between the two spheres become blurred; for many women de-

fenders, their advocacy has become both a life and family project. This becomes problematic when family roles are mirrored in collectives.

In many cases, maternal figures in the participant's organizations generate affective commitments such as respect, rootedness, and loyalty to the group. However, it can also generate conflict within the group. This "mothering" affects the types of attachment to the group, which are differentiated among its members; just as there are those who receive the performance of this role positively, there are also those who disagree with some aspects of it, generating internal tensions. This occurs especially when there are several generations of women in the collectives. There are dimensions of this type of motherhood that manifest themselves as infinite dedication to the point that one's own needs and emotions tend to blur. There are also cases in which they actively work on a resignification of their roles in order to take care of themselves and others and begin to build relationships of greater parity.

Despite the obstacles, women defenders have decided to move forward through various emotional management mechanisms involving emotions of resistance, such as pride, self-confidence, self-esteem, and anger. Anger is one of the most powerful emotions but one of the most punished for women [47] since the rules of Westernized gender systems, especially in the Mexican context, dictate that women should not get angry. There are many arguments, but examples are "exaggerated", "argumentative", and "crazy".

"When the social detractors come, paid by the State, for any reason. That's when. . .I have suffered the most. With those kinds of detractors, I have had to. . . I am very violent. And I have had to hit people" (she laughs) (Martha, Personal communication, 30 September 2019).

When women defenders combine rage with pride towards their gender condition: being a mother, being a woman, being a young woman, being an indigenous woman, being an older woman, this becomes an emotional management tool that, accompanied by various arguments, provokes, especially in men, shame; thus, the perfect tonic in these cases has been to combat moral emotions by provoking moral emotions in return.

## 4. Conclusions

In this text, we pointed out some of the main dominant emotions in women's struggles to defend territory and daily life. Dominant emotions such as fear, powerlessness, guilt, shame, and loneliness are experienced in relation to the family home, community, and their groups. In the face of these emotions, from collectivity and sharing, women generate emotional management strategies to cope with these dominant emotions and the associated rules of feeling. The emotions of resistance that emerge in these processes are love among friends, pride, self-love, self-confidence, hope, and rage or anger. In this way, it is possible to appreciate the coexistence of ranges of emotions that could be considered "opposites" due to bodily sensations and pleasant and unpleasant thoughts that they provoke, referring to the same place. These "moral batteries" [41] propel collective action, and some emotions can become emotions of resistance from the emotional management performed by the defenders. These emotions can coexist but also overlap; in the latter case, when one becomes more present or more dominant over the other, from emotional management [8], it becomes an emotion of resistance.

The exploration of these emotions implies a recognition of women's struggle from their most intimate sphere, a micropolitical one. It also means recognizing the different strategies propelled by social institutions in Jalisco and Mexico, such as family, church, and the state; the latter's interests are often woven with private corporations and drug cartels, especially at a local level, making their context even more complex. Producing these emotional management strategies also demands identifying, questioning, defying, or "moving around" dominant discourses, feelings, and acting rules. Therefore, the experience of defending their territory is a completely embodied experience that also deserves to be observed from each subjectivity and bodily experience [5,7,53], a remaining task to be explored. This way, the defense of their territory is a struggle that weaves other places domains with each other, from micro to macro dimensions, which is the complexity of this

type of analysis. This way, the women defenders' struggles imply profoundly personal and political processes that question and, in some cases, are able to gradually transform the power relations in the core of community and family organization. Intersectional and contrast analysis of each collective is one of the limitations of this research and opportunities for future works. Most of the socio-cultural and economic backgrounds of the women who participated in these studies are similar. Thus, the moral issues faced within their families and communities are common. For example, several of these women have been publicly sanctioned and even excommunicated by local priests because of their social and political involvement in land defense. Nevertheless, important contrasts were noticed regarding one group of women of a peripherical area in the municipality of El Salto, Jalisco, who face more economic and educational difficulties and a lack of access to basic living means such as clean water, trash collection, and functional sewage systems.

For this group of women, maintaining individual and collective commitment was specifically difficult because of several reasons: (1) it was an only women group; (2) they experienced more pronounced sociocultural and environmental vulnerabilities in contrast with the other groups that were part of this research; and (3) they live in a politically contested area for proselytism by political parties and a drug cartel recruitment and operations site. Another interesting aspect observed from an intersectional perspective in this collective and most others is that women who are not primary care providers have fewer obstacles to their involvement in land defense collectives. Older women, especially widowed or divorced, are an example, as they regard themselves as more independent and less obliged with domestic and family care activities. On the other hand, women in more privileged socioeconomic positions who defend their territory through other approaches and political stances must also be considered in further research and analysis. Therefore, one of the difficulties and limitations of this work, and one to address in the future, consists of the possibility of contrasting the different cases approached from an intersectional analysis. Consequently, a crucial ethical challenge in this task is being able to specify while protecting sensible data and avoiding the identification of the participants and their collectives.

As mentioned before, the defense of land and territory is a profound embodied experience marked by gender; as Ahmed [54] points out, certain bodies are socially expected and demanded to feel, express emotions, and act in specific ways. Weaving bodies, emotions, and actions in analyzing these struggles, especially for women who defend their territories, unveils a set of emotional management strategies. Some of them have been carried out historically. To ensure their survival as women and principal caregivers of life, they have produced and inherited a set of strategies that configure a growing "politics of the ordinary", capable of maintaining and vindicating ancient knowledge and resistance practices, critically sowing and feeding territorial attachment, memory, and identity in their families and communities. Through emotional management strategies, these politics of the ordinary imply subverting dominant emotions, feeling, and acting rules and gradually questioning and reinventing their roles and human and non-human relations in their most immediate contexts. Processes that are not exempted from conflict, pain, violence, and grief, as it implies going countercurrent to deeply rooted social orders and the institutions appointed to maintain them.

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