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No Barriers: Corrientes Women in a Conservative Society

Pérez Gamón Carolina Margarita

Universidad Nacional Del Nordeste, Facultad de Humanidades, Argentina

Corresponding Author: Pérez Gamón Carolina Margarita

Abstract

The history of Corrientes is nourished by women, so they were together with those who led the province, and our history rescues them at different times. With this work we propose to recreate the state of the question regarding the history of women, one of the currents for the study of history and to publicize their actions and their works. As well as the current situation in the provincial territory. We are aware that in the 21st century it is no longer possible to write stories that do not include women as agents of

historical change. The topic addressed was presented as a challenge, practically unexplored to what is currently discussed at the theoretical and methodological level among those who work on the history of women with a gender perspective, hence its relevance. The analysis and treatment given to the information has been strictly qualitative. Conclusion we understand gender theory in its close relationship with power and subordination; likewise, women in the provincial territory left their mark.

Keywords: Women, Society, Conservative, Power, Gender

Introduction

"...We were strong and willful, and we did not hesitate to overcome prejudices and conventions to unite for joint action. We tried to find explanations for the curtailment that society made of our desire to "have light wings / fly under the sky." We wanted to change those conditions. We sought to rethink relations between the sexes because, simply, we were not satisfied with being second-class citizens. We aspired to elevate our situation, to be respected. We wanted women to be people open to the entire human horizon..."

Calvera Leonor (1990)¹

Because No Barriers. Corrientes women in a conservative society, it was not an easy task to find some words that symbolized the content of this publication, the images were clear and it was necessary to find a title that represented them. Today, research on the role of women in the family has a strong vitality, perhaps because they are very close to researchers and readers. Historians consider that power and social inequality are fundamental factors in history, so that dominant relationships play a very important role in people's daily lives. Societies characterized by conflict recognize in the family a project that represents power based on strategies, customs and imposed conjugal behaviors and, above all, the roles of women as wife and mother. The objective of this work was oriented towards the identification, description and analysis of the features that rescue women at different times, including Guaraní mestizos, such as Rosa Guarú, the nurse of the Great Captain, or Melchora Caburú, the consort of Andresito Guaçurary to make known his actions and his works as well as his influence in the construction of Corrientes society. The topic addressed was presented as a challenge, practically unexplored, to what is currently being discussed at the theoretical and methodological level among those who work on the history of women with a gender perspective, hence its relevance. Gender theory is understood in its close link with power, domination and subordination. The analysis and treatment given to the information has been strictly qualitative. Regarding the historiography of the region, we include: Chico de Arce Eloísa (1996), which includes topics on Women from Corrientes in Recent History, as well as Kofman de Schvets Margarita (2006) addresses topics such as Sexuality in the Conquest in the provincial territory. In addition, González Nelly Estela, García Analía Silvia (2009) investigate Women and dissent in the construction of Corrientes society.

¹ Calvera Leonor *Mujeres y Feminismo en la Argentina* Grupo Editor Latinoamericano Buenos Aires Argentina 1990. p. 6.

For her part, the historian Quiñones María Gabriela (2007) describes the social and cultural life of Corrientes in a period of transformations 1880-1930 the social profile of the aristocracy and female subordination in the province of Corrientes².

From the History of Women to the History of Gender

Women's history has specific and general aspects of historical scholarship, it is impossible to write a history in the 21st century that does not mention women as agents of historical change and objects of political consideration.

In the work of Kofman de Schvetz Margarita we can see that the leading role of women in history is a fact, some with aristocratic roots and others with humble conditions that have left a legacy of courage and historical commitment. In 1536, about 20 women arrived at the Río de la Plata aboard one of the ships of Adelantado Pedro de Mendoza. Isabel de Guevara is considered as the first correspondent from the Río de la Plata for reporting on the situation that women and men are suffering, highlighting the courage of the women who accompanied the conquerors; by means of a letter that he sent from Asunción to Queen Juana in 1556. In it he said "... the accompaniment of women in the first urban settlement on the western margin was characterized by companionship and unconditional support for the fainting, malnourished sailors..." (...) "...Isabel Guevara recounts that those who were breastfeeding made their children share with the weaker men the little milk that arose from their meager breasts. In a section of his correspondence he says: The men came with such weakness that all the work was loaded on the poor women as well as washing their clothes as well as curing them, making them eat what little they had, cleaning them, making sentinels, hanging around the fires, arming the crossbows, when ever the Indians came to fight them, would go out to give arms through the field, sometimes sergeant and putting the soldiers in order; because at that time, as women we subsisted with little food, we had not fallen into the same weaknesses as men..."³.

Kofman de Schvetz also refers to the Hispano-Guaranic miscegenation and its influence on the history of the first populations. The alliance was based on the friendship between the noble men and the caciques to whom it seemed good that their daughters lived in cohabitation with a conqueror, thus obtaining his protection. Domingo Martínez de Irala, the Lieutenant Governor set an example by uniting with several Indian women. All daughters of the Caciques with whom he parleyed for domain issues and peaceful coexistence arrangements. Irala recognized them as servants.

² Chico De Arce Eloísa Mujeres Correntinas en la Historia Reciente. Instituto Historico del Poder Legislativo, Corrientes Argentina.1996. KOFMAN de SCHVETZ Margarita *Sexualidad en la Conquista*. Anal N° 8 de la Junta de Historia de la Provincia de Corrientes, Moglia ediciones Corrientes, 2006. GONZALEZ, Nelly Estela. GARCIA, Analía Silvia *Las mujeres y el disenso en la construcción de la sociedad correntina*, 2009. Disponible: <http://sedici.unlp.edu.ar/handle/10915/41083> y QUIÑONES María Gabriela. *Elite, ciudad y sociabilidad en Corrientes.1880-1930*, Corrientes Moglia Ediciones, 2007.

³ KOFMAN de SCHVETZ Margarita *Sexualidad en la Conquista*. 2006, Cit. p.218.

María, daughter of a principal Indian, Juana, Agueda, Leonor, Escolástica, Marina and Beatriz, the name of her seven Indian women appears in her destiny. With the Indian Leonor Mokirasé Irala he had Doña Ursula who, applying the nuptials policy, married the nobleman Alonso Riquelme de Guzmán. From this marriage was born the author of Argentina, Ruiz Díaz de Guzmán. In turn, distinguished Argentine and Paraguayan families come from this branch, such as Leonor Acevedo Borges, mother of the writer Jorge Luis Borges, and Mrs. Juma Carrillo de López, progenitor of Mariscal Francisco Solano López of Paraguay. The Adelantada Mencía Calderón de Sanabria arrived in Asunción in 1550 with fifty consecrated women to unite with the Spanish and her two daughters to marry Native Americans, giving rise to a Creole lineage from which Hernando Arias de Saavedra, the Bishop of Trejo y Sanabria, and the Jesuit from Asuncéño Roque González de Santa Cruz, exponents of Hispanic-American miscegenation in the Río de la Plata "... the marriages and minors of indigenous women with soldiers and leaders of the conquest represented a guarantee of continuity of the family patrimony..."⁴.

Basting from the Coast

Through the author Chico de Arce Eloísa (1996), we remember women during the conquest, such as Inés Arias de Mansilla, wife of Lieutenant Governor Manuel Cabral de Melo y Alpoin; Paula Camelo de Berón de Astrada, mother of the hero; Francisca Gasca de Alsina, grandmother of governors. Going through this timeline in the early years of the Revolution and in the course of civil strife. Doña Isabel Esquivel de Méndez "The Governor" in 1814; Dolores Vedoya de Molina, one of the patricians; Sonorosa Rolón y Rubio is thus remembered as the "Lady of Good", while Doña María de los Ángeles de Acosta y Soto de Madariaga was the old woman who accompanied the forced exile of her family in 1843.

In the 20th century in the provincial territory a group of women collaborated with the construction of the Church of Jesús of Nazareno, the Basilica of Itati and with the Little Cotelongo, they were: Adelaida Vedoya de Ballesteros Luisa Leiva de Llanos Dominga Vallejos Juana Paula and Feliciano Vallejos⁵. During the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, a group of ladies arose in our midst who dedicated themselves to providing our city with charitable works that had become necessary for the growing

⁴ Kofman de Schvetz Margarita *Sexualidad en la Conquista*. 2006. Cit. p.219-220. Irala recognizes her Indian women as servants "...María, daughter of a principal Indian, Juana, Agueda, Leonor, Escolástica, Marina and Beatriz, the names of her seven Indian women appear in her testimony as well as her numerous offspring speak of their multiple concubinage With the Indian Leonor Mokirasé Irala he had Doña Úrsula whom, applying the marriage policy, he married the nobleman Alonso Riquelme de Guzmán. From this marriage was born the author of Argentina, Ruiz Díaz de Guzmán. In turn, distinguished Argentine and Paraguayan families come from this branch, such as Leonor Acevedo Borges, mother of the writer Jorge Luis Borges, and Mrs. Juma Carrillo de López, progenitor of Mariscal Francisco Solano López of Paraguay..."

⁵ Chico De Arce Eloísa. *Mujeres Correntinas en la historia reciente*.1996. Cit. pp.5-15.

population of the city. Several ladies belonging to the main and educated class, moved by charity and anxious to alleviate the pain of others, sought to promote popular welfare through the creation of institutions dedicated to this end.

We mention Mrs. Juana Francisca Cabral⁶, who acquired a piece of land located between Bolívar, Córdoba and Belgrano streets, in the city of Corrientes and assigned it to build the Women's Hospital, on December 5, 1879, she signed the pertinent agreement with the Municipality, The construction was completed at the end of 1882, entirely paid for by her, and the new hospital was inaugurated on April 6, 1884, with Miss Cabral and the then Vice-Governor, Mr. Joaquín Vedoya, acting as godparents. The new health house received the name of Santa Rita at the request of a benefactor who maintained the hospital until 1892 and also managed the coming to the city of the Sisters of Mercy, who took over on February 20, 1892. The Municipality of Corrientes in a note sent to Señorita Cabral said *"In communicating, then, this resolution of the Intendancy, I must at the same time signify to you, on behalf of that, the satisfaction that the clauses stipulated in 1879 are finally fulfilled, after thirteen years of indecision and even indifference, originating from lack of intelligence that I have deplored and tried to remedy, the highly humanitarian purposes that encouraged you and decided you to carry out with your private pocket, the foundation of the Hospital of Women, an honorable title that makes her deserving of public gratitude and especially of the sick protected by their misfortune in that asylum that charity assures the helpless"*⁷.

Marta Elgul from Paris⁸ narrates the actions of women together with men in the difficult period of the War of the

Triple Alliance, emphasizing the participation of Paraguayan and Corrientes women in this theme of war⁹. *"History tells that there were five women who left for Paraguay as prisoners in the middle of the War of the Triple Alliance, between 1864 and 1870. Only four returned to the Corrientes coast. Jacoba Plaza de Cabral, Victoria Bart de Cevallos, Encarnación Atienza de Osuna and Carmen Ferré de Alsina returned to Corrientes on September 5, 1869. Only Toribia de los Santos de Sosa, wife of Colonel Desiderio Sosa, did not return"*¹⁰.

Social Activities Women and Men

In her work, the historian Quiñonez Gabriela (2007) exposes us the charitable activities carried out by women, being the first institution of this kind in the city of Corrientes *"...by official initiative in 1858 to take care of the assistance of the poor and women's education. Disappeared after the Triple Alliance war, an attempt was made to establish it again on the same bases, but it was not until the 1880s that the elite ladies, gathered around the midwives, gave life to associations for the maintenance of asylums. In 1884 the Asilo de Huérfanos society was established, at the initiative of Adela Billinghamurst de Avalos, and the Asilo de Mendigos society, by the work of Josefa Derqui de Díaz Colodrero in 1886. Both institutions were consolidated from the end of the 19th century and were recognized for the work they carried out, for the prestige of those who supported them and for the social justification of the goals pursued. They had their own buildings and sources of resources for their maintenance, through donations or benefits and national and provincial subsidies granted by the public authorities. The Orphans Asylum had its own building since 1894, located in the area near Paseo Mitre, close to the riverbank. Its president was midwife Adela Billinghamurst de Avalos, and its main partners included ladies such as Leonor Pujol, María Zamora de Caussat, Celestina C. de Capará, Dominga D. de Montero, Carmen Beristayn de Rojas, Delfina B. de Caussat, Mercedes Marchi de Höchner..."*¹¹.

In addition to that, Quiñonez comments that the social activities of women and men were different. Men made their social lives making their own decisions and women had to ask for their husband's authorization to do some activity or do it with them. Until the 1960s, specifically female activities were charitable activities, such as raising funds for nursing homes, which were closely linked to religion. With the beginning of the carnivals, in 1961, the young women began to have more freedom for many things and they felt independent to do things that their mothers could not do

⁶ This worthy lady was born on August 21, 1818, in the home formed by Mr. Pedro Dionisio Cabral, a landowner who was Governor of the Province, and Mrs. Leocadia Latorre y Rolón, both from patrician families from Corrientes. Educated from her early years in the Christian faith of her elders, Mrs. Juana Francisca Cabral was a fervent devotee and a woman yearning to do good, without ceasing to cultivate her intellect, being a cultured and enlightened lady, who stood out for their garments in the cultured nucleus of the Corrientes of the last century Scaramellini Guerrero Francisco J. Doña Juana Francisca Cabral. disponible:

<http://argentinagrandeza.blogspot.com.ar/2011/11/dona-juana-franciscacabral>

⁷ SCARAMELLINI GUERRERO Francisco J. Doña Juana Francisca Cabral. Cit.pp.1-3

⁸ Some biographical data Marta Elgul de París was born in Lavalle (Province of Corrientes) on September 21, 1921. Former teacher of the Chair of Spanish and Spanish and Latin American Literature in secondary schools in the city of Goya (Corrientes). She founded the branch of the Argentine Society of Writers in Goya in 1975, whose presidency she held for several years. She has lived in Buenos Aires since 1981. She was a member of the C.D. of the Argentine Society of Writers (SADE) during the period 1982-1984. In 1985 she founded the CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS LATINOAMERICANOS DE CORRIENTES (CELACO) in Buenos Aires, disponible:

<http://biografiadelosautores.blogspot.com/2011/05/marta-de-paris.html>

⁹ DE PARIS Marta Elgul *Amantes, Cautiva y Guerreras* ensayo, Editorial Almagesto, Buenos Aires, 1996 Colección La mujer en la literatura hispánica del Instituto Literario y Cultural Hispánico, California. Segunda Edición: Editorial El Francotirador, Buenos Aires, 1998.Tercera edición: Impreco Gráfica, 2005.

¹⁰ LA REPUBLICA. Las Cautivas y su tiempo, a 150 años de su retorno 11 de septiembre del 2019

disponible: <https://diariolarepublica.com.ar/notix/noticia/16125/las-cautivas-y-su-tiempo--a-150-aos-de-su-retorno-.html>

¹¹ QUIÑONES María Gabriela. *Elite, ciudad y sociabilidad en Corrientes.1880-1930*, 2007. cit. p.220.

before. This is how activities such as the *estudiantina* arose, every September 21 in Empedrado *"Today, each woman chooses her role, although that traditional model of the woman who obeys her husband still exists. That did not cease to exist, especially in larger women. In younger, it depends on the family model in which she was raised"*¹².



Imagen¹³

In this order of things, among the actions carried out by Da. Carmen Molina, throughout her life, is the foundation of the "Brotherhood of Carmen" to help the poor, cared for by herself with the collaboration of her family. The foundation of the Escuela Taller Exposición "Carmen M. De Llano" would take place as a result of the approval of the law of September 6, 1949, and Governor J. Filomeno Velazco ordered that it be located in the building at 669 Rioja Street. Carlos Pellegrini corner, there is a school which will bear the name of Carmen Molina de Llano¹⁴.

Women Today

According to Alías Lahittette, M. E. (2006), social representation has traditionally fostered stereotypes about women and their role in society. Through these and naturalization mechanisms, certain characteristics of women that are considered fixed actually derive from the social roles historically assigned to them, influencing their ways of being and doing. She thus appears concerned for the well-

being of her surroundings and devoted to her, while the males are represented as dominant¹⁵.

Argentina is dedicated to fighting against all forms of discrimination against women, along with promoting their political and economic independence as well as encouraging their participation in decision-making places on equal terms with men *"...The Inter-American Convention for Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), are among the main international agreements on women's human rights that the Argentine State has ratified. Female (Belem do Pará Convention). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterates its commitment to transmit to various international forums the improvements in equality problems, as well as the policies that Argentina implements in the search for the protection and defense of the human rights of women and girls throughout its diversity. Along these lines, and with the commitment to continue adding efforts to make effective the defense and promotion of the rights of Argentine women, different measures have been implemented with the purpose of building substantive gender equality: the Directorate for Women and Gender Affairs, under the leadership of a career diplomat; women were elected in different areas of the Foreign Ministry and offices abroad; the denomination of the officials of the Foreign Service of the Nation according to their gender was authorized; Bearing in mind that every decision taken in foreign policy has a gender perspective, in accordance with the Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995..."*¹⁶.

Meanwhile, in the province of Corrientes - The Chamber of Deputies unanimously approved in 2022 the gender parity law in the legislative field, adding Corrientes to the 22 provinces that already have it. Only Tucumán and Tierra del Fuego were left out, which continue to discuss adapting their electoral systems to the national laws approved by Congress in November 2017. *"Through Decree No. 2444/22, I promulgated Law No. 6612, on Gender Parity. Thus, we guarantee equality between women and men in all elective legislative positions provided for in the Constitution of the Province and in the representative sphere of political parties"*¹⁷.

Other official documents give an account of the actions carried out in the provincial territory: Law 5903 Adhesion of the province of Corrientes to National Law No. 26485 of

¹² Republica De Corrientes. Historiadora escudriña la vida de la mujer correntina en los años 30

3 de marzo de 2021, disponible:

<https://www.republicadecorrientes.com/8393-historiadora-escudrina-la-vida-de-la-mujer-correntina-en-los-anos-30>

¹³ QUIÑONES María Gabriela *Elite, ciudad y sociabilidad en Corrientes.1880-1930*. 2007. Cit p. 223.

¹⁴ VALLE Nicolás Alberto, Cardozo Gonzalo R. El patrimonio aun no reconocido de los correntinos a la casa Llano. Molina. Escuela Taller Exposición "Carmen Molina de Llano" y su historia. Siglo XIX-XXpp318-333, 1 Congreso Iberoamericano de Historia Genealogía y Cultura Primera parte, Moglia ediciones, Corrientes Argentina.2022.

¹⁵ Alias Lahittette, M. E. Género y trabajo: Reflexiones acerca del lugar de la mujer en el mercado de trabajo argentino [en línea]. Trabajo final de grado. Universidad Nacional de La Plata. Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación. 2006. p.8. Disponible en: <http://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/tesis/te.511/te.511.pdf>

¹⁶ Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Comercio Internacional Y Culto Argentina disponible: <https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/es/iniciativas/mujer-y-asuntos-de-genero/igualdad-de-genero-empoderamiento-politico-y-autonomia>

¹⁷ LA NACION 31 de agosto del 2022 disponible: <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/politica/corrientes-aprobo-la-paridad-de-genero-para-cargos-legislativos-y-solo-quedan-dos-provincias-sin-ley-nid31082022/>

comprehensive protection to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women. Law 5929 Creates the labor assistance program for women victims of gender violence among others. "...convinced that the maximum participation of women, on equal terms with men, in all fields, is essential for the full and complete development of a country, the well-being of the world and the cause of peace; Bearing in mind the great contribution of women to the well-being of the family and to the development of society, hitherto not fully recognized, the social importance of motherhood and the role of parents in the family and in the upbringing of children, and aware that the role of women in procreation should not be a cause of discrimination, but that the education of children requires shared responsibility between men and women and society as a whole; recognizing that in order to achieve full equality between men and women it is necessary to modify the traditional role of both men and women in society and in the family..."¹⁸.

However, in Corrientes as in other provinces of the Argentine territory, Chubut, Formosa, Jujuy, Salta, Tucumán and San Juan, never a woman came to occupy the position of governor or vice president in political culture, women have a space in technical functions but the problem arises when they try to dispute power "... in more than half of the provinces women occupy less than 30% of the places in the cabinet. The percentage of women in the provincial cabinets is uneven and reaches its highest expression in the province of Tierra del Fuego, where it represents 67%, followed by Chaco, with 57% until reaching 0% in La Pampa..."¹⁹.

By virtue of the foregoing, in an article in the newspaper *Época*, different candidates for national and provincial legislators agreed on the advances that women have had in recent times in the political aspect, but they also referred to the lack of training on the gender perspective, making it clear that they do not seek to obtain a majority of women for the mere fact of granting a space, but that each of the people who assume office can contribute actions to prop up women, "...Corrientes will increase the rates of women in the political front line, Going from 13 municipalities with female figures in 2017 to a possible total of 17 by the end of 2021. Thus, these inequalities differ from the political color occupied by the candidates, since the two largest political forces in the province that will compete -Encuentro por Corrientes (ECO) and the Kirchnerist Frente de Todos (FDT)- at the time of the definitions, tipped the balance towards their male referents, somewhat postponing the space of women at the head of the political scene..."²⁰.

¹⁸ Derechos Humanos Legislación Provincial Vigente Corrientes. pp.14,15 y 16 disponible: <https://www.senado.gob.ar/bundles/senadomicrositios/pdf/observatorio/Corrientes.pdf>

¹⁹ Chequeando. Pepe Gabriela En 7 de las 24 provincias argentinas nunca una mujer llegó al cargo de gobernadora ni de vice. 8 de marzo del 2021, disponible: <https://chequeado.com/el-explicador/en-7-de-las-24-provincias-argentinas-nunca-una-mujer-llego-al-cargo-de-gobernadora-ni-de-vice/>

²⁰ EPOCA. Corrientes podría tener apenas 17 intendentas de 74 municipios. 14 de noviembre del 2021 disponible: <https://www.diarioepoca.com/1231962-corrientes-podria-tener- apenas-17-intendentas-de-74-municipios>

Conclusions

The main Findings allowed us to see that, coinciding with the conservative governments of the province, the social activities between women and men were differentiated at first, the role of these was one of subordination compared to men. The social role assigned to women was that of future mother in charge of transmitting values and running the home. Then a liberation process took place in the way of acting, beginning to not be subordinated to the freedom of parents or husbands, for these years the activities they carried out were charitable homes and hospitals in close relationship with the church. Collaborating in this way with Corrientes society through institutions that to this day remain a reflection of the actions carried out by women in the provincial territory. Although in some aspects the female figures were positioning themselves throughout the history of Corrientes, the truth is that both in the municipalities, and in the positions of the Executive power, women come with a reduced quota, where parity is oriented towards men still.

Equity between genders was significant in this context, since it is the basis that allows us to understand the changes that were taking place in society so that women are not discriminated against in the different spheres in which they operate, and in turn, so that men begin to assume responsibilities that they traditionally did not consider their own. Studying the problem of gender is today a possible scientific reality, the quality and number of investigations that are promoted from academic fields allow us to address gender relations or socio-cultural relations that men and women instituted over time in the province of Corrientes.

It is not that we recognize rights, but that they earn them every day, in the struggles for labor equality and gender parity, ceasing to be anonymous women. Finally, there can be no doubt that having rights must imply a guarantee and the opportunity to exercise it.

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