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**TOXIC TERRITORIES: PESTICIDES, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION, AND THE  
POLITICS OF AGROECOLOGY IN ARGENTINA'S SOY FRONTIER**

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Agroecology has long resisted against the application of chemical pesticides and herbicides in agriculture. Most scholarship depart from a strictly agronomic view, arguing that agrochemical use disrupts biological flows of ecosystems and thus leads to decreasing biodiversity. These views have been complemented by thorough medical research demonstrating that impacts on biodiversity apply not only to non-human ecological processes, but that harmful chemicals in fact penetrate human bodies and have the potential to cause permanent neural and epigenetic alterations. What is missing from these analyses is a politicized and territorial focus on agroecology, specifically focusing on the way in which pesticide use affects the capacity of communities to produce and reproduce themselves, and how it is applied as a tool of territory-making at the edge of agricultural frontiers. Based on ethnographic fieldwork at the expanding

agricultural frontier of soy in Santiago del Estero, Argentina, we argue that peasant and indigenous communities are affected by biological, economic, social and political constraints in their ability to sustain their livelihoods and that these realities affect the ways in which they understand agroecological resistance. We conclude that 1) pesticide use can result in the dispossession of communities through the undermining of their capacities of social reproduction; 2) pesticides are used as technologies in the making and re-making of territory; and 3) the territorial and organizational contingencies of pesticide use are crucial in understanding how social movements at the edge of agricultural frontiers understand and conceptualize agroecology.

Palavras-chave: pesticidas; agroecologia; território; desapossessão; social reproduction.