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(IN)JUSTICE IN RURAL WORLDS

**WATER (IN)JUSTICE AND AGRIBUSINESS EXPANSION: PESTICIDE
CONTAMINATION IN DRINKING WATER IN TUPÃ, BRAZIL (2014–2024)**

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Water contamination by pesticides has become one of the most invisible dimensions of environmental injustice in rural territories shaped by agribusiness expansion. Rather than being understood merely as a natural resource or an object of technical management, water must be analyzed as a socio-political construction embedded in power relations, regulatory frameworks, and territorial disputes. This study examines drinking water quality in the municipality of Tupã, São Paulo State, Brazil, between 2014 and 2024, a region marked by intensive monoculture production and widespread pesticide use.

The research analyzes how agricultural practices, state regulation, and water governance intersect to produce differentiated exposures to chemical risk. The empirical analysis is based on secondary data from Brazil's Drinking Water

Quality Information System (Sisagua), combined with an examination of national potability standards and their regulatory changes over time, particularly Ordinance GM/MS No. 888/2021.

The results indicate recurrent detection of pesticide active ingredients in groundwater sources used for public supply, including compounds classified as highly hazardous. Although the quantified concentrations generally remain within Brazilian legal limits, these thresholds are substantially more permissive than those adopted in the European Union, revealing regulatory asymmetries that normalize contamination. Furthermore, the absence of systematic monitoring and incomplete data reporting limit public transparency and obscure cumulative exposure risks.

The study argues that such dynamics configure a situation of water (in)justice, in which the economic benefits of agribusiness are spatially and socially concentrated, while environmental and health risks are redistributed to the urban population through drinking water. By highlighting the political production of potability standards and the governance failures surrounding pesticide regulation, the paper contributes to sociological debates on water justice, hydro-social relations, and the contradictions of rural development under extractivist models.

Palavras-chave: water justice; pesticides; agribusiness; water governance; hydro-social territories.