



# Development, subtraction and the Indigenous peoples of Paraguay

Antonio A.R. Ioris\*,

## ABSTRACT

This article deals with the very emblematic, but largely understudied, trajectory of national and local development in Paraguay, which is an example of a subtractive geography that produces spaces that are, in aggregate, less than before. Subtraction is an old driving force of nation-building as it connects the subtractive colonial past with the cultivated deserts of hyper-neoliberal agribusiness. The production of Paraguayan spaces has been based on the subtractive inclinations of its military-agrarian ruling elite, which compromised the national territory in tragic wars with regional neighbours and, since the end of the 19th century, the selling of land to foreigners and international companies. The subtractive pattern of a subordinate and aggressive capitalist development has been especially predicated upon the negation of the most fundamental rights and entitlements of Indigenous peoples. The discussion is based on research dedicated to understanding the struggle of the Paĩ Tavyterã Indigenous nation. Despite systematic denunciation of the anti-Indigenous direction of development by national and international organisations, the ancestral territories of the Paĩ Tavyterã have been under attack and they have been treated as generic citizens and cheap labourers. At the same time, the response of Indigenous peoples and other sectors of the working class has emerged in the form of anti-subtraction reactions. Decolonisation is, first and foremost, an anti-subtraction movement that aims at reverting the deficit caused by systemic subtraction and collectively seeking for social, political and spatial additions.

Published: 22 May 2024

\* E-mail: IorisA@cardiff.ac.uk

### Citation

Ioris, A.A.R. (2024), 'Development, subtraction and the Indigenous peoples of Paraguay', *Journal of the British Academy*, 12(1/2): a05  
<https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/012.a05>

© The author(s) 2024. This is an open access article licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International License



Published by The British Academy.

**Keywords** development, agribusiness, Indigenous peoples, working class, Paĩ Tavyterã, ancestral territories, subtractive geography, Paraguay

## The subtractive geography of development

More than seven decades since the inaugural address of President Truman, in 1949, which announced technical assistance and economic aid to underdeveloped countries in the Cold War fight against communism, most of the world population continues to suffer from high levels of inequality, poverty and socio-ecological degradation. Development, normally considered as economic growth and intensified market transactions, remains a central goal of national and multilateral organisations, but its main beneficiaries are typically the same politico-economic elites with control over economy, state and society. The promise of development has systematically nourished underdevelopment or situations even worse than before. The contradictory basis of the capitalist economy and its reliance on 'creative destruction' had already been denounced by authors such as Marx and Schumpeter (Elliott 1980) and became more

evident over the years, especially in Latin America (Veltmeyer 2022). Through the transfer of technologies, ideologies and capital, development is a complex phenomenon that mobilises and transforms matter, energy and socio-ecological relations in order to produce novel, but selective, asymmetric realities. In many cases, as in the remote frontiers of national and international development, there is a tendency towards nothingness and the net socio-economic and ecological result is often negative: a real subtraction. This constitutes the subtractive geography of mainstream development: that is, the production of spaces that are in aggregate less than before. Subtraction is not metaphysical or metaphorical, but phenomenological and concrete, as socio-ecologies and opportunities are removed, lessened and reconfigured according to the narrow logic of market exchange, private property and widespread exploitation. Mainstream development, as a socio-ideological process, promises a lot but in effect delivers very little.

This article deals with the very emblematic, but largely understudied, trajectory of national and local development in Paraguay, as an example of this subtractive geography. Subtraction is an old driving force of nation-building in Paraguay as it connects the subtractive colonial past with the less-than-nothing landscapes (green, cultivated deserts) of hyper-neoliberal agribusiness. The subtractive pattern of a subordinate and aggressive capitalist development has been predicated upon the negation of the most fundamental rights and entitlements of the majority of the population. In particular, the impacts on Indigenous peoples and the sequestration of their ancestral areas have made very real the prospect of a subtracted, emptied reality. Their world has been brutally eroded and belittled due to the imposition of quantitative priorities over qualitative prerogatives. That violates the claim made by Hegel (1977: 34) that, from the standpoint of Understanding, 'Existence is Quality, self-identical determinateness, or determinate simplicity, determinate thought.' However, despite all the injustice and violence suffered by the Indigenous peoples in the territory of Paraguay, the power of subtraction is regularly opposed and fought in various ways. The country is increasingly shaped by the tense interplay between subtraction and the opposing resistance of Indigenous peoples, which leaves a discernible imprint on wider socio-political trends. As demonstrated by Lefebvre (1991), humans create the space in which they make their lives and the production of such spaces is shaped by interests of classes, ethnic differences and other contending forces. Space is, thus, produced, contested and produced through relations and interactions that reflect the balance of power, associations and multiple asymmetries.

Our analysis of the Paraguayan situation is based on seven years of qualitative research dedicated to the land struggle of Indigenous peoples in South America and, in particular, fieldwork campaigns conducted in 2023 (Figure 1) and also engagement with authorities and organisations in Asunción and Amambay. This text constitutes a relational storytelling that draws insights from various actors, communities and situations, as well as documents and archives, to describe a broad array of socio-spatial trends and complex practices (Blaser 2010). The narrative is an attempt to connect peoples and epistemologies to places and



**Figure 1.** Conversation between the author and a Paĩ Tavyterã community, with the imposing Jasuka Venda mountain in the background (January 2023); photograph by William Costa.

struggles (Hart 2021) without trying to conceal the socio-political and radical dimension of the work, given that the ‘role of ideology does not diminish as rigour increases and error is dissipated’ (Foucault 2002: 205). The project was initially approved by the ethics committee of the author’s university (when questions of reflexivity, positionality, language and translation were critically considered), but it also went beyond conventional considerations of research ethics. The investigation was likewise associated with wider strategies to decolonise research and, in that case, it followed a strict ethical standard for research involving Indigenous partners that entailed an active and autonomous involvement of the Indigenous communities as true co-investigators who use, almost exclusively, the Guarani language. The main contribution is to reveal the subtractive trends that shape Paraguayan geography and problematise the lingering, but ideologically justified, impacts of exclusion, land-grabbing and racism on Indigenous peoples. Its innovative substance is both theoretical and argumentative, as it helps to question national development and cross-scale globalisation from the perspective of Indigenous peoples.

The present work extends, among other things, the scholarship of Wolfe (1999) on settler colonialism and how the politics of ignorance facilitated both

dispossession and the continuing oppression of native peoples, of Kauanui (2018) on the contradictions of Indigeneity and self-determination in domestic policy and international law and of Englert (2022) on the interface between settler colonial strategies, as an ongoing process, and contemporary social movements and solidarity campaigns. More importantly, the research project is also part of the socio-political concern for restorative justice, socio-spatial inclusion and self-determination of Indigenous peoples. Instead of any pretence of neutrality, the work was designed to examine and reflect on accumulated violence and injustices manifested through subtraction. It is an example of engaged research efforts, which are not necessarily less rigorous or worse than long-term, more conventional research, most of all because it is further scrutinised (Barker & Pickerill 2020). The focus is on the politicised geography of the Paĩ Tavyterã, a subdivision of the large Guarani nation who live in the northeast of Paraguay. Despite systematic denunciation of the anti-Indigenous direction of development by national and international organisations, the ancestral territories of the Paĩ Tavyterã have been under attack and the people have been treated as non-specific, generic citizens and cheap labourers. The next pages will demonstrate that, although widely silent and silenced, the Indigenous question is immanent both in the past and in the present of Paraguayan life.

The first section, after this introduction, will revisit the subtractive basis of both colonial and independent geography, which will be followed by an examination of the subtractive proclivities of today's agribusiness-based agro-neoliberalism. It is demonstrated that subtraction continues to dominate Paraguayan socio-economic policies as the self-destructiveness of development is typically overlooked and left unquestioned. The main empirical part of the text, in the subsequent section, is dedicated to the subtraction of the Paĩ Tavyterã world and how their space is now the result of aggression and marginalisation. That is not, however, the end of the story, and the conclusion indicates that the subtractive effect of development accumulates in the form of spatial deficits, enclave formation and the opening of new social, moral and spatial frontiers, which in time will trigger refutation, mobilisation and disruptive reactions. This anti-subtraction movement is a collective struggle for social, political and spatial additions.

## Colonialism and nation-building as subtraction

The main effect of colonisation in Paraguay has been the production of a reality smaller than the sum of pre-colonial parts, given that both the European and South American societies were forced into a hostile interaction that in the end downgraded both. Evidently, the main loss was inflicted upon the natives. Since the 16th century, during the conquest of the centre of South America by the Spanish Crown, Catholic missionaries and Luso-Brazilian trail-blazers (*bandeirantes*), the Indigenous peoples of Paraguay have been subjected to an unflinching subtractive geography predicated on their conversion into

non-subjects and their confinement to an increasingly belittled (physical and socio-political) space. The Indigenous nations, in particular in the large Guarani people, were, like the Jews and other marginalised groups, considered a *Homo sacer* who can be killed or even subjected to genocide, but not sacrificed for a reason that was placed beyond divine and human law (Agamben 1998). Their ‘capacity to be exterminated’ was inherent in their liminal, bare-life condition and in the invisibility of their very existence. Subtraction depended on tacitly excepting the Indigenous person, who was not formally excluded from the colonial Paraguayan society, but not included either. ‘*The exception is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a member and cannot be a member of the whole in which it is always already included*’ (Agamben 1998: 25, italics in the original).

During the Iberian invasion, various chroniclers (storytellers) reported the difficulty of tolerating and even deciphering the Indigenous world. For instance, in a letter from Francisco de Andrada, written in 1545 to the Spanish King and the Council of the Indies, his lack of comprehension of the socio-economic and technological practices of the inhabitants is clear, due to several misunderstandings and a crude comparison with the European reality. In his words,

most of the people went up to the Paraguay River by ship, in which company I found myself. We disembarked in this port where this town is now settled, which is called the city of Asunción, because its settling and building began on that date [15 August]. The quality of the land: the soil is poor and there is a lack of food supplies. Nonetheless, it is densely inhabited by naked people. They possess neither gold, nor silver; their houses are made of straw; their belongings are a bow and arrows, a cotton net in which they sleep, and tools with which they sow corn, manioc, and other things that they eat. They are planters, and they live on what they sow and harvest. The number of people and the land that they possess are large. ... they used to eat the flesh of the enemies that they took and killed in war. They had their relatives as their wives, beginning with their sisters. All of them believed in dreams. (quoted in García Loaeza & Garrett 2015: 70)

The Europeans were fascinated with the plants, animals and riches of the colony, but could not understand, let alone appreciate, the socio-economy, spirituality and practices of the Indigenous inhabitants, which were only mentioned in the course of their subjugation by the invaders. It was hard to understand that the natives worked to live and not to amass wealth. The time allocated to hunting, gathering or agriculture was no more than what was essential to ensure the subsistence of the social group. More significantly, the heaviest tasks were carried out collectively under an economic ideal that sounded strange: *reciprocity* (Roulet 1993: 28). The accumulation of perishable goods was meaningless and would have been in clear contradiction with the

norm of generosity that obliged members of the same village, related to each other, to collaborate with each other. Although the chroniclers and priests registered abundant evidence of the complexity and vitality of the Native societies, the newcomers struggled to comprehend the intricacy of the Indigenous existence, concepts and arts:

the lands ... that have been cleared and cultivated, are nothing in comparison to those, that still remain in a state of nature ... [about the people] we may affirm that they are more or less of an olive complexion, that they are commonly rather below than above the middling stature ... go quite naked ... almost all of them are naturally dull, cruel and inconstant, treacherous, and excessively voracious, and cannibals, given to drunkenness, void of foresight or precaution, even in the most indispensable [sic] concerns of life, lazy and indolent beyond the power of expression.  
(Charlevoix 1769: 8)

The same author (the French geographer and Jesuit priest Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, who was also a teacher of Voltaire in 1704) contradicted himself when in the same book he described a productive and diversified Indigenous agriculture:

THESE were the Guarani, who grew Maiz, of which they made the earth yield them every year two crops; and Manioc, with which they made Cassava bread. They, likewise, reared hogs, geese, poultry, and parrots. (Charlevoix 1769: 68)

It is relevant to note that the Guarani population have often been referred to as the cornerstone of Paraguayan society, but never took any autonomous part in national affairs, as the colony remained functional according to a constant actualisation of subtraction in the form of violent resource and labour grabbing. They were the part that paradoxically only took part through sustained subtraction and had negated the recognition of space agents. Voltaire (2005: 34) had already mocked the vast extensions of land seized from the Guarani by the Jesuits when Cacambo, one of the main characters, explains that ‘*Los Padres* own everything, and the people own the rest; it is a masterpiece of justice and reason.’ This subtractive force had been imposed through a systematic attack on the Indigenous world and the containment of their political reactions, even though the natives continued to exploit Iberian rivalries and weaknesses in order to achieve more favourable conditions for themselves (Carvalho 2023). Those widespread spatial tendencies help to understand the many dilemmas faced by Paraguay, which has had its geography and socio-economic relations produced out of relentless subtractive pressures. Its borders are in themselves testimony to accumulated losses and hard-fought legacies. Squeezed between Spanish and Portuguese imperial enterprises, Paraguay was a subtracted colony par excellence. With the destruction of Buenos Aires by the natives in 1541, the conquistadores found refuge in Asunción (founded in 1537), which became the

centre of a large Spanish colonial province that included large parts of today's Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina; however, with the inability to find gold or silver, and following the reconstruction of Buenos Aires in 1580, Paraguay became a separate governorate in 1617 and, therefore, lost direct access to the sea (Domingo 2012).<sup>1</sup>

Later, throughout a frail independence process initiated in 1811 and that was initially rejected by Buenos Aires (Brezzo 2016), Paraguay was run by a small, authoritarian coalition that essentially insulated the country from external influences and, in particular, Argentinean belligerence. 'Isolation is one of the few constants of Paraguayan history' (Williams 1972: 102), particularly during the regime of Gaspar de Francia, a theologian–politician known as *El Supremo* (The Supreme), who governed from 1814 to 1840. However, in retrospect, it should be recognised some level of international exchange was maintained during the *Franciata* and that isolation was mainly on a formal level, forced by the diplomatic decisions of the neighbouring nations and not much worse than it had been before Francia (Williams 1972). Because of its peculiar history and geography, Paraguay had its image distinctively associated with Guaraní symbols and language, but it was a controlled narrative that cultivated Indigenity only by its own subtraction. This vague Indigenist façade of the fragile Paraguayan republic, nurtured by an idiosyncratic fusion of nationalistic, romantic and predatorial penchants, provided ample populist legitimisation for the small military–bureaucratic ruling coalition. Subtraction has been employed not only to profit from relatively abundant resources, but to block any possible politico-economic alternatives. The tension between an exacerbated nationalism and geopolitical constraints came to a head during the devastating War of the Triple Alliance (1864–70), an impossible conflict simultaneously against Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay that decimated society, took away a large part of its territory and destroyed a hitherto thriving economy.

Subtraction continued after the war due to the irresponsible and shameful dilapidation and divestiture of its own territory to compensate for the monumental mistakes of the ruling elite since independence. There is abundant evidence of the self-serving biases of the political system and the systematic appropriation of opportunities at the expense of the majority of the population and Indigenous peoples in particular (Flecha 2016; Martins 1972; Ominami 1988). International migration was stimulated after the war to recover the economy and repopulate the country through the sale of public lands to white settlers to the detriment of the Indigenous nations devastated by the catastrophic conflict (Raya & Rodriguez 2016). From the 1870s, there was increasing selling of land to foreign companies and the attraction of, preferentially, white colonists, including many religious communities, such as the Mennonites (Kohlhepp 1984). Indigenous labour was essential in colonial farms and towns, as much as for the harvesting of quebracho and yerba-maté from the second half of the 19th century, typically in the form of seasonal jobs on *estancias* or with large forestry

<sup>1</sup>It is ironic that several 17th- and 18th-century maps continued to depict the segment of the South Atlantic Ocean around the Tropic of Capricorn as the 'Paraguay Sea'.

enterprises (*changa*), which were often a dissimulated form of semi-slavery (CernaVillagra 2014; Chase-Sardi 1989; Kleinpenning 1987; Stanford *et al.* 2021). Despite their ubiquity, the Indigenous population remained the ‘eternal other’ prone to be undermined and exploited. Their condition was an aporia between law and justice or, what is the same thing, between formalist citizenship and real life. The consequences of these measures and the inequalities created during this historical period are still evident today.

Like the other South American nations, Paraguay is paradoxically a nation state with vast resources and major socio-political shortages. On the one hand, the country has constantly lost territory and land resources to its larger neighbours, a process that had already started in early colonial times when the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church competed for control of the South American centre. On the other hand, Paraguay has managed to secure and maintain its independent status, despite the initial lack of international recognition (in the early 19th century) and perennial coercion by Argentina, Brazilian and the United States (in the last century). The first decades of the last century were a period of great political instability, which included another major war with Bolivia (for the control of fossil fuel reserves in the Chaco region), but in the 1940s several agrarian colonies had already been organised in the eastern region, leading to increasing deforestation and displacement of Guarani and other Indigenous nations. The main contact between state authorities and the Indigenous communities was (and continues to be) through violence, dispossession and labour exploitation:

Because the Indians could claim no rights to the land and no thought was given to reserving land for them, the state land used by them passed almost entirely into the hands of non-Indians. They became, without exception, occupiers on private estates unless they were able to take refuge on the remaining fiscal lands [state properties]. Their presence was sometimes not tolerated on the private estates, but sometimes it was. Not only did the Indians form a welcome labour force, but many newly-acquired latifundia were exploited in such an extensive fashion that sufficient space still remained for the native population to make a living, at least in the early years. They had no right to the land, however, which meant that their existence remained legally insecure. They were also partly compelled to abandon their traditional way of life, because their territory was so changed by forest exploitation ... and/or clearances and fencing of land that they could no longer properly practise such activities as hunting and gathering. (Kleinpenning 2009: 29)

The old subtractive trends only intensified as a response to development pressures. With the consolidation of Alfredo Stroessner’s brutal power after the 1954 coup d’état and the sharing of the proceedings of illegal activities with other generals and political leaders, it was possible to promote a highly



conservative and authoritarian process of agricultural expansion (Lambert & Nickson 2013), partly funded by the North American government and aimed at concentrating land and specialising production units (Pincus 1968). For many generations, Paraguayan agriculture had been largely based on small family farming and most of the land maintained its original vegetation, but this started to change in the second half of the last century with agrarian development programmes and extensive land-grabbing (Yaluff 2006). The 1960's *March towards the East* aimed, along the lines of the Green Revolution, at occupying, deforesting and converting into private properties the borderland with Brazil. In 1963, a new Agrarian Law was passed and established the formal principles for the distribution of land among peasants, particularly in collective units ('colonies'), although it also led to the seizing of large private areas by political allies. The government also used agrarian reform as a strategy to secure political support and also to compensate members of the regime, especially senior officers of the armed forces (74 per cent of the land was allocated to only 2.8 per cent of the beneficiaries; see Hetherington (2013)); the latter are the much discussed '*tierras malhabidas*', around seven million hectares transferred to military officers and political allies (Guereña & Rojas 2016). Stroessner's agrarian reform clearly followed the dictum of subaltern capitalist development and oligarchic modernisation that characterised the Cold War period. The aim was not to produce food or agrarian justice, but to export commodities, speculate with land and contain the Indigenous population in dwindling enclaves.

Amidst sustained subtractive trends, the nineteen Indigenous peoples of Paraguay have endured a long struggle to survive the authoritarian trail of development, which included the mobilisation of highly sophisticated socio-spatial knowledge and specialised community practices.<sup>2</sup> These are the descendants of the original inhabitants of the land, who witnessed the arrival of Iberian conquerors, struggles for resources and Indigenous labour between Catholic priests and landowners, the formation of independent nation states and the organisation of highly oligarchic, exclusionary societies. One of the Indigenous peoples most severely impacted by recent rounds of subtraction—in the form of land-grabbing, discrimination and violent attacks by drug dealers, and state and paramilitary forces—are the Paĩ Tavyterã (Figure 2) who live mainly in the eastern section of the country (Wicker 1990), especially in the Department (province) of Amambay, on the border with Brazil (the same ethnic group, known as Guarani-Kaiowa, has ancestral land in the Brazilian State of Mato Grosso do Sul; see Ioris (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)).<sup>3</sup> Paĩ Tavyterã/Guarani-Kaiowa is one of the sub-groups of the large Guarani people who inhabited and continue to occupy hundreds of locations (Bertoni 1922). At the beginning of the last century, their territory amounted to more than two

<sup>2</sup>According to 2017 statistics, the country's Indigenous population stands at 122,461 individuals (IWGIA 2022) separated into five linguistic families and nineteen peoples: Guarani (Aché, Avá Guarani, Mbya, Paĩ Tavyterã, Guarani Nandeva, Guarani Occidental), Maskoy (Toba Maskoy, Enlhet North, Enxet South, Sanapaná, Angaité, Guaná), Mataco Mataguayo (Nivaclé, Maká, Manjui), Zamuco (Ayoreo, Yvytoso, Tomárho) and Guaicurú (Qom).

<sup>3</sup>In Paraguay, there are also Paĩ Tavyterã contingents in the Departments of Concepción, San Pedro and Canindeyú.



Figure 2. Paĩ Tavyterã family (January 2023); photograph by William Costa.

million hectares, in Paraguay alone, but that is now restricted to a much subtracted 5.3 per cent of the original terrain (99,524 hectares in 2020), with around 16,000 people divided into several family nucleuses (*tekoha*) spread throughout eight large clusters (*tekohaguasu*) (Glauser & Villagra 2021). The Paĩ Tavyterã suffer from extreme poverty and are the least urbanised of the Indigenous peoples of Paraguay (DGEEC 2014); they are confined to remote corners of the country that have nonetheless become a hotspot of agribusiness, land-grabbing, resource extraction and globalised drug trafficking (Costa 2023). The Paĩ Tavyterã's unique geographical situation is of great interest, not only for Indigenous studies, but to interrogate the basis of agro-neoliberalism and rent extraction activities (Ioris 2017), examined in the next section.

## Subtracted modernities and uncertain futures

The farce of the agrarian reform and the crisis of post-war developmentalism promoted by Stroessner have paved the way to neoliberalising reforms and a ritualistic redemocratisation since the late 1980s. The transition was swift and, in February 1989, only six months after being sworn in for what would have been his eighth full term, Stroessner was ousted in a coup led by one of his

closest confidants for over three decades, General Andrés Rodríguez. The dictator fled to Brazil, where he lived in exile and died in Brasília in 2006. The downfall of the proto-fascist Stroessner administration was not due to popular uprising or democratic pressures, but was rather a pre-emptive, internal adjustment in the dominant coalition (Abente-Brun 1999). The long hegemony of the Colorado Party was only briefly interrupted by the election of Fernando Lugo to the presidency in 2008, with promises of land reform and measures to aid the urban working classes. However, Lugo's administration was ended by a hasty parliamentary coup in 2012 (Recalde 2013). The politico-economic and ideological situation continued to reflect the legacy of the power relations encrusted in land-grabbing, patrimonialism and violent repression, what Escobar (2018) describes as an 'almost Brechtian theatricalization' that has dominated Paraguay ever since the Triple Alliance War. It is also a clear expression of the subtractive pressures of development, particularly because of the conversion of small family farms into large agribusiness properties dedicated to commodity export and rent extraction. The agribusiness frontier that transformed the Alto Parana region in the 1980s expanded to the northeast of Paraguay, notably in the Department of Amambay, where the majority of the Paĩ Tavyterã ancestral areas are located (Palau & Heikel 2022).

The most acute manifestations of subtraction in Paraguay today are the operations of the agribusiness sector, particularly the export of meat and soybean. Private farms currently occupy 30.4 million hectares, out of a country with 40 million, most of these as cattle ranches and export-oriented plantations (MAG 2023). It is a typical example of a 'playboy, macho economy' that is bloated due to growing international demand and the facilitated access to common and Indigenous land in South America. Soybean, above all, was converted from a flexible legume and a nutritious crop into a new 'fossil-fuel-like resource' coming from the vast landscapes in the centre and south of the continent and encroaching on the ancestral areas of the Guarani and other Indigenous peoples.<sup>4</sup> Soybean has become a key socio-natural actor of the current agro-neoliberalist *durée* of the South American economies (Ioris 2017), increasingly deindustrialised, dependent on Chinese and North American commercial orders, and inserted into the logic of transnational corporations, global banks and agro-industry. The agronomic technology involved in soybean cultivation is perilously dependent on the heavy use of agrochemicals, machines, genetically modified seeds and foreign digital equipment. Hetherington (2020: 80) argues that 'soy is always a conspiracy'. It is everywhere in Paraguay. It is a new version of the old colonial violence—*la soja mata* (the soy kills)—a vast socio-economic poison for which it is supposed to be a remedy. Agribusiness is an input-intensive and discriminatory form of agriculture that leaves behind a heavy ecological and socio-spatial passivity (Ioris 2016). In addition, it has been a process of neo-colonisation with a strong element of racism, given that the most influential and destructive players involved in the

<sup>4</sup>The process is widespread and affects most Indigenous lands, as in the case of the Ava Guarani in the Brazilian State of Paraná, where agribusiness totally surrounds and has already invaded more than half of the area (see Conselho Indigenista Missionário 2023).

contemporary advance of agribusiness have been Brazilian settlers in alliance with the Paraguayan political elite.<sup>5</sup>

There are also worrying synergies between the advance of agribusiness, the self-seeking interests of conservative politicians and the strengthening of a largely illegal economy based on drug trafficking (including the transportation of Colombian cocaine and the cultivation of marijuana in Indigenous lands)<sup>6</sup> and the smuggling of goods (including both goods produced in Paraguay and those imported from Asia through Brazilian ports and later smuggled back into Brazil). The separation between legal and illegal activities is highly controversial in a geographical context dominated by the violence of agribusiness, the connivance of the national state and prominent politicians (*vis-à-vis* the dodgy track record of past president Horacio Cartes) and the widespread operation of militias and drug mafias (Ávalos 2013). What prevails now is a political regime that includes a high tolerance for the various manifestations of corruption, explicitly authoritarian or demagogic tendencies among political leaders and generally despondent attitudes toward elections (Meyer 2018). It is what Tucker (2020: 1459) describes as an ‘outlaw capital’ which ‘is a mode of accumulation that works through dealmaking and rule breaking’. Around 80 per cent of the drugs that sneak into Brazil come from Paraguay (notably through Pedro Juan Caballero and Capitán Bado, which are the main districts with Paĩ Tavyterã presence in the Department of Amambay) and, although large-scale farmers are not involved in drug smuggling into the Brazilian territory, they invest in land and cattle to launder money in Paraguay. There have been regular assassinations of Indigenous individuals by drug dealers and a notorious trafficker, Jarvis Pavão, even had plans to create a sort of ‘zoo’ for tourists with the Indigenous communities as the main ‘attraction’ (Castilho & Bassi 2017).

Institutionalised violence is another form of rent extraction or, in the words of Tucker (2020: 1461), it is basically a mechanism of ‘accumulation by transgression’. Illegality and institutionalised corruption have been the main catalysts of national politics and policy-making, the only thing that ‘really works’, at least from the perspective of landowners and businesspeople. During the 2023 presidential campaign, the defeated candidate Efraín Alegre, of the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico, declared that ‘We run the risk of a “Mexicanization” of politics, the consolidation of a mafia state that impedes normal development’ (*Americas Quarterly* 2023).<sup>7</sup> Perhaps above all other forms of institutionalised corruption, there is the relation between the Indigenous nations and the Paraguayan State that better demonstrates the subversion of legality and its transmutation into the dominant law at the expense of all justice and liberty. As declared by Senator Miguel (Kencho) Rodríguez

<sup>5</sup>More than 14 per cent of the Paraguayan territory is currently owned by Brazilian migrants, the majority from the southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul and have German or Italian ancestry (Souchaud 2002).

<sup>6</sup>The drug trade links Paraguay to Colombian and Bolivian cocaine production zones, its own domestic marijuana fields, and consumption in Brazil and in northern markets.

<sup>7</sup>It was explicitly mentioned, in an anonymous interview with a civil servant in the national senate in Asunción, that votes are being bought in the 2023 election for 300,000 guaraní (the name of Paraguay’s currency), the equivalent of around £35 sterling. According to our informant, ‘the politician pays this amount [300,000 guaraní] and then has five years [the duration of the mandate] for personal profit, to make money’.

(interview, January 2023), the most pressing problem of Paraguay is the illegal appropriation of Indigenous land, because Indigenous peoples have incontestable rights over more than two million hectares. However, according to Kencho,

the law is regularly not observed, but the State only intervenes in favour of the powerful. The 12,000 landowners have more than 33 million hectares and 150,000 indigenes have merely 1 million. The situation is deteriorating further, because the public sector only always to support the agribusiness sector. However, the development of Paraguay totally depends on the solution to the Indigenous ‘problem’.<sup>8</sup>

The post-Stroessner Constitution of 1992 (substantially amended in 2011) has in its preamble the principles of republican, representative, participative and pluralistic democracy; however, the lived reality on the ground has completely bypassed the legal rhetoric. Articles 62 and 67 of the national constitution explicitly recognise the existence of Indigenous peoples, including their ancestral rights over their land and customary, community rules. Article 64 states that:

The Indigenous peoples have [the] right to communal ownership of the land [*propiedad comunitaria*], in [an] extension and quality sufficient for the preservation and the development of their particular [*peculiares*] forms of lifestyles. The State will provide them gratuitously with these lands, which will be non-seizable [*inembargables*], indivisible, non-transferrable, imprescriptible, not susceptible to guarantee contractual obligations nor to be leased; likewise, they will be exempt from taxes. The removal or transfer of [the Indigenous peoples] from their habitat without their express consent is prohibited.

In actual fact, however, those constitutional guarantees have proved to be mere false promises, constrained by the power of agribusiness-based development. As pointed out by Lidia Ruiz Cuevas (executive secretary of Tierraviva, interview in January 2023),

Our Constitution is very advanced, but it is a dead letter. There are repeated cases of displacement [*desalojos*] of Indigenous communities in recent years and horrible cases of assassination [*sicariato*] that we always denounce.

That is why the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights asked the government to enforce and implement, without further delay and with sufficient funds, the provisions of the Paraguayan Constitution concerning respect for and restoration of the community property rights of the Indigenous peoples

<sup>8</sup>A few months after the interview for this research, Kencho lost his seat in the April 2023 election that was again dominated by a hyper-conservative campaign.

(OAS 2001). However, the response has evolved in the diametrically opposite direction and, because of procrastination by national judges, many organisations have had to resort to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (CODEHUPY 2022).<sup>9</sup> Law 6830, passed in 2021 (which amends Article 142 of the Criminal Code and also its previous amendment, Law 3440/2008), multiplied by four the penalty for those who ‘invade’ private property, which affects peasants and Indigenous peoples attempting to reclaim their areas lost to mainstream development. It increased the sentences for trespassing, stiffening the penalties by establishing that whoever ‘individually or in concert with other persons, violently or clandestinely enters another’s property shall be punished with imprisonment of up to six years’. In the event that the person is occupying private property in order to ‘settle’ or to ‘cause damage to assets existing on the property of others’, this sentence can be extended up to ten years. This new legislation aims at reinforcing the sanctity of private property, regardless of its origin, and has been criticised accordingly. Although conservative sectors claim that the law will benefit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, its entry into force will negatively and disproportionately affect Indigenous communities since, in the aforementioned situation, soybean growers and cattle ranchers could invoke it to the detriment of land recovery or expansion claims.

During the pandemic, the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the national economy led the Ministry of Finance to call for cuts to the budgets of public institutions. These cuts resulted in institutional inaction in the face of inequalities that widened abysmally during the pandemic. The already small budget of the Paraguayan Indigenous Institute (INDI) covers only the institution’s running costs and some specific assistance programmes, and has been clearly insufficient to promote the minimum conditions of well-being and dignity for Indigenous peoples. Unlike under the previous government, there are no plans to directly address the problem of land and territory for peasants and Indigenous people, and the National Institute of Rural and Land Development (INDERT)’s budget has thus been reduced by 25.84 per cent and that of INDI by 16.38 per cent (IWGIA 2022: 458). INDI has historically been managed by bureaucrats who publicly declare their total ignorance of Indigenous matters and manage dwindling material means; the ‘cultivated ignorance’ of the public sector is further inflated by the deliberate decision to remove ethnic references from the national census carried out in 2022 (CODEHUPY 2022). According to the executive-secretary of CODEHUPY (Dante Leguizamon, interview in 2023), ‘the Paraguayan State is schizophrenic: one segment recognises Indigenous rights, but other segments continue to oppress and dislodge them’.

The subtraction of the Indigenous world, following the long-lasting tendencies of Paraguayan political-economy, is associated with what Badiou (2009) has described as the production and recognition of ‘truths’, which are not

<sup>9</sup>Miarta Pereira (Federación por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos Indígenas lawyer, interview in 2023) criticised how the Paraguay courts function and the tacit alliance between judges and landowners. The problem seems not to be the law, but how it is implemented, especially under the pressure to export commodities. According to this lawyer, ‘there is a dual morality in Paraguay, because conservative sectors articulate a strong pro-family discourse, but great discrimination against indigenous, women, LGBT+, among others’.

only articulated with and through the world but are excepted or subtracted from it. Absence is also an integral element of world truths and says a great deal about its organisation and functioning. The truth is, for that very reason, invested with an absolute and eternal capacity to change any given circumstance (Hallward 2003). In that sense, the most pronounced socio-spatial truth of Paraguay, as analysed above, has been the imposition of a perverse, exploitative order that relies on the simultaneous subtraction of the possibility to transform relations and structures. It is a truth that emerges out of the subtractive tendencies of mainstream development that, according to Badiou, can only be meaningfully reached by breaking with the established criteria for judging opinions and understandings which prevent change. In other words, those subtractive tendencies do not lead to a total removal or complete destruction of reality, but dialectically retain the possibility of a radical transformation. Subtraction is, thus, fully political and contested, as it is both an expression of power control and the anticipation of change. As observed by Badiou (2009: 159), an illegal state has typically the veil of legality and pretends to observe the constitutional order, but really justice only arises when what is supposedly illegal becomes the legal norm. Politico-institutional changes and the preponderance of an agribusiness-based economy have increasingly impacted the Paĩ Tavyterã people, whose storyline is presented below.

## Space production by subtraction: undermining the Paĩ Tavyterã world

As described in previous pages, the Indigenous nations of Paraguay, the Guaraní in particular, were severely affected by centuries of *encomiendas*,<sup>10</sup> Catholic missionaries and colonial authorities, precarious jobs in cattle ranches and yerba-maté estates, and the allocation of properties to white settlers, which resulted in successive pulses of land-grabbing, displacement and forced confinement. Not only were the ancestors of the contemporary Indígenas impacted by those historical events, but the communities have undergone multiple forms of violence in recent decades that were nothing less than an actualisation of past trends. During the long Stroessner regime (1954–89), the treatment meted out to Indigenous peoples evolved in a somewhat haphazard and contradictory manner; sometimes it tried to improve the economic situation of the natives, but more often it sought to make them disappear (Horst 2007). Since the 1960s, this has coincided with mounting agrarian pressures, due to conservative land reform and the growing number of Brazilian incomers. The most negative effect of the combination of oppression and paternalism was the gradual erosion of the collective ownership of land and its replacement by refuges at the margins of the large latifundios. The Paĩ Tavyterã, in particular, were left scattered over many small locations and reservations, mainly

<sup>10</sup>*Encomenderos* were landowners who received permission to exploit the indigenous labour force on the vaguely defined condition of feeding them and instructing them in the Christian faith.

throughout the Department of Amambay (Maybury-Lewis & Howe 1980). One of the few and highly questionable recognitions of Indigenous demands during this period was provided by General Samaniego (Defence Minister of President Stroessner) who had a paternalistic patron–client relationship with the Paĩ Tavyterã communities at Yvy Pyté, situated 77 km from the departmental capital of Pedro Juan Caballero (Cadogan 1962; Samaniego 1968).<sup>11</sup>

With the agrarian and political situation of the remaining Indigenous population deteriorating fast, a coordinated response came in the form of the Paĩ Tavyterã Project (PPT), launched in 1972 with international financial support and managed by the Austrian anthropologists George and Friedl Grünberg. PPT tried to mitigate the more immediate risks posed by rural development and, once the initiative was approved by the IBR (the Rural Welfare Institute or *Instituto de Bienestar Rural*),

the project’s survey team determined that 31 communities, taking in some 80% of the Northeast’s indigenous population, could be secured on the basis of the 1963 agrarian reform law [26 Paĩ communities]. 23 were on *tierras fiscales* (state-owned lands), 11 were on private holdings, and one site overlapped private and public lands. ... By 1979 a majority of the 31 communities had been surveyed and officially recognized, and a few of them on private land had been granted title. ... [the project] suits before the IBR and the courts have pressured owners into settling out of court. By 1977 eight of the eleven communities on private land had been secured through ‘donations’, trades for public land, and indemnification at prices below market value. (Maybury-Lewis & Howe 1980: 91)

PPT was relatively successful and its most tangible result was the consolidation of a fragmented landscape of precarious enclaves (reservations or encampments) that remained nonetheless under attack by farmers and speculators in the following years. An enclave is, by definition, a small piece of territory that is culturally distinct and politically separate from another territory within which it is located, normally quartering a minority population with a unique identity. Most Paĩ Tavyterã communities were forced into this unfortunate enclave situation that, in practical terms, was the spatial consequence of subtraction (Figure 3).

Socio-spatial fragmentation, together with political and juridical instability, further nourished Paĩ Tavyterã’s subtractive geography. With the demise of the Stroessner regime and the insertion of Paraguay into market-based globalisation, new rounds of grabbing and commodification ensued. There has been a growing reconcentration of rural land and the expansion of cattle ranches and transgenic soybean plantations, which took place through both legal and illegal means (Figure 4). According to Law 904, the ancestral lands must be bought back from

<sup>11</sup>The same government also granted permission to New Tribes missionaries to set up a station in the Yvy Pité in 1962, but their operation was systematically despised by the Indigenous families and terminated in 1976 (Maybury-Lewis & Howe 1980).



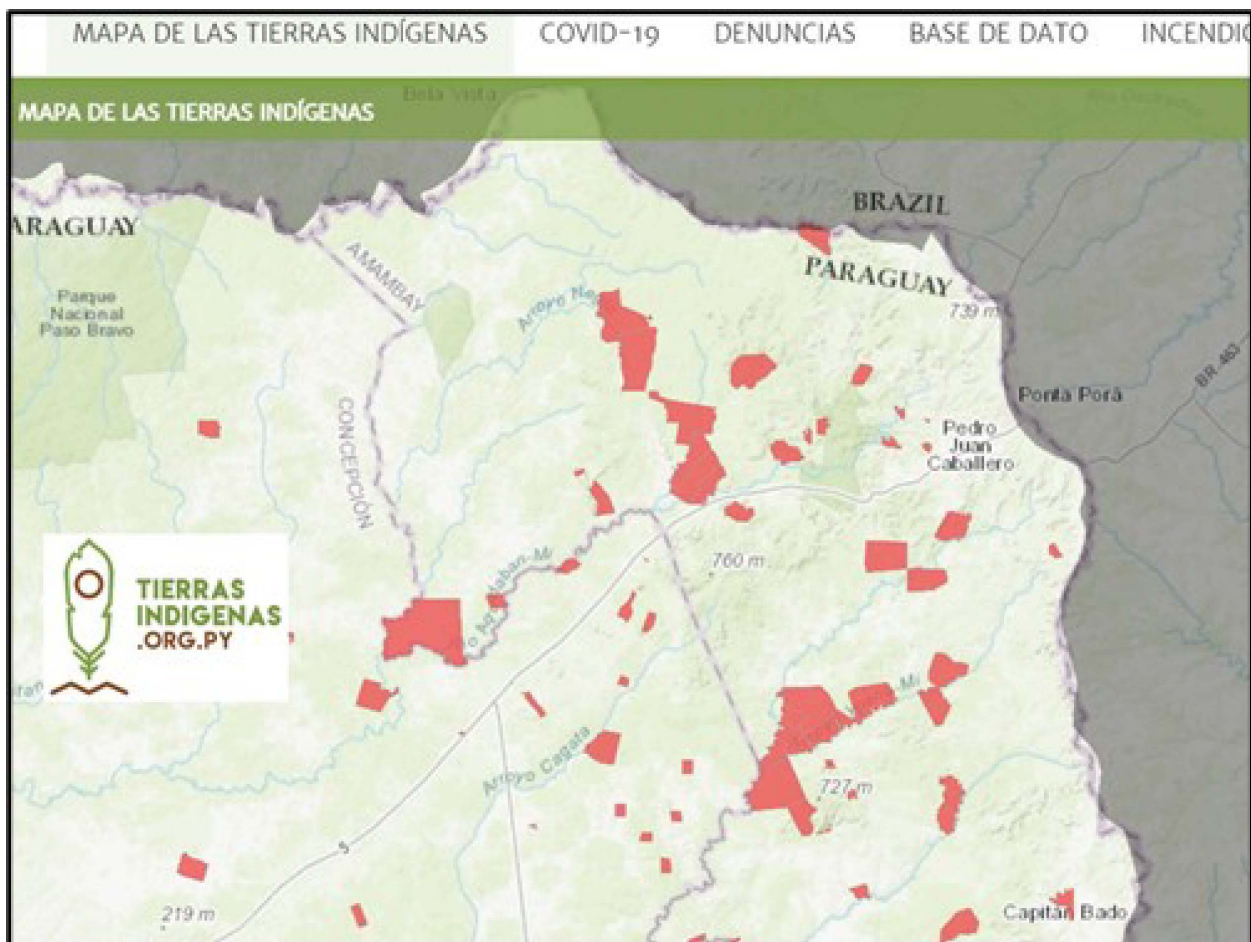


Figure 3. Paĩ Tavyterã lands on the border between Paraguay and Brazil; areas in different stages of 'regularisation' and external pressures; produced by the author from the interactive platform Tierras Indígenas (<http://www.tierrasindigenas.org.py>).

the current private landowners and transferred to the Indigenous communities (which first have to attain legal personhood status to claim their rights) and then maintained as collective property (which cannot be rented, subdivided or resold). Beyond the formality of the legal texts, the actual recognition of Indigenous areas is always protracted, painful and risky. Even in the cases where the land was officially transferred and registered in the name of the Indigenous communities, there are repeated aggressions and persistent forms of disruption. For instance, at least 16,152 hectares of forest were cut by invaders between 2001 and 2018 in areas that lawfully belong to the Paĩ Tavyterã (Glauser & Villagra 2021). It is no surprise, therefore, that the Paĩ Tavyterã have equally considered Brazilian and Paraguayan farmers as major threats to their ancestral areas (Grünberg & Grünberg 2014).

The intimidating removal of the vegetation has even more negative consequences than elsewhere, because the Paĩ Tavyterã way of life (*teko*) includes as social agents both the plants and the ecosystems. Notably, their spiritual leader, the *tekoruvicha*, has the ability to speak to the trees, plants and



Figure 4. Soybean plantation surrounding an Indigenous community near Pedro Juan Caballero (January 2023); photograph by William Costa.

animals as a means to understand the world and protect the community. Together with deforestation, the regular occurrence of forest fires is another grave consequence of land intrusion by non-Indigenous persons. However, the national state and its Indigenist agency INDI persistently prevaricate and refrain from taking the necessary measures. The government and the national police certainly have sufficient resources to intervene, if they wanted, as we witnessed on 23 June 2023 during a visit by a judge to the Yvy Pité: the magistrate came from Asunción escorted by a heavy security convoy (Figure 5) just to briefly meet some community members (after this ceremonial visit, nothing was decided by the judge in favour of the Paĩ Tavyterã demands).

Reflecting on those challenges, a leader of the Cerro Akängue community stated in an interview in 2023, originally given in the Guaraní language:

*Question:* Considering the last three generations, how do you feel? People lived better before or now or they live almost the same?

*Answer:* As an Indigenous people, we used to live much better; we had forests, wild animals, other foods, honey, but now all that is over, wherever you look around the community it is now grassland, we are surrounded by ranches. Before it was not like that, that is why we have to go and buy in the towns to get the meat we need.



Figure 5. Heavy security protection for a magistrate, but unavailable for the protection of the Indigenous population (June 2023); photograph by the author.

*Question:* And what else has changed, compared to before?

*Answer:* The main thing is deforestation, there is too much change, we no longer have forests where we can bring our remedies. Now there are just a few forests, that's why we take a lot of care of them [*rakate'y*] because otherwise it will soon be over. There are Indigenous communities where they no longer have forests, we still have a little, not much but we have. ... Our youngsters get jobs in the plantations and sometimes they get sick and only their bodies come back [they are dead, *hetekue*]. ... That is why we have to improve awareness [*concienciación*] and keep searching for alternatives.

In the same way, the communities of Arroyo Ka'a, 63 km from Bella Vista (46 families with 176 inhabitants), have spent more than thirty years trying to recover and register their land of around 5,900 hectares. Many generations of Indigenous families have lived on the site and, before that, they were living on the fringes of the land. The population has suffered from the lack of potable water, deforestation and fires caused by neighbouring farms and contamination caused by pesticides and by a nearby ethanol factory (Morínigo Villalba *et al.* 2021: 29). The following statement by a female interviewee in Arroyo Ka'a demonstrates that, in the end, they can basically only count on the community, on the family and on the forest:

The white people want the [our] land, more and more. Why? Because the forest is immense, we have forests, medicine in the mountains, wild animals, we have a stream, trees, there is where our children's children are. There is still space for us to search for what we need. ... We never ask for help, because our community is large and has everything in the forest, there we forage for food, if we can get it we eat, we never ask for anything. If any institution wants to help us, they are welcome, but we don't ask. We go hunting in the mountains to feed our children.

Not even one of the most sacred lands of the Paĩ Tavyterã, the aforementioned Yvy Pyté, located in the Amambay administrative department, has been respected by land-grabbers. The Yvy Pyté is one of the few remaining *tekohaguasu*, the large ancestral territories, but it has special importance as it sits at the entrance to Jasuka Venda, the most revered site of the Paĩ Tavyterã (and of the Guarani-Kaiowa) because it is a mountain where they believe the creator—*Ñande Ru* or *Ñane Ramõi Jusu Papa*—brought himself and the world into existence (Ioris *et al.* 2021).<sup>12</sup> Around 380 families, 1198 people, currently live in the eight Yvy Pyté settlements; the reservation has 16,303 hectares, but not all the ancestral Indigenous land was regularised and it has been repeatedly invaded by farmers and poachers (Morínigo Villalba *et al.* 2021: 72). Aggression can often become fatal and in October 2023, the spiritual leader (*tekoruvicha*), Arnaldo Benítez Vargas, was murdered in very strange circumstances.<sup>13</sup> Another very disturbing example of semi-official land-grabbing, tolerated by the public authorities, happened during our fieldwork in January 2023, when the Inmobiliaria [estate agent] Capitán Bado openly advertised the selling of a 'property' of 1,920 hectares with excellent soil quality ('*tierra roja y mixta*') at US\$1,700 per hectare (Figure 6).<sup>14</sup> This eye-catching 'farm' was nothing short of a large segment of the Indigenous land Yvy Pyté. The sellers used the expression '*titulado*' to indicate regular ownership and claimed that it was registered under the name Añareta Guasu, which were flagrantly made-up facts. Our efforts to interview the estate agents and the supposed owner proved unsuccessful (for obvious reasons).

The Indigenous reaction to the preposterous selling of their sacred land was nonetheless swift and came in the form of an urgent call for support signed by the community leaders:

We inform the national and international community that our indigenous community of Yvy Pyte, Amambay, is facing a new case of invasion within their territories. ... On February 20 of this year, people associated with Mr. Ramón Segovia entered with firearms,

<sup>12</sup>For images and more information about Jasuka Venda, see the 2021 video 'Yvy pyrũ' a—Pueblo Paĩ Tavyterã' at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zn7Euo2WdeI>.

<sup>13</sup>Resumen de Noticias (2023).

<sup>14</sup>It was advertised under the following address, removed after a few weeks: <https://www.capitanbado.com/inmobiliario/oferta-estancia-de-1920-has-tierra-roja-y-mixta-ubicado-entre-capitan-bado-y-pjc-precio-oferta-de-1-700-por-hastitulado/228121>.



**entre  
Capitán  
Bado y  
PJC,  
Precio  
oferta de  
1.700 \$  
por has...  
TITULADO**



Por Redaccion

Publicado en 22  
febrero 2023

**Figure 6.** Advertisement of 'Private Farm' between Capitán Bado and Pedro Juan Caballero, which is effectively an area of Indigenous land (February 2023).

threatening and intimidating members of the community, especially the indigenous leaders, under the assumption that those lands belong to them. A worrying fact is that the aforementioned Mr. Segovia has put up for sale a total of 1,920 hectares of our land. In recent days, people related to the same gentleman, remain in the place doing previous work to demarcate and wire. For this reason, it is necessary and urgent that the pertinent measures be taken to protect our territory. (*Última Hora* 2023).

To make matters worse, the ancestral lands of the Paĩ Tavyterã have increasingly been under attack not just by invaders and negligent authorities, but also by anti-state guerrillas associated with drug trafficking. The annual report of The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA 2023: 442) explicitly denounces that 'although Amambay department has been the scene of widespread violence linked to the production, transit and illegal sale of drugs for decades, the current situation seems to have reached new levels of concern and threats to the lives of the communities'. Likewise, the Paraguay's People Army (EPP), a miniscule group of leftist insurgents, has maintained operations in the

northeast region of the country and, on several occasions, confrontations with the army have resulted in the killing of Paĩ Tavyterã people (as in October 2022, when two died and one was injured, whose relatives were interviewed during this research).<sup>15</sup> As a result, the Indigenous communities in the area are increasingly concerned about the growing hardships and are attempting to systematically join forces with other Indigenous nations and with non-Indigenous allies. In that context, it is important that the response includes not only their ancestral knowledge, but also a clear understanding of both the perverse subtractive trends and of the gendered element of violence and resistance (female member of Cerro Akängue):

The [our] neighbour and landowner doesn't want to know anything about caring for the land, they use poison, they plant soybeans, you talk to them, they are Mennonites and they don't want to know anything. But we have no complaints about some of the other neighbouring farmers, as they don't use poisons. They only have cows and it doesn't bother us, they secure it with fencing so they don't pass by us and bother us. ... But just by being a millionaire a farmer cannot use what harms us, they should know that later they may have various problems and that is why they must take care of themselves. ... What worries us most now, as women, is that many things happen in the family, there is family violence, many things happen to us now that did not happen before. That's why as women we always try to strengthen our culture, we are not going to forget, because our culture also defends us from violence.

*Question:* How do you use culture to defend against violence?

*Answer:* And now we talk again about our culture, our values, the way of caring, what previously seemed burdensome, but is better for us. The *tamóí* [grandparents] tell us what belongs to our system. As Paĩ people we are going to try to get back to what is ours. We try to recover our culture as women, before it was lighter, now family life becomes more difficult for us. There are many ugly things happening between us.

*Question:* And what are those many things?

*Answer:* Now there is a lot of violence against Paĩ women, there is pressure from outside, they want us to be equal with whites ... the hardest thing is that our children frequently don't listen to us, they want to decide alone.

Considering their preoccupation with knowledge and tradition, it is revealing of the internal logic of their political mobilisation that Paĩ Tavyterã leaders have repeatedly expressed a strong resolve to remain within the boundaries of the (non-Indigenous) law, as the most effective and justifiable strategy to recover

<sup>15</sup>La Nación (2022).

land amidst a context of great political adversities. That was stated, among other things, in meetings with the Ytaguazu Community located near the imposing hills of the Jasuka Venda, which was declared Paraguay's Natural and Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Conservation Territory. Despite its huge importance, the communities bitterly lament that Jasuka Venda was left beyond the area officially demarcated as Indigenous reservation (Espíndola Oviedo 2021). Even so, there are no plans to carry out any forced reoccupation of ancestral areas and they insist on their right to receive the land back through legal channels. In our interviews with one of the main leaders, he reflected on the various internal and external challenges ahead, including the difficulty of confronting the illegal activity of land-grabbers within the official legal framework. From their perspective, despite the moral justification for taking their struggle beyond the perverse boundaries of the positivistic legislation, so-called illegal action is contradictory because it operates along the same lines of prevailing subtraction. In his words:

the Indigenous leader needs support, and the best support comes in the form of words, that is, the engagement with our community members, other Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous allies. We are very concerned; it makes me sleepless. The bureaucracy does nothing and the State continues on the path of illegality. All they do is to ask us to file a complaint, which costs a lot and is very taxing. We don't want to do anything illegal, the Paĩ [Tavyterã] insist on the legal path, but it is difficult to defend against the soybeans of the Brazilians, the drugs and the Pentecostals.

The Paĩ Tavyterã regularly compare their situation with the Guarani-Kaiowa and speculate that, perhaps, the lower economic activity in Paraguay has so far delayed more violent conflicts, as in the case of Brazil. Another factor, mentioned by the leader of the Paĩ Retaã Joaju association is that in Brazil the land is only demarcated and remains a public asset owned by the national state, while in Paraguay the land has to be commercially purchased and transferred to the Indigenous communities, further complicating the situation. The requirement to acquire the land and compensate the landowner is another incentive to maintain their actions within legal boundaries so that the authorities are not obliged to take measures against them. Instead of mere passivity, as observed by Correia (2023), the strategy of Indigenous peoples in Paraguay is a combination of 'working with and against the law' to try to challenge settler land control and to enact environmental justice. Moreover, there are other, more subjective reasons that help to understand the Paĩ Tavyterã reluctance to resort to unilateral reoccupation of the ancestral areas. In our conversations, they vowed not to carry out reoccupation of Indigenous areas, because they see their land as sacred and peaceful and do not want to 'degrade' it (that is, subtract its ancestral and spiritual value) with violent acts, however much these may be justified or necessary. This clearly demonstrates a non-utilitarian path (ethics not just of the goals, but also of the means to secure those goals) and an anti-subtraction

strategy: securing land through illegal violence would tarnish its integrity and somehow compromise its sacred status (although the Paĩ Tavyterã always respect and support the strategies adopted by their brothers the Guaraní-Kaiowa). However, this high moral ground creates an additional difficulty in dealing with a national state whose actions are characterised by misinformation, omissions, deceit and, quite often, sheer corruption. The framework of impunity, fostered largely by judicial inaction as well as the absence of legal security and the lack of regularisation of property ownership, results in violations of the physical integrity of Indigenous communities.

Despite the bottom-up mobilisation and the careful protection of their moral–theological and socio-ecological heritages, the land problem remains unresolved and is allowed to continue. The Paĩ Tavyterã were left with a tiny fraction of their original territory and all agree that it will be a major struggle to recover more of their land subtracted in the name of development and nation-building. They are immersed in the continuities between the colonial past and the neoliberal present, which are intensely replicated in the cross-scale connections between local and national spatial trends. The subordinate tendencies of the Paraguayan political-economy are related to the fact that the country could never emulate the import-substitution path adopted in other larger countries in the region (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico), but Paraguay was at the receiving end of neighbouring developmentalist agendas.<sup>16</sup> The fact that Paraguay is itself an enclaved, Mediterranean country is dialectically associated with its internal anti-Indigenous subtraction and the confinement of the Native population in ghetto-like reservations. Both forms of enclave are always deeply racialised and intense manifestations of socio-spatial power asymmetries. Violence and exclusion in and around the Indigenous lands of the Paĩ Tavyterã are replicated in the sharp inequalities of the capital, Asunción, where a vast low-income periphery contrasts with Miami-like neighbourhoods like Villa Morra, Las Lomas and Manorá. The election of the economist Santi Peña as president, in April 2023, represents the continuity of the political pact around the Colorado Party (Peña was an IMF economist and Finance Minister of ex-president Horacio Cartes, 2013–18, allegedly associated with contraband and criminal networks) and, more importantly, the immense hegemony of agribusiness in synergy with illegality and drug traffic—the main subtractive nexus—discussed in the final section.

## Persistent subtraction and decolonial addition

The previous pages have examined the basis of Paraguayan socio-spatiality and paid particular attention to the negative geography of colonialism and nation-building. The production of Paraguayan spaces has been based on the

<sup>16</sup>On the one hand, Paraguay embarked in the 1970s on a process of infrastructure construction, notably the two hydropower schemes in an asymmetric partnership with Brazil and Argentina (Itaipu and Yacyretá, both along the Paraná River). On the other hand, the smuggling of Asian goods through the border with Brazil (electronics, cigarettes, etc) operated as real anti-Brazilian import-substitution industrialisation (ISI), due to the unfair competition with Brazilian equivalent goods.



subtractive inclinations of the ruling elite and associates, who historically compromised the national territory in tragic wars and, since the end of the 19th century, the selling of land to foreigners and international companies. In practice, the physical subtraction of the country has evolved in tandem with the subtraction of rights, voices and entitlements. Paraguay, like all other Latin American countries, functions as a pyramid of opportunities that spreads from the main politico-economic centres in the Global North, to the national politico-economic-military leaders and to local chieftains or oligarchs, subordinating the majority of the population to the powerful interests and agendas coming from the top. This long and highly hierarchical process has relied, primarily, on the subtraction of the Indigenous world and on the insertion of the Indigenous population into the broad majority of the national population. Such a general course of action is evident nowadays in the northeast of Paraguay, along the border with the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Agribusinesses have become consolidated, following what happened in previous decades during the *March towards the East*. Agribusiness is tacitly associated with drug trafficking and the smuggling of goods, creating a new wave of aggression against the remaining Indigenous areas. Like the other Indigenous peoples in the country, the Paĩ Tavyterã, who had in the past been plagued by the genocidal violence of colonisation and nation-building, by the semi-slavery of quebracho and yerba-maté extraction and the conversion of common land into private farms, are now severely impacted by export-oriented plantations, land-grabbing and illegal trade.

Paraguayan politics and the economy are now dominated by the powerful interests of export companies and landowners, forging a decisive synergy with illegal trade (*contrabandistas*) and, increasingly, drug traffickers (*traficantes*) associated with politicians and senior authorities. The national economy is firmly based on an intricate chain of imports and re-exports, together with the production of primary commodities for international markets and the generation of hydroelectricity in a complicated partnership with Argentina and Brazil. Due to international civil rights concerns, explicit anti-Indigenous violence was somehow mitigated in recent years by populist concessions and the cosmetic acceptance of Indigenous rights, but subtraction, even dissimulated, remains the rule. After centuries of slavery, *encomiendas*, Jesuit reductions and genocide, the country was left with a very reduced Indigenous population (around 1 per cent of the national inhabitants). Paraguay has always been ‘a country apart’ (Galeano 1981), whose society is formed by a complex amalgamation of ethnicities, religions, groups of workers and peasants, migrants and non-migrants. This regularly results in a social split between Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the population, living side by side in the same location and speaking broadly the same language (Guarani), but not always recognised as politico-economic allies. There is just a vague, indeterminate sense of Indianness permeating Paraguayan society, which conceals structural socio-spatial asymmetries, including the doubly excluded Indigenous peoples (exploited due to their ethnicity and their class condition, and also the simultaneous targets of religious conversion and forced labour). Land-grabbing

and the exploitation of Indigenous labour in Paraguay draw ‘attention on how racial capitalism is woven into the social fabric of settler colonialism and its spatial expression’ (Correia 2023: 47).<sup>17</sup>

However, as pointed out by G. Grünberg (personal communication 2023), ‘where there were Guarani in the centre of South America in the eighteenth century they are still there’, that is, although the more than 500 Guarani communities have been severely impacted by colonisation, nation-building and agrarian pressures, they have resisted and developed novel political strategies to survive (including the crucial role of religious practices; Figure 7). Despite the stereotyped appearance of passivity and degeneration, all Indigenous nations have remained active, mobilised and able somehow to react to spatial subtraction (Correia 2021). Because of national and international dynamics and the influence of other social movements, there is today stronger than before identification of communities as Ava Guarani, the Mbya Guarani and the Paĩ Tavyterã/Guarani-Kaiowa than as members of interethnic divisions of those large sub-groups (Glauser & Villagra 2021). This proves that, instead of any rigid separation, there is resistance in vulnerability: that is, resistance is a resource of vulnerability, because the latter is induced and maintained by relations of dependency that should be exposed and challenged (Butler *et al.* 2016). This means that vulnerability, typically produced and used by dominant groups to shore up their privileges, can become a critical relational force undermining subjectification through a myriad of objects, bodies and demands. Against a spurious order, the Indigenous person is the ‘bearer of the nonlaw’ (Badiou 2009) exactly because he/she bears the possibility of justice. As claimed by Badiou (2009: 159), an illegal state typically has the veil of legality and pretends to observe the constitutional order, but really justice only arises when what is ‘supposedly illegal’ becomes the legal norm.

Paraguay, like most other Global South nations, is inserted in globalised markets with a baggage of accumulated deficits and unfulfilled grassroots demands. Despite the fact that the country is currently a major exporter of agribusiness commodities, the dominant geographical force is the sharp actualisation of subtraction. This is just like the past, when colonisation and conservative national development not only promoted, but also depended on subtraction. From the perspective of the beneficiaries of such fabricated vulnerabilities (reactionary politicians, farmers and land-grabbers, in particular), the socio-political place of the Indigenous Paraguayan is the non-space of the offsite (cf. Badiou 2009) that is always there, constantly creating tension in the status quo, but never recognised as a legitimate part. Subtraction is basically the name of an ongoing Indigenous genocide (Ioris 2021) that steadily removes something of what was left. However it is likewise resisted, day-by-day, because the Indigenous person is and can be much more than what is allowed in the prevailing socio-spatial order. The reaction of Indigenous peoples, in strategic

<sup>17</sup>Correia (2023: 23) makes the disturbing point that, just like in the past when Christian missionaries were instrumental in seizing indigenous lands in Paraguay, the current ‘spread of information about rights to empower Indigenous peoples’ is a new form of ‘evangelisation’ carried out by activist anthropologists and Indigenists.

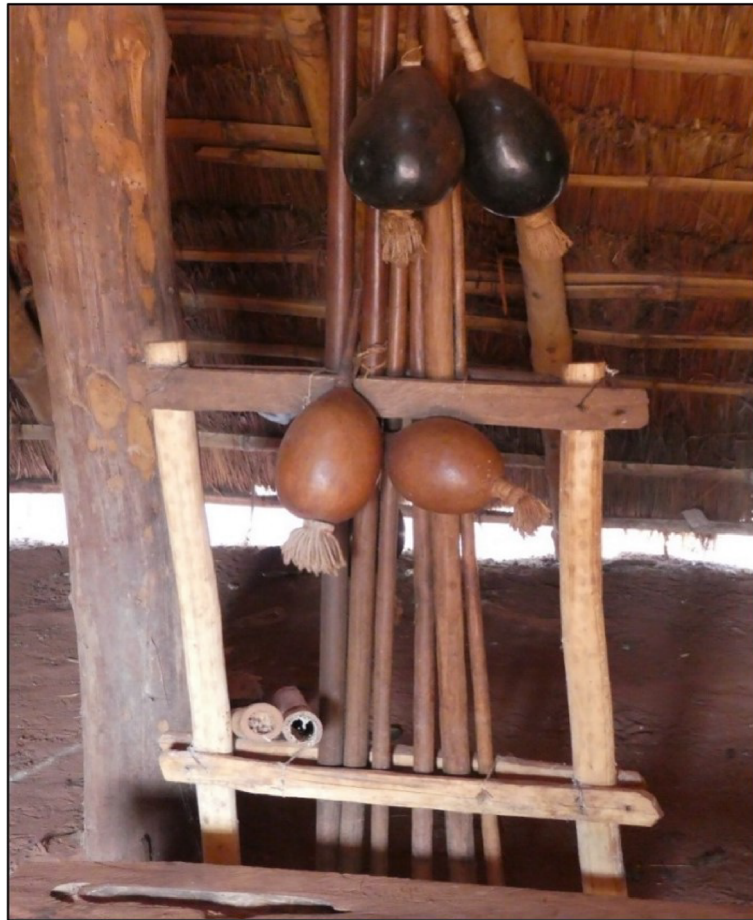


Figure 7. Musical-religious Paĩ Tavyterã instruments, key elements of their existence and political mobilisation (January 2023); photograph by the author.

association with other sectors of the working class and social movements, comes in the form of ingenious resistance and multiple anti-subtraction responses. This means that decolonisation is, first and foremost, an anti-subtraction movement that in Paraguay aims at reverting the less-than-nothing condition caused by the interconnected evolution of land-grabbing, racism and neoliberalised agribusiness.

## Acknowledgements

Financial support from The British Academy is deeply appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. This text benefited from the database and publications in the libraries of Cardiff University, Edinburgh University, DIIS (Copenhagen) and Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain). The author wants to warmly acknowledge the attention and the support received from various Indigenous community members, their religious and political leaders, and in particular the Asociación Paĩ Tavyterã Jopotyra and the Asociación Paĩ Retaã

Joaju, and also the partnership with members of the Grupo de Estudios Ancestrales Ary Ojeasojava, and the various organisations and individuals interviewed in Asunción and Amambay. Finally, he thanks the handling editor and the extremely helpful comments of two knowledgeable referees that helped to improve the paper.

## References

- Abente-Brun, D. (1999), 'Latin America's imperiled progress: "people power" in Paraguay', *Journal of Democracy*, 10(3): 93–100. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1999.0041>
- Agamben, G. (1998), *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Trans. D. Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press).
- Americas Quarterly* (3 January 2023), 'Meet the candidates: Paraguay'. <https://americasquarterly.org/article/meet-the-candidates-paraguay>
- Ávalos, C. (2013), *La Otra Cara de HC* (Asunción, Editorial El Lector).
- Badiou, A. (2009), [2006], *Logics of World: Being and Event*, 2, Trans. A. Toscano (London, Continuum).
- Barker, A.J. & Pickerill, J. (2020), 'Doings with the land and sea: decolonising geographies, indigeneity, and enacting place-agency', *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(4): 640–62.
- Bertoni, M.S. (1922), *La Civilización Guaraní* (Puerto Bertoni, Alto Paraná, Imprenta y Edición 'Ex Sylvis'). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519839863>
- Blaser, M. (2010), *Storytelling Globalization from the Chaco and Beyond* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press). <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11cw0jf>
- Brezza, L.M. (2016), 'La Conmemoración del Bicentenario de la Independencia de Paraguay: un balance', *Boletín Americanista*, 73: 117–34.
- Butler, J., Gambetti, Z. & Sabsay, L. (eds) (2016), *Vulnerability in Resistance* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822373490>
- Cadogan, L. (1962), 'Aporte a la etnografía de los Guaraní del Amambái, Alto Ypané', *Revista de Antropología*, 10(1/2): 43–91. <https://doi.org/10.11606/2179-0892.ra.1962.110425>
- Carvalho, F.A.L. (2023), 'Formal and informal alliances between Iberians and natives in the heart of late eighteenth-century South America', *Ethnohistory*, 70(1): 65–93. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-10117282>
- Castilho, A.L. & Bassi, B.S. (17 November 2017), 'Latifundiários Brasileiros Acusados de Tráfico têm Fazendas no Paraguai', *De Olho Nos Ruralistas*. <https://deolhonosruralistas.com.br/deolhonoparaguai/2017/11/17/latifundiarios-acusados-de-trafico-de-drogas-brasileiros-tem-fazendas-no-paraguai>
- Cerna Villagra, P.S. (2014), 'Los Censos Indígenas en Paraguay: entre el auto-reconocimiento y la discriminación', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 20(3): 423–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13260219.2014.995878>
- Charlevoix, P.-F.-X. (1769), [1757], *The History of Paraguay. Containing Amongst many other new, Curious, and Interesting Particulars of that Country, a Full and Authentic Account of the Establishments Formed there by the Jesuits, from Among the Savage Natives, in the very Centre of Barbarism: Establishments Allowed to have Realized the Sublime Ideas of Fenelon, Sir Thomas More, and Plato* (London, Lockyer Davis, printer to the Royal Society).
- Chase-Sardi, M. (1989), 'Situación de los Indígenas en el Paraguay', *América Indígena*, 49(3): 419–30.
- CODEHUPY (2022), *Derechos Humanos en Paraguay 2022* (Asunción, Coordinadora de Derechos Humanos del Paraguay).

- Conselho Indigenista Missionário (2 May 2023), 'Lançamento: soja, milho e pecuária dominam 60% de território do povo Avá-Guarani (PR), revela estudo'. <https://cimi.org.br/2023/05/lancamento-soja-milho-e-pecuaria-dominam-60-de-territorio-do-povo-ava-guarani-pr-revela-estudo>
- Correia, J.E. (2021), 'Reworking recognition: indigeneity, land rights, and the dialectics of disruption in Paraguay's Chaco', *Geoforum*, 119: 227–37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.11.014>
- Correia, J.E. (2023), *Disrupting the Patrón: Indigenous Land Rights and the Fight for Environmental Justice in the Paraguayan Chaco* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press). <https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.151>
- Costa, W. (8 March 2023), 'Transnational Guarani Land defense and solidarity', North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA). <https://nacla.org/transnational-guarani-land-defense-and-solidarity>
- DGEEC (2014), *Pueblos Indígenas en el Paraguay: Resultados Finales de Población y Viviendas 2012*, III Censo Nacional de Población y Viviendas para Pueblos Indígenas (Asunción, Dirección General de Estadística, Encuestas y Censos).
- Domingo, P. (2012), 'De la «Provincia Gigante de Indias» à la «Tierra en Medio de la Mar»: L'Espace Paraguayen aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles (1534–1617)' *E-Spania [online]*, 14. <http://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/21861>; <https://doi.org/10.4000/e-spania.21861>
- Elliott, J.E. (1980), 'Marx and Schumpeter on capitalism's creative destruction: a comparative restatement', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 95(1): 45–68. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1885348>
- Englert, S.P. (2022), *Settler Colonialism: An Introduction* (London, Pluto Press). <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2x6f052>
- Escobar, T. (2018), 'What happened at Curuguaty? The coup and the limits of hegemonic thought', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 27(1): 5–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569325.2017.1420637>
- Espíndola Oviedo, S. (2021), 'Las "Olas no Enumeradas" en los feminismos contemporáneos. Reflexiones a partir de los feminismos indígenas', *Revista Suplemento Antropológico*, 56(2): 147–62.
- Flecha, V. (2016), *Breve Historia del Paraguay*, 3rd edn (Asunción, Servilibro).
- Foucault, M. (2002), [1969], *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (London, Routledge).
- Galeano, E. (1981), [1971], *Las Veines Overtas de l'Amérique Latine: Une Contre-Histoire*, Trans. C. Couffon (Paris, France Loisirs).
- García Loaeza, P. & Garrett, V.L. (eds) (2015), *The Improbable Conquest: Sixteenth Century Letters from the Río de la Plata* (University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University Press). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780271066585>
- Glauser, M. & Villagra, R. (2021), 'Procesos de despojo y re-territorialización contemporáneos de los Pueblos Ava Guaraní, Mbya Guaraní y los Pa'i Tavyterã de la Región Oriental del Paraguay', *Revista de Estudios e Pesquisas Sobre as Américas*, 14(3): 103–40.
- Grünberg, F.P. & Grünberg, G. (eds) (2014), *Los Guaraní: Persecución y Resistencia* (Quito, Abya-Yala).
- Guereña, A. & Rojas, L. (2016), *Yvy Jára. Los Dueños de la Tierra en Paraguay* (Asunción, Oxfam Paraguay).
- Hallward, P. (2003), *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press).
- Hart, J. (2021), *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction*, 2nd edn (Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press).
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1977), [1807], *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford, Oxford University Press).

- Hetherington, K. (2013), 'Beans before the law: knowledge practices, responsibility, and the Paraguayan soy boon', *Cultural Anthropology*, 28: 65–85. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2012.01173.x>
- Hetherington, K. (2020), *The Government of Beans: Regulating Life in the Age of Monocrops* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478007487>
- Horst, R.H.D. (2007), *The Stroessner Regime and Indigenous Resistance in Paraguay* (Gainesville, FL, University Press of Florida).
- Ioris, A.A.R. (2016), 'Rent of agribusiness in the Amazon: a case study from Mato Grosso', *Land Use Policy*, 59: 456–66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2016.09.019>
- Ioris, A.A.R. (2017), *Agribusiness and the Neoliberal Food System in Brazil: Frontiers and Fissures of Agro-neoliberalism* (London, Routledge).
- Ioris, A.A.R. (2020), 'Ontological politics and the struggle for the Guarani-Kaiowa world', *Space and Polity*, 24(3): 382–400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562576.2020.1814727>
- Ioris, A.A.R. (2021), *Kaiowicide: Living through the Guarani-Kaiowa Genocide* (Lanham, MD, Lexington Books).
- Ioris, A.A.R. (2022), 'Guarani-Kaiowa's political ontology: singular because common', *Cultural Studies*, 36(4): 668–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2021.1913200>
- Ioris, A.A.R. (2023), 'Making the Amazon a frontier: where less space is more', *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, 24(1): 64–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2021.1884579>
- Ioris, A.A.R., Colman, R.S. & Goettert, J.D. (eds) (2021), *Pequenas Geografias Guarani e Kaiowá: Relatos* [Guarani and Kaiowá small geographies: personal reports] (Curitiba, Appris).
- IWGIA (2022), *The Indigenous World 2022* (Copenhagen, The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs).
- IWGIA (2023), *The Indigenous World 2023* (Copenhagen, The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs).
- Kauanui, J.K. (2018), *Paradoxes of Hawaiian Sovereignty: Land, Sex, and the Colonial Politics of State Nationalism* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822371960>
- Kleinpenning, J.M.G. (1987), *Man and Land in Paraguay* (*Latin America Studies*, 41; Amsterdam, CEDLA).
- Kleinpenning, J.M.G. (2009), *Rural Paraguay 1870–1963: A Geography and Progress, Plunder and Poverty, Volume 2* (Madrid and Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana and Vervuert).
- Kohlhepp, G. (1984), 'Colonización y desarrollo dependiente en el Oriente Paraguayo', *Revista Geográfica*, 99: 5–33.
- Lambert, P. & Nickson, A. (eds) (2013), *The Paraguay Reader: History, Culture, and Politics* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press). <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822395393>
- La Nación (24 October 2022), 'EPP aterrorizó a comunidad pãitavyterã, relata hermana del líder indígena asesinado'. <https://www.lanacion.com.py/politica/2022/10/24/epp-aterorizo-a-comunidad-pai-tavytera-relata-hermana-del-lider-indigena-asesinado>
- Lefebvre, H. (1991), *The Production of Space*, Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, Blackwell).
- MAG (2023), *VI Censo Agropecuario Nacional (CAN 2022)* (Asunción, Dirección de Censos y Estadísticas Agropecuarios, Ministro de Agricultura y Ganadería).
- Martins, L. (ed.) (1972), *Amérique Latine: Crise et Dépendance* (Paris, Éditions Anthropos).
- Maybury-Lewis, D. & Howe, J. (1980), *The Indian Peoples of Paraguay: Their Plight and their Prospects* (Cambridge, MA, Cultural Survival).
- Meyer, S.A. (2018), 'Paraguay: the uneven trajectory', in Kline, H.F., Wade, C.J. & Wiardapp, H.J. (eds), *Latin American Politics and Development*, 9th edn (New York, Routledge), 265–82, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429495045-17>

- Morínigo Villalba, A., Agüero Moreno, A. & Bonzi Vera, A.R. (2021), *La Tierra es Nuestra. ¿Y Ahora Qué?* (Asunción, Tierraviva/Grupo Sunu).
- OAS (2001), *Third Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Paraguay*, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.110. Doc.52, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Washington, DC, Organization of American States).
- Ominami, C. (ed.) (1988), *Amérique Latine: Les Ripostes a la Crise* (Paris, Éditions L'Harmattan).
- Palau, T. & Heikel, M.V. (2022), *Los Campesinos: El Estado y las Empresas en la Frontera Agrícola*, 3rd edn (Asunción, Base IS).
- Pincus., J. (1968), *The Economy of Paraguay* (New York, Praeger).
- Raya, E.M. & Rodríguez, I.M. (2016), 'The Paraguayan state and the Indigenous population: the immigrant collective in the interwar period, 1870–1932', *Boletín Americanista*, 73: 99–116.
- Recalde, L.R.D. (2013), 'Paraguay: interrupción al proceso de consolidación de la democracia', *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 33(1): 303–24. <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-090X2013000100015>
- Resumen de Noticias (24 October 2023), 'Líder indígena asesinado en Amambay tras violenta disputa'. <https://www.rdn.com.py/2023/10/24/lider-indigena-asesinado-en-amambay-tras-violenta-disputa>
- Roulet, F. (1993), *La Resistencia de los Guaraní del Paraguay a la Conquista Española (1537–1556)* (Posadas, Editorial Universitaria de Misiones).
- Samaniego, M. (1968), 'Textos míticos Guaraníes', *Suplemento Antropológico*, 3(1–2): 373–423.
- Souchaud, S. (2002), *Pionniers Brésiliens au Paraguay* (Paris, Karthala).
- Stanford, K., Cappetta, A., Ahn, R. & Macias-Konstantopoulos, W. (2021), 'Sex and labor trafficking in Paraguay: risk factors, needs assessment, and the role of the health care system', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(9–10): 4806–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518788364>
- Tucker, J. (2020), 'Outlaw capital: accumulation by transgression on the Paraguay–Brazil border', *Antipode*, 52(5): 1455–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12656>
- Última Hora (1 March 2023), 'Civiles armados amenazan con vender tierras indígenas'. <https://www.ultimahora.com/civiles-armados-amenazan-vender-tierras-indigenas-n3050970.html>
- Veltmeyer, H. (2022), *América Latina en la Vorágine de la Crisis: Extractivismos y Alternativas* (Bielefeld, Bielefeld University Press). <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2sbm7k1>
- Voltaire (2005), [1759], *Candide, or Optimism*, Trans. T. Cuffe (London, Penguin).
- Wicker, H.R. (1989/1990), 'Yvytyi-cutting the Earth: Indian land rights strategies in Eastern Paraguay', *Bulletin de la Société Suisse des Américanistes*, 53/54: 109–24.
- Williams, J.H. (1972), 'Paraguayan isolation under Dr. Francia: a re-evaluation', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 52(1): 102–22. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-52.1.102>
- Wolfe, P. (1999), *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London, Cassell).
- Yaluff, Y. (2006), 'Las dinámicas territoriales del Paraguay Oriental: configuraciones y movimientos actuales', *Población y Desarrollo*, 31: 43–57.

## About the author

**Antonio A.R. Ioris** is a reader in political geography and director of the MSc in Environment and Development at the School of Geography and Planning,

Cardiff University. Among his recent books are *Kaiowcide: Living through the Guarani-Kaiowa Genocide* (2021, Rowman and Littlefield) and *Agriculture, Environment and Development: International Perspectives on Water, Land and Politics* (2022, Springer). One of his main ongoing research projects is *Guarani Beyond Borders: Healing Fragmentation and Sharing Indigeneity*, supported by the British Academy.