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Joel E. Correia, *Disrupting the Patrón: Indigenous Land Rights and the Fight for Environmental Justice in Paraguay's Chaco*, Oakland: University of California, 2023. ISBN: 978-0-520-39310-3 (paper); ISBN: 978-0-520-39311-0 (ebook)
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Across the Americas, rising Indigenous movements for "land back" demand land return while invoking and enacting radical visions for worlds otherwise. Amid bleak landscapes of crises and despair, land back forges pathways toward more just futures where enlivened Indigenous sovereignties protect the sacred and enact more expansive environmental justice(s).

Joel Correia's *Disrupting the Patrón: Indigenous Land Rights and the Fight for Environmental Justice in Paraguay's Chaco* is an essential contribution to discussions on land back, settler colonialism, state power, and "Indigenous environmental justice" (p.8). With careful ethnographic attention and astute geographic sensibility, the book traces the land struggles of the Enxet and Sanapaná people in Paraguay's Chaco region. There, cows outnumber people 50:1 and racial state projects orient toward enabling cattle life while they directly or indirectly "let die" Indigenous peoples. Resisting their dispossession and seeking land back at each moment, Enxet and Sanapaná struggles shaped and continue to shape regional racial geographies. The book attends to the long histories of settler colonialism while focusing on transformed Indigenous–state relations in the wake of several Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) rulings which awarded both groups land restitution for human rights abuses (court cases in 2005, 2006, and 2012). *Disrupting the Patrón* traces the struggles of three communities—the Yakye Axa, Sawhoyamaxa, and Xákmok Kásek—from initial dispossession through three decades of land back claims in different forums. Despite the historic IACHR wins, these legal promises yet remain unfulfilled. This dilemma sets up the universal applicability of these specific stories in the yawning gap between the formal recognition of rights and their substantive enactment. To explain this gap, Correia argues that active state capacities orchestrated a "biopolitics of neglect" (p.24) through "*legal liminality*: spaces, situations, and subjects that simultaneously lie within and outside the juridical order" (p.4). In consort with hollow performances of caretaking, these dynamics allow state officials to claim movement toward compliance with the IACHR

settlements even as they enable brutal settler geographies which undermine the collective life of the Exnet and Sanapaná. In this review, I focus on a few of the productive lines of inquiry carried forward in Correia's work: the entanglements of settler colonialism and racial capitalism; enactments of state power through neglect and bureaucratic arbitrariness; and social movement strategy.

Disrupting the Patrón thinks racial capitalism and settler colonialism together, contributing to urgent dates (Byrd et al. 2018; Koshy et al. 2022) and locating contemporary Enxet and Sanapaná struggles in much longer histories and entangled racial geographies. Contesting the traditional Marxist emphasis on labor, scholars of settler colonialism center land dispossession and the drive toward native elimination as foundational to capitalist expansion and its enabling state forms (Coulthard 2014; Wolfe 2006). In this lineage of thought, Tuck and Yang's influential "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor" (2012) effectively centered Indigenous struggle and inaugurated land back for a broader audience, but also created a false hierarchy between land/labor, settler colonialism/capitalism, and the material/symbolic (Garba and Sorentino 2020). Moving beyond these hierarchies, Correia—like the editors of a new volume proposing the analytic "colonial racial capitalism" (Koshy et al. 2022)—seeks to grasp the entanglements, mutations, and recursive relations between both structures of domination. To the devastatingly familiar story of land dispossession to make way for settler life, in this case entangled with cows ("settler colonialism's ultimate companion species" [p.32]), Correia shows that Anglican missionaries and later German ranchers required Indigenous labor to support the shifting racial geographies of ranching. While the *patrón* (landowner)—and the economic system—depended on the labor of Indigenous "peons", this relation of dependency was and is erased through racist narratives of the "productive pioneer" (p.34)—and "lazy natives". We know that capital accumulates by "producing and moving through relations of severe inequality among human groups" (Melamed 2015: 77). Racism produces and justifies these inequalities, and here Correia demonstrates the violent symbolic systems enabling mass labor and land theft. Good books spark questions, and Correia's has me puzzling over the relations between settler colonialism and racial capitalism. Are they different racialized logics within an overarching,

albeit intensely differentiated system (akin to the colonial racial capitalism proposal) or two distinct, if overlapping, structures of violence?

Correia emphasizes land dispossession as an "environmental harm" (p.7) and Enxet and Sanapaná struggles for land back as "Indigenous environmental justice". Here Correia joins with others (Pulido and De Lara 2018; Ranganathan 2016, 2017; Whyte 2013), arguing that environmental justice must expand beyond "distributional and procedural issues" to tend to "the capabilities of collectives and communities to live well on their own terms" (p.162). In a beautiful show of these capacities, members of the Xákmok Kásek community quickly rebuilt relations with land after state officials returned 7,701 hectares of their traditional homeland (of the 10,001 hectares recommended by the IACHR). This "vital pedagogy" (p.136) signals a different ontology of land. Here we only get glimpses of Enxet and Sanapaná land ontologies, even as we know they stand in stark opposition to the dominant extractive, death-making land ontology oriented toward (increasingly bleak) settler futures. Amid the devastation, Correia highlights these moments of agency, resistance, and Indigenous world-making—including a three-day, intermittent road blockade in which the Xákmok Kásek outsmart the cops and dance other relations into being on the Trans-Chaco Highway (the ultimate settler infrastructure). For those of us committed to "transformative theory", in bell hooks' (1996) sense, Correia's attunement to possibility and resistance, his refusal to narrate totalizing capitalist closure, is welcome.

Indeed, *Disrupting the Patrón* shows how these communities use all available tools to strive for more just futures for their families, community, and future generations. This includes actions that break the law, like road blockades or land occupations, actions one leader calls "above" or "in addition to" (p.129) the law, and another describes as the "self-implementation" of the IACHR rulings (p.115). Correia terms this double recourse to official and extralegal strategies as the "dialectics of disruption" (p.4). Here, I longed for more comparative analysis with other movements—Indigenous and otherwise—as well as grounding within social movement literature to contextualize this dialectic. From the American Indian Movement's occupation of Alcatraz Island to unemployed Argentine *piqueteros* blocking roads and taking over factories, disruption and legal violation are core to social struggle, rather than a unique

characteristic of these movements. Capturing a resonant "dialectic of disruption", Faranak Miraftab (2009) describes how South African housing activists use both "invited" and "invented spaces of participation". Indeed, the surprise, perhaps, is not that the Enxet and Sanapaná turned to strategies "in addition" to the law, but rather than they waited so long—three decades—before doing so. As shown throughout the book, the shadow of the *patrón* is long, as are its multiple expressions as empowered individual (boss, landlord, and master), racialized class hierarchy, and the "patterns" of the racialized settler-colonial order.

From Fanon (1963) to Coulthard (2014) to Moreton-Robinson (2015), decolonial scholars urge attention to continuities between overt systems of native elimination/erasure/assimilation to more covert programs of domination couched in recognition, rights, and reconciliation. Enxet and Sanapaná struggles offer important windows onto these dynamics as they navigate the IACHR's legal recognition of (a small portion of) their land claims. Correia's ethnography of state practice here shines, as he demonstrates the everyday legal practices which produce Indigenous Paraguayans as simultaneously inside and outside the law, an ambiguous state of affairs that produces chronic—indeed inherent—delays and intractable bureaucratic Gordian knots, what he calls "legal liminality". Echoing Hetherington's (2011) work on the politics of paper hindering *campesino* land claims in rural Paraguay, Correia shows how the land restitution bureaucracy creates endless, nearly insurmountable obstacles: from demonstrating tribal membership to conducting official land surveys to the deeper epistemological disputes over whose land claims count. If state officials deny Indigenous rights through a "biopolitics of neglect", state officials also engage shallow performances of care—from grossly overstating their emergency food deliveries to tragicomic spectacles where state officials, including the president, distribute a super-sized land restitution check and soccer balls while an emcee narrates the events as if it's a game show (p.153-154). *Disrupting the Patrón* makes clear that justice—both an "aporia" (p.10) and a "political horizon that we cannot turn away from" (p.159)—will never be enacted through recourse to state-sanctioned spaces alone. Yet, unlike more hardline skeptics of the politics of recognition, Correia does not abandon state spaces as key sites of contestation. To be sure, the field of power called the state does, at least for now, retain the material and symbolic power to extend or deny land claims. Further, his

interlocutors engage both an inside and outside game. Yet given the strong critique of the "grievance claims" approaches, I would have appreciated more discussion of Correia's analytic and political choices here, including reflections about how Enxet and Sanapaná land struggles articulate (or not) with broader assertions rooted in Indigenous sovereignty.

Since Correia's gaze is trained on Enxet and Sanapaná struggles, we don't see the flipside of legal liminality, that is, how ranching elites likely mobilize this ambiguous grey zone to their own advantage. Indeed, Correia's work on legal liminality resonates with my own, in which I find state officials manage poor street vendors in a Paraguayan border town through "regulation by ambiguity" (Tucker 2017b) and legal, spatial, temporal, and affective uncertainties (Tucker 2017a). Furthermore, I find that state projects use legal flexibilities and grey spaces to create immense arenas of elite profiteering in Paraguay's dynamic border trade—what I call accumulation by transgression (Tucker 2023). In concert with other scholars of state practice (Auyero 2011; Das and Poole 2004; Gupta 2012), our work in Paraguay shows how state power can work through confusions, ambiguities, doublings, and delays. Furthermore, these state practices are a "hallmark of settler power" (p.4)—and state power—rather than a sign of its absence, incompleteness, or failure.

Correia's ethnographic practice is clearly rooted in care, reciprocity, and long-term commitment. However, we do not see much of his research choices or the associated negotiations of power/knowledge that accompany all ethnographies (and indeed all knowledge projects). Correia does not disclose his race/class positionality, nor reflect on how it shapes the claims made in the book. The implications of conducting research in Guaraní and Spanish with Exnet and Sanapaná speakers is not discussed with specificity. Without making visible the frictions and slippages that accompany knowledge projects across difference, the ethnographer, at times, comes off as an unproblematic conduit of truth, rather than an active agent shaping the story in ways that are always influenced by their social location. Meaningfully enacting land back, and justice more broadly, requires thoughtful allyship and accountable solidarity across difference. It is a missed opportunity that we don't learn more about these kinds of negotiations across difference that are the conditions of possibility for this book.

Disrupting the Patrón is a superb ethnography of Indigenous environmental justice as well as a nuanced account of the possibilities and challenges of land back. It deserves to be widely read by scholars and practitioners of all stripes.

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