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Tourism Extractivism in **Tourist Corridors** in the **Triple Border** (Misiones Province, Argentina)

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Abstract | Large-scale tourism appears to be an unavoidable event in the Iguazu area, and it is growing permanently. Tourism is an activity that is promoted as being allied with the preservation of natural resources and a provider of employment opportunities which have a significant impact on territorial organisation. In this case, the structuring resource of the tourism proposal is the Iguazu Falls. This paper analyses the various paradoxes of promoting "green tourism" in the Iguazu area from a perspective focused on the role of Indigenous communities in the area. The paper focuses particularly on the debates surrounding green tourism in areas of traditional indigenous occupation. Methodologically, the research is supported on ethnographic records stemming from fieldwork and workshops with key tourism actors in the region, as well as sources produced for tourism promotion generated in the last three years in the town of Puerto Iguazu (Misiones, Argentina).

Keywords | tourism, Indigenous peoples, environment, territory, extractivism

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1. Introduction

The territorial uses carried out by Indigenous populations seem to pose a challenge to the "sustainable development" model of late capitalism. Territories with ancestral Indigenous occupation are seen as spaces that hinder the expansionist logics of capitalism to such an extent that their formal recognition remains a historical debt that has yet to be fully addressed (Braticevic & Vitale, 2014; Papalia, 2012; Hirsch & Lorenzetti, 2016; Vitale, 2014).

In Argentina, the criteria for preserving territories for conservation purposes and their use by Indigenous populations have not been sufficiently reconciled, resulting in various tensions in territorial configurations (Carenzo & Trentini, 2013; Ferrero, 2018). The general rule has also been the expulsion of Indigenous populations from the territories to be preserved, along with increased pressures on their lands from the market and different population groups. As in the Chilean case analysed by Beer (2023), in Argentina, the reserve spaces are spheres that aim to counteract the generalised extractivist model. But in the case of this study, in order to sustain this preserved space, a high-impact tourism model is promoted.

Each country in the region has developed certain specificities in the regulation and administration of spaces incorporated into occupation and use dynamics, based on various exploitation projects. The objective of this work is to examine the impacts, contradictions, and ambiguities created by large-scale tourism in the Iguazú area (Triple Border), which have affected the Mbya Guaraní communities and their ancestral territories. Specifically, it seeks to demonstrate how the spatial appropriation dynamics driven by the tourism industry have shaped the use of the land and the relationships of Indigenous communities with their environment, particularly in terms of territorial loss and the transformation of their ways of life.

Iguazú is an area of triple international border (Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay), bordered only by water and inhabited by Indigenous people. It is the area with the highest Indigenous population density in the province of Misiones and its population is located in territories that have been bordered by tourist developments and environmental preservation areas. Within this scheme, the province of Misiones (Argentina) stands out as the area with the largest native forest reserve (Brown, Martinez Ortiz, Acerbi & Corcuera, 2006). Especially in Iguazu, since it is a hydrographic and international triple border area, unique conditions are established to

investigate preservation policies in relation to the development of tourism projects in areas of Indigenous Mbya Guaraní[4] occupation.

Figure 1: Triple Frontier map with 600 hectares area.

Source: google maps, authors' edition

This region is home to the main enticements of the area and is one of the places in Argentina that attracts a significant volume of domestic and international tourism centred around the Iguazu Falls, located within a public area protected as a National Park and Reserve, established in 1934. According to the Tourism Observatory Report of Misiones (in Spanish: *Informe Observatorio de Turismo de Misiones)*, in 2017, the hotel occupancy in this area averaged 260,000 monthly, with relatively stable levels of occupancy that did not allow for the definition of high and low seasons. This indicated a long-standing and steady tourism movement. However, the number of tourists, both Argentinians and foreigners, visiting the communities is

[4]The Mbya Guaraní people live in regions of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina, often in the vicinity of jungle areas. The Triple Frontier map shows the rivers that delimit Brazil and Paraguay from Argentina, and the Iguazú National Park represents the most preserved area. Four of the communities located in Puerto Iguazú are located in the 600 hectares delimited in yellow.

considerably lower, as only interested tourists who are sensitive to ethnic issues seek these alternatives.

The transversality of tourism had been gaining importance in our ethnographic research agendas as an essential aspect of the daily life of the Indigenous communities with whom we had been building relationships in the field (see Methodology section). This context of "*touristification*" (Bertoncello, 2008) shaped the different issues, concerns, and interests of our Mbya Guarani interlocutors; therefore, the project proposal aimed to explore how the territorial spaces and the environment – as indispensable dimensions for sustaining community life – were strongly influenced by this economic activity.

As it is known, many native populations in Latin America have experienced situations of forced displacement, enclosures, and confinement, resulting from the implementation of productive fronts in their territories at different scales and associated with various economic activities (Llancaqueo, 2005; Svampa, 2021). In Iguazú, the territory of ancestral occupation has been modified over time for the benefit of tourism and the forestry industry.

Large-scale tourism commodifies all resources for its own benefit, as do all extractive industries (Gudynas, 2009; Korstanje, 2012; Honkanen-Chagoya, 2024). The most extended use of extractivism has been applied to industries such as mining, hydrocarbons, or agricultural livestock, which involve a significant impact and transformation of the environment in which they operate. In Iguazú, tourism generates relevant impacts in the organisation of the natural sources, making limits (Svampa & Viale, 2020; Schmidt, 2018; Wharen, 2016). The Indigenous populations of Iguazú inhabit a territory framed by the forestry industry, large-scale tourism and preserved territories. In this context, the populations have entered a dialogue with the tourism industry in a particular way that will be analysed in the present study. As Kostanje (2012) points out, the concept of cultural tourism is debated (Clark & Cahir, 2003) and describing it as the opposite of mass tourism does not seem to have a basis.

Focusing specifically on the socio-environmental impact, this becomes a key element in understanding the pressures of extractivism, both in the affected spaces and in the social relationships that intertwine (Klier & Folguera, 2017). From this standpoint, this text reflects on the paradoxes of promoting green tourism, due to the fact that, while it enables community and indigenous tourism, it also intersects an extractivist logic of appropriation and privatisation that tends to expand in a progressive and sustained manner. It allows to question the margins it creates and recreates for the recognition and sustainability of Indigenous territories.

First, the present text clarifies the conceptual framework from which we engage in dialogue into the particularities of the case presented here. The discussion draws the interpretations of works that debate the dynamics imposed by extractive productive activities and those that refer to the modalities and agendas of community tourism.

Secondly, it presents the methodological coordinates that guided the fieldwork in order to reconstruct certain milestones that marked turning points to be considered and to outline our data collection. Thirdly, it reconstructs the tourism initiatives of the Mbya Guaraní communities settled in the area known as the "600 hectares" through exchanges and field records to address concerns and discussions regarding territorial appropriations and uses, as well as their social recognition.

Lastly, it revisits some of the issues addressed in order to provide an account of how Indigenous Mbya Guaraní community tourism intertwines with large-scale tourism proposals prevailing in the Triple Border area of Iguazu (Misiones, Argentina).

2. Conceptual framework for understanding extractivist tourism

Various research studies focused on analysing neoliberal tourism proposals clearly evidence an interest in offering subaltern life experiences as a way of experiencing indigenous ways of life (Fletcher 2016, 2021; Azcárate, 2020). These proposals have a high level of international impact but have not been developed in Iguazú. On the other hand, in our research, the tours for tourism do not access people's homes, but on the contrary, they take place in public circuits. The experience included in the tourist resources offered by the Indigenous population of Iguazú is an approach to nature and narratives associated with it.

In contrast, the advance of neoliberal capitalism in this area has led to the deprivation of natural resources (such as land and water) in order to favour the development of large-scale tourism. The preservation of the territories for use as tourist scenarios has deprived the Indigenous populations of hunting, fishing, gathering, etc.

Different debates have arisen about how to address and understand the relationships between tourism at a macro and micro scale to understand its scope, particularities and modes of impact in Latin American contexts (Tolosa, 2013). Amid these coordinates, studies related to Indigenous community tourism have focused on several dimensions. In principle, they have centred on problematising the effects of tourist commodification on Indigenous communities (Enriz, 2020; Gascón, 2011; Impemba, 2013; Osorio, Rampello & González, 2017; Rodríguez

& Di Nicolo, 2019; Valverde, Maragliano & Impemba, 2015; Yasnikowski, 2016), in the performative reconfigurations of identity at play and processes of heritage-making (Cantore & Boffelli, 2017; Benedetti & Crespo, 2014), as well as the possibilities of participation-agency through self-managed projects (Brosky, 2023; Milano & Gascón, 2017; Groos & Hrubi, 2021). These studies underscore the need to reconstruct the contexts and historicity of interethnic configurations. These considerations allow us to unravel the interaction between the global and the local, considering the involvement of different sectors and issues when territories enter processes that configure a spatial continuum of tourism (Bertoncello, 2006).

In Latin America, the expansion of the agricultural frontier with genetically modified monocultures and the development of the hydrocarbon industry have been the defining elements of capital dynamics, where resource exports are a constant, as well as the nationalisation of environmental liabilities (Göbel & Ulloa, 2014; Gudynas, 2016; Svampa & Teran Mantovani, 2019). In the most contentious cases, the economic frontier expands to produce resources that are exportable commodities, leaving behind significant environmental liabilities for which the resource-managing companies are not held accountable. As Beer (2023) argues, as long as conservation is wrapped up in resource extractivism, it is difficult to understand what is meant by preservation, since the absence of extraction will produce the most relevant transformative change for territories.

In other latitudes (Clark & Cahir, 2003) it can be seen how the impact of gold mining is advancing on Indigenous territories and does not consider indigenous voices in the reconstruction of local history. Svampa and Viale (2014) problematise this situation in terms of dispossession, referring to the concrete loss of a resource and the permanent damage to others. Industries such as mining or hydrocarbons extraction exemplify these instances, as they extract non-renewable resources and require large amounts of water, which, in addition to being a scarce resource, often becomes contaminated and produces a negative impact on health. As is show by Clark and Cahir (2003), not only the resource is extracted, but the (conflictive) history of these peoples is removed from the official narratives.

As Ojeda (2016) put it, this dispossession implies a slow, day to day, and irreversible reconfiguration of space that masks what could be called a direct displacement of communities. In these cases, rather than violent expulsions, what is observed are processes of territorial enclosure that lead to a reduced capacity for decision-making by the groups on how to restructure that space and define their own ways of life. These dynamics are characterised by gradual forms of territorial curtailment, as they involve a progressive limitation in the use of

space, which, nevertheless, remains coercive. These processes not only result in the loss of territorial possession and resources, but also in the transformation of the socio-environmental relationships in that space.

In Latin America, the advances of extractive fronts have resulted in a constant loss of forested areas, causing significant changes. A report by CEPAL (2021) indicates that between the years 1990 and 2020, the proportion of regional forest cover decreased by 7 percentage points (from 53% to 46% of the territory), with 932 million hectares being deforested in 2020. The total loss of forested areas in the entire region is comparable to half the surface of Argentina. In this environmental transformation, the ways of life of the people who inhabit these areas are compromised, including, in many cases, Indigenous and peasant communities.

In Argentina, the expansion of agribusiness, linked to deforestation, did not experience a slowdown; not even during the period of maximum mobility restrictions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (Greenpeace, 2020). The evidence of this pressure is reflected in a profound restructuring of livelihoods in Indigenous and peasant communities, and in some cases, it even leads to territorial alienation through various bureaucratic and administrative procedures.

There are other forms of territorial pressure that are established in a more subtle manner, such as, for example, the development of the tourism industry. Large-scale tourism industry does not necessarily involve massive deforestation; however, it affects access limitations to territories and encourages the incorporation of local communities into its own dynamics as a survival strategy. In an attempt to mitigate the impacts brought about by agricultural-livestock-hydrocarbon-mining development, the state declares protected areas, often with high biodiversity value, but without considering the populations living in those areas. As Azcárate (2020) states, tourism allows us to think of future improvements for territories and people, although its forms (even the friendliest) continue to promote logics of capitalist accumulation. In this sense, it is an extractivist activity and, it can be said that the promotion of large-scale tourism carves out other forms of extractivism under the guise of the legitimising inducement of preserving natural resources, which is not exempt from tensions. In this interpretive key, the apparent duality between extractivism and conservation is not such, as one action complements the other, which is sometimes expressed as sacrifice zones (Lernes 2012).

As developed by Iñigo Carrera (2020), within the framework of territorial preservation projects, Indigenous populations are given an essentialised place associated with the "natural landscape",

which has implications for what is expected of them. This has a particular impact when it extends to tourism because the essentialisation of community life as part of a past scenario – that still persists – is part of a process of heritage-making that undermines indigenous agency, which becomes subsumed under the logics of commodities that can be consumed among the offerings of the promoted circuits, thus shaping their present that actually corresponds to the expectations of those involved in tourism activities. Tourism is an activity that does not allow for other ways of thinking or living and, therefore, when the Indigenous people are involved, they find themselves stuck in predatory activities (Azcárate, 2020).

In this context, in the provincial area of Misiones, the delimitation of public and private areas of land assigned to preservation which in many cases are later linked to the tourism circuit, has been promoted (Ferrero, 2013). The case of international tourism in the Iguazu region is a concrete and clear expression of these theoretical reflections. The resource offered as the beauty of the landscape is associated with the valorisation of biodiversity. Under the growing impetus of this trend, the declaration of the Iguazu Falls as a "world natural wonder" in 2011 has shaped this space as a large-scale tourist enclave, while also contributing to discussions about proposals for "Indigenous community tourism" or "alternative tourism" among Indigenous communities in the area.

In the next section, new contextual dimensions will be reintroduced, and the development of field records will be outlined. Then, it will illustrate how Indigenous community tourism challenges the mere disposition of territory and enables Indigenous people to produce a statement. It allows for the possibility to interact with the tourism industry but does so within a model of clear asymmetry.

3. Methodology

This paper is presented in the final stage of the project "Environment and Indigenous Territory in the Triple Border[5]." Within the framework of this project, we have approached the tense relationship between tourism development and indigenous territorial sustainability in various ways. Between 2020 and 2023, this project brought together a team of specialists conducting basic research with Mbya populations. Noelia Enriz has been conducting ethnographic research

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with Mbya populations in the province of Misiones since 2003 (since 2013 in Iguazú), while Mariana Lorenzetti and Alfonsina Cantore have been doing so since 2015.

For this research we revisited, therefore, our own records, specifically audiovisual productions of visits to tourist trails in 2005, as well as field records produced between 2015 and 2021. The selection of these records allowed to trace a procedural path and highlight the reflections of the actors on tourism in general, and the years of *ASPO/DiSPO* in particular. In Argentina, on March 20th, 2020, the "Social, Preventive, and Mandatory Isolation" (*corresponding to the Spanish initials: ASPO*), and, subsequently, the "Social, Preventive, and Mandatory Distancing" (DISPO) were implemented as a containment measure against the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This not only marked a turning point in terms of population mobility but also affected the context in which the project began. It was necessary to adapt our way of working as a team while identifying emerging issues raised by an uncertain present regarding the possibility of continuing massive tourism activities as they had been carried out until then.

Upon returning to the fieldwork in late 2021, it was possible to conduct 30 interviews with key promoters of indigenous tourism, as well as to hold a workshop with the technical-administrative staff of the Iguazu National Park, members of the Mbya Guarani communities, and individuals engaged in various tourism activities. The triangulation of data contributed to some of the results presented in this text.

The interviews and workshop held at the facilities of the National Park Iguazu (PNI) allowed us to record different viewpoints in specific contexts and the plurality of voices, including state agencies, NGOs, and communities, in specific enunciation and practice contexts. Both instances facilitated the reconstruction of how perspectives were being reconfigured in light of the situation emerging from the pandemic.

The workshop was conducted by the research team and aimed to engage in dialogue regarding the process of tourism development and its relationship with the Mbya Guarani communities; to reflect on the different roles that communities have assumed in relation to tourism; and to rethink mutual interests in the dynamics of current tourism. In this exchange space, a historical analysis was carried out on the relationship between tourism and the Guarani communities of Iguazu, and discussions were held on the current situation, drawing on various connections with different organisations and institutions. This working session focused on exchanges regarding the value of interculturality conveyed in tourism promotion messages, as well as national ideals, in order to later address the impact of tourism on Indigenous territory.

These isolation and distancing measures as strategies to mitigate the SARS-COV-2 virus led to a disruption in the tourism dynamics, generating new reflections from the perspective of the actors involved. The Iguazu Falls, as a structuring resource in the area, remained significant in the social dynamics and concerns of the local inhabitants, even without the entry of tourists, as they contemplated the present and future of the tourism economy.

4. Local tourism context and indigenous territorial limitations

The Indigenous populations of Argentina constitute a significant portion of the population in statistical terms (around 1,300,000 people according to the 2022 National Population Census). However, indigenous presence has been overlooked in the discourse about the nation, in favour of an ideal that emphasises European migrations rather than the native inhabitants. This is not merely rhetoric but a process of original accumulation that focused on the expropriation of Indigenous territories by the expanding agricultural and livestock industries. In the early stages of the state formation, the Argentine territory was a vast land inhabited by Indigenous populations that were gradually marginalised, relocated, and even exterminated in the process. Today, they are presented by the national state as isolated points, which accounts for how they were displaced and marginalised by productive borders and urbanisation (Lenton et al., 2015).

The particularity of the province of Misiones in this context is that not only displacement and enclosure occurred for the development of farming and forestry industries, but the creation of protected natural areas also exerted pressure on Indigenous territories. The inflection point was the establishment of Iguazu National Park (1934), which became a reserve area marked by tourism activity. Its presence and formation led to a transformation in the area with long-lasting impact.

The accelerated development of tourism in the last 20 years has made Puerto Iguazu an area of great interest, increasing the value of land and territorial disputes (Cantore & Boffelli, 2017; Enriz, 2020; Osorio et al., 2017; Yasnikowski, 2016). As Azcárate (2020) points out, tourism is predatory because, which other extractivism enclaves, it prioritises resource extraction for capitalist gain at the expense of local lives and environments. The 2000s were crucial in terms of reconfiguring the relationship between tourism projects in the area and Indigenous communities. Large-scale tourism has affected the Mbya Guarani Indigenous population, limiting their access to land and resources, and altering their traditional forms of livelihood, mobility, and community reproduction. In this process, the communities gradually gained

recognition following the democratic transition, which became evident, for example, in the creation of schools, health centres, and the possibility of obtaining legal personality.

Despite state legislation aimed at nature conservation, the significant biodiversity and availability of resources for indigenous use have been greatly disadvantaged. In this case under study, the territory corresponds to an area of limited degradation (yellow colour[6]) according to National Act of Native Forests No. 26,331. In this area, efforts are made to generate minimal negative environmental effects, but it is allowed to be exploited for activities classified as "sustainable." This implies that Indigenous communities can make minimal use of the natural resources present there; however, the restrictions imposed on this utilisation are severe (Stecher, 2013). Activities related to scientific research and tourism are also permitted. Nonetheless, the type of tourism in this area does not always align with conservation principles, especially regarding the construction of environmentally unsustainable hotels.

The environmental legal conditions of the territory require hotel investors to incorporate conservation measures, at least in slogans. "Nature" acquires a particular symbolic value, generating tourism of special interest for a "calm and nature-connected" tourism. This discourse of harmony conceals territorial conflicts and clashes of interest regarding the use of these territories. The development of private economic interests by hotels contradicts indigenous ways of inhabiting the territory, which have maintained environmental balance for centuries (Boffelli & Cantore, 2017). However, at the same time, there are imaginaries that Indigenous people are "preservers" and "protectors" of the environment, which only serves to scrutinise their use of their territories.

As evident in the following photograph, the hotel construction process is ongoing, with the provincial government granting permits for it, and the territory that is used currently being a forested area.

[6] The National Native Forest Law categorizes conservation zones: red for those that need high conservation measures, yellow to demarcate degraded but restorable ones, and green for areas that require a low level of conservation.

Figure 2: Sign for the future construction of a hotel

Photo by Noelia Enriz and Mariana Lorenzetti (September 2022)

A paradoxical situation arises: on one hand, territorial arrangements are established to support the preservation of areas, but on the other hand, concurrently, these preserved areas are surrounded by socio-productive initiatives of extractive traits where the territory is exposed to hyper-exploitation, undermining these "conservation safeguards". In a tourism development that attempts to be labelled as "green economy", it is contrasting and impactful how, at first glance, the spaces currently occupied by Indigenous people have greater preservation and care. However, in this scenario, Indigenous people have suffered a significant loss of territory and an ongoing process of marginalisation and overcrowding.

In this sense, the international tourism model in Iguazu is extractive because it trades a natural asset in a way that jeopardises the continuity of that asset, putting its sustained presence over time at risk. Similar to monocultures, which are almost entirely exported, large-scale tourism in Iguazu is inherently international, meaning its values and fluctuations depend on external factors. It has the advantage of not producing large-scale pollution like other industries;

however, it generates immense amounts of waste generated by the tourist flow that is not treated.

From the delimitation of the PNI and the military border zones (in the 1930s) to the territorial delineations of the 600-hectare area (mid-2000s), the process has been driven by a common objective: to reduce the territory used by Indigenous communities. In an overly complex framework, Indigenous people are prohibited from autonomously traversing the PNI because it is understood to be a type of reserve where any human activity can have an impact. However, the human activities framed within tourism that take place in the park have a significant impact due to their volume (the number of daily visits is sustained throughout the year) as well as the offers which are available (such as hotels for overnight stays). Furthermore, the area historically inhabited by the Guaraní populations - the 600-hectare area – has preserved its biodiversity to such an extent that privatising it makes this resource central, and tourism in the jungle is promoted due to its unique degree of preservation in the area.

In our ethnographic research over more than a decade in the area, we have observed the growth of the Indigenous population and the socio-economic difficulties they face, as well as the negative aspects of territorial enclosure and overcrowding (Lorenzetti, Cantore, Enriz & Vitale, 2021). Currently, there are six Indigenous communities in this area, but only two have communal land ownership. In one case, the territory is shared with other communities, and in the other case, the land portion is small compared to the size of the community.

In one way or another, the communities are limited in their territorial uses due to the expansion of the urban area that has encircled them. Thus, two of the communities in the nearby area known as the "2000 hectares" are surrounded by new neighbourhoods of Iguazu. The other four are located in the area called the "600 hectares", where three of them share 254 hectares (only one of them having a deed on the land), and the remaining community is in an area designated for hotel ventures. The different situations account for the increasingly acute restrictions on territorial use and possibilities. Territorial geographical development policies for tourism exploitation have had little benefit for the Mbya Guarani communities.

The "600 hectares" area was exclusively designated for tourism activity in 2002 with the creation of the Master Plan (*Plan Maestro* in Spanish) (Nuñez, 2009). In this plan, this portion of land was specifically allocated for tourism, disregarding (denying) the presence of Indigenous populations in this space. In 2004, the largest Indigenous mobilisation in the province occurred, resulting in the granting of ownership of 254 hectares for the Mbya Guarani

people living in the area as a way to mitigate the conflict. Far from being a conquest, this led to the loss of more than half of the hectares belonging to the ancestral struggle, and Indigenous communities became surrounded by hotel ventures. In 2014, a group of Indigenous people reestablished a settlement in part of the lost area due to irregularities in a hotel venture (see the next section). This recovery was not without tensions and conflicts (Enriz, 2020).

Simultaneously with the territorial dispossession, community tourism projects began, especially those funded by NGOs dedicated to ecological rights. One of the most relevant projects in terms of Indigenous tourism in the area was the MATE project (Self-Management Model for Tourism and Employment. *MATE corresponds to the initials in Spanish*), which created training spaces for the development of autonomous tourism proposals by the communities in their own territories. The training spaces were located within the Indigenous territory itself, and channels of communication and validation of Indigenous knowledge, which would be shared publicly with tourism and those that would not, were established. Over time, the proposal gained the interest of NGOs that contributed resources to improve or sustain these proposals, but which may not necessarily be economically profitable.

The initial Indigenous tourism projects in the area seemed promising for the Indigenous population and promised to be a means of (stereotypical) visibility for the communities. These projects had the philanthropic objective of Indigenous individuals generating economic resources through tourism activities. They proposed guided visits to the communities with delimited paths within them. As a result, many families experienced sporadic and informal income, while it also brought about the reconfiguration of the social organisation of those participating (especially men).

Over time, these proposals were rethought and transformed. By the end of the 2010s, communities chose to diversify their tourism models, offering different experiences to attract a greater diversity of audiences. The diversification of proposals and actions that involve the communities enables the possibility of incorporating tourism resources into an always diversified economy. Although over the years there has been reflection on tourism activities, as community incomes are rethought, distribution is updated, new forms of participation in this industry are generated, and more and more people from the communities are included, community tourism has by no means provided sufficient resources and even less replaced the loss of the forest. On the contrary, natural resources have been destroyed and modified in the process and the communities are increasingly suffering from territorial enclosure. Next, various scenes in which tourism is reflected upon by different actors involved will be systematised,

identifying strategies and actions that aim to promote green and community tourism as an alternative.

5. Indigenous reflections for considering tourism alternatives

Some discussions developed in previous spaces will be presented with the focus on how tourism activities and the allocation of land for this purpose have led to the loss of territory and forest resources. A procedural reconstruction of the changes in space and lifestyle when the “600 hectares” became a tourist area is provided. While land was allocated for tourism and hotel ventures, projects aimed at "community tourism" began to emerge. In other words, in the few lands that the communities managed to obtain, tourism seemed like an economic alternative.

Tourism, accompanied by the communities, seemed to present a more benevolent form of land and nature utilisation. Conversely, tourism also brought about the reconfiguration of social and spatiotemporal relationships, leaving Indigenous individuals with limited freedom to organise this activity. The spatiotemporal journey reveals how "Indigenous tourism" became an unstable option, although it implied a small economic income for Guarani families. Territorial enclosure implied an enclosure in movement, use of the forest and way of life. Hence, it is an extractive activity, not only exploiting nature but also resulting in socio-environmental impacts (Ojeda, 2016; Kriel & Folguera, 2017). Through our field records we can see that the tourism activities brought hopeful changes in the beginning but, over time, were more of an impediment than a sustainable alternative.

In 2005, one of us conducted the only community visit available at that time (currently, there are more than one with diversified proposals in the communities) and recorded part of the itinerary (see methodology). Here, we present some excerpts from the conversations with the tour guide:

Guide: Many people used to say, "They [the Indigenous people] only want the land to exploit it, to sell the wood". This [the visit to the community with the presentation of hunting traps] was a way to show why we wanted the jungle, the forest... It's not to sell the fur or the meat; it's for us. [...] We are creating a crafts deposit, all together.

N: Do you go out to search for the materials for the crafts, or is everything from here?

Guide: Everything is from the forest here. The agua'i fruit, if we don't take care of it, can disappear. What doesn't exist anymore is the wood for making bows and arrows that used to be made. The old bows were made of cedar, or native trees like the alecrin

or the guayuera, but now there is little wood in these places. Also, because you can't go and take the heart of the wood. You have to wait for the tree to fall to be able to use it... Here, you see that it's all forest, even though we are close to the city, it's all forest.

N: Do you know what they are going to use those hectares that used to belong to you for?

R: Well, now they are going to build a new hotel there, the Hilton hotel. You surely saw the route they are constructing that passes through here. Well, they are building the hotel at the end of that road... and well, there was a lot of talk, the owner who will build the hotel with the chief here, because when that hotel is finished, most of those visitors will come to see this place here. That was the agreement they made (tour guide, audiovisual, community tour in 600 hectares, 2005).

Contrary to the illusion of improvements that tourism would bring, non-Indigenous proposals have been sustained with an extractivist focus that leaves little room for alternative ways of life. Allocating land for tourism ventures is incompatible with the revaluation of forest spaces. The case of Ita Poty Miri exemplifies how these resources degrade with limited recovery capacity, even when tourism is seen as an activity that is not so harmful to nature (see forest law above). The following two records illustrate these difficulties:

He told us more or less what the place was like and said that there was a Palm Grove that had been "attacked," but they needed a biologist and a lawyer for that. He said that the Guarani hadn't entered to occupy that area before because they hadn't dared to (Cacique Ita Poty Miri, joint record, 600 hectares, February 2015).

At this moment, we would like to comment that we have heard more than once that there were things that were not the same as before. For example, we are told that they had to ask another community for the roof of the OPY (a sacred indigenous space) because it couldn't be obtained here. And they tell us that they also had to ask another community for the roof of the OPY here. Before, it was very easy to find in the forest where the Tierra Guaraní hotel is now located, "they passed the bulldozer through there and took everything", they said. Another thing they couldn't do was the baskets (indigenous reference, joint registration, 600 hectares, May 2016).

As we can observe, it's not merely a matter of transforming empty landscapes from a palm grove to a lagoon, but rather the impossibility of restoring those spaces. The place that is now

inhabited by a community was an area destined for an international hotel that modified the landscape in such a way that it is irrecoverable. With the intention of building a golf course, the palm grove was burned and turned into a lagoon. In an area where people could use the resources of the forest to sustain their ways of life (such as the importance of palm roofs for the opy, a prayer house), it became a place of little usefulness for natural resources and turned into a space for contemplation. Nowadays, with the proposal to diversify tourism among the communities, this site, which is currently a lagoon, has been transformed into a bird-watching space managed by the community.

The tourist proposal as mere preservation or contemplation of nature, without connection and intertwining with it, is not a proposal that fits indigenous ways of life. Something that may not seem extractivist because it has a proposal to "look without touching" nature in order not to disturb it, has as its counterpart the removal of the history of territories and populations. "Contemplative" visits are much more than mere visual observation of nature because, mediated by an economic exchange, they bring forms of tourism that have little understanding of other ways of inhabiting the territory, about which Indigenous people reflect:

"So, for the years that I have been guiding, I have already understood what the attitude of the tourists who come to the community is, how they come and sometimes I can stop them too because I think they are encroaching on my territory. It doesn't mean that just because they have paid - that I'm paying, I have to do whatever I want. It's not that either. I repeat, that takes away our energy, takes away our desire to chat with family, with friends, to be there all the time". (President of the Mbya Guarani Tourism Association, interculturality workshop in PNI, December 9, 2021)

The ways in which tourism intervenes can be experienced as disruptive by the communities and can even have effects on the people who decide to work within that framework. The mass tourism in the Iguazu area does not align with the Mbya Guarani way of life, as the excessive and uncontrolled number of tourists alters the connection between communities and nature. In this regard, the aforementioned measures ASPO/DiSPO taken to contain the spread of COVID--19 led to a reconsideration of activities and the massiveness of tourism by the communities. The chief of a community reflected in the following terms:

"He told us that in 2020, without visits from anyone, it had served them to connect with nature (...) Also, the absence of tourism had made them remember that tourism brings a great stench because hotels have poor drainage for effluents, and that makes the community smell a lot of

sewage, and that in the absence of tourism, those smells had disappeared very quickly in a month, and they had felt the smell of plants and nature again. Neither was there any noise from cars, and the sound was more from the surroundings". (Chief Jasy Porã, joint registration, 600 hectares, October 2021)

As shown in the record, the senses such as smells and noises refer to ways of life connected with nature and not just mere observation. This does not mean that indigenous reflections propose the abolition of this economic activity. On the contrary, being aware of the advanced development of tourism and the difficulties it entails, the proposals from the communities aim at constant reflexivity regarding other forms of land use. A proposal that focuses on a connection with the senses and the possibility of measuring tourism by re-reading bodily dispositions. In this sense, in 2020, the Mbya Guarani Tourism Civil Association was created with the aim of advising and ensuring the continuity of indigenous tourism projects during the pandemic. The same association considers Indigenous community tourism as a tool for environmental, social, and cultural preservation of the communities in Misiones. Their representative expressed the difficulties of tourist massification for them as "Indigenous people":

"Santiago: Well, I just want to share an experience with tourism and what tourism means to us. The reason why that civil association has emerged in tourism is because, in reality, mass tourism or constant tourism throughout the day, a Guaraní guide or an Mbya Guaraní guide like myself, often works too much with tourism and it takes away our desire and energy. Sometimes when we come home, we don't feel like talking to our family anymore. A child comes and wants to play, but we don't feel like it. Why? Because our energy is drained by the visitors. So, it's not only mass tourism, but also the people who come all day because we also don't know with what energy, intention, or proposal they come to the community. A tourist might think, 'Oh, so-and-so told me there is a community project there, and I will pay to visit'. But it's not that the tourist can do whatever they want just because they paid. No, it's not like that either. We need to explain to them well how a community works. So, I repeat, we don't think about it, but we have a lot of energy, a lot of joy, and a lot of certainty to share. There are things that we don't show or say because they won't understand us, especially the juruá (non-indigenous people). That's why it's a weakness that makes many of us feel that they won't understand... (President of the Mbya Guarani Tourism Association, interculturality workshop in PNI, December 9, 2021)

Within the framework of reflection workshops with different actors involved in tourism in Iguazú, a referent member in indigenous tourism in the area expressed the preceding argumentation. They did so to try to show the complexity involved in incorporating Indigenous community tourism experiences. As we have been showing throughout the text, tourism emerges as a corollary of repeated territorial dispossession actions, leading to meager material conditions.

This condition already makes the incorporation of Indigenous communities into tourism a conditioned act. But what the referent member explains in the previous excerpt is that tourism practices also generate daily contradictions in the way they unfold. The speed and massiveness of the tourist experience in the area make it disrespectful to the way of life, exhausting, and questionable.

The record shows the complexity of turning a close experience into a commodified activity, and at the same time, how the fatigue from that task impacts other daily experiences necessary for the reproduction of their way of life. Tourism did not provide better living conditions for communities as expected by Indigenous people, instead, it only became another link in the chain of their survival (as food production, social programs, odd jobs, etc.).

We explain that tourism is extractivist in the sense that it exhausts the capacity of the environment. It has no policies of reconstruction or conservation and less encourages friendly interaction with people. It is also extractive in a new sense, in what the Indigenous express as the impossibility of *"hallarse*" (feel good in the place). In the other words, maintain their way of life in relation to nature.

However, it also makes it clear that the proposal for engagement with tourism becomes a way for communities to raise awareness of their living conditions, interests, and values. It is even a means to express the conditions of territorial enclosure and their participation as a subordinated actor (more than an alternative one) in economic, socio-territorial, and environmental reconfigurations.

6. Conclusions

This paper analyses the impact of tourism on Indigenous lands in the Iguazú area that particularly impacts Indigenous populations mbya guaraní and their ancestral territories. This impact is caused by both the actual alienation carried out by the provincial state and the pressure generated by the large-scale tourism industry itself. Here, tourism activity, environmental

conservationism, and agroforestry industry construct a type of spatiality where dynamics of differential spatial appropriations coalesce, shaping the ancestral indigenous use of these territories by the Mbya Guaraní.

As evidenced, the process unfolds over time, and conditions of relocation, enclosures, and territorial conditioning build a new scenario of possibilities for the communities. This tourism is predatory because it prioritises resource extraction for capitalist gain (Azcárate 2020). Large-scale tourism reduces the territory used by Indigenous communities. The impossibility of use, whether because it has been "preserved" or commercialised, leads to a transformation of the communities' relationships with their environment.

However, in this new context, tourism is seen as a means of visibility of indigenous existence. It presents itself as a strategy to attract legitimate demands. It is experienced on a daily basis, with many contradictions, but also as an opportunity to express demands and needs. Our field register could see that Indigenous people take advantage of tourism to denounce the years of cornering, territorial loss and daily conflicts with this activity. Highlighting the critiques of "top-down" sustainable tourism approaches is a key contribution to analysing "bottom-up" community tourism initiatives based on the concept of Buen Vivir, as they help strengthen Indigenous agency (Chassagne & Everingham, 2019). Empowering local communities requires that they define the parameters of sustainability based on their own practices and knowledge, enabling them to become "producers of tourism knowledge" and to counter the tendency to be reified as "objects of tourism intervention" (Chassagne & Everingham, 2019).

Tourism in the region presents itself as a friendly face of capitalism, promoting laid-back actions and offering happiness to those who visit the area. It provides communities with an additional complement to their highly diversified economies, which are also highly vulnerable due to the cumulative actions of capital extraction. The renewed interest of the communities in being part of these projects, in a condition of subalternity and within the framework of a concentrated industry, reinforces the need to produce committed research that contributes with reflections to the complexity of the process.

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