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ANGAITÉ'S RESPONSES TO DEFORESTATION

Political ecology of the livelihood and land use strategies of an indigenous community from the Paraguayan Chaco

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Angaité's responses to deforestation

The Gran Chaco, the second largest biome of South America, entered a phase of deep and fast environmental changes a few decades ago. Indigenous peoples are amongst those most affected. This dissertation focuses on the responses of the Angaité of La Patria to altered access, use and management of natural resources inside and outside their colony over the past 20 years (1995–2015). From a third-generation political ecologists' perspective, I consider the Angaité's adaptation a transformation of cosmographical practices because the latter contribute to the production of a particular place or territory and a particular understanding of the world. I focus mainly on two types of cosmographical practices: ritual practices, like the choqueo, and livelihood related practices. I explore how the Paraguayan state allowed and promoted, by de facto not recognising "La Patria territory", resource use practices that were in-compatible with certain Angaité livelihood practices. I claim that, by redefining the "political" and the "social collective", the adaptation of livelihood and land use strategies and the new patronage networks with the state and NGOs impacted the Angaité cosmography, forms of leadership, and networks of sharing. This redefinition manifests in everyday contradictions, tensions and internal political conflicts. Finally, I argue that the responses from the Angaité should be understood as part of a longer and wider process of adaptive resistance. This paradoxical term refers to the ways of sustaining existence in interaction with other worlds. The Angaité, aware of and concerned by the disempowerment these changes provoke, are trying to regain protagonism.