Agrarian Capitalism’s Genocidal Trail: The Saga of the Guarani-Kaiowa

Dr. Antonio A. R. Ioris

www.cardiff.ac.uk/geography-planning
Indigenous Genocide

- Genocide is a defining feature of the 21st century.
- A long debate to adapt and amend the definition of genocide beyond the Holocaust and the 1948 Convention.
- Indigenous genocides are still at the periphery of genocidal studies; major questions about the minimum threshold of killing, intentionality, direct responsibility, duration, inevitability, etc.
- An indigenous genocide today is typically the coordinated attempt to repress, control and annihilate indigenous peoples when they challenge frontier-making, exploitative national development and market-based globalisation.
The nexus geocide-genocides-massacres

Images from violent attacks on protests this week in Brasília (22/23 Jun 2021)
A Research on Indigenous Genocide in Brazil

Funded by the UK-AHRC; partnership Cardiff, LAB and four Brazilian universities

https://lab.org.uk/indigbrazil

Main case-study: the ongoing genocide of the Guarani-Kaiowa in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul

The second largest indigenous population in Brazil; more than 50% of the assassinations of indigenous people in recent years; loss of 98% of their land; but many attempts since the 1970s to retake their ancestral areas (the so-called retomadas)
The contemporary genocidal violence against the Guarani-Kaiowa:

KAIOWCIDE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17th-19th Century Conquest and Enslavement</th>
<th>most 20th Century Agrarian and Agribusiness frontier</th>
<th>late 20th Century Kaiowcide</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forced labour and population control</td>
<td>Assimilation, exploitation and tutelage</td>
<td>Extermination, financialisation and juridical asphyxia</td>
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1st phase of Kaiowcide (1970s-1990s)

• Initial Guarani-Kaiowa mobilisation to stop and revert land grabbing and socio-spatial marginalisation
• Large, regular assemblies (Aty Guassu and others)
• Early movement to retake areas (retomadas) illegally lost to farmers and speculators
• Farming community and police forces increasingly organise violent reactions
• Frustration of the constitutional rights secured in 1988 (result of national grassroots campaigns)
• Exponential growth of suicides (child & teenagers)
• Murder of leaders, activists and community members
Acometimento de índios guaraní: vida precária, enquanto aguardam demarcação de terras.
2nd phase of Kaiowcide (mid-1990s to 2007)

- Mounting pressures due to the steady neoliberalisation of the agribusiness economy
- Deterioration of violence associated with land struggles and the power of agrarian elites
- Tortuous court cases (endless appeals, illegalities)
- Sporadic land regularisation and some new allies (e.g. journalists, academics), but it is evident the sustained trend of killings and abuses
- In 2007, the federal government launched a comprehensive plan to restore indigenous areas (immediately frustrated)
3rd phase of Kaiowcide (2007 to 2020s)

- The **Zenith of Hell**: poverty, unemployment, child mortality and malnutrition, overpopulation, labour exploitation and regular killings
- Advance of conservative thinking, alienation and evangelical churches also in the communities
- Criminalisation of indigenous leaders, academics, anthropologists and civil servants (2007 compromise)
- Growing number of publications, documentaries and 'letters of desperation' confirm the tragedy
- Militarisation of the region; coordination between neo-fascist local and national politicians; drug traffic
Fotos retiradas do filme feito pela ASCURL. Vovô rende a cemira da terra. Parentes retiram o corpo e, segundo profissionais da ASCURL, que ainda estava vivo, para levá-lo ao hospital, que infelizmente veio a falecer durante o trajeto.

Fotos retiradas do filme feito pela ASCURL. Vovô rende a cemira da terra. Um dos vítimas morrendo e local onde foi atingido por balas de borracha.

Foto Eliel Benites. Diferentes cápsulas de armas de fogo empilhadas pelos campos onde ocorreram os ataques, juntadas para mostrar às autoridades.

Foto Eliel Benites. Momento da enterro do Clódodo, mostrando emoções entre os familiares e amigos.

Lower photos from: Benites (2021), PhD
Living through Kaiowcide

- Widespread racism and discrimination
- Alliances/impact of regional politicians on national politics (e.g. Ministers of Health and Agriculture)
- But persistent protests, denunciation and mobilisation against Kaiowcide
- Negotiation of internal community tensions AND against external pressures: combining traditional knowledge, family links, religiosity, new sources of income, ancestral symbols and references, etc.
- New opportunities and creative spaces: primary and secondary education; university degrees and jobs
The lived, contested, fought for, imagined and remembered space of the Guarani-Kaiowa
Join the #iamGuaraníKaiowa hashtag campaign

Stop indigenous genocide in Brazil

With a few celebrities' support (Paul Watson, Pierce Brosnan, ...), Plume Amazone is aiming to spread an international emergency hashtag campaign and calls for thousands of users around the world to gather to save the Guaraní-Kaiowa people by posting with the #iamGuaraníKaiowa hashtag. Once uploaded on a dedicated page, the pictures will be sent to the Brazilian President to urge him to immediately sign the certification decree for 22 indigenous Guaraní-Kaiowa territories, as imposed by the 1988 Constitution, to end land disputes motivating the annihilation of this people of 45,000 souls by big landowners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Paul Watson</td>
<td>Paris, France</td>
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<td>Pierre Richard</td>
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<td>Pierce Brosnon</td>
<td>Drogheda, Ireland</td>
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<td>Valérie CABANES</td>
<td>End Ecocide On Earth, France</td>
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<td>Gert-Peter BRUCH</td>
<td>Plume Amazone, France</td>
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<td>Jean-Marc BIORARD</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Simon M. (Cornwall, UK)</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>Marco B. (Ozira, Malta)</td>
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<td>Jéssica L. (Melbourne, Australia)</td>
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<td>Agnès V. (HOSSA, Finland)</td>
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<td>Gaët N. (Barcelona, Spain)</td>
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Prospects and Lessons Learned

- Kaiowcide is a peculiar, lengthy and extremely brutal genocide
- It demonstrates the dynamic nexus between geocide-genocide-massacres
- Disturbing paradoxes: horrible living (and dying) conditions and racist violence, but 'surprising' elements of resistance, wisdom, partnership and creativity
- Clear connections between ethnic, agrarian and class-based politics

New book (2021)
Thank you!
Aguyjevete!

IorisA@cardiff.ac.uk
www.antonio-ioris.my-free.website