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Indigenous Natures and the Anthropocene: Racial Capitalism, Violent Materialities, and the Colonial Politics of Representation

Penelope Anthias

Department of Geography, Durham University, Durham, UK, penelope.f.anthias@durham.ac.uk

Kiran Asher

Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA, USA, kasher@umass.edu

Abstract: Indigenous Peoples are gaining renewed attention within both policy and academia, as examples of "resilience" and of non-humanist, non-modern ways of relating to nature, which might, it is hoped, provide tools to withstand the socio-ecological crises associated with "the Anthropocene". This paper argues that such representations obscure both their own colonial foundations and the ongoing forms of racialised dispossession and ecocide faced by Indigenous Peoples today. Instead, we conceptualise indigeneity and nature as deeply entangled categories that are co-produced with capitalist modernity. Engaging anti-colonial and Marxist scholarship, and drawing on our long-term research with Indigenous movements in Bolivia and Colombia, we highlight how discursive and material assemblages of indigeneity and nature are dialectically linked to capitalist processes of dispossession and subaltern efforts to contest these. We further highlight how romanticised accounts of non-modern nature-cultures are unsettled by the violent world-making of colonial capitalism and the unequal burdens placed on Indigenous territories and bodies. We use an ethnographic vignette from the Bolivian Chaco to illustrate the messy everyday ways in which real Indigenous people navigate, contest, endure, and make do amidst the contradictory processes of racialisation, dispossession, and conditional recognition that characterise their positioning within colonial capitalism. In doing so, we show how thinking from the sacrifice zones of extractive capitalism unsettles contemporary debates on decolonising nature in the Anthropocene.

Keywords: colonialism, capitalism, indigeneity, race, nature-cultures, representation

Introduction

In the 21st century, amidst the deepening socio-ecological and political economic crises associated with "the Anthropocene", Indigenous Peoples and their relations with non-human ecologies are gaining renewed attention. Global policies of climate adaptation and mitigation represent Indigenous Peoples as "resilient" to a variety of risks associated with anthropogenic climate change. Meanwhile, a variety of critical academic approaches—the ontological turn, actor network theory, post-humanism, object-oriented and speculative thinking—represent Indigenous

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Peoples as embodying non-humanist, non-extractivist, non-modern ontologies, which might, it is suggested, offer a blueprint for "moderns" to renounce their own imbrication in an ecocidal system of colonial capitalism. As Chandler and Reid (2020:485) conclude, the "Indigenous have become central to contemporary critical and governmental imaginaries as the West tries to cope with planetary crises imbricated in the legacies of modernity and settler colonialism".

In this paper, we problematise accounts of Indigenous Peoples as external to colonial capitalism, or as embodying a way of being that might be appropriated and replicated to withstand its crises. Instead, we argue that indigeneity and nature are deeply entangled categories that are co-produced with capitalist modernity.[1] We show how discursive and material assemblages of indigeneity and nature are dialectically linked to capitalist processes of dispossession and subaltern efforts to contest these. Racialised representations of indigeneity are part and parcel of the capitalist production of nature and space. We also highlight how representations of Indigenous nature-cultures within Western discourse—from colonial narratives of Amerindians living in a "state of nature", to multicultural mapping efforts, to the ontological turn in anthropology—work to obscure this relationality.

We view the recent framing of indigeneity as a speculative horizon for the Anthropocene within this longer history of colonial representation, but also as symptomatic of a particular moment of capitalist development when anxieties around ecological collapse accompany but fail to mitigate its ongoing drive to appropriate new territories. In this context, current representations of Indigenous nature-cultures are riddled with paradoxes. Chief among them is that Indigenous Peoples are held up as embodying alternatives to capitalist modernity, yet disproportionately suffer the environmental harms of capitalist development, including resource extraction on their lands—processes rest on and reproduce colonial forms of racialisation that designate Indigenous Peoples as non-citizens, unproductive land users, and their homelands as *terra nullius* requiring development. The disproportionate harms of racialised representation and capitalist development are deeply material and include ecological contamination, displacement from and dispossession of lands, unequal insertion into capitalist labour relations, and exclusion from capitalist modes of economic distribution. These material geographies are largely outside the representational frame of Indigenous nature-cultures as they appear in the aforementioned literatures.[2]

Our argument draws on scholarship from anti-colonial, decolonial, and Marxist traditions, which ground our understanding of race and nature as relational to capitalism. It is also rooted in our long-term research with Indigenous and Black movements in Bolivia and Colombia, where we have observed how essentialising representations of indigeneity and nature are entangled with and efface ongoing forms of colonial and capitalist dispossession and racialisation. Indeed, part of what compels us to write this article is firsthand witnessing of the ongoing dispossession and contamination of Indigenous territories by transnational corporations at a moment where Indigenous Peoples are symbolically being held up as an alternative to/in the Anthropocene. The current celebration of Indigenous life occludes the facts of Indigenous death, as well as the labour involved in

Indigenous endurance. Bearing in mind Ruth Gilmore's (2007:247) definition of racism as "the state-sanctioned and/or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death", this amounts to denial of racism as an intrinsic feature of capitalist social relations. We thus use materiality as a vantage point through which to further our critique of representation of Indigenous nature-cultures, highlighting how these are unsettled by the violent world-making of colonial capitalism and the unequal burdens these place on Indigenous territories and bodies.[3] We also explore indigeneity and nature as sites of contestation, where historical modes of racialisation are both unsettled, by subaltern claims to recognition and sovereignty, and reinscribed, as capitalist demands for land and resources place limits on these struggles.

The paper is structured as follows. The first section discusses the framing of Indigenous nature-cultures within contemporary Anthropocene narratives, both as a resource for resilience to endemic crises, and as a speculative horizon for discovering non-modern ways of thinking and being in the world. Building on existing critiques, we argue that these approaches render invisible past and present geographies of Indigenous and Black suffering and imbrication in racial capitalism. Section two provides a relational reading of race, nature, and capitalism, weaving together insights from literatures on racial capitalism, settler colonialism, indigeneity, and the coloniality of power. Section three considers the multicultural politics of indigeneity and nature that reemerged in the late 20th century, in response to transnational networks of Indigenous resistance to assimilationist states and capitalist dispossession, arguing that this reworked colonial representations of indigeneity and nature in ways that were instrumental to neoliberal capitalism's appropriation of new territories for resource extraction. In the fourth section, we draw on Anthias' long-term research in the Bolivian Chaco to further illustrate our arguments.[4] We highlight how Guaraní people in this gas-rich region endure and make do amidst contradictory processes of racialisation, cultural recognition, dispossession, and environmental change that reflect their positioning within historical and contemporary geographies of colonial capitalism.

These contradictory processes also mark the lives of Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific lowlands of the country where Asher has worked since the 1990s, and those of pastoralists in western India where she has begun comparative work recently. Indeed, it is to understand similar mobilisations of indigeneity and nature in different cultural and geographical contexts that we read them conjuncturally. That is, while we parse these representations of indigeneity in the South American and specifically Bolivian context, we think with Frantz Fanon and Antonio Gramsci via Gayatri Spivak and Stuart Hall to understand indigeneity as a structural category and construct (Hall 1986). These thinkers, and recent works by scholars of settler colonialism such as Glen Coulthard, Patrick Wolfe, and others trace the broad and complex histories of indigeneity to examine how the Indigenous is not a political category limited to settler states. Space precludes us from a relational comparison of these dynamics across our research sites, but we acknowledge that the arguments of Black, subaltern, and postcolonial studies are relevant and related to our discussions of decolonising representations of indigeneity.[5]

Indigeneity and Nature in the Anthropocene

Over recent years, the spectre of human-induced climate change and biodiversity loss has exacerbated the crisis of modernity and further questioned humanism as a pillar of Western philosophical and political thought. As a wide range of intellectuals and activists—feminists, postcolonial, transnational, Black, queer, decolonial, posthumanists, and others—have made clear, the dichotomy between "Nature" and "Culture" and the notion of progress associated with Enlightenment modernity is a dangerous illusion. Reflecting on this unravelling, various critical academic approaches and concepts seek to imagine a world (or rather, worlds) beyond modernist and humanist dichotomies. The Anthropocene, post-humanism, the ontological turn, actor network theory, and object-oriented and speculative thinking are all symptomatic of this unravelling of Western knowledge traditions, in ways that many scholars appear to find exciting and even hopeful.

Within this context, Indigenous modes of relating to nature and the non-human have gained a renewed interest. Chandler and Reid (2019, 2020) provide a critical analysis of this trend—which they characterise as a call to "become Indigenous"—across several fields of knowledge and praxis. In debates on the Anthropocene, neoliberal discourses of resilience frame Indigenous Peoples as embodying capacities that might be replicated to address a world of perpetual crisis:

> The Indigenous are celebrated in these discourses for their willful subordination to the world, their refusal to distinguish themselves as superior to other living species, or even living things from non-living things, and their capacities to live in a state of perpetual crisis by accepting the idea that no security from this world is possible. This is an image of the Indigenous that scholars as well as powerful actors worldwide argue the West has much to learn from and which it must ultimately seek to embody. (Chandler and Reid 2019:23)

Other scholars have traced and critiqued this shift towards resilience thinking in development policy and planning processes more broadly (Grove 2014; Wakefield 2020). For instance, Michael Watts (2015) views it as a resurrection of a problematic legacy of cybernetics-influenced systems theory, which precludes any serious analysis of the social relations of capitalism. Rather than addressing the structural conditions of slow death, Indigenous institutions and other postcolonial hybrids are enlisted to manage risk—with the help of development and state practitioners.

While attention to such context-specific policy dynamics is important, Chandler and Reid's interest is somewhat different; they are interested in how indigeneity is being abstracted as an analytic that might serve as a blueprint for *all* societies. That is, they point to how Indigenous knowledge has been appropriated by critical scholars as an example of non-modern ways of thinking and being in the world—a new kind of speculative analytics and ontopolitics for the Anthropocene. This mobilisation of Indigenous ontologies as an analytic is distinct from an ethnographic or activist engagement with real Indigenous Peoples and the ecological struggles in which they are embedded (see also Cepek 2016; Rivera Cusicanqui 2010). Rather, the emphasis is on identifying generalisable ontological

characteristics that resonate with popular academic theories that challenge the foundations of Western humanism. Chandler and Reid implicate the ontological turn in anthropology—which they see as symptomatic of the broader crisis of humanism—in these new analytics of indigeneity. By translating Indigenous knowledge into Western self-knowledge (that is about humanism's role in the Anthropocene crisis), they argue that ontological anthropology rests on a problematic dichotomy between the "Indigenous" and the "modern".

This critique is not new. Anthropologists have drawn on ethnography in the Amazon region to challenge the essentialising and homogenising tendencies of some Latin American scholarship inspired by Viveiros de Castro's theory of perspectivism (see Erazo and Jarrett 2018; Ramos 2012). In a similar vein, Asher (2013) has used Gayatri Spivak's critique of subaltern representation to challenge scholars in the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality (MCD) research programme for resuscitating old binaries and paying insufficient attention to heterogeneity within the Latin American continent. Bessire and Bond (2014:443) have accused ontological anthropologists of "a targeted erasure of ethnographic evidence", including relating to environmental pollution and disasters (see also Cepek 2016; Killick 2021). Across these various debates, critics raise concerns that indigeneity becomes essentialised and exoticised, a mere foil for critiques of modernity that is "indifferent to the historical and political predicament of indigenous life in the modern world" (Ramos 2012:489).

We share these concerns. Indeed, this article emerged from a discomfort we have both felt in recent years about the disjuncture between such framings of Indigenous ontologies and our ethnographic research with Indigenous subaltern communities in Latin America and Asia. At various conference panels on post-humanism, decolonising nature, and the Anthropocene, Anthias felt that her work charting the ambivalences of Guaraní efforts at reclaiming territory amidst deepening hydrocarbon extractivism in Bolivia were at odds with some panellists' and audience members' interests—that is, extending post-humanist and new materialist philosophical debates in conversation with Indigenous knowledge, or identifying non-modern ontologies that might offer a source of hope and unlearning for a non-Indigenous academic audience. It was rarely acknowledged that these conversations were predicated on participants taking international flights fuelled by hydrocarbons—a key obstacle to Guaraní efforts at reclaiming territory. Asher has had parallel experiences with the reception of her work on Afro-Colombian communities. Or to paraphrase Patrick Wolfe, to assert that Indigeneity or subalternity is ontological is to recapitulate colonising thought, to take colonial ideology as truth.

In particular, we ask what is rendered outside the frame of critical debates around Indigenous ontologies in the Anthropocene. This question has been powerfully addressed by Indigenous, Black Studies, and other anti-colonial scholarship from the Anglo-American context (Davis and Todd 2017; Karera 2019; Pulido 2018; Sundberg 2014). The erasures produced by the universalising "we" of Anthropocene narratives have been widely noted, in terms of historical responsibility for the climate crisis and the disproportionate impacts it has on non-White populations. But the critique goes deeper than this. Axelle Karera (2019) argues

that the new regimes of Anthropocenean consciousness and the post-apocalyptic futures they project are haunted by the spectre of Black death. There is an aspiration that the current moment of crisis will give rise to new "Anthropocenean sensibilities" capable of transforming our relation to the earth; a new ethics of care and accountability built on a shared understanding of human vulnerability. Central to this is a hyper-valuation of the concept of "life", a naturalisation of intrinsic relationality and dependency among earthly beings. Here, Karera raises a crucial question: Who is left outside of the category of "life" in its relational guise? Reminding us of critical genealogies of the concept of life, and its counterpart in necro-power, she argues that the "prima facie value of the concept of life seems untenable in the face of stark evidence to the fact that the life worth saving—the 'grievable life'—is determined by the color of its skin" (Karera 2019:51).[6] In fact, she suggests that relationality is not a position that the Black cannot afford or claim, given that it is the condition for the possibility of their enslavement.

If Black experience is entirely disavowed by discursive renderings of relational life in the Anthropocene, then Indigenous geographies have a more paradoxical positioning. They are both analytically central to the speculative analytics of the Anthropocene and strikingly absent as a site of racial antagonism and material violence. For all the celebration of Indigenous ontologies, real Indigenous Peoples —those who historically laboured in mines and on haciendas, those who are at the frontline of current conflicts over extraction, dispossession, and environmental injustice—are effaced from the hopeful horizons of a Anthropocenean ethics. Todd (2016) and Sundberg (2014) are among the growing number of scholars who note how such framings also render invisible Indigenous intellectual production, claims to self-determination, or locally specific knowledge traditions around nature-culture.

Our account resonates with such critiques. However, rather than grounding our critique solely in an ethnographic account of Indigenous more-than-human relations as heterogeneous (Sundberg 2014) and entangled with capitalist modernity (Cepek 2016; Erazo and Jarrett 2018), we provide a broader genealogical account of indigeneity and nature as relational to colonial capitalism. We argue that the current double movement of romanticised abstraction and erasure of colonial materialities within academic and policy debates echoes a long tradition of representation of Amerindian peoples within Western thought, where they have served as a foil for Western constructions of sovereignty and political subjectivity in ways that efface their simultaneous and involuntary imbrication in material relations of colonialism and capitalism. Multicultural constructions of Indigenous territories—which we view as relational to neoliberal expansion in the Global South—reproduced this erasure, in ways that serve as an unacknowledged underpinning for contemporary constructions of Indigenous ontologies in the Anthropocene.

Our approach draws inspiration from Gayatri Spivak's critique of the politics of subaltern representation within Western disciplinary knowledge production. Methodologically grounded in non-essentialist Gramscian Marxism and deconstruction, Spivak links the problem of representation to relations: between the West and the Rest, metropole and colony, rural and urban, capital and culture, aborigine and

national culture, Western philosophy/science and Indigenous knowledge/episteme. Writing a quarter of a century ago, she notes that:

> The current mood, in the radical fringe of humanistic Northern pedagogy, of uncritical enthusiasm for the Third World, makes a demand upon the inhabitant of that Third World to speak up as an authentic ethnic fully representative of his or her tradition. This demand in principle ignores an open secret: that an ethnicity untroubled by the vicissitudes of history and neatly accessible as an object of investigation is a confection to which the disciplinary pieties of the anthropologist, the intellectual curiosity of the early colonials and the European scholars partly inspired by them, *as well as* the indigenous elite nationalists, by way of the culture of imperialism, contributed their labors, and the (proper) object (of investigation) is therefore "lost". (Spivak 1999:60)

While encouraging us to think alterity beyond the human (Spivak 1995:201), she rejects nativist thinking, urging scholars to reflect on how our desire for "other" alternatives is bound up in the political economy of capitalism and shaped by a long history of colonial representation. Rather than refusing to represent the subaltern, she calls for a mode of analysis that makes visible the subaltern's discursive and material relationality to capitalism, the state, nationalism, and environmental dispossession (Spivak 1988; see also Spivak 2010).

We are also inspired by Audra Simpson's (2007:68) insistence on the importance of "anthropological accounting"—that is, of tracing how anthropological representation of Indigenous Peoples has been historically predicated on the production of difference and its containment into "neat, ethnically-defined territorial spaces that now needed to be made sense of, to be ordered, ranked, to be governed, to be possessed". As this statement makes clear, the politics of representation of indigeneity and nature is not just about the erasures of a romanticised nativism, but also about the way in which representations accompany and facilitate material processes of dispossession, as part of broader processes of colonial governmentality and territorial ordering. This involves forms of erasure, racialisation, and selective recognition that endure into the present. Not only do Anthropocene narratives repeat this move towards containment of difference, but they efface the long history of colonial representations on which contemporary renderings of Indigenous nature-cultures are built. In the remainder of the paper, we flesh out an alternative understanding of indigeneity and nature as relational—both discursively and materially—to colonial capitalism.

A Relational Reading of Indigeneity, Nature, and Capitalism

The relationship between capitalism and race has been a longstanding concern for both Marxist and anti-racist scholars, as we note above.[7] While some strands of Marxism have been rightly accused of reducing race to class, and others of failing to theorise race in relation to capitalism, the most constructive analyses understand racialisation as intrinsic to the functioning of capitalist social relations (Gilmore 2007; Hall 1980, 1986; Robinson 1983; Spivak 2012). Or as Chatterjee and Asher (2021) discuss, capitalist production depends on producing and

reproducing hierarchical differences and is inextricably bound to a politics of difference.[8]

Writing over a century ago, Rosa Luxemburg was among the many to show how imperialism was necessary for capitalism. That is, the imbrication of racialisation and capitalism is key to that latter's dynamic of territorial expansion, and to its tendency towards abstraction, associated with the commodity form. The process of abstraction and hierarchisation assigned colonised people to racial groups that were represented as lacking in European values (Fanon 1963:40–41). Challenging classical Marxist theory, Fanon recognised race as foundational to capitalist relations rather than a mere superstructure. Cedric Robinson's seminal book *Black Marxism* (1983) similarly exposed how an ideology of "racialism" shaped the historical development of world capitalism—its social structures, forms of property, and modes of production (Robinson 1983:66)—and how racial categories were continually remade according to the demands of the world market (Robinson 1983:81). The dialectical relationship between race and capitalism has been explored extensively through the concept of racial capitalism. This work highlights not only the historical imbrication of race and capitalism but also how racism works to pushes "disproportionate costs of participating in an increasingly monetized and profit-driven world" on those who have been racialised (Gilmore 2002:16).

While the literature on Indigenous Studies has not always concerned itself with the production of racial categories (see Moreton-Robinson 2015), recent work on settler colonialism provides rich accounts of how racialisation and capitalism are articulated through land and property. Moreton-Robinson (2015:xii–xiii) argues that the settler-colonial nation is socially and culturally constructed through "white possessive logics" in which Indigenous Peoples are figured as "a deficient model of humanity". Brenna Bhandar (2018) highlights how racialised subjectivities were co-constituted with property regimes through "ideologies of improvement" grounded in English agrarian capitalism. Both accounts build on Cheryl Harris' (1993) characterisation of whiteness as analogous to property. Continuing this dialogue between Black and Indigenous Studies (and between work on settler colonialism and racial capitalism), recent work explores how the differential forms of racial valuation set into motion by colonisation and chattel slavery continue to shape subjection, subjectivity, property, and territoriality in settler-colonial states, including through forms of financialisation, debt, property, commerce, and the prison industrial complex (Byrd et al. 2018; Gilmore 2017).

In applying these discussions to our own work, we draw additional insights from Latin American decolonial scholarship. This work builds on a long tradition of dependency theory to highlight how racial categories—such as "Spaniards", "*Indios*", and "Negros"—structured a colonial regime of labour exploitation and resource extraction in Spanish America, providing the material and epistemic foundations for an emerging Euro-centred capitalist economy (Quijano 2000). Racial knowledges are thus read as co-constituted with the material practices of colonialism and capitalism, in ways that resonate with Anglophone work on racial capitalism (Robinson 1983). It is important to acknowledge that there are important differences, perhaps particularly regarding the centring of knowledge (rather

than land, labour, or the body) as a site of decolonial politics. There are also important critiques of some Latin American decolonial scholars' appropriation of indigeneity (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012), which we share (Asher 2013, 2017). Nevertheless, we find this work important in highlighting the importance of labour and land as sites of racialisation in the Americas, and in showing how capitalism *emerged from* such racial material formations, rather than merely exporting European ideas of race to the colonies (Robinson 1983).

Notwithstanding their differences, all the above bodies of scholarship contribute to our understanding of indigeneity as a site of racialisation linked to the emergence of a global system of racial capitalist development. We echo MCD scholars' insistence on the foundational role of racialised Indigenous and African labour in the development of Euro-centred capitalism. Yet we also retain Marxists' and settler colonial scholars' understanding of racism as intrinsic to capitalism and settler state sovereignty, meaning that decolonisation must be a material and political rather than simply epistemic process. This is important because forms of racialisation that label Indigenous Peoples non-citizens, irrational, and unproductive not only persist in Latin America (as captured in the phrase "the coloniality of power"), but they are continually reworked by capitalist processes to facilitate the appropriation of Indigenous lands. These processes of racialisation and dispossession are effaced by the figuring of Indigenous nature-cultures as a constitutive outside of capitalist modernity and a speculative horizon for the Anthropocene.

In fact, such discourses are themselves grounded in colonial racial tropes of indigeneity and nature. Chatterjee and Asher (2021) discuss how under capitalism, "humans" are constituted as a category that is separate from and superior to "nature". Regimes of race, animality, sex, gender, ability, and nationality cement this separation and obfuscate how the "human" is co-constituted through categories such as nature and indigeneity. This hierarchical politics of difference shapes identities and justifies social inequalities and ecological ravages.[9] For example, colonial discourses of savagery and barbarism emphasised colonised peoples' proximity to animals, while environmental determinism constructed racial traits as an outcome of natural environments. Of particular relevance to our argument is the colonial discourse of Amerindians as living in a "state of nature", which served as a foil for the development of European notions of political subjectivity and sovereignty (Jahn 1999). For Hobbes, the "state of nature" was a state of war, misery, irrationality, and chaos, wherein "the savage people in many places of America … have no government at all; and live at this day in … [a] brutish manner" (quoted in Henderson 2000:16). As this Indigenous author writes: "Indigenous peoples have experienced … [the 'state of nature'] concept as slavery, colonization, and imperialism" (Henderson 2000:11). Yet, the "state of nature" was also used to express ambivalences about European modernity. European radicals, notably Rousseau, projected a positive trope of "natural man" as a basis for developing a critique of private property as the source of inequality in capitalist society. A romanticised figure of Amerindians as noble savages and "guardians of nature" remained a key trope for critiques of modernity, from the Romantics to the Latin American cultural movement of *indigenismo*. These tropes carry through

to the multicultural constructions of indigeneity that emerged from the 1970s (discussed in the next section).[10]

The romanticised accounts of Amerindian peoples projected by European radicals served to obscure ongoing processes of racialisation, dispossession, and genocide experienced by Amerindian peoples during the same historical period, in ways that were driven by demand for primary commodities to serve Euro-centred capitalist markets. For example, in 1756, a year after Rosseau published his "discourse on inequality" contrasting capitalist relations with "Natural Man", Spanish and Portuguese forces killed 1,511 Guaraní who were seeking protection from Brazilian slavers in Jesuit missions and refused to surrender the land they occupied (Ganson 2003:91). We contend that a similar but much more blatant effacement is happening today in discussions around the Anthropocene. While Chandler and Reid argue there is a reification of dispossession as a condition for Indigenous resilience, we find contemporary discourses are more notable for their effacement of Indigenous dispossession as an ongoing condition for capitalist development. Indigenous nature-cultures are framed as untouched and transparent to the Western eye rather than refracted through centuries of colonial capitalism. Processes of primitive accumulation continue to fuel contemporary extractive economies at the cost of Indigenous sovereignty and ecosystems, while Indigenous more-than-human ontologies are held up as sites of refuge and resilience in the Anthropocene.

We now turn to the emergence of a politics of indigeneity since the 1970s as a site for the contestation over the unfolding geographies of racial capitalism. We argue that the discursive and material assemblages of indigeneity and nature that emerged from such struggles were *both* sites of anti-colonial resistance *and* sites for the reworking of colonial racial categories within new forms of capitalist governmentality. We further argue that these neoliberal multicultural assemblages represent an unacknowledged antecedent to recent framings of indigeneity in the Anthropocene.

Neoliberal Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition

The category of Indigenous Peoples emerged in the 1970s, as minoritised groups of formerly colonised and enslaved peoples formed transnational networks of legal and political advocacy to defend their collective rights. Rejecting the dominant assimilationist vision of development, Indigenous rights advocates argued that minority groups should be allowed to develop according to their own cultural priorities (Engle 2010). In Latin America, the end of dictatorships and the introduction of neoliberal democracy unleashed waves of Indigenous protests and demands for collective control over ancestral territories and the right to self-governance. In Bolivia, the 1990 March for Territory and Dignity was the first of several national Indigenous mobilisations demanding state recognition of collective territories, as well as greater participation in national politics. In Colombia, Black groups, including women, were a key part of the intensive and diverse organising for cultural recognition, political rights, and socio-economic justice. These

movements gained momentum and international attention around the 1992 quincentennial of Columbus' landing. They articulated these demands in terms that exceed Eurocentric conceptions of citizenship, sovereignty, territory, property, and productivity. This included conceptualisations of territory as a relational more-than-human assemblage that includes not only the land, but also the sky, forests, and subsoil (Anthias 2018).

In response to these social movements, many countries in the region, including Bolivia and Colombia, adopted new laws and constitutional amendments acknowledging that they were pluri-ethnic nations and granting new cultural rights to Indigenous Peoples. These multicultural state reforms, as well as Indigenous politics on the ground, were shaped by transnational legal frameworks of Indigenous rights, such as the International Labour Organisation's Convention No. 169, passed in 1989, which called for respect for the cultural integrity of Indigenous Peoples, their co-participation in national society and development decision-making, and the recognition of their territorial rights. During the 1990s, leading global development institutions like the World Bank and the United Nations endorsed cultural rights, under a new paradigm of "ethnodevelopment" or "development with identity" (Andolina et al. 2009), which formed part of a more socially oriented "second wave" of neoliberal structural adjustment.

If Indigenous advocacy and mobilisation were instrumental in bringing about this shift, then it also responded to concerns about the ecological sustainability of unregulated market-led development. The link between Indigenous rights and biodiversity was expressed as a key rationale for the promotion of Indigenous rights within global development policy. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro recognised Indigenous Peoples as major stakeholders who should participate in sustainable development, while a series of mapping projects documented the spatial overlap between Indigenous lands and biodiversity. Anthias and Radcliffe (2015) discuss Indigenous land rights as an "ethno-environmental fix" designed to synergise protection of vulnerable populations and highly valued natures from the destructive effects of markets. Multicultural constructions of Indigenous territories —as bounded and legally protected spaces of cultural difference and environmental stewardship amidst a broader landscape of marketisation—were thus relational to ongoing capitalist development *and* to the countermovements it generated. These included nascent movements of Indigenous Peoples, whose territories were being invaded by transnational mining and logging companies, as well as the broader anti-globalisation and environmentalist movements.

The construction of Indigenous territories as external to capitalism and in need of protection echoed longstanding Western discourses of Indigenous Peoples as living in a "state of nature". Indigenous mapping efforts in the 1970s–1990s drew heavily on cultural ecology, a tradition that "seeks to explain cultures as a function of the environments in which they had evolved" (Bryan 2009:28). Such framings eclipsed long histories of Indigenous participation in capitalist labour relations in the Amazon and other lowlands regions of South America. For Bolivian Aymara scholar Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2012), neoliberal multiculturalism reproduced the "conditional inclusion" that was a longstanding feature of

Bolivian citizenship; it was the latest iteration of a historical project of Bolivian elites working in tandem with international political economy to efface Indigenous Peoples' presence, contemporaneity, and claims to self-governance. The representation of Indigenous Peoples as associated with nature is key to her critique:

> A discussion of these communities situated in the "origin" denies the contemporaneity of these populations and excludes them from the struggles of modernity. They are given a residual status that, in fact, converts them into minorities, ensnaring them in indigenist stereotypes of the noble savage and as guardians of nature … The term "original people" affirms and recognizes but at the same time obscures and excludes the large majority of the Aymara- and Qhichwa-speaking population of the subtropics, the mining centers, the cities, and the Indigenous commercial networks of the internal and black markets. It is therefore a suitable term for the strategy of depriving Indigenous Peoples of their potentially hegemonic status and their capacity to affect the state. (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012:99)

Here, Rivera Cusicanqui raises the question of what relations and political claims are made invisible by multicultural representations of Indigenous nature-cultures, which rest on a constructed binary between indigeneity and modernity—a representation that effaces Aymara, Quechua, Guaraní, and other Indigenous Peoples' long entanglements with capitalist markets, labour relations, and processes of (post)colonial state-formation. She develops the concept of *ch'ixi* to work against this colonial politics of representation. An Aymara word denoting "a color that is the product of juxtaposition, in small points or spots, of two opposed or contrasting colors", *ch'ixi* conveys how Indigenous cultures in Bolivia have retained their ontological and political distinctiveness while participating in modernity and capitalist markets (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012:105). In her account, ontological difference does not exist apart from the modern, but rather permeates it, providing a basis from which to transform and decolonise the present and future. This notion of a "*ch'ixi* world" (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018) provides an alternative to political ontology and post-development perspectives that construct indigeneity as outside of, or oppositional to, capitalism.

Besides this politics of representation, multicultural reforms around Indigenous rights failed to challenge a neoliberal development agenda that depended on transnational corporations' access to land, forest, and subsoil resources located in Indigenous-claimed territories. Extensive work in the region, including ours, shows how forms of cultural recognition and environmental protection overlapped with and become entangled with extractive development and environmental dispossession (Anthias 2018; Asher and Ojeda 2009; Dest 2020). This is not to deny the strategic advances of Indigenous struggles through multicultural framings; many lowlands peoples, including those in the Chaco and the Chocó, have harnessed networks and discourses of cultural rights and nature conservation to advance their claims for citizenship, territory, and self-determination. Elsewhere Asher (2009, 2020) discusses how Afro-Colombian ethnic and territorial struggles intertwined in complex and contradictory ways with neoliberal economic reforms and environmental governmentality in the Chocó region. The legal recognition of ethnic and territorial rights opened up spaces for strategic alliances and for

protest, contestation, and claims. But the spaces and representation won by Indigenous and Black groups was disproportionate to the power and violence of neoliberal extraction, which was deeply intertwined with the violence of legal and paralegal armed forces. In Bolivia too, the politics of indigeneity did not prevent processes of capitalist territorial restructuring, giving rise to contradictory processes of recognition and dispossession that inform ongoing processes of Indigenous struggle (Anthias 2018).

The Anthropocene narratives of Indigenous nature-cultures discussed in the previous section fail to grapple with this relationality of indigeneity and capitalism—both in terms of the construction of neoliberal policy discourses, and in terms of the on-the-ground entanglements of capitalist geographies and processes of ethnic recognition and environmental protection. By failing to historically account for their own subject of analysis (Simpson 2014), such narratives reproduce multiculturalism's reenactment of colonial binaries of modernity vs the "state of nature". What is new is that Indigenous nature-cultures are not only seen as worthy of (conditional) recognition and protection amidst capitalist development processes, but posited as blueprint for all of society; a horizon for intellectuals wishing to renounce Western humanism and its ecocidal trajectory. In this sense, Indigenous nature-cultures play a more crucial function in Anthropocene narratives as the Other through which modernity-in-crisis might seek redemption, rather than simply a pragmatic solution to managing dispossession. The problem with this projection is that it fails to contend with the ongoing racialised dispossession and ecological violence faced by these very Indigenous communities. In the final section, we turn our attention to the Bolivian Chaco, the site of Anthias' research, to highlight the contradictory processes of racialisation, cultural recognition, dispossession, and ecological suffering that characterise actually existing Indigenous geographies in this gas-rich region, and how Guaraní people find ways of making do and sustaining alternative relations with the land in the midst of these processes.

Colonial Capitalism, Indigeneity, and Nature in the Bolivian Chaco

Anthias has been conducting multi-sited ethnographic research on Indigenous territorial claims in the Chaco region of Tarija Department, Bolivia, since 2008.[11] At the heart of this research agenda has been an interrogation of how forms of territorial recognition, land rights, citizenship, and state-formation have evolved relationally with extractivist expansion in this gas-rich region—and what this means for Indigenous decolonial projects. Since the gas boom of the late 1990s, Indigenous territories of the Chaco have seen a proliferation of gas infrastructure and associated social and ecological impacts. This has coincided with a period of social and political transformation in relation to Indigenous rights, from the multiculturalism of the 1990s to the post-neoliberal/plurinational state of Evo Morales. However, the territorial dynamics of extractivist dispossession in the Chaco remain largely unchanged. The following vignette highlights the everyday ways in which Guaraní people endure amidst these contradictory processes of racialisation,

recognition, and dispossession, which reflect the Chaco's location within historical and contemporary geographies of colonial capitalism.

Endurance (Anthias)

I first met Justina (a pseudonym) when she was the president of an NGO-sponsored "women's committee" created to manage Tëtakavi (also a pseudonym) community's communal plot and to coordinate distribution of seeds, irrigation equipment, and other NGO interventions. She took a leading role in irrigating the plot, often lugging a heavy water pump on her own down a steep slope to the river and back to the community for storage. As the committee's president, Justina was bound up in multicultural imaginaries of Indigenous development, as local NGOs sought to channel European funding for "ethnodevelopment" and "gender and development" into rural communities. Such projects also addressed a dilemma that was unresolved by the framing of Native Community Lands as Indigenous Peoples' "habitat"; namely, how these newly recognised communities would meet their basic needs following half a century of debt peonage on local haciendas.[12] If the communal plot resonated with development imaginaries of Indigenous land use practices, then it was actually a more pragmatic creation; the men had little interest in participating, preferring to tend to their own individual household plots based on longstanding Guaraní practices of shifting cultivation.

During my six-month stay in Tëtakavi (2011/12), I would often help Justina carry the water pump down the steep path to the river then accompany the group of women to irrigate the plot—that is, until I broke my ankle. Once on crutches, I would visit her all-female household on a daily basis. On seeing me approaching, her mother or sister would kindle the fire and refill the mate gourd. Then we would sit gossiping for a while, Justina teaching me new Guaraní words, while the women continued their intricate work of weaving pots and mats from strips of dried palm—a skill that they had learnt from the neighbouring Weenhayek People in the context of an NGO sustainable livelihoods programme.

One day, I returned from a trip to learn that Justina had left the community the previous day for a new job cooking for a construction company in Palos Blancos —a *karai* (non-Guaraní) village turned oil company hub some four hours' drive away. Her mother and sister said she had been offered the job while cooking for the construction company that was building an "ecotourism lodge" in Tëtakavi—an unsuccessful municipal effort to commercialise Indigenous natures, which provided limited labour opportunities during the construction phase but then remained abandoned. As is common in the hydrocarbon sector, Justina's new job would be in 15-day stretches and she would return home for a few days in between. Her five-year-old daughter had stayed behind.

Justina's sister explained matter-of-factly that she had left because "*mbaeti ime koripoti*"—there is no money. Her mother hummed and shook her head in agreement. Over the previous six months, I'd witnessed how this all-female household struggled economically, relying mainly on the painstaking work of handicrafts, the collection of palm for which was becoming increasingly difficult; the

community remained surrounded by private landholdings. With the NGO's handicrafts cooperative barely functioning anymore, they were forced to sell to *karai* (non-Guaraní) merchants, who paid a low price and often tried to swindle them. Their situation was the result of a tragic history. Justina's father had left many years ago, followed by the suicide of her two older brothers. Her remaining brother worked as an agricultural labourer near Buenos Aires and—as he told me himself—was often robbed of his meagre savings in his efforts to cross the Bolivian border "without papers".

The daily challenges faced by Justina and her household must be understood in the context of a long history of Indigenous dispossession in the Bolivian Chaco. Home to the Guaraní, Weenhayek, and Tapiete Indigenous Peoples, the semi-arid Chaco region has historically been constructed as a frontier of Bolivian national territory and European civilisation. Non-Indigenous settlement of the Chaco was driven by an expanding cattle ranching trade, which supplied meat to the silver-mining economy of Potosí. The heart of the Spanish Empire, Potosí's silver mines supplied currency to Europe, underpinning all other commodity exchanges and enabling the development of European mercantile capitalism. Racial ideologies and colonial violence in the Chaco were thus articulated with the resource needs of an emergent world capitalist economy. Indigenous dispossession accelerated following the discovery of oil in the 1930s, when the state awarded Indigenous lands to ex-combatants to ensure "national" sovereignty over the region's oil and gas fields. A 1953 agrarian reform—funded by the US as part of a Cold War plan to keep Bolivia on a capitalist development path due to its strategic tin reserves—awarded these new settlers land rights, consolidating a regime of debt peonage under which Guaraní communities endured decades of hardship, racist abuse, and corporal punishment. These processes are illustrative of the colonial and capitalist racial formations outlined earlier in this paper, with racial ideologies of Chaco lands as empty and unproductive serving to legitimise their appropriation by non-Indigenous actors articulated with capitalist markets.

Justina's situation was also marked by recent processes of multicultural recognition that positioned the community of Tëtakavi within a Native Community Land claim. TCO claims marked a profoundly decolonising moment in the Chaco, as the breaking of debt-bound labour contracts was accompanied by the physical occupation of hacienda lands (Anthias 2018). Without such processes, her life could have been very different, marred by the experiences of forced labour, racist abuse, and sexual violence endured by her parents and grandparents. Still, the resulting processes of ethno-territorial recognition produced ambivalent outcomes. The rights of non-Guaraní cattle ranchers were prioritised over Indigenous land rights, provided they demonstrated "productive" use of land. State officials were reluctant to recognise Indigenous land rights where transnational and state interests in gas were at stake—not least, in Bolivia's biggest gas field, which lies adjacent to Tëtakavi. In practice, capitalist and racialised logics of property prevailed over multicultural aspirations for Indigenous territories. As a result, most Guaraní communities in the Chaco, like Tëtakavi, continue to live in fragments of arid and often steeply inclined land surrounded by private properties. This is why Justina, her sister, and her elderly mother have to climb over barbed-wire fences

to access increasingly scarce supplies of palm to make their handicrafts, or wood fuel for cooking. It is also part of the reason why most younger men—and some women, like Justina—spend periods of time outside their communities engaging in wage labour to supplement precarious land-based livelihoods.

Alongside these ambivalent titling outcomes, the material consequences of natural gas extraction in Guaraní territory continue to accumulate. The Chaco is now covered by a sprawling network of gas wells, pipelines, access roads, and other hydrocarbon infrastructure. Guaraní communities have experienced contamination of water sources, a loss of wild flora and fauna, increasing levels of noise and air pollution, restrictions on freedom of movement, and the presence of hydrocarbon workers and associated impacts, including prostitution and single-parent families (which include Justina's). Deforestation has caused a loss of medicinal plants and animal routes previously used for hunting, presenting challenges to maintaining more-than-human relations. These impacts are experienced in conjunction with other processes of anthropogenic environmental change, such as worsening drought conditions (attributed by Guaraní to gas flares), upstream mining contamination of the Pilcomayo River, and diminishing fish supplies.

If hydrocarbon development exacerbates the challenges for Guaraní land-based livelihoods, then it has also shaped new territorial imaginaries and livelihoods strategies. Faced with ongoing dispossession, as gas wealth flows from their territories, Indigenous organisations in the Chaco have made repeated claims for a share of gas rents—whether framed as compensation, a percentage of state royalties, state-funded Indigenous development, or corporate investment. Meanwhile, some Guaraní villagers, like Justina, find short-term employment opportunities in the regional hydrocarbon economy—opening roads, cleaning workers camps, washing company overalls, guarding infrastructure, driving, or working for catering companies.

Justina's integration into a regional labour economy did not signal a turning away from other relations with territory. After her sister told me about Justina's new job in "catering", I asked about the household's *koo* (plot), which she had talked proudly of during my last visit. Her sister offered to show it to me. I followed her down a steep path to the river, where we took a sandy track through forest along the riverbank, wading twice across she shallow water before following another path through thorny vegetation into the property of a former *patrón*. We paused at a large *carapari* cactus, picking off the fruit carefully and devouring its succulent bright-pink flesh. Finally, we passed through a stick fence, skirting the edge of an unplanted *potrero* belonging to a young man who was absent for wage labour, then dissembled a second stick gate to reach the household's small plot. Most of the area had been cleared and sown with *avati* (maize), *kumanda* (black bean), *merö* (melon), and a row of *guɨndaka* (squash) at the edge. The avati was already knee-high, the fruit of Justina's labour. Justina had not permanently abandoned the world of *ɨwɨ* (Guaraní: land/territory) for the world of "catering"—an English word that has slipped into local dialect during the recent hydrocarbon boom. When I visited two and a half years later, in June 2014, she was back at home with her mother and sister, weaving palm and caring for her

new two-year-old daughter. It would be many months before the rains came, if they came at all, but when they did she would replant the household plot.

Justina's circulation between NGO development projects, a regional hydrocarbon economy, and her household plot (located within a private property) offers a window into how Indigenous people in the Chaco endure and make do amidst the contradictory processes of erasure, dispossession, and conditional recognition that, as this paper has argued, are key to the (re)production of race and nature by ongoing colonial capitalism. Rendered invisible in dominant academic and policy approaches, such everyday strategies of Indigenous survivance differ from idealised abstractions of Indigenous ontologies as outside of, or a speculative future beyond, capitalist modernity. They force us to reckon with the enduring relationality of race, nature, and capitalism, the political work done by representations that obscure this, and the paradoxical outcomes when romanticised versions of Indigenous nature-cultures are projected via development finance and state law without shifting broader patterns of capitalist dispossession. Above all, thinking from the sacrifice zones of extractive capitalism demonstrates the perversity of seeing Indigenous ontologies of nature-culture as a philosophical-ontological fix for the Anthropocene, when the very capitalist processes that define this proposed geological epoch—not least, the extraction and burning of hydrocarbons—are working in manifold material and political ways to render unviable Indigenous land use practices and aspirations for reclaiming territory. As Nick Estes (2016) argues, "the land can no longer sustain us if capitalism continues to stalk the earth in search of new markets, bodies, and resources. For life to live on this planet, capitalism must die". Post-humanism, the ontological turn, speculative thinking, and resilience narratives are strikingly silent on the structural drivers of the contemporary crises glossed as the Anthropocene and what kind of political responses this might call for from the members of advanced capitalist societies.

Conclusion

Indigenous Peoples have assumed a central position within contemporary critical and governmental imaginaries, as a signifier of resilience and alternative, non-humanist ontologies that might help advanced capitalist societies withstand or curtail the deepening socio-ecological crises glossed as "the Anthropocene". This paper unsettles such representations, arguing that indigeneity and nature must be understood as constructed and deeply entangled categories that are co-produced relationally with colonial capitalism and its processes of racialisation and territorial ordering. We have argued that racialised representations of Indigenous Peoples and the lands they inhabit are part and parcel of the capitalist production of nature and space.

While the category of Indigenous Peoples did not emerge until the 1970s—as an outcome of diverse colonised peoples' rejection of assimilationist and modernising forms of development—the multicultural imaginaries of indigeneity and nature that emerged from these struggles bear the imprints of longstanding colonial imaginaries of Amerindian peoples within Western thought. This creates both erasures and paradoxes. In the era of multicultural rights, as in previous centuries,

representations of Indigenous Peoples as guardians of nature living outside of capitalist modernity co-exist with the violent appropriation of Indigenous lands and labour by extractive capital, and the forms of racialisation and erasure this entails. This double movement of conditional recognition and racialised dispossession characterises indigeneity as a site of capitalist governmentality. In making this argument, we do not downplay the agency of Indigenous movements or the strategic value of indigeneity as a site of cultural affirmation and territorial struggle. Rather, we see subaltern resistance as a key dimension of the relationality of capitalism, indigeneity, and nature. We do, however, echo Gayatri Spivak (2012) and contemporary Indigenous scholars like Glen Coulthard (2014) in highlighting how multicultural modes of recognition sidestep claims to self-determination by failing to address ongoing processes of capitalist dispossession.

Following Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, we have also sought to counter colonial representations of Indigenous nature-cultures by making visible Indigenous Peoples' lived entanglements with colonial capitalism. As Anthias' ethnographic research in the Bolivian Chaco makes clear, multicultural imaginaries of Indigenous territories are just one layer in a complex production of territory, coexisting awkwardly with ongoing processes of extractivist territorialisation, racialised dispossession, ecological contamination, and anthropogenic climate change. Attending to such lived realities provides the foundations for reconceptualising "decolonial natures", not as philosophical abstractions or impossible romances, but as the messy everyday ways in which real Indigenous people navigate, contest, endure, and make do amidst colonial capitalism.

This paper has focused on non-Indigenous representations of indigeneity and nature rather than on Indigenous Peoples' own (highly diverse) conceptions of land, territory, or the non-human. We do not discount the political value in making visible the latter, though we would question whether non-Indigenous scholars are best placed to do this work. But we find it equally important to reflect on the politics of representation of indigeneity and nature and how this tends to obscure the ongoing processes that continue to dispossess Indigenous Peoples and other racialised populations of their lands and labour. Put simply, we refuse to feel comforted by the persistence of more-than-human ontologies in a world where Indigenous and non-Indigenous futures are being rapidly foreclosed by colonial capitalism. Instead, we conclude by asking, what forms of politics are necessary to create a world in which heterogeneous life projects can thrive, materially and politically, rather than simply embodying "resilience" or philosophical alternatives for those grappling with the crisis of Western humanism?

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Endnotes

[1] The human–nature split is explored in a wide range of fields: abolition ecology, climate justice, Black geographies, environmental humanities, feminist science and technology studies, multi-species anthropology, political ecology, political ontology, post-humanism, queer ecologies, and many variants of anti-colonial scholarship. Asher explores these literatures elsewhere. Also see Van Sant et al.'s (2021) Symposium on the "Political Ecologies of Race" in *Antipode*.

[2] We acknowledge the political importance of making visible the persistence of radically different ways of relating to the non-human as a counter to colonial narratives of Indigenous disappearance or Eurocentric conceptions of territory. Nevertheless, we contend that a centring of more-than-human ontologies as a speculative or radical horizon tends to downplay ongoing forms of ecological violence and racism faced by Indigenous Peoples and anti-capitalist and anti-colonial politics that is required to disrupt these.

[3] In Latin America, the concept of "sacrifice zones", which has its origins in the Environmental Justice movement, has been used to highlight the spatial and material effects of the non-valuation of Indigenous life and sovereignty that underpins and sustains an extractivist development model (see Bolados et al. 2023).

[4] Since 2008, Anthias has spent over three years (38 months) conducting ethnographic research in Tarija Department of Bolivia. This includes two longer trips (10 months and 14 months) and seven trips that were two months each.

[5] We thank Nicholas Caverly for helping us make this key point of our work explicit. Also see the forum on Patrick Wolfe's (2017) *Traces of History* in *American Quarterly* (Franklin et al. 2017).

[6] See Chatterjee and Asher (2021) on how such stark contradictions fundamentally structure and substantiate capitalist political economy under COVID capitalism and depend on rendering selected lives mournable and others as killable, dispensable but necessary labour.

[7] Stuart Hall's (1980) essay "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance" provides an excellent review of some of the early Marxist debates. As Hall notes, a series of seminal works on South Africa opened new theoretical directions that moved beyond the "economic" vs "sociological" perspectives on race that had previously dominated. Cedric Robinson's (1983) seminal book *Black Marxism* is a key reference point for the literature on racial capitalism.

[8] They note how capitalism creates and categorises difference on varied levels through racism, sexism, homophobia, and more. It produces immense social stratifications, poverty, destitution, and ecological ravages by rendering subjects outside the protections of the category of rights-bearing humans. The centrality of the work, labour, and value of these subjects for capitalism is invisible under capitalism.

[9] There is a vast literature exploring the entangled nature of race, nature, and gender. See the introduction and contributions in Moore et al. (2003) for an excellent representation of this literature.

[10] The last point is acknowledged by critical scholars of indigeneity, who have critiqued essentialised representations of Indigenous Peoples as an embodiment of non-Western nature-cultures, instead conceptualising indigeneity as a relational positioning within wider geometries of power (Radcliffe 2017; see also Bryan 2009; Li 2000). As Joe Bryan (2009:25) writes, "Indigeneity works a residual category, referring to everything that existed prior to all that is Western or modern … [It provides] an 'Other' against which the norms and practices constitutive of Western or modern society are defined". Our critique of Anthropocene narratives builds on this work. However, rather than grounding our understanding of indigeneity's relationality to capitalist modernity only in postcolonial discourse analysis, we draw on the more materialist accounts of Marxist and anti-colonial scholarship to emphasise how racialisation works to legitimise the appropriation of land and labour. This reading foregrounds the question of what material geographies underpin particular constructions of indigeneity and nature.

[11] Her pre-doctoral volunteer research, doctoral research, and first book (Anthias 2018) focused on the Guaraní struggle for territory in the Native Community Land (TCO) Itika Guasu, which overlies the Margarita-Huacaya mega-gasfield. Her subsequent research

explored Indigenous participation in a new gas-funded regional autonomy project, and resistance to new hydrocarbon development in the nearby Tariquía National Reserve of Flora and Fauna.

[12] Native Community Lands are defined as "the geographical spaces that constitute the habitat of Indigenous and originary peoples and communities, to which they have traditionally had access and where they maintain and develop their own forms of economic, social, and cultural organization in a way that guarantees their survival and development" (Article 41.5, INRA Law, cited in Anthias 2018:19).

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