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AGRIBUSINESS IN ARGENTINA: EFFECTS ON THE TOBA QOM INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

Katie Blenko

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Argentina's Agricultural Secretary legalized the commercial use of the country's first genetically modified (GM) crop, the Roundup Ready soybean, in 1996. This decision was followed by the widespread adoption of transgenic seeds, a phenomenon that altered the country's agricultural landscape through land consolidation practices and a new proliferation of powerful agribusinesses. The rapid transition to GM soy across Argentina and the implementation of an agricultural-export model can be attributed to a variety of intertwining factors, including political context, farmer demand, economic benefits, and weak intellectual property laws.

This so-called soy boom was closely preceded by processes of international and domestic indigenous *visibilization*. Increased awareness of indigenous communities' suffering and past rights abuses triggered dramatic changes in international covenants and Argentine legislation throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Argentine politicians amended the country's constitution in 1994 to recognize the pre-existence of indigenous societies and affirm their legal rights to land ownership and bilingual education. Despite these efforts of historic reconciliation, Argentina's indigenous communities are still having their basic human rights infringed upon, as new health, economic, and land conflicts have emerged with the strengthening of agribusinesses. Through the examination of David Harvey's *accumulation by dispossession* model and a case study conducted in Northern Argentina's Chaco region, this research finds that the government's ongoing prioritization of economic opportunities associated with GM soy's expansion undermines legislation created to protect indigenous communities. If Argentina's indigenous peoples are to have their human rights properly recognized, the government must ensure laws are enforced on the ground.