

## **Submission to International Workshop: The Political Economy of the Extractive Imperative in Latin America**

**Author:** Maria Eugenia Giraudo  
PhD Candidate  
The University of Warwick  
Department of Politics and International Studies

**Paper Title:** The Governance of the Soybean complex in South America.

### **Abstract:**

The consolidation of Latin American post-neoliberal governments (2002-2014) was accompanied by a return to a primary-export model based on extractivism. The peak in commodity prices has accelerated this process, and offered the governments in the region a remarkable income of cash to be added to the arks of the State. If we consider extractivism as 'economic-political regimes based on the over-exploitation of the natural goods of their territories' (Machado Araoz 2013:129), we can include agricultural activities in this framework, especially the production of commodities at a large scale, as is the case of soybean in several countries of the Southern Cone. The soybean complex involves high intensity of capital and technology, and very low use of labour. Every step of this chain is calculated in such a way as to extract more productivity from the natural resources available: seeds, soil, and the use of waterways, among others.

In countries like Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay (and increasingly Uruguay and Bolivia), the soybean complex became a key sector in their GDP and an essential element to their balance of payments, being the most important or even single sector of the economy with surplus of US dollars. While the phenomenon crosses borders -even encouraging names like the 'Soybean Republic' or 'Soylandia'- the approaches taken by the different governments are different, sometimes even contradictory and affected by power struggles at the subnational level. This paper intends to analyse the different policies adopted by the governments of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina regarding the soybean complex, to understand the role this commodity plays in each country's national development and the different market-state relations that emerge from it.

**Bio:** PhD Candidate at the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick. Thesis title: The Political Economy of Commodity Regions: Soybean in South America. M.A. in International Political Economy from the University of Warwick. Previously worked as Academic Coordinator at the Bs.As. based think tank, the Argentine Council on International Relations. MsC in Geopolitics and International Relations from Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Toulouse (France) and BsC in International Relations from Universidad del Salvador (Argentina).