The Chaco region of South America, is a vast eco-region which stretches across four countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay and is inhabited by indigenous groups, criollo settlers, and colonists of diverse nationalities. This ecoregion has experienced fast-paced environmental, social and economic changes as a result of an intensification of extractive industries. In a few decades, the area has become a complex arena of political, cultural and economic contestation between different actors that include the state, environmental and developmental NGOs, religious groups, and private businesses whose projects and agendas collide with the ways of life of local residents. In this talk we present our recently published edited volume on the region, and discuss our research in the area, which shows the transformations of the region and the complex interethnic relations.