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Conservation and its Effect on Indigenous Communities

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PO 332

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Project Preface

Summary of Findings

For my project, I chose to investigate the effects of conservation on indigenous populations. My research question going into this project was, “How does conservation affect indigenous communities and individuals?” The main reason I chose this topic was because of the misconceptions surrounding conservation. It is often believed that conservation is a wonderful thing that protects baby elephants and keeps our rainforests green; However, I wanted to dig deeper, and find out how the most marginalized communities are affected by conservation.

After reading countless journal and news articles, I came to the conclusion that indigenous populations are extremely negatively affected by conservation and are disproportionately affected by the consequences of conservation. The main findings that led to this conclusion were the massive expulsions of indigenous populations to make way for protected areas (Colchester 2004), the extreme enforcement of park rangers, arresting and shooting at anyone who comes into their ancestral territory to hunt or farm (Vidal 2016), the growing feeling of anxiety (Goodale et al. 2015 in Thondhlana et al 2020, 4) and powerlessness in indigenous individuals because of the control of conservationists (Brockington 2014, Thondhlana et al. 2016 Thondhlana and Cundill 2017 in Thondhala et al. 2020, 5), and the drastic loss of culture indigenous communities go through when they are stripped from their lands and resources (Colchester 2004, 147). All of these negative consequences of conservation

help to demonstrate why the sharing of this information is so important. What is going on all over the world constitutes a human rights crisis, where people are ripped from their homes and communities just so conservationists can “protect” biodiversity that has already been cared for by indigenous people for centuries. The suffering, harm, poverty, and despair felt by indigenous communities because of conservation is a sign to everyone that change is needed.

While continuing my research, I chose to investigate how indigenous people are resisting conservation and what people like me can do to help. From this portion of my research I found that most indigenous activists are resisting this discriminatory form of conservation in hopes that they can implement community-based conservation (CBC); A method of conservation where local communities take part in conservation and development activities (Hulme and Murphee 2001 and Rihoy et al 2010 in Hitchcock 2019, 219) by participating in decisions, having ownership over resources and sometimes land, and often receiving economic benefits for their work as conservationists (Hackel 1998 in Bajracharya, Furley, and Newton 2005, 2767).

Although there are some negatives to community-based conservation, many indigenous activists and others engage in resistance to achieve some level of independence in the form of CBC. My findings demonstrated that there are five primary ways activists organize for CBC. First, indigenous activists engage in seeking laws and resolutions to secure their rights as landowners from the state and international organizations (Colchester 2004, 148). Second, activists often go to court to be granted land ownership or the right to use land traditionally from the state (Dominguez and Luomo 2020, 12). Third, indigenous tribes hold protests against organizations and the state for the care of animals and the environment to be given back to them (“Honey...” 2021). Fourth, groups engage in everyday activism by continuing banned practices as a way to

show that their ways are superior (Holmes 2007). And Fifth, groups write letters (“Letters...” 2018) or formal complaints (Milko 2020) to organizations urging the ending of protected areas.

Although all of these paths of activism may seem effective, conservationists, NGOs, and the state seem to continue to hold ultimate power. In order to combat this power, activists must keep working and people like me should get involved. The main ways someone detached from the situation can get involved is through getting informed, spreading awareness, and making sure to only support community-based initiatives when you travel. People in America can also get involved by pressuring Joe Biden to continue on his promise to allow indigenous people a role in caring for public land.

Overview of Different Texts

To convey all of the information I noted in the above section, I chose 3 different genres of media. The first is a powerpoint with a voiceover attached. This is my most detailed text and it provides the most information out of the whole project. I chose this genre because I wanted to create something more detailed than the rest of the texts. I knew a powerpoint would give me a lot of space to put information and in addition I knew I would do a voiceover which allowed me even more ways to convey ideas. I did a lot of research for this project and I wanted to provide as much of it as possible. Another reason I chose this medium was that it is accessible to most people, being in a familiar platform. Social media isn't everyone's forte, but listening or watching a presentation on YouTube is something many people are able to do. This being said, the powerpoint is geared toward less tech-savvy people, who wish to get a more detailed presentation. I envision my family members or academics taking part in watching this presentation

The second text I completed was a TikTok. This is the text that was the hardest to do because I had so much information to share and only 60 seconds to do it. In the end, I ended up making two parts to be able to convey my findings. I chose to make a TikTok because I thought it would be a fun and interesting way to present my information. I am used to writing papers or making PowerPoints, so this text was very fun to make. In addition, I chose this genre because I thought it would be a great way to educate younger people on this topic who are more excluded from the academic world. By going on TikTok and watching my presentation, a 15 year old highschool student probably learned more about conservation than her parents even know. The intended audience for this text was younger people, mostly my age, who are not necessarily academic. I pictured my friends from high school who are not political science majors watching the TikTok.

The last text I created was an Instagram post. The reason I created this text was similar to why I chose to make a TikTok; I wanted to try something new and present my research in a fun way. Another motivation for presenting my research on instagram was that it was a way I could be creative. Making the post, I was able to mess around with many different editing techniques and images. In addition to being creative, the instagram post was also a way for me to create something similar to other instagram accounts I follow. I follow many accounts who post slideshows of pictures displaying important information on social issues, and I wanted to try my hand at it. My intended audience for this text was someone from 12-55 who was slightly tech-savvy, but also didn't need to know too much about social media. I imagined my mom's friends reading the instagram post or my boyfriend's little sister. This person would probably not be too informed on conservation, but would come in with a little bit of background knowledge.

To check out my projects, click on these links. Hope you enjoy!

Powerpoint Presentation: <https://youtu.be/9Q4foSW1AMQ>

TikTok: Part 1 : <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMexg5Ttd/>

TikTok Part 2: →<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMexg9gJJ/>

Instagram:https://www.instagram.com/p/CN_511IBzfF/?igshid=1ut3zb4dp2hmh

Link to Works Cited Google Doc:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15alp5kelbQXRasCQ85VlWoByFBWD21VVoYjyGqHAO3w/edit?usp=sharing>

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