
Faculty Name Kimberly R. Marion Suseeya

Summer 2018

Fall 2018

Winter 2019

Spring 2019

Project Title From Presence to Influence: Examining the Politics of Indigenous Representation

Project Description The United Nations has identified indigenous peoples and women as two groups most affected by environmental change, including climate change (UN 2010). Although indigenous peoples make up approximately five percent (5%) of the global population, they constitute more than one-third of the world's poorest people and govern, occupy, or use nearly 22% of global land area, thus suggesting that indigenous peoples, and indigenous women in particular, are key stakeholders in global environmental governance (UN 2010, UN n.d.). Moreover, there has been an upwelling of different forums and groups associated with indigenous peoples, women, and forest governance related to climate change, including the Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change, Indigenous Women in REDD, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, and the Forest Peoples Programme, among many others, that engage global policy arenas. Until the mid-1990s, however, indigenous peoples had limited—if any—formal representation in international environmental policy-making. The primary mechanism for representation is traditionally through formal state channels, many of which fail to recognize indigenous peoples and rights, thus excluding them from any formal political representation in international policy-making arenas. In recent years, however, indigenous peoples and local communities have steadily gained access and opportunities to participate in international policy-making arenas. This increased participation is particularly visible in global environmental governance venues, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Despite, however, the resources and attention dedicated to indigenous representation and the increased presence of indigenous peoples in global environmental governance, their influence on decision outcomes remains weak (Witter et al 2015). In this project, we seek to identify and examine the ways in which marginalized and underrepresented groups effectively influence governance processes that directly impact their ways of living.

Position Expectations The student will participate in the following research activities: (1) transcribing audio files from field observations and interviews conducted at the Paris Climate Summit and the World

Conservation Congress; (2) organize and curate material artifacts collected at the Paris Climate Summit and the World Conservation Congress into a web-based, open-access data set; (3) assist with data organization and file management; (4) update project website and library. Training will include qualitative data analysis techniques and programs, data management and archival curation, and professional web-based communication skills. Depending on the progress made in the project, the student may also be able to participate in data analysis, interpretation, and writing up results for publication.

Skills/Experience Required The ideal candidate will demonstrate excellent attention to detail, experience with web-based communication, and skills with Excel and EndNote (or be willing to learn). Demonstrated ability to troubleshoot. Transcription experience desirable. Must be comfortable and capable of dealing with and organizing large amounts of diverse types of data; self-driven and able to work independently; capable of be able to follow data storage guidelines and procedures; and, complete research ethics training. Spanish or French language ability is a plus, but not required.

What Will the FF Gain? As part of a team of researchers, the research assistant will have the opportunity to work with scholars and students from a variety of disciplines including political science, anthropology, political ecology, and ecological sciences, among others. This will help enhance the research assistant's interdisciplinary literacy and expose her/him to alternative ways of understanding and examining questions in political science. Additionally, because the project is team-based, the research assistant will gain experience in collaborative approaches to research and how team-based research unfolds across different stages of research. By working with ethnographic data collected at sites of global environmental governance, the research assistant will learn about how the global politics of the environment play out through the lens of traditionally understudied groups, including Indigenous Peoples.

Time Requirement 4 quarters (Summer 2017 – Spring 2018), Summer up to 40 hours/week, Academic year 10-20 hours/week.
