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Marginalized Populations and Climate Change

'Faces of COP 21'

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United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of climate change on marginalized populations, and seeks to understand the strategies of climate activists from so-called Least Developed Countries, particularly small island nations, for influencing climate policy on the global stage. I conducted participant observation and interviews at the UNFCCC's COP 21 in Paris, in order to understand how marginalized populations anticipate the future, solutions they have to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change, and how they saw themselves being represented at the conference.

Methods

- Panels
- Interviews
- Observations
- Analysis of Literature
- Videography

Future Directions

Future climate conferences and policy decisions need to include the voices of marginalized communities. Their wealth of knowledge and personal experiences with climate change is invaluable to the global efforts to reach climate justice. The Global North also should be more active in supporting these communities.

Voices of COP 21



Brianna Fruin

"Climate Change is a day to day thing for people in Samoa. As a teenager growing up it is my reality to see cyclones, flash floods, general flooding in the area we live in, droughts and all sorts of extreme weather we see everyday and it's our reality. And out of this COP I would like to see a legally binding agreement and my wish for the world is that everyone can concentrate on 1.5c because that is the only way our Pacific Islands can survive".

—Youth Activist from the Island of Samoa, Brianna Fruin



"It is about the survival of people in Tuvalu, people in Kiribati, and Marshall Islands. Because if we adapt, and adapt and adapt, and we do not protect the islands, there will come a time there will be nothing to adapt to".

—Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Enele Sopoaga

Key Findings

Marginalized populations have the smallest carbon footprint but due to geographic location, gender, age, socioeconomic class, they experience the worst effects of climate change.

Marginalized populations are well informed and proactive on climate issues.

They are disproportionately impacted by climate change, but are not included in high level discussions and policy initiatives.



-Small Island Nation Activists