

# Review of: "“Saving the Forest” with a REDD+ Project: Socio-Ecological Repercussions on Indigenous People in Cambodia"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is an incredibly important manuscript. I commend you for your razor-sharp criticism of capitalist-aligned conservation programs via this case study. In Theme 3, the point about how fortress conservation is in complete opposition to Indigenous sovereignty is really great. The contents of Theme 6 are so under-discussed in the realm of conservation, and it is fantastic to see these articulated so clearly in this manuscript. Theme 7's attention to the uselessness of FPIC processes from an Indigenous perspective is well articulated as well. Theme 10's discussion about the "two-tiered regime" regarding forest activities was really great to see; as was the point about WCS being an assimilative force pushing Indigenous peoples into capitalist ways of being. There is a serious lack of articles addressing conservation programs as a part of the capitalist superstructure. Thank you for writing this one so wonderfully!

I have just a couple of suggestions for clarity and a question or two. I'll put a general suggestion first, then address the others in the sections where they appear.

General:

"Indigenous people(s)" would be good to capitalize throughout.

Abstract:

My brain wants to hear "This anthropological ..." rather than "The anthropological ..." but this is just a suggestion – it helps me realize you're talking about your own research.

Findings & Discussion:

Theme 3:

The sentence "It leads to a corporate nature (Milne, 2022) elaborating, supervising, monitoring, and evaluating the REDD+ feasibility and its whole process;" could be made a bit clearer. I think the phrase "a corporate nature" is throwing me off. Could that part be rephrased?

The sentence "Neither investors nor the wealthy owner recognized as a land grabber has ever been trialled, even openly denounced by the conservation NGO" could use an "or" before the word "even" to make it clearer: "Neither investors nor the wealthy owner recognized as a land grabber has ever been trialled, or even openly denounced by the conservation

NGO.”

#### Theme 7:

The point, “They need to be “re-educated”,” should be edited to make it clear that this is not YOUR opinion but rather the finding about WCS attitudes. 😊

#### Theme 8:

Just a general thought for consideration ... The point “Financial compensations are promised to offset additional subsistence costs resulting from conservation restrictions. Noticeably, they are offered as a “reward”, not as a right” made me wonder if there was anything reported about conservation being a threat to Indigenous identities, given it is so linked to their relationships with the land? You do a great job pointing out the disruption to subsistence and way of life, but I wonder if there is more depth in there that could be explored. Not suggesting you do this in this manuscript, but it could be something to keep in mind. There is ongoing work done in places like Colombia to recognize how assimilation and displacement are acts of genocide in the sense that they destroy not only a way of life but an entire identity.

#### Theme 9:

This point “WCS establishes REDD+ committees in each village. They are supposed to act as intermediaries between the organization and the community. Organizing forest patrols is their main duty. The majority of the population faces scepticism about their efficacy. Concerns about potential conflicts of interest within the REDD+ committees prevail. It is suspected that committee members and their families are the main beneficiaries of the REDD+ project,” really stood out to me as familiar. In Colombia, the Atrato River Guardians seem to potentially have a similar unfortunate thing going on. Just wanted to share in case you might be inspired to connect with material about that biocultural ruling at some point.

“The majority of the population faces skepticism about their efficacy.” <- Do you mean “expresses” rather than “faces”?

#### Theme 10:

“In turn, each Bunong village can access, but on certain conditions strictly evaluated by the conservation NGO, to development activities whose main purpose is nonetheless to keep men and women away from the forest” Can this be clarified a little bit? I think it is just a wording issue. Maybe just erase the word “to”: “In turn, each Bunong village can access, but on certain conditions strictly evaluated by the conservation NGO, development activities whose main purpose is nonetheless to keep men and women away from the forest”

#### Conclusion:

The second paragraph of the conclusion is fantastic.

“The ways of indigenous people have to be eliminated.” Make it clear that this is what the governments want and not you as the author.

And that’s it. I’m really looking forward to sharing this article once it is available for sharing. Great work.

