Studying the Effects of Top-Down Conservation Legislation in Developing Communities

Emily Sinsky
Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Ramos, Ph.d

Abstract: Since climate change became a legislative issue, there have been numerous proposals both within countries and on the world stage at the U.N. in order to combat its effects. Ironically, laws intended to mitigate the devastation caused by climate change oftentimes affect the countries who face the most fallout from deforestation, rising sea levels, and other effects of global warming. Multilateral organizations such as the U.N. are known for implementing policies or programs which, in theory, are beneficial in the fight against climate change but fail to take into account the effects such restrictions may have on individuals and the local economies in a country. Through my research, I plan on answering the question as to how individuals are affected by climate change initiatives in their communities—and how to better integrate their needs into the policymaking process. In order to do this, I will travel to Costa Rica and interview artisan fishers and perform an empirical analysis on their local fishing markets’ profits. This research will be useful in the quest to combat climate change without driving more individuals into poverty.