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# A Close-up of Conservation Photography: Bringing the Environmental Movement's Creative Industry Into Focus

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

Elizabeth Anne Gervais

June 2016

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The Dissertation of Elizabeth Anne Gervais is approved:

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Close-up of Conservation Photography: Bringing the Environmental Movement's Creative Industry Into Focus

by

Elizabeth Anne Gervais

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Sociology
University of California, Riverside, June 2016
Dr. Katja Guenther, Co-Chairperson
Dr. Ellen Reese, Co-Chairperson

This dissertation examines the process by which conservation photographers do conservation photography as they generate visual material as part of environmental social change initiatives. Using interviews, I study photographers associated with the International League of Conservation Photographers. Focusing on the process by which photographers do culture, I examine the boundaries that photographers invoke in their work, how the photographers became conservation photographers, how conservation photographers manage tensions among logics in their work, and how conservation photographers relate to emerging technologies. I demonstrate that technological and economic changes create tensions among professional photographers who attempt to integrate social change efforts into their professional work. This dissertation shows the importance of considering occupational identity when studying individuals who engage in social change activities.

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## Chapter One: Examining Conservation Photography

### Introduction

> I think [conservation] photographers have a tremendous opportunity to communicate in ways that maybe scientists don't and maybe policy makers don't and maybe the average citizen doesn't. We're allowed through our craft of photography to come in and tell a story and people open the door, and their home, and their lives, and their land to us, with that thread of trust that we're gonna come in there and…do something with it. Whether…it's get somebody to care or simply showing the beauty that's there or moving policy in some direction or what not. I think about all the environmental laws in this country, think about all the places that have been protected around the world and photography has been a tremendously important and powerful tool … to protect a place or save a species or shine a light on an issue. Today that's more important than ever and we're living in a world today that's more visual than ever and at the end of the day we are storytellers and we've been telling stories since we've been dragging our knuckles on the ground. I don't know if there's any other species on the planet that tells stories. We do, it's innately human, and pictures go clear back to the cave paintings in France, 40,000 years ago. So I think it's an incredibly powerful tool and lever for conservation. –Charles

Charles' quote is illustrative of the complex nature of doing conservation photography. On the topic of cultural material, like art and music, and social movements, scholars encourage research to move beyond content analysis of cultural objects and instead examine "the social processes by which people do culture" (Roy 2010: 95-96) and "the culture-making practices and processes by which [cultural] codes are created, transformed, communicated, applied, and given meaning" (Hart 1996: 91). Apart from the material photographs that are an outcome of their work, the processes by which conservation photographers make their photographs become important and can provide important insights into the environment in which they work. Analysis of the conservation movement's development and use of visual communication material can contribute to our

understanding of the social, political, and cultural construction of the environment as well as provide insights into social movement processes. I employ an understanding of social movements that encompasses institutionally oriented and extra-institutional activity (Meyer, Jenness, and Ingram 2005) and views cultural activities within a conflictual situation as having the prospect of being more likely to help groups reach their goals than more antagonistic forms of direct action (Roy 2010). This dissertation demonstrates the importance of studying the production process of members of a creative industry who are associated with social change initiatives, or more specifically, how conservation photographers do culture as they take part in conservation photography (Becker 2008, Hart 1996, Roy 2010).

The study examines various aspects of the process involved in the field of conservation photography: How do conservation photographers define their occupation? What factors lead to a career in conservation photography? How do activism and journalism influence conservation photography? And, finally, how do conservation photographers relate to emerging technologies? I combine insights from the scholarship on social movements, sociology of work, and new media to address these questions. In this research, I draw on interview data gathered from 34 conservation photographers associated with the International League of Conservation Photographers (iLCP).

Visual materials remain vital resources that environmental advocates use in environmental discussions. Through this dissertation, I provide an analysis of factors influencing the production of visual material that conservation organizations utilize to communicate about environmental issues. Findings will help to illuminate the shifting

professional environment of members of a creative industry who strive to bring about social change with their work. Understanding the underlying factors that influence the production process can assist individuals and organizations in actively constructing conditions that will lead to more successful communication expeditions and communication tools.

**Background and Significance**

This project draws from the social constructionist perspective in regards to issues surrounding the environment. Social constructivists argue that social, political, and cultural processes influence how we define environmental conditions (Hannigan 2006). Social constructivists have been harshly criticized by realists who say social constructionism does not lead to useful analysis of environmental issues. If environmental issues are simply seen as socially constructed, they cannot be seen or studied as objectively existing phenomenon (Dunlap and Catton 1994, Dunlap and Marshall 2007). Other scholars expand on this criticism, explaining social constructionists have 1) obscured the discovery of the properties of nature and the effect that discovery has on social action; 2) ignored that nature itself is a crucial element in the scientific development of factual knowledge; and 3) glossed over the manipulation of nature (Murphy 1994). In defense, social constructionists argue that social constructions play an important role in problematizing environmental claims and knowledge (Dunlap and Marshall 2007). Much like Ascher, Steelman, and Healy (2010), I acknowledge the existence of "a real biophysical world" (p. 5) and want to examine the social, economic,

and political influences that affect the production of knowledge used by the environmental movement. Similarly, Hannigan (2006) asserts that social constructionists encourage scholars to "look more closely at the social, political, and cultural processes" (p. 29) involved in presenting environmental concerns. The social constructionist perspective returns to key sociological concerns such as power and perception and places environmental issues in social, cultural, and political contexts (ibid).

Scholars highlight the influence of the social construction of climate change and the importance of "acknowledging that social facts are facts for social purposes, and that social reality is real even if it falls on us to make it real" (Dunlap and McCright 2010). In the case of climate change, the anti-environmental countermovement, assisted by industry, conservative politicians, scientists, media, and think-tanks, consistently tries to delegitimize environmentalism and promote environmental skepticism (Jacques et al. 2008). They work to discount science, which is often used by the environmental movement to legitimize their stance, and scientific experts. In essence, these groups manufacture and disseminate uncertainty (Dunlap and McCright 2010).

Although there is debate surrounding environmental organizations' abilities to create usable environmental knowledge (Ascher et al. 2010, Brulle and Pellow 2006, Eden 2010, Irwin and Michael 2003), environmental social movement organizations, environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGOs), and other environmental organizations play integral roles in developing new environmental narratives that challenge more traditional environmental narratives. Knowledge that individuals or groups create in ways society does not view as rigorous may reveal things that other more

scientific approaches miss (Ascher et al. 2010). Recent research examines the role that NGOs and other groups that are not always identified as 'scientific' play in the creation of scientific knowledge. Findings suggest that groups like ENGOs play important roles in creating and often modifying boundaries between what is considered scientific knowledge and what is not (Eden 2010; Eden et al. 2006) and often created hybridized spaces (Eden 2010, Irwin and Michael 2003,) or 'technoscience' generated by transdisciplinary organizations (Jamison 2001).

In addition, a scientific approach may only be a partial solution when it comes to communicating about environmental issues. Scientific literacy only plays a small role in how society forms opinions about scientific issues (Allum, Sturgis, Tabourazi, and Brunton-Smith 2008, Nisbet and Scheufele 2009). Scholars also point out that people do not receive scientific information in a vacuum and there is not a single formula for disseminating scientific knowledge. This highlights the importance of considering the context in which scientific knowledge is communicated and the negotiation and evaluation people do when they receive scientific information (Yearley 2005). While in the past science was key to political decision-making about environmental problems, increasingly, public perception of environmental issues has gained prominence in policy debates and "winning hearts and minds" (Hansen 2011: 8) of the public has become more important. Nisbet and Scheufele (2009) highlight the importance of individuals with scientific and communication experience and skills for the future success of science communication. They argue that using storytelling techniques to communicate scientific information may help to reach broader audiences (ibid). Conservation photographers'

visual environmental narratives may help fill this role as photography is used to help create a dialogue between the scientific community and the public (Tucker 2006, Wilder 2009).

Studying those processes and individuals involved in the production of media and content becomes an important area of examination. This dissertation focuses on one area of environmental knowledge production: the creation of visual material used to support the conservation movement. It examines the individual photographers affiliated with the iLCP who work with conservation organizations to produce the visual material. Because of the research focus on photographers associated with one specific organization, the study provides a significant, in-depth examination of the workings of photographers from that group, but the intricacies of the organization may mean that, as the field of conservation photography continues to grow, findings may not reflect other photographers, or groups of photographers, who identify as conservation photographers from other groups. Further, as discussed shortly, the conservation movement represents a specific perspective of the environmental movement overall.

Analyzing social movements' use of visual materials can provide important insights into social movement activities (Philipps 2011), and in this study I argue that focusing on the production processes involved in the creation of visual materials is equally important to understanding social movement dynamics (della Porta 2013, Doerr 2010, Roy 2010). Research examines how social movements use visual artifacts, such as photographs, as part of their meaning making processes (Halfmann and Young 2010, Jasper and Poulsen 1995, O'Neill and Nicholson-Cole 2009, Philipps 2011, Rohlinger

and Klein 2012). The anti-nuclear and animal rights movements (Jasper and Poulsen 1995) anti-abortion, and anti-slavery, movements (Halfmann and Young 2010) use grotesque images and visual symbols' abilities to administer moral shocks. Analysis of migration protests finds protesters' visual dialogue contrasts with mainstream media messages and points to the importance of place-specific visual culture (Doerr 2010).

Images have long been associated with social change and particularly with promoting environmentalism (Bright 1992, DeLuca and Demo 2000). In the environmental movement, visual artifacts often play a key role in the social, political, and cultural construction of the environment in environmental narratives (Hansen and Machin 2008). Visual artifacts are thought to reproduce a particular way of seeing in which images' perspectives are normalized and construct a specific environmental reality (DeLuca and Demo 2000, Remillard 2011). For example, the iconic photograph of the earth taken from space has been used extensively in the environmental movement (Maher 2004, Tucker 2006). Myriad groups use visual material to communicate about environmental issues such as deforestation, drought, and endangered species (DiFrancesco and Young 2011). ENGOs like Greenpeace routinely use photographs of various environmental issues as part of their work (Doyle 2007).

In general, environmental movement organizations often use photographs to promote specific concerns, interests, and ideologies in the hopes of shaping peoples' perceptions of the environment. Idyllic understandings of nature have been prevalent throughout time (Bright 1992, DeLuca and Demo 2000, Doyle 2007, Hansen and Machin 2008, Remillard 2011), but photographers also construct images of nature that go beyond

the sublime (DeLuca and Demo 2000). Local, nonthreatening impact images of environmental issues, like images of famine, can engage viewers by creating local relevance and action images, such as images of thermostats, can help empower viewers (O'Neill and Nicholson-Cole 2009). People use photographs to translate and shape nature into specific cultural representations. In an examination of how media uses images to create an understanding of biodiversity, researchers find one of the functions photographs serve for communicating about environmental issues is to help viewers become more familiar with scientific problems (Seppanen and Valiverronen 2003).

Other research problematizes the use of visual imagery positioned as scientific knowledge to communicate environmental issues. Doyle (2007) examines how Greenpeace uses photography to communicate about environmental issues and shows some of the limitations of using visual imagery. She argues that focusing on the visual as a form of scientific knowledge can obscure some current environmental issues as well as potential issues that are not as readily visible such as climate change.

A small study of four photographers, two photojournalist and two conservation photographers, demonstrates that conservation photographers may help bridge the gap between conservation science and laypeople in ways that photojournalists do not. In their work, conservation photographers use their ecological knowledge, collaborate with experts, focus on the interpretive and conceptual, and embody a feeling of stewardship (Farnsworth 2011). A study exploring collaboration between scientists and artists finds that both scientists and artists use photographs of natural phenomenon. However, scientists and artists used the photographs differently. Scientists used the photographs to

show the effects of environmental degradation while the artists used them as emotional and aesthetic objects (Halpern 2011). Taken together, this research highlights the importance of considering individuals' social backgrounds and positions when studying the production and use of visual material. It is likely that differences will emerge regarding what goes into the production of images and how photographers make use of them afterwards.

As one strain of the environmental movement, the conservation movement, in particular, has made use of photography. Conservation photographers like Carleton Watkins and Ansel Adams paved the way for current conservation photographers with projects such as campaigns to create federal parklands (DeLuca and Demo 2000, Farnsworth 2011). There is also a history of conservation photographers successfully working with groups like the Sierra Club, the National Geographic Society, and the Wildlife Conservation Society to address conservation issues (Ward 2008).

When studying environmental communication, scholars urge researchers to consider "how communicative power in society is deeply unequally distributed" and "how economic, political, and cultural power significantly affects the ability to participate in and influence the nature of public 'mediated' communication about the environment" (Hansen 2011: 20-21). This relates to the idea of the public sphere as a social domain that holds public opinion and mediates between the state and society. According to Habermas (1991), the public sphere is where discussions among individuals take place freely. Structures such as the market economy and mass media have dual roles in the public sphere. They can lead to increased discussion within the public sphere but

they have the ability to limit it or break it down as well. The old conceptualization of the public sphere has been transformed through the rise of structures that promote a focus on consumerism and commercialization. Media plays a large role in manufacturing public opinion and activities like marketing and public relations are powerful forces that influence public discourse and debates (ibid). Yet, with “corporate colonization” public sphere is narrowed as corporate elites gain increasing power over other types of social actors. Corporate media giants play a large role in shaping which issues are considered to be news worthy and how they are discussed. In particular, mainstream news media have obscured or ignored many environmental issues (Boggs 2001).

Social movement activists use the internet, and specifically online social networks, to share information, including visual material (Castells 2012, Cottle and Lester 2011, Tufekci and Wilson 2012). Recent studies find that advocacy groups (Obar, Zube, and Lampe 2011) and social movement organizations and activists (Gervais 2015, Harlow and Harp 2011) use social network websites. Internet technologies also allow for users to create their own content and share it with their networks (Bennett and Segerberg 2011, Kavada 2009). Social movement organizations that use the internet can bypass media and empower them to communicate their stories directly to large numbers of internet users (Bennett 2003, Postmes and Brunsting 2002). It is easy for most people to be a broadcaster using laptops and smartphones in conjunction with Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (DeLuca, Suns, and Peeples 2012; Ritchin 2013).

DeLuca et al. (2012) argue, “television, digital cameras, the computer, the Internet, Web 2.0, and smartphones in concert have fundamentally transformed the media

matrix that constitutes our social milieu, producing new forms of social organization and new modes of perception" (p. 145). Scholars propose that the internet might help reveal the aspects of scientific research that were previously hidden from the public (Peterson 2001). Hansen (2010) contends that in the case of constructing environmental problems, the biggest implication of new internet technologies is "the twin emergence and mass proliferation of sources of information about the environment combined with the concomitant erosion… of control over news and information about the environment, environmental problems, environmental damage…" (p. 66). Similarly, other scholars warn that numerous competing environmental messages may oversaturate the public sphere and distract people from more serious environmental issues (Boggs 2000).

There are also challenges associated with new technologies, especially for members of creative industries like photographers (Jenkins et al. 2013). Now, using mobile devices, anyone with the resources and abilities can take pictures and upload them to an online audience. The proliferation of Web 2.0 technology also brings with it the introduction of online user-generated content. Mobile applications like Instagram with various filters and photographic manipulation capabilities have created an entire class of amateur photographers (Hochman and Schwartz 2012, Ritchin 2013). This could be a way for laypeople to become involved in documenting environmental issues but could also create tension between professional photographers and amateur photographers. While the internet provides a place for photographers to archive and display photographs, it also makes it possible for people to use their photographs without permission which creates copyright issues. In addition, the revenue stream found in traditional print media

is no longer what it was in the past. Instead, photographers should feel "honored" when their photos are used on blogs. Further, the widespread use of photographic software, like Adobe Photoshop, may also lead audiences to question the veracity of photographs more so than in the past (Ketchum 2013).

The primary contribution of this research is to gain a better understanding of the process of conservation photography. More broadly, the research examines (1) how conservation photographers define their profession, (2) how they became conservation photographers, (3) how conservation photographers relate to activism and journalism, and (4) how conservation photographers relate to emerging new media technologies. In doing so, the research extends research in the areas of social movements, environmental communication, and new media. Narratives are a key tool that social movement actors use to create meaning and can be used in the realm of environmental policymaking. The environmental movement has a history of using visual material as well as internet technologies to promote their understanding of the environment and engage audiences. This study adds to research on how social problems are socially constructed by focusing on members of the creative industry and how cultural and structural factors in society influence the construction of social issues. I study individuals whose roles incorporate career and social change aspirations that often come in conflict with each other. In particular, I examine the challenges and opportunities of integrating new media into their work.

While environmental organizations are not always viewed as legitimate players in creating environmental or scientific information, it is important to study their roles in

creating these types of knowledge (Eden 2010, Eden et al. 2006). In light of changing work environments, including methods of getting compensated for their work, professional photographers are more likely to partner with NGOs (Ritchin 2013). The findings help illuminate how networks of individuals and organizations work together to create environmental knowledge, with a particular focus on how conservation photographers negotiate activism and journalism during the process. Further, this study offers insight into a group of individuals who capture both scientific and communication expertise and how this might influence the communication of scientific information. Finally, the research provides a better understanding of how the conservation organizations and conservation photographers make use of technology in their work, with a specific focus on online tools and technologies.

The research findings provide information about members of the creative industries more broadly as parts of the creation process may remain consistent regardless of the social change issue. Many conservation photographers face tensions between making a living and the means by which they choose to encourage social change, experiences likely to occur for members of creative industries who work on other social problems as well. However, the discourse surrounding each topic on which social change advocates focus also present unique obstacles and challenges that need to be taken into consideration to fully comprehend the content creation processes in different areas.

## Research Methods and Design

### *International League of Conservation Photographers*

To understand the process by which organizations create environmental narratives and how journalism and activism interact in the creation of environmental knowledge, this study focuses on photographers associated with the conservation group the iLCP. There are myriad factors why the iLCP is an ideal organization to examine the intersection journalism and activism. The network-based, project-focused group sends conservation photographers on environmental expeditions to accomplish their goal of disseminating environmental conservation messages to wide varieties of audiences. Their mission "is to translate conservation science into compelling visual messages targeted to specific audiences. We work with leading scientists, policy makers, government leaders, and conservation groups to produce the highest-quality documentary images of both the beauty and wonder of the natural world and the challenges facing it" (iLCP 2011). Many of the iLCP photographers have scientific professional or academic credentials. The iLCP works around the globe with a particular focus on projects that are specifically aligned with current policy initiatives.

Studying this type of organization and its members sheds light onto the process by which networks for stakeholders collaborate and create environmental knowledge. In a sense, the iLCP can be considered a hybridized space where both laypeople and experts are found together. Eden (2010) contends "recognizing and pursuing hybridity in these rather fluid ways may be helpful in challenging outdated models of the place science has in society and of the ways in which cultural cartographies of science are shaped and evoked" (p. 228). As with other environmental organizations, part of their goal is to generate knowledge to create action (Jasanoff 1997). While most studies focus on science

and politics, examining how journalism and activism come together to do this helps provide additional information about these hybridized spaces.

The iLCP identifies as a conservation organization. The conservation movement's traditional message framing is summarized as: "Natural resources should be technically managed from a utilitarian perspective to realize the greatest good for the greatest number of people over the longest period of time" (Brulle, Turner, Carmichael, and Jenkins 2007: 200). Current conservation organizations typically frame their messaging around "conserving or rationally developing our natural resources to meet long term human needs" (Brulle 2000: 158-159). While conservation organizations focus is on conserving and enhancing natural habitats and species, environmental groups try to confront the negative effects of modern society on the environment. For example, environmental justice organizations focus on how the structure of society leads to negative environmental outcomes (Brulle 2000). Conservation organizations typically have memberships with scientific backgrounds and a scientific ethos. In the United Kingdom, this close association to science allows conservation organizations to work closely with the government and allows them to obtain funding. However, it also means scientific projects may take precedence at the expense of campaigning. Predominantly scientific groups typically do not have the background or expertise in communication, fundraising, or publicity (Yearley 1996).

While the iLCP fits under the umbrella of the environmental movement more broadly, they focus on conservation, which scholars identify as a particular kind of environmentalism (Brulle 2000). Because of this, the findings of this study may not apply

to the environmental movement overall, but instead represent what one might find when focusing on the conservation movement. According to Ward (2008), “The difference between a conservation photographer and a general nature photographer is that the conservation photographer selects projects that will address the global loss of biological and cultural diversity” (p. 63). However, in Ward’s (2008) exploration of conservation photography, when asked about the difference between conservation and nature photography, conservation photographers contend “the natural world is in danger and must be preserved” and that conservation photography depicts “an issue of conservation, preservation, or natural history science,” (Ward 2008: 89). Ward (2008) goes on to propose that to address environmental challenges, changes may be necessary in the political and economic realms. This suggests that in some cases conservation photography may extend beyond the ideas of the traditional conservation movement and into forms of environmentalism such as preservation, which hopes to keep what remains, or deep ecology, which views nature as having value outside of human existence and seeks to restore ecosystems (Brulle 2000). For a full history of conservation photography and the iLCP see Ward (2008).

*Data Collection and Sample*

Data collection includes interviews and content analysis. Describing qualitative fieldwork, Lofland et al. (2006) explain, “The researcher seeks to witness how those studied perceive, feel, and act in order to understand their perceptions, feelings, and behavior more fully and intimately” (p. 3). Understanding processes is a common theme

in qualitative work that quantitative work is unable to address. In this research, interviews were used to provide valuable insight into the process of conservation photography. According to Seidman (2006), interviewing can help researchers understand “the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). Outlining research aims that may call for interviewing methodology, Weiss (1994) includes developing detailed descriptions, integrating multiple perspectives, describing processes, and learning how events are interpreted, among others.

I selected this population because the iLCP contains a mix of male and female photographers; the photographers are from six continents and over 20 different countries; and the environmental work these photographers do aligns with environmental policy issues. I used maximum variation sampling. This allowed me to assess the maximum range of individuals who are affiliated with the iLCP. I fulfilled the criteria of sufficiency and saturation of information by interviewing “sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants … that make up the population” and to the point where I began “to hear the same information reported” (Seidman 2006: 55).

At the time of my interviews there were 104 photographers associated with iLCP. Fifty percent were from the US and 50 percent were from outside of the US. There were 18 female photographers. I interviewed 34 photographers. Half were from the US and half were from outside of the US. My sample included 9 female photographers and 25 male photographers. I purposefully over-sampled the women in order to compare across gender in future analyses.

Fourteen participants indicated that their occupation is photographer. Five participants indicated that they are photographers and writers. Four participants indicated that they are photographers and filmmakers. Three respondents considered themselves photojournalists. Three participants indicated that their occupations were general creative roles and photographers. Two respondents noted they were professors and photographers, one a research associate and photographer, one an ecologist and photographer, and one a naturalist and photographer. On average, respondents had been photographers for 19 years with a high of 45 years and low of six years.

Two respondents have a high school education. Eleven photographers' highest degrees are bachelor degrees. Twenty-one have advanced degrees. Highest degrees are in science (16), social science (6), business (4), law (2), engineering (2), and humanities (2).

**The Process of Conservation Photography**

This study extends research examining alternative entities that play a role in creating environmental knowledge. Exploring the process of conservation photography, this study will specifically examine how conservation photographers combine journalism and activism in the development of environmental knowledge. Analyzing the development of visual narratives by the conservation movement will contribute to our understanding of the process by which conservation organizations create visual material; the relationship between journalism and activism; and how the use of technology influences the generation and transmission of environmental narratives. Although not

generalizable to every discourse surrounding the environmental movement, this study's findings will reflect one of the dominant environmental discourses in our society.

This research seeks to examine the process involved in conservation photography. Specifically, it examines a case of professional photographers who are interested in using their work for social change purposes. Chapter two analyzes how conservation photographers use boundaries to help define conservation photography. I find economic and technological changes encourage conservation photographers to create boundaries between themselves and nature and amateur photographers. Conservation photographers indicate they have a strong environmental ethic behind their work, engage in the process of storytelling, and do something with the images that they make.

Chapter three demonstrates how these photographers became conservation photographers. Environmental concern and positive ideas about the efficacy of conservation photography propel photographers into a career focused on environmental social change. This highlights the importance of emphasizing the perceived effectiveness of conservation photography for understanding the motivation to enter and stay in the profession, and explores the variation in each photographer's understanding of success.

Chapter four examines how conservation photographers relate to activism and journalism. Traditional understandings of activism and journalism discourage some photographers from identifying as an activist but also lead self-identified activists to develop strategies to take part in social change initiatives. Findings suggest there are different types of journalism from which photographers draw and highlight the idea that photographers do not have to identify as an activist to do social change work.

Chapter five analyzes conservation photographers' relationships to emerging technologies using the concept of media resistance. Instead of presenting a dichotomy of use and non-use, I argue that in large part because of their occupational identities, or the structure of meanings in which individuals tie to their competencies and motivations with acceptable work roles (Meijers 1988), conservation photographers fall along a continuum of media use. There is variation based on their understanding of how technology influences community building, their relationships to traditional media, and their strategies for bringing about social change.

The dissertation contributes to sociological understandings of social movements, sociology of work, and new media. iLCP photographers offer an intriguing case that allows for the analysis of the intersection of activism and journalism; social movements' creation and transmission of visual environmental material; and how emerging technologies influence the process. Examining the iLCP will allow for a greater understanding of an important group of individuals -- people who strive to use their professional roles and experiences in social change initiatives.

Further, the process of developing visual material can provide valuable information about social movement strategies. While research about media representations of social movements is quite prevalent, there is less information about the visual material creation process. Further, this study will add to the literature examining part of the process of how environmental organizations develop and disseminate environmental knowledge. Finally, this research will provide insight into how technological advances are influencing organizations' creation and transmission of visual

environmental knowledge. Technology's affordances lead to benefits and challenges for creative industries (Jenkins et al. 2013, Baym and Burnett 2009). This study extends research examining how the internet is affecting creative industries by including conservation photographers. At the same time, the case allows for analysis of how activists and organizations are making use of online social networks, smartphones, and other pieces of technology throughout the process of knowledge creation and dissemination. I expect that the organizations and photographers will find innovative ways to use online technologies but also create boundaries to help preserve their own place as members of a creative industry, separate from the more participatory culture online technologies offer.

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## Chapter Two: The Boundaries of Conservation Photography

> The main difference is when you are photographer, only [a] photographer or only [a] wildlife photographer, you are making a beautiful picture for you and for maybe for your ego and maybe to win a photo contest…but when you became a conservation photographer you are working…to change the reality with your pictures. So you go deeper and deeper with your work. All of your work has a strong goal when you are a conservation photographer, but not when you are a photographer, only a photographer. –Miguel

Miguel differentiates between being “only a photographer” and being a conservation photographer. By using photographer as a starting point, a role that most audiences would identify, he explains how being a conservation photographer is different than what people would traditionally think of as photographers. What they do as conservation photographers is not for themselves but to try to create change with their work. He also claims that conservation photographers are thorough and systematic in their work. These boundaries became evident as photographers talked about their work as conservation photographers associated with the iLCP. Examining conservation photographers’ boundary work helps reveal how photographers are managing and responding to economic, technological, and social transformations in their professional field (Abbott 1988, Gieryn 1983). It also exemplifies the creation of collective identity among the photographers (Taylor, Whittier, and Morris 1992).

At the 8th Wild Wilderness Congress in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2005, a group of photographers founded iLCP, thus bringing the field of “conservation photography” into fruition. Although many of the photographers had focused on conservation issues for their entire careers, according to Ward (2008), that day the photographers took on the

identity of "conservation photographer." But what is conservation photography and what does it mean to be a conservation photographer? Ward (2008) states, "Conservation photography is simply photography that empowers conservation" (p.8). Ward's master's thesis, which provides a thorough depiction of the history of photography and conservation leading up to the creation of conservation photography as a discipline in essence becomes a playbook for conservation photographers and highlights similar boundaries that emerge from interviews in this research. I will not duplicate his efforts but instead expand upon his work by empirically examining how iLCP photographers create professional boundaries to help further define the space of conservation photography. Specifically, in this chapter, I analyze how conservation photographers use boundaries to help to define conservation photography.

Scholars use the concept of boundaries extensively in the social sciences (Lamont and Molnár 2002). I draw on literature that examines boundaries in relation to careers and professions as well as collective identity and social movements. The case of conservation photographers demonstrates that technological, social, and economic changes that influence occupations can lead to boundary demarcation among movement participants. Conservation photographers have a strong environmental motivation, engage in storytelling, and make use of the photographs that they make. Together, they construct themselves as authentic conservation photographers that support environmental causes. In addition, by constructing boundaries with amateur and nature photographers instead of other social movement players, conservation photographers remain uncontentious while at the same time making space for various social movement activity. I argue that

occupational identity plays a role in creating a collective identity focused on social movement activities. At the same time, conservation photographers provide a case of how one type of photographer is managing changing technological, social, and economic environments in their work.

In what follows, I review various dynamics that led to the creation of conservation photography as well as literature about the use of boundaries in careers and social movements. Next, I outline the boundaries conservation photographers present and end with a discussion of implications for environmental communication, social movements, and professions. I find that boundaries become an important tool that conservation photographers use in their profession as they develop environmental communication.

**Rationales Behind Using Boundaries**

Boundary work often emerges in response to a perceived threat. One reason that iLCP photographers create boundaries is the influence changing technologies have had on their profession (Jenkins 2006, Jenkins et al. 2013, Ritchin 2013). Increased numbers of people can afford more professional-grade photography equipment as the price of photography equipment continues to drop. Smart phones and other electronic devices are now equipped with photographic tools that continue to improve with every new version released (Shirky 2008). Further, people are more likely to have the funds to travel across the globe than in the past. For these reasons, professional conservation photographers often come up against other types of photographers as more individuals enter their professional domain. Professional conservation photographers draw on the differences

between what they do and the activities of other photographers as they work to protect their professional roles.

## Boundaries and Careers

Although some scholarship focuses on boundaryless careers (Arthur and Rousseau 1996), or protean careers (Hall et al. 1996), models which respond to the waning relationships between workers and the companies for which they work, other boundary-focused career scholarship (Inkson et al. 2012) highlights the importance of considering the role of boundaries when studying careers. This returns scholarship back to previous organizational work that considers the importance of boundaries in the creation of professions and careers (Abbott 1995). The concept of boundaries can assist in examining the relationship between career, social, and organizational contexts. It also allows a better understanding about the changing nature of professions (Inkson et al. 2012) in response to societal changes.

Boundary work consists of the players and stakeholders, the goals and interests, and the arenas (Gieryn 1983). In addition, Gieryn (1983) asserts that boundary work is typically employed in professions when 1) people want to expand their authority in a certain area, 2) people want to monopolize their professional authority, and 3) people want to protect their autonomy in regards to certain professional activities. Monopolization of authority helps to maintain their status and maintaining autonomy allows them to achieve certain professional norms and preserve control. Boundaries can also help speed up the professionalization within a field (Gieryn 1999).

Inkson et al. (2012) contend, “in response to technological change, many new occupations have sprung up, and new, boundary-focused studies of entry to established and new occupations, and the effects on careers, are needed” (p. 334). When societal changes lead to encroachment into professionals’ spaces, the management and negotiation of boundaries can lead to transforming occupational norms and participants (Abbott 1988). The changing economic and technological landscape photographers face creates an ideal environment to study how this new niche of photographers enact and negotiate boundaries as they develop conservation photography.

Artists are one professional group that typically take part in creating boundaries to distinguish themselves from others (Becker 1974). By creating boundaries, conservation photographers are creating demands for their service that are similar to, but, as they argue are very different than, the same service provided by other photographers (Winch 1997). Similarly, journalism is another field that has been hit particularly hard by technological changes (Deuze 2006, Jenkins 2006, Jenkins et. al 2013). Norms of traditional journalism may be changing as citizen journalists and other participatory media outlets have emerged. Journalism is another profession where boundary work is prevalent between professionals and non-professionals. This is because more people are able to create and disseminate information, activities that were previously primarily available to journalists or photojournalists (Lewis 2012, Ritchin 2013). Journalists actively work to protect their authority by adopting norms such as objectivity and balance as part of their work (Deuze 2005). Studies of environmental and science communication suggest that, in part from technological changes, journalists and other environmental communicators may be more

likely to relax some of the traditional journalistic norms of balance when communicating about environmental issues because of the gravity of the situation surrounding the environmental concerns facing society today and the strength of the science behind these assertions (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004).

**Boundaries and Social Movements**

Boundaries are also important to social movements, particularly when it comes to collective identity construction. Boundaries are "the social, psychological, and physical structures that establish differences between a challenging group and dominant groups" (Taylor and Whittier 1992: 111). Movement participants help to define who they are and who they are not. Essentially, participants construct a collective self and a collective them (Gamson 1997, Hunt et al. 1994, Taylor and Whittier 1992). Boundaries can be demographic, physical, or symbolic (Taylor and Whittier 1992). Social networks play a key role in differentiating between "us" and "them" (Melucci 1996). Entry of a new type of participants, policy changes, and movement successes and failures all contribute to the use of boundary work by participants to construct collective identities (Hunt and Benford 2004). Jagger's (1992) study of animal rights suggests that boundaries indicating that participants should behave in particular ways may strengthen movement commitment. For example, within the environmental movement, particular behaviors develop into part of peoples every day practices and become "environmental citizenship" (Horton 2006). Clear boundaries can assist in mobilization, forming collective grievances, and developing group solidarity. Movement participants can also obtain rights and resources

through clear boundaries (Gamson 1997). For example, an environmental group might obtain funds by focusing on a specific geographic area. Social movement organizations will also use boundaries to demarcate themselves ideologically from other organizations within the same movement (Benford and Zurcher 1990, Kriesi et al. 1995, Taylor and Whittier 1992).

Participants typically use identity boundaries to identify protagonists (participants or potential participants), antagonists (the 'other'), and the audience (observers) (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994). Creation of identity boundaries includes internal activist dynamics and external social factors which highlights the importance of considering context in the development of boundaries (Reger 2008). Collective identity encourages action by "identifying issues common to a group and overcoming forces that discourage its activity" (Wilson and Hollis-Brusky 2014: 420). While previous literature suggests the 'other' can come from areas like dominant society, contested membership, and within the movement, in this study I argue that occupational identity creates another opportunity to find an 'other' that resonates with changes occurring in their occupational field. Economic and technological changes present conservation photographers with the opportunity to create boundaries between themselves and other photographers in society, not necessarily targets, or other groups that might be against environmental conservation. However, even when the target is not adversarial, conservation photographers develop space to participate in activism by creating boundaries with other photographers.

## The Conservation Photography Trend

Theo highlights the trendiness of the label conservation photographer, stating, "Everybody calls themselves a conservation photographer…it's just a hip term, and some are, and a lot are not." His response also demonstrates that he believes that there are "authentic" conservation photographers. Other iLCP photographers are more severe in their descriptions of photographers who use the conservation photographer label but fall outside of the boundaries of what they think authentic conservation photography is. For example, Oliver states:

> These days, photographers -- I'm being a bit cynical here -- use the conservation photographer patch to justify travelling around the world doing what they want to do. And sometimes, if they were honest, they would just say, 'Well, look, I'm doing it because I enjoy doing it.' That's fine. But don't wrap it up in this philanthropic package that portrays you as some sort of earth warrior when really what you're doing is what you would be doing anyway... I think conservation photography has become sort of a trend. It's almost like organic yogurt. It's cool to be seen to be saving the planet, so to speak.

Oliver considers use of the conservation photographer label dishonest if photographers do not have the right intentions behind their photographic activities. He portrays conservation photography as a charitable endeavor and conservation photographers as individuals who fight for the earth.

Similarly, Logan contends: "The term has rather been hijacked and is part of greenwashing, perhaps on the part of many photographers who don't really have any interest or long-standing involvement in conservation." He frames the conduct of non-conservation photographers appropriating the label of conservation photographer as something criminal and wrong. He also uses the term 'greenwashing' which refers to a deceptive practice of marketing that describes something as environmentally friendly

when it is actually not (Kangun, Carlson, and Grove 1991). Finally, he critiques the actual behavior of photographers who use the label conservation photographer but are not committed to conservation. In sum, Logan propagates the idea that there are bars that must be met to fall within the boundaries of what an authentic conservation photographer is. In the following sections, I discuss the bars conservation photographers set and must reach in order to identify as authentic conservation photographers.

## Creating Boundaries

There are three main aspects of conservation photography that the photographers highlight when distinguishing their work from the activities of nature and amateur photographers. Specifically, they focus on 1) the motivation behind their work, 2) their use of storytelling, and 3) being proactive in regards to disseminating the images they capture either during or after the photographic expeditions are over. Together, emphasizing these delineations helps the conservation photographers create a collective identity and to present themselves as legitimate, authentic, environmental communicators.

### *Why You Do What You Do*

First, they contend that the motivation behind their photographic activities sets them apart from other photographers. They are driven by a desire to promote conservation. Charles explains "I think it's more in the context of why you do what you do…" and goes on to say: "it's photography that has some sort of mission behind it …

and that mission is to care for, get people to care for, or investigate conservation issues, basically what's at stake. Not just pretty, but what's at stake?" For Charles, to be a conservation photographer, you should be interested in focusing on conservation issues and getting others to care about the conservation issues as well. He insists that making a picture that is aesthetically pleasing is not enough; instead, it should examine the consequences associated with the environmental issue they are photographing.

David is in agreement, adding that conservation photographers must have a drive to reach their conservation goals. He states: "So the thing you can't teach in all this is the passion and you have to have the passion to see a project through and see your work through, from caring to passion to the desire to see it through..." David believes that the passion and desire that goes along with conservation photography is not something that people can learn. This passion drives them to actively share the information they gather with stakeholders. This could make it difficult for just anyone to be able to use the label and get within the boundaries associated with being a conservation photographer.

Photographers who are not conservation photographers train their cameras on popular destinations and subject matter. Logan describes this type of photography as a form of trophy hunting, which often carries a negative connotation. He explains:

> We're seeing a polarization now between that sort of photography, which is really more like trophy hunting, and the more, shall we say, challenging, but in some ways more worthwhile, [photography] because it's telling stories that haven't been told before, kind of [like] wildlife photography.

Logan creates a dichotomy between conservation photography and other types of photography. His response portrays conservation photography as better, albeit harder than other photography, to do because of the purpose behind their work. Conservation

photographers' desire to further conservation efforts likely means that they will take part in projects that are outside of the norm of where most people travel or have even heard about before. Instead, they go where conservation projects are taking place even if they are not well known or on trendy topics.

Other photographers are often propelled into photography for their own personal satisfaction and sometimes their egos. Marcel expands on this idea:

> Nature photography is very popular here in Europe, France especially. There are so many people that have very good cameras and take very good pictures but most of the time they are working on taking pictures of their own, or for fun or sometimes to get recognition from others to be more visible but it's quite rare that there is a cause associated with [their] photography.

Although photographers may have excellent equipment and make good pictures, if there is not a purpose behind the photography, it does not fall within the scope of conservation photography. The conservation photographers argue that other photographers are simply taking photographs to gain recognition or practice an art form rather than to support conservation efforts. These photographers may be more likely to give away their images to people or organizations for free or at a very low cost, just happy to have their work shown in the public sphere (Ritchin 2013). This may also have an economic influence on the professional conservation photographers who depend on photography as their sole source of income.

*Storytelling*

Next, conservation photographers highlight that the use of storytelling in their work process is something they do not see from other photographers. Their use of

storytelling influences their photographic process in myriad ways. They spend a great deal of time researching the locations and subjects that they will be photographing through resources like the internet or personal connections. They often work with local communities and other content and location experts to learn more about what they will be photographing so that they can share that knowledge with their audiences through visual storytelling.

Logan offers an example of the importance of creating a story with images which includes context:

> It's a lot like going to a really fantastic party, very loud, lots of interesting people, but all you…hear is the occasional fascinating word coming out and these words for themselves, they don't actually mean anything and that's the same as these…great individual photographs that many of these photographers produce. But they're just like these random words out of conservations and what photographers need to do is construct full sentences and that's the context that they give their work through… it being about something, about an issue, about a story they want to sell, and it's once they construct these sentences, these sets of photographs and have context for it, then they have something coherent that people will listen to and make sense of.

Essentially, Logan contends that without the storytelling aspects of photography that conservation photographers provide, photographs are less meaningful and perhaps less interesting. The assumption is that audiences are more engaged when they have a series of photographs which include context.

Conservation photographers point to numerous ways that they ensure that the stories they are telling are accurate. Miguel contends it is not just about a person with photographic equipment, but instead it is about the ability to explain conservation issues to your audiences using photographs:

> A photographer is not the person who knows how to manage a camera. This is not a photographer. A photographer is the one who is explaining things through images. So you can find people with a very expensive camera but they are not explaining things. And to explain things through images first of all you [have] to experience and to live this kind of thing. For example, if you want to explain the life of an animal, first of all you have to understand the life of this animal. Secondly, you have to you have to stay there, you have to stay living with this animal during one week, one month, one year, I don't know… and you have to know how to explain this life with three or four images or five images. So the camera at the end, it's only a tool.

He highlights that spending a good deal of time with the subject on which the photographer is focused is a large aspect of being an authentic conservation photographer. For Miguel, learning about the subject means spending time and experiencing being with the subject for an extended period of time. Local knowledge that amateur photographers may hold is often seen as a benefit of more participatory photography (Ritchin 2013). Photographers' claims suggest that they can also obtain similar types of knowledge. The photographers can then take that knowledge and use photographs to explain the subject to their audiences.

Marco explains:

> Storytelling … it's a commitment on the long term… you work on a project three years, when most photographers go out on Sunday... And you study the subject. You read books. Again, you get a little bit responsible for what you take. And this is why it makes a difference between people in the photojournalism world and people in the iLCP and many amateur photographers.

Again, the length of time spent on a project demarcates conservation photography from amateur photography. Part of spending extended periods of time on the project includes taking time to learn about the subject you are photographing, including reading about the subject, which is different than the experiential learning proposed by Miguel. For Marco, conservation photographers become invested in the project on which they are focused. In

addition, he groups photojournalism with conservation photography and distinguishes the two from amateur photographers.

Being an authentic conservation photographer includes processes that occur during an expedition and also after. Conservation photographers contend that many wildlife photographers' portfolios contain staged photographs. Logan reveals: "it's not…an authentic wildlife experience in the same way as somebody who…does ground up research and establishes a site or builds relationships with people so they can have access to photograph these things." Derek highlights the importance of not manipulating imagery in conservation photography in the post production process. He argues: "our pictures must be truth…You can do a lot of manipulation, even in the early days. There's Photoshop that you can do a lot in that." Max agrees that the veracity of his photographs is important, explaining, "What I publish is the record of something that is happening." These assertions place photography that is staged or post-processed as outside of conservation photography and presents stories created through conservation photography as truthful and accurate.

The conservation photographers also work to legitimize their stories by aligning themselves with science as well as journalism practices. Max speaks to the journalistic aspect that he sees associated with conservation photography as opposed to amateurs who do not follow the same practices:

> Chances are this blogger might or might not know what the fuck they are doing. More likely they're not. They don't actually have this editorial process, they don't have an editor that says, well, are you sure about this, is that fact checked? … A published story has gone through a lot of treatment, and thought to make it a published story, to make it a journalistic product that is true.

For Max, conservation photographers' association with journalistic practices demarcate their work from amateurs' work. It is through these practices that he sees the stories gaining veracity (Bennett 1996).

*It Can Have an Impact*

Finally, conservation photographers stress that what sets them apart from other types of photographers is that they do something with the photographs that they take. It is in this area that I find the most deviation in terms of where the photographers see boundaries lie when it comes to using their photographs to create social change. Spurring social change takes the form of any number of actions, from personally sharing the photographs on Facebook during photographic expeditions or giving presentations using the images to providing images to organizations for their use to promote their conservation projects. However, some conservation photographers argue that in addition to using their photographs to engage in social change efforts the photographers themselves should become part of the social change process. Photographers fall along a spectrum of raising public awareness and communicating pro-conservation messages to being political advocates or activists in support of particular conservation campaigns.

Gabriel explains: "I can be called a conservation photographer…because…my subject has always been the nature and the environments and the biodiversity and my work is now being used to raise awareness for conservation." In addition to focusing his photography on conservation issues, Gabriel highlights raising awareness for

conservation as an important aspect of conservation photography. Marcel provides examples of what he does with his photographs as a conservation photographer:

> I [am] using my photography to promote nature conservation and for causes to either help national parks in Ethiopia or just to pass on messages in schools or festivals or public libraries and so on…. I like taking pictures but what I really like is using my pictures to pass on messages to do something for projects that I believe in.

He notes that he likes taking pictures, which may align with the work of amateur or nature photographers, but his response indicates that he also sees passing along messages as an integral part of conservation photography. In addition, he identifies students and the general public as audiences for these conservation messages.

Aditya takes the audience of conservation photography to another level as he outlines what he sees as the process of conservation photography: "We first try to document what's there and then we take it to a larger audience and then we take it to decision makers and policy makers to help make policy, conservation policy, about these areas." He views conservation photography as an activity that can enter into the policy making process as policymakers and other decision makers create policies surrounding conservation issues.

Adriana describes this process further:

> It's not just the pictures; you really have to become the ambassador for your work and the ambassador for the place and the species that you photograph. Photographs alone don't do it. You hear it all the time, you know, photography can change the world. I have news for you, no it can't. All it does is raises awareness and it creates constituency of support…but it really takes a champion to take those photographs and move the agenda in any direction. So the conservation photographer, is not just a photographer, it has to be a spokesperson, ambassador, diplomat.

She extends the role of conservation photographer far beyond someone who makes photographs. Unlike the previous photographers who note their goal of raising awareness, Adriana pushes what conservation photographers can do even further. Adriana sees conservation photographers as advocates who should represent and speak for the conservation issue on which they are working.

Arthur adheres to this understanding of conservation photography and provides additional examples of the usefulness of conservation photography beyond simply using the photographs:

> I run across many photographers that say, well, my role is to show people some beautiful places and that should be enough. Well, it's not enough, I mean…if you really care you should become an activist. You should get involved in a very strong way, not only using your photographs but testifying at hearings and things like that.…I used to go back to Washington fairly frequently to testify at the house and senate hearings on legislation…that would preserve wilderness areas… Photographers see things and document things that many other people don't think about. And they do it in such a way in portraying a place that they become experts and being an expert you should use that expertise and you know whenever legislation is introduced, for example...in a state legislature or in the US house of representatives or the senate and to testify at hearings and…it can have an impact. So, you know, being an activist, I think is an important part of being a conservation photographer.

Arthur expands on the idea that conservation photographers are experts in the location and topic on which they choose to train their cameras. He argues that photographers bring a unique perspective because of the work that they do. Far beyond simply raising awareness he brings conservation photographers and conservation photography into the realm of the political.

In summary, Leah explains: "… conservation is a more activist, kind of approach to photography, nature photography has more traditionally been just geared toward taking

beautiful photos of nature, not necessarily using them to do conservation projects with." However, while all iLCP photographers agree that something should happen after photographic expeditions, what this 'activist' approach entails differs among photographers, which could indicate that this boundary is more flexible than the others. It allows photographers to choose what actions and risks they are willing to take with their photographic work.

**Conclusion**

Ritchin (2013) notes that, "Information, as the saying goes, wants to be free, and the notion that professionals provide essential information that should be reimbursed has met with only modest success" (p. 10). Emerging technologies--such as smart phones, higher quality consumer photographic equipment, and online sharing--mean more amateur photographers have opportunities to infringe on the profession of photography (Jenkins 2006, Jenkins et al. 2013, Shirky 2008). Just as in journalism, more people are able to create and disseminate visual environmental information, activities that before were under the domain of professional photographers (Lewis 2012, Ritchin 2013). In part, these changes have encouraged conservation photographers to perform boundary work as they define their profession and attempt to maintain their relevancy. The goal of this chapter was to examine the boundary-work that conservation photographers perform in light of recent economic, cultural, and technological changes that they have experienced in their work. As noted by Gieryn (1999), the discursive practices that people use to create boundaries translate into strategic practical action. By focusing on

the boundaries in conservation photography we can better understand what a conservation photographer is and what their roles may be in the environmental movement.

I find that professional conservation photographers focus on three areas as they differentiate between themselves and other types of nature photographers and amateur photographers. First, conservation photographers seek to focus their careers on environmental issues because of the deep concern they have about the environment. Next, they argue that their process of storytelling they employ differentiates them from other photographers. Finally, conservation photographers highlight the importance of what they do with the images after the fact as a demarcation between themselves and other photographers. Some photographers take on advocate roles as they remain involved with the projects on which they work long after they take the photographs.

The work of conservation photographers highlights the importance and interaction between symbolic and social boundaries in social movement communication (Lamont and Molnár 2002). Symbolic boundaries are “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” while social boundaries are “objectified forms of social differences manifested in un-equal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities” (Lamont and Molnár 2002: 168). The boundaries that conservation photographers construct allow for positive and negative implications for social movement communication as conservation photographers interpret the boundaries in different ways. Depending on how the photographers interpret the boundaries could influence who is

able to speak about environmental issues and what types of information are available for use in discussions about environmental issues. I expand on this more in what follows.

First, ideological boundaries in the form of concern for the environment as motivation for their work provide one area of differentiation. Common ideology is often viewed as a precursor for collective action (Corrigall-Brown 2011, Klandermans and Oegema 1987, Oegema and Klandermans 1994). The environmental concern motivation may be seen as a value associated with having a career in conservation photography as well as a mechanism that helps draw conservation photographers closer to collective action.

Conservation photographers also invoke the boundary of storytelling in their work. Narratives can assist people in making sense of the social world, determining who they are, and influencing their behavior (Nepstad 2001). Social movements use storytelling strategically (Polletta 2006) and conservation photographers offer another example of that, as they use their development of stories to differentiate themselves from other photographers. However, using narratives can be particularly challenging for social movement activists as society does not always view storytellers as experts who adhere to "well-evidenced and clearly specified arguments" (Polletta 1998: 429) which means that conservation photographers may come up against challenges when positioning themselves as storytellers.

On the one hand, by their process of developing stories conservation photographers can use symbolic boundaries to help expand whose voices and what types of information are included in conversations about environmental issues. The storytelling

process and becoming informed about the conservation topic, involves collaboration with various types of people. This may be a way for types of knowledge not normally found in environmental conversations to find their way into the discussion (Ascher et al. 2010). Alternatively, conservation photographers could add to the privileged position traditional scientific knowledge typically holds within environmental debates. In addition, this could lead to 'othering' communities living in the area in which the conservation issue is occurring.

In essence, how photographers interpret and enact symbolic boundaries can determine the social boundaries associated with the environment, including what groups have voices in conservation debates and how conservation resources are allocated. However, the case of conservation photographers also indicates that social boundaries are flexible. Further research can help examine what cultural, social, economic, factors influence how conservation photographers enact boundaries in conservation photography. This chapter helps to show how changing practices of photography could influence the environmental movement's messaging.

Finally, iLCP photographers are adamant that conservation photography involves doing something with the photographs they make. The conservation photographers' narratives about their work can help create collective identities among the photographers (Nepstad 2001, Rice 2002). Taken together, the creation of boundaries leads to a collective conservation photography identity (Gamson 1997, Hunt et al. 1994, Taylor and Whittier 1992). Having these occupational boundaries in place may make it more likely for conservation photographers to take part in collective action (Gamson 1997). But what

that collective action looks like differs for each photographer. These findings allow for a place to start to try to consider what an activist model continuum of conservation photography might look like (Sarat and Scheingold 1998).

This study highlights the importance of considering occupational identity when examining issues of collective identity and social movement participation.  Thinking about social activism more generally, occupational identity could influence what activities and strategies social change advocates use and who is allowed to participate and how they can participate. For example, it may be harder for photographers who are not conservation photographers to have a voice in the discussion. Conservation photographers may find that in order to remain a conservation photographer they need to focus on specific conservation areas, therefore constructing what should be considered a legitimate conservation problem. Occupational identity could provide newcomers with guidance about what they should do and how they should do it. However, organizations may also restrict what those with specific occupational identities can do and prevent new, perhaps more effective, ways of achieving social change and communicating with the public to emerge. Similar dynamics are likely at work in other social movements, such as those involved with health, labor, or anti-racism, as they work to legitimize certain topics or individuals associated with their social change issues.

These findings also help to identify potential sources of intragroup conflict, such as disagreements between photographers over their specific boundaries (Cable and Shriver 2010, Gamson 1995). Importantly, this research also helps to illuminate the identity conflicts that emerge among iLCP photographers as they engage in their work

(Stuart et al. 2013). How conservation photographers understand journalism and activism shape how they understand and construct conservation photography. My next chapter addresses how iLCP photographers manage the tensions among these activities or identities.

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## Chapter Three: "It was a natural transition:" Becoming a Conservation Photographer

### Introduction

> I grew up with a family that loved nature and loved being outdoors. My grandfather - I always think about him. He was kind of odd in that he was…the VP of [a company]…but he…would take us out to San Gabriel Canyon and he would be running around in his slacks with [his slacks] tucked into his shoes…and we'd be looking for newts and lizards and stuff like that. And he always had exotic pets as well, at his home, either a really cool parrot or some kind of a reptile, so, we kind of got exposed to nature and unusual types of nature, like reptiles and frogs and amphibians early on and…I had parents who supported my kind of interest in that, which was started at a very young age, so I think it started back in my youth and…because my parents and extended family were so supportive of it, it just got nurtured from there. –Timothy

Timothy paints a nostalgic portrait of his youth, one that many other conservation photographers echo in their own descriptions of becoming a conservation photographer. The portrait centers on the importance of family and time he spent in nature as a child. In a sense, this response also mirrors what conservation photography sees as a goal of conservation: an attempt to return us to a time when there was more of a balance between nature and humans. His grandfather's combination of business slacks with the natural world reflects an integration of a professional life and nature while the mention of exotic pets inside of a home suggests a domestication of nature. In both cases, nature is not simply something that is 'out there;' it is something that interacts with the family inside and outside of their home. Conservation photography and conservation photographers might be seen as mediators of these natural and human spaces.

This chapter combines career, social movement, and environmental communication scholarship to examine the stories of how conservation photographers came to their careers. The goal of the research is to identify common factors that influence a person's career pathway into conservation photography. Examining what factors, or significant life experiences, influenced their choices to become photographers focused on environmental social change may help to develop more individuals who focus on the environment and social change (Tanner 1998).

Photographers have a precarious work environment and with the transition to a more networked information society (Benkler 2006), their positions in the creative class (Florida 2012) have led them to experience considerable career instability. A review of the artistic labor market and careers suggests there is an oversupply of artists, uneven rewards, a focus on project-based work, and general work and career unpredictability (Menger 1999). In career contexts such as these, subjective careers, which are concerned with aspects like happiness, well-being, and feeling of purpose, may become more salient to people than objective careers, which are concerned with aspect like promotion and salary (Hall and Chandler 2005).

Although not always seen as legitimate voices about social issues, scholars contend more and more artists are taking on "social practice art" (Lingo and Tepper 2013) and becoming engaged as advocates for social change (Lingo and Tepper 2013, Roussel 2007). Some artists are concerned about professional risk associated with taking political stances on issues while others more readily take on the role (Roussel 2007). As

photographers focused on conservation issues, iLCP photographers are an ideal case for examining how artists decide to take on social issues in their work.

Social movement scholars have long been interested in what factors lead someone to participate in activism. Ideological factors (Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Oegema and Klandermans 1994), personal and professional networks (Kitts 2000; McAdam 1986; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Passy and Giugni 2001; Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980), and biographical availability (Beyerleing and Hipp 2006; Dauphinais, Barkan, and Cohn 1992; Klandermans 1997; McAdam 1986; Petrie 2004; Schussman and Soule 2005; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991) have all shown to play a part in social movement participation. Similarly, studies focused on developing environmental ethics (Horwitz 1996) and pursuing environmental careers (Wright and Wyatt 2008) point to influences such as experiences with nature, familial models, and academic experiences as being important factors to engaging with environmental issues.

Even though creative visual content, such as photography and video, plays an integral role in the environmental movement, there is scant research that examines the career pathways of individuals who create this vital content for the environmental movement. In part, this study adds to scholarship that focuses on individuals' stories about how and why they became activists to help illuminate their entrance into social movement participation (Valocchi 2012). Focusing on biographical issues can address how involvement in social movements fits into activists' lives (della Porta 1992; Valocchi 2012; Roth, Saunders, and Olcese 2014). Understanding what led conservation photographers to choose the careers they did can provide us with broader understandings

of what photographs and photographers are and what they can do when it comes to addressing environmental issues.

Two main themes emerged as conservation photographers describe what led them to become conservation photographers: developing a concern for the environment and perceiving the success of conservation photography. Concern for the environment developed through experiences in childhood, from family, traveling as adults, and educational settings. The perception of success came from both intrinsic and extrinsic sources. These findings can help us gain more understanding about conservation photography and the conservation movement more generally.

I first engage with the current research about careers, participation in activism, and environmental careers. I outline findings and then close with a discussion of the significance of the findings for social movements and environmental communication scholarship as well as practical implications for those interested in communicating about environmental issues.

## Conservation Photography Careers

With the transition to a networked information society (Benkler 2006) some scholars argue that the traditional concept of career has become outdated (Arthur and Rousseau 1996, Hall 1996, Hall et al. 2002) a new understanding of career has taken its place. Often called contemporary careers, protean careers, or boundaryless careers, these new forms of careers place more of an emphasis on individual agency, individual adaptability, able learners and less on career contracts people used to have with the

organizations for which they worked (Arthur et al. 2005, Hall and Chandler 2005, Hall et al. 2002). However, critics of these new career perspectives note, 'boundaryless careers discourse ... is a manifestation of wider neoliberal discourse that emphasizes individual rather than societal or organizational responsibility for economic and career outcomes' (Roper, Ganesh and Inkson, 2010: 673). Conservation photographers' career experiences provide an understanding of how a focus on individual responsibility in career outcomes influences their work as they attempt to develop and disseminate environmental messages. For example, photographers can no longer count on funding sources from traditional media or governmental organizations to be successful in their careers. They must negotiate the myriad challenges that come from working in a networked information society.

Scholars distinguish between the objective and subjective career as different perspectives by which people and society view careers (Hughes 1958). The objective career is "an external perspective that 'validates' the tangible facets of an individual's career, such as income, promotions, hierarchical job level, and job mobility." These are viewed as organizational-level factors. The subjective career comes from the perspective of the individual and includes facets like "job satisfaction, self-awareness and adaptability, and learning" (Hall and Chandler 2005). These are considered individual-level factors. Scholars note that there is interdependence between objective and subjective careers (Hall and Chandler 2005, Goffman 1961). With technological advancements as well as changes in economic organization and social practices, some scholars argue that the subjective career has increased in importance (Hall 1996). Hall

and Chandler (2005) contend that more research is needed to understand the subjective career.

There are also other changes in how careers are conceptualized. Regarding non-linear careers, Hall (2002) contends that the path to the top has been replaced with a path to the heart. Similarly, Zabusky and Barley (1996) distinguish between careers of advancement and careers of achievement. In careers of advancement “identities are bound to organizations and attainment is parsed in increments of authority tied to formal positions in a chain of command” (p. 187). Alternatively, a career of achievement “entails horizontal movement from the periphery to the center of of an occupational community” and “success brings authority as a form of moral leadership that rests more on expertise than formal position” (p. 187). A study of participants in unions used the concept of career of achievement to describe sustained engagement in labor unions when conceptualized as informal careers. In these informal activist careers, members are spurred into their roles and then take on organizational roles and gain status and skills which help to sustain their participation. Findings suggest that “personal meaning and subjective career success were found to fuel enduring activism” (Yu 2014: 73).

As members of the creative class, which includes “people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology, and new creative content” (Florida 2014: 8), photographers must manage their careers in the complex environment that comes with working in the networked information society. This study will add to

scholarship that considers objective and subject careers for photographers within the current economic and technological context.

## Pathway to an Environmental Ethic and Career

There is also research that examines individuals' environmental ethic and individuals who have careers focused on the environment. There are six main themes associated with environmental activists' development of environmental ethics. These themes included 1) experiences in nature during childhood, 2) academic experiences, 3) family influence, 4) spiritual/religious feelings, 5) generativity issues, or concern for future generations, and 6) historical events. Some participants noted that their environmental ethic influenced their decision to go into careers where they concentrate on the environment and others suggested that their careers focused on environmental issues helped to develop their environmental ethic (Horwitz 1996). Similarly, there are six major experiential influences on environmentalists' environmental concern: experiences with nature; parents or other family members; academic factors; participation in environmental organizations; books; and the environmental destruction of places that are important to them (Chawla 1999). Young environmental leaders note influential people, such as parents, teachers and friends, as well as influential experiences such as time spent in nature, conferences, and gatherings were key factors in becoming environmental leaders (Arnold, Cohen, and Warner 2009).

In the general population, experience with nature as a child is found to relate to adult environmentalism. Experience with "wild nature" such as hiking or camping and

“domestic nature” such as picking flowers or produce as a youth are associated with adult environmental attitudes. “Wild nature” experiences are related to adult environmental behaviors while “domestic nature” experiences are only mildly related to adult environmental behaviors (Wells and Lekies 2006).

In a study of El Salvadoran environmental professionals, Sward (1999) identified four life experiences as being important in developing environmental sensitivity: outdoor experiences, environmental destruction, formal education, and outdoor-related organizations. Wright and Wyatt (2008) examine the factors influencing the careers of 104 Canadian environmental scientists. They find that the most common factors among the scientists include experience in the natural world, travel, role models, familial models, students and teaching, and negative environmental events. They do not find spirituality and generativity to be strong factors in their sample of environmental scientists. The current research adds to this scholarship by examining factors that influence career choice by photographers who focus on environmental issues.

**Participating in Activism**

As discussed in the last chapter, conservation photographers feel strongly about making use of their photographs. From that perspective, this study also adds to a robust literature examining social movement participation. There are various frameworks that help us understand social movement participation and why these photographers might take on the role of conservation photographer.

Having a sympathetic ideology toward a movement is an important precursor to participation in activism (Corrigall-Brown 2012, Klandermans and Oegema 1987, Oegema and Klandermans 1994). Ideological factors also prime individuals for activism (Corrigall-Brown 2012). Prior research finds that personal and organizational social networks play important roles in facilitating individuals' participation in movements (e.g., Kitts 2000; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1986; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Passy and Giugni 2001; Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980). People primarily join movements through interpersonal ties (Snow et.al 1980), and informal networks can increase motivation to participate where individual's share views and opinions with other participants (Kitts 2000). Affiliations with organizations are one of the strongest predictors of participation in social movement activities and are often thought of as extensions of interpersonal ties (McAdam 1986, McAdam and Paulsen 1993). Being part of organizations provides additional opportunities to meet people and be asked to protest. In addition, people may have a stronger sense of self-efficacy if they belong to organizations (McAdam and Paulsen 1993).

Other research suggests that biographical availability is important, or "the absence of personal constraints that may increase the risks and costs of movement participation" (McAdam 1986: 70). Such factors include employment, marital status, having children, and age (Beyerleing and Hipp 2006; Dauphinais, Barkan, and Cohn 1992; Klandermans 1997; McAdam 1986; Petrie 2004; Schussman and Soule 2005; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991). While there are studies that find being married and having children limit individuals' participation in protest, they are not always found to be significant

(Dauphinais, Barkan, and Cohn 1992; Petrie 2004; Schussman and Soule 2005). Findings regarding the relationship between full-time employment and participation in activism is mixed, with some research suggesting people who are employed are less likely to participate in activism (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006) while other research indicates that there may be some occupations that are less of a barrier than others (Schoussman and Soule 2005).

Another approach emphasizes the importance of perceived political opportunities and threats for explaining when and why people engage in activism (Meyer 2004). McAdam (1982) highlights the importance of political opportunities, existing organizations, and how successful people think they will be in their undertaking. Political process models argue that activism is most likely to occur when political opportunities are partially open. If they are completely open, there is no need to engage in activism. If they are fully closed, there is no chance for success. Mobilization also occurs when people perceive threats to their values and interests. This is even more likely when activists see negative policies about to be enacted or they are dismissed from the traditional political process, such as institutionalized politics. Authorities' activities surrounding policies, making topics either more or less urgent, help activists make cases for focusing on certain issues (Meyer 2004). Political opportunities emerge from anything from wars to demographic changes. In the case of issues surrounding the environment, this could include perceived threats and concerns about environmental dangers and degradation, such as climate change or oil spills. Under this framework, mobilizing structures (McAdam et al. 1996), like independent media and community organizations,

and framing (McAdam et al. 1996, Snow and Benford 1988) are important for developing an understanding of how a group sees a situation.

## Becoming a Conservation Photographer

Next, I examine the reasons photographers provide about what led them to become conservation photographers. When considering what led them on a career path to conservation photography, all of the respondents spoke to the importance of consciousness-raising moments, or moments that they experienced during their life that "increased [their] knowledge of the issues" (Van Dyke and Dixon 2013). Two main themes emerged from the interviews in regards to choosing their career paths. These include: 1) concern for the environment (cultivated as a youth, with family, traveling later in life, and educational settings) and 2) perceiving what they see as the effectiveness of conservation photography (intrinsic/extrinsic enjoyment; utility).

## Environmental Concern

Photographers describe that their concern for the environment was a large part of what led them to become conservation photographers. Drawing from social movement scholarship, this could be seen as priming for participation in social movement activity (Corrigall-Brown 2012, Klandermans and Oegema 1987, 1994). This underlying concern developed in multiple ways; including, going out into nature, influence of family, and learning about environmental issues in educational settings.

Some photographers describe their environmental concern as an intrinsic concern for the natural environment that has always been part of who they are and what they do in their life. If environmental concern is considered an inherent cultural trait, it blurs the boundaries between public/career and private life (Menger 1999). Marco, a photographer who considers his concern for the environment as deep-rooted, explains what led him to become a conservation photographer:

> Well there's no…single moment in my life that I didn't care about the natural world and the animals, so for me, if I see something not right where the places that I work in or the places that I love, I feel bad. So it's kind of an inner, you know… when you grow and you study and you realize what the real issues are and you see that some decision can be taken to intervene [with] the situation then you want to give your help. So besides being a photographer, or a conservation photographer, I'm also conservationist, a volunteer for many projects with NGOs and I've done this all my life, so…it's like a gradient of experiences, not something…like a switch where it's not right now and [then it is]….I had the Carpathian Mountains, I decided all of my projects should … help conservation and not of pure photography or pure aesthetics only.

Marco highlights the fact there was not one single event or reason why he became a conservation photographer. He always had an intrinsic concern for the environment and as he learned more about environmental issues he wanted to create what he saw as positive social change with his photography. His response outlines the many additional environmental roles he sees himself holding. His comparison of his environmental concern to something that cannot just be switched on would also indicate that the concern is not something that he can turn off. His experience documenting conservation issues in the Carpathian Mountains of Romania solidified his career focus. As discussed in Chapter two, he creates a boundary between photography for photography's sake versus photography for conservation purposes.

While photographers like Marco assert their concern for the natural world has always been part of their lives, for others, the concern for the environment was not their original focus and instead their environmental concern emerged later in their lives. This interest came from areas such as experiences as youth, family, and educational settings.

*Childhood Experiences*

Photographers often spoke of childhood experiences with nature. Leah summarizes what she has experienced in terms of the influence of youth experiences on conservation photographers overall: "it's a really gradual thing and it has happened…over my lifetime, I think most of the people that I work with that do conservation photography have a similar rooting in having some exposure when we were young, to nature." For Leah, her path to conservation photography was nurtured throughout her lifetime and began in her childhood. Her understanding is that this is a common occurrence among conservation photographers, which could reveal another boundary as to what a conservation photographer is, or is not.

Illustrating this sentiment, Lars recalls,

> I think it was in early childhood, [my grandfather] took me when I was a young boy … to fly fishing trips up the river where we were mostly spending our time watching king fishes or river otters or other species and not do much fishing or when we were…walking in the forest and experiencing nature firsthand is something that I think imprinted this feeling for conservation on me.

Lars speaks to the importance of experiences in nature with his grandfather. He mentions going on fly fishing trips but is quick to note that they did not do much fishing, which may go against what might be thought of as being a conservationist (another boundary).

Personal networks and direct experiences with nature encouraged Lars into a career as a conservation photographer.

Nancy was influenced by trips that her grandparents took to Africa when she was growing up. She explains:

> For as long as I could remember I have been interested in conservation issues, even as a child. I've always loved wildlife. My maternal grandparents … my maternal grandmother actually spent a very early part of her life in Africa around the turn in the 20th century, so my grandparents went to Africa a number of time when I was a child. Of course that was incredibly intriguing for me so I learned a lot about African wildlife...I started learning about conservation issues at an extremely early age.

Contrary to Lars' experiences, Nancy's comment suggests that one does not necessarily need to have direct experiences with nature to influence their career path. Instead it was through *conversations* with her grandparents about their travels that her interest in nature grew. All of these responses also speak to the importance of interpersonal networks in cultivating an interest in the environment as family members were a central part of introducing photographers to the natural environment. This aligns with research highlighting the importance of interpersonal relationships in joining in activist activity (Klatch 1999, Snow et al. 1980).

*Nature Experiences Later in Their Lives*

Some conservation photographers had previous environmental positions like being a guide for a bird watching company and a trip leader on outdoor excursions. Outdoor hobbies also influenced some photographers. Nicole provides an instance of this as she describes how she became a conservation photographer:

> I just got into the photography totally from a passion of doing photography. I've always enjoyed photography but when I was still in corporate living in Miami, Florida is when I got into scuba diving 30 years ago and just became pretty obsessed about the photography side of it in a marine-like environment. It started to, well the good news is, the corporate environment afforded me the ability to do a little bit of traveling and it became pretty obsessive behavior after that.

Continuing she explains:

> Once you start really photographing and developing a portfolio of images, especially in the marine life world, it is through osmosis. You really realize just how important specific environmental issues are. You see the beauty of the marine life world and you run across situations that impact you and affect you.

Nicole's passion for photography preceded her passion for the environment. Her experiences with nature started her on a path to becoming a conservation photographer. Her direct involvement with nature led her to want to do more with her photography; thus, creating a boundary between hobbyists and conservation photographers. Nicole also highlights the importance of having the time and resources afforded to her by her corporate job that allowed her to take the time to pursue her passion of photography. This supports research that suggests employment may facilitate participation in social change activities (Corrigall-Brown 2012.) Finally, Nicole uses the scientific term osmosis to describe the process that occurred with her as she went from hobbyist photographer to conservation photographer. Using the word osmosis[1] may suggests that the process was easy, effortless, and natural.

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[1] Osmosis is defined as 1. movement of a solvent (as water) through a semipermeable membrane (as of a living cell) into a solution of higher solute concentration that tends to equalize the concentrations of solute on the two sides of the membrane; 2. a process of absorption or diffusion suggestive of the flow of osmotic action; *especially*: a usually effortless often unconscious assimilation.

Agreeing, Filip notes, "…before I started doing this type of work I didn't have a very good comprehension about the threats these organisms were facing." Similarly, Leah describes her process of focusing on conservation with her photography:

> I think because…the more that I have learned about what is happening with the actual world, and the wildlife and biodiversity, the more concerned I've become about the impact of people on the earth and the future of kind of wild creatures and nature and I just felt that my role, simply taking photographs and doing a story, that I felt I needed to do more, so I gravitated towards having a kind of an activist approach to photography and [having] conservation be more essential to what I do.

Leah distinguishes between documenting environmental issues and doing more – or becoming a conservation photographer to create another boundary. Taken together, Filip and Leah's environmental ethics ignited when they went out into nature as adults and learned about what environmental issues were taking place in the world. Their explanations suggest that instead of simply a natural process that takes place automatically to some people, letting people experience the issues facing the environment may increase people's concerns about the environment.

*Educational Settings*

Finally, concern for the environment developed in educational settings. Lars describes that "it started with studying biology where we did a couple of research expeditions to countries like Siberia or West Africa where there is, of course, many issues around conservation." Similarly, Adriana explains, "I am a chemical engineer and marine biology was a huge part of my education. Just understanding the ecological underpinnings of how our planet works, makes you realize that, without a full array of

biodiversity…life on this planet is simply not possible.” Education and understanding the issues surrounding the environment end up being strong influences to cultivating a career focused on the environment. Education allowed them the opportunities to go see various locations with environmental issues as well as understanding the situation surrounding the issues involving the environment.

Overall, these examples suggest that there is not just one path to making the environment a central focus in a career. Consciousness-raising occurred at various points in photographers’ lives and both direct and indirect experiences with nature and environmental issues are shown to encourage individuals to become conservation photographers.

**Perceiving Success**

Perceiving success in conservation photography is also key to photographers as they talk about their careers in conservation photography. Typically, this is explained in three ways: 1) they are motivated by their enjoyment in terms of what they do in their career 2) they get enjoyment by extrinsic results they get or other people’s enjoyment, and 3) through the utility of conservation photography.

For a number of photographers, the perceived effectiveness of communicating about environmental issues through visual media provided them with the impetus to continue down the path to becoming a conservation photographer. Simon reports:

> I’ve had a lifelong interest in photography and certainly in the early years it was in competition with music. I’m trained as a classical pianist and my university degrees are in that. And I sort of did the two track approach for a while, but I became increasingly to feel that through photography I could…make a greater

> contribution and…achieve more that…wasn't…being done by other people and…so that's where I decided to concentrate my efforts.

Simon's perception that he could make a difference in conservation through his photography played a big role in why he decided to focus on conservation photography, indicating the importance of the objective career. His education training was in music but he wanted contribute to society and he felt he would be more likely to do that with photography. In his case, he chose between two creative career paths. He chooses the career path where he believes he will be more productive to society overall

Kevin had a similar experience deciding between two career paths, but in his case it was between a career in science or photography. He recalls:

> …while I was researching sea turtles I started taking photographs and it was at that point that I realized that my photographs were gaining more attraction and more effectively communicating my messages more so than the science was.…it was a pretty easy choice once I started to realize the impact that the photography and the storytelling could have. It was a no brainer to begin focusing my efforts in this space rather than pursuing a science career.

Having the choice of going into a 'science career' or photography, Kevin found that photography was a more effective tool for spreading the messages he wanted to communicate than science was. In his response he creates a demarcation between scientific communication and photography. For him, the utility of what he was doing was most important to him, exemplifying the importance of his objective career.

Lars also focuses on science and communication as he expands on why he became a conservation photographer:

> Because I think…good photography and storytelling with different media can make a real difference in conservation and for conservation. I especially like the opportunity to turn back to biology and help scientists bridge the…crevice. …The thing is that as soon as I saw that you can do something with your photography

> about conservation, that there is action taken for different species that you have photographed that people didn't know about or didn't know that they were endangered. And this is of course very inspiring and motivating.

Lars and Kevin emphasizes the importance of science in their responses while at the same time promoting photography as a tool that can effectively communicate scientific information. However, Lars' response suggests an interconnection between a utilitarian outcome, an objective career perspective, and feeling inspired by his work, a subjective career perspective.

Gabriel tells a similar story about his journey to becoming a conservation photographer and emphasizes that it was a natural process:

> ..I think it was as a natural transition because...people were really interested in tell[ing] my stories and talk about the things I think are relevant. So I use my camera to tell these stories and…my pictures were published, they…[bring] results for conservation, helping conservation. But it wasn't something that…I changed. It was something that start[ed] happening, naturally. So…I keep going there, out there in the field to tell my stories and…my stories of course talk about my interest in the…vast wilderness areas in the planet. So these stories are really helping…conservation. But I think it was…a natural transition.

His argument suggests that once one sees that conservation photography leads to positive outcomes, it motivates one to continue on that career path (Hall 2002). Social movement scholarship suggests that there is a relationship between feelings of efficacy, or that people can bring about the change they would like to see in society, and social movement participation (Gecas 2000; Klandermans et. al 2008).

At the same time, there are also photographers who question the effectiveness of conservation photography and want to see more research that speaks to how photography is effective in communicating about environmental issues. Some photographers may be motivated to enter the field as a way to see if it is an effective way to communicate about

environmental issues. This may point to a dominant narrative that they want to spread about the profession – that what they are doing is effective and important. This is part of developing what conservation photography is and how it can be an effective part of helping the environment. If the group says what they are doing is good and important, the rest of society may believe it.

*Career Change*

Although most of the iLCP photographers started out as photographers, just over 20 percent of the photographers experienced career changes to become conservation photographers. In addition to having direct experiences with nature, Nicole describes her career change as she explains how she became a conservation photographer:

> I've always been a conservationist. I was an outdoor kid and loved everything to do with habitat, critters, beauty and so forth. When you grow up [where I did], you could hardly avoid that. [I] grew up in a family where I had to have a real job, and so I got the credentials and got a real job, whatever that is. I had kids, but when my youngest daughter was in her last year of college and I wrote the last check to Harvard, I said it's my turn, so I quit my day job, and thought I would become a professional photographer…

Nicole notes that her love of nature in large part stemmed from growing up in a certain location. However, unlike other photographers who suggest their families were a reason why they became conservation photographers, Nicole's response indicates her family deterred her from pursuing anything but a "real job." She spent a large portion of her professional life in a "real job," or more traditional job, before becoming a conservation photographer. First, this highlights the perception that photography is not a real job and instead something that you focus on after having another career or after you make a lot of

money. In addition, her assertion that it was ‘her turn’ suggests that conservation photography was what, if she had the choice at the beginning, she really wanted to do with her life – pursuing her passion. Her response highlights the importance of a subjective career perspective.

Peter also made a career change early on, transitioning from obtaining a business degree to doing conservation photography. He recalls:

> It was really just a natural progression. …I really couldn't see myself being any other type of photographer. When I mentioned that I had originally gone to school for business. I did not have a photography background at all. Even growing up. My father was an accountant. ...I assumed I would be doing the same, and went to school for business, got a degree, and then for a graduation present from school, I was given a camera. And so, that just kind of changed everything and within six months, I just did a 180 and decided on a different career. There was never really any question of what I would do with photography -- photography was always connected to my love of the outdoors, and wild places, and wildlife... So that subject matter was always just inherent, and that interest of that subject matter was really there before photography.

Peter also presents a situation where familial expectations initially guided him to a more traditional career path. An unexpected gift of a camera resulted in a career change – which he describes as the complete opposite of his intended career in business. His interest in the environment came before his interest in photography and indicates the importance of his subjective career perspective.

Unsurprising given the importance of scientific research on the conservation field in general, a number of photographers found themselves transitioning from scientific careers to ones in conservation photography, often decisions made during their education. Emily expands on how she became a conservation photographer:

> …I evolved into it from science. I started taking photos when working as a summer or seasonal field tech. So I took advantage of all the places and the work

> that I was doing to take photographs and document that, and while working on that I found that I actually really enjoyed the stories of the science, behind the science, why they were doing this science, who it was impacting, more than actually doing the science myself. And I found that there was a real gap in need for people to be communicating that and telling those stories…

Emily used photography as part of her field tech role and through this experience decided to focus on developing a career in conservation photography. She followed what gave her the most enjoyment, taking photographs, and made that the focus of her career, a career that she also notes fills a need she saw in her scientific role. She focuses on both her subjective and objective careers.

## Conclusion

This chapter examined what led conservation photographers to choose the career path they did. I find evidence that people become conservation photographers for reasons related to objective and subjective careers. As hypothesized by Hall and Chandler (2005) and Goffman (1961), I find support for the interdependence between objective and subjective careers. These findings suggest that for conservation photographers, career choice is a multifaceted process. The findings offer a more nuanced understanding of individuals' experiences becoming involved in careers that, at least in part, focus on facilitating social change.

Concern for the environment is important when considering what led photographers to become conservation photographers. This concern for the environment developed through direct and indirect experiences with the natural environment. Personal and organizational networks spurred environmental interest as well. I find that perceived

success of conservation photography plays a major role in why photographers focused on conservation photography. The subjective career became a large part of finding a career path into conservation photography (Hall and Chandler 2005). It is important to note that many of these themes were overlapping during photographers' stories, which highlights the interdependence of the objective and subjective career.

Examining conservation photographers' stories about how they came to their careers provides important insight into the field of conservation photography and environmental communication more generally. Similar to past research on environmental activism and careers, photographers note outdoor experiences (Wright and Wyatt 2008; Owens 2005; Bixler et. al. 2002; Horwitz 1996) and personal networks (McAdam 1986; McAdam and Paulsen 1993) as central to their career choices. Generativity appears to be less important for these environmental communicators, concurring with other recent work (Wright and Wyatt 2008).

Consciousness-raising moments (Van Dyke and Dixon 2013) were important as photographers developed a concern about the environment and then saw the effectiveness of conservation photography. Van Dyke and Dixon (2013) note that individuals who acquire skills and tools that can assist in social change efforts "feel more empowered to engage in activism because they know that they can make valuable contributions, and they find it rewarding to do so (p. 199). Many photographers want to focus their lenses on social issues but get frustrated by the lack of outlets for their work. The photographers may be drawing from the general expectation that many involved in making and using photographs have that the photography will benefit the subjects of the photographs, even

though it is difficult to measure the impact of photography (Ritchin 2013). Still, feelings of efficacy about their role in helping to find solutions to perceived threats to the environment become important factors when taking on the role of conservation photographer, aligning with previous social movement scholarship (Gecas 2000; Klandermans et. al 2008) and with the assertion that once individuals find success in careers, they will become more involved in that aspect of their work (Hall et al. 2002).

Organizational processes can play a role in transforming personal emotions into a collective understanding of injustices. According to Reger (2004) this transformation happens in stages. She describes the stages as: "finding space in which to respond to moral shocks related to anger and alienation; engaging in organizationally focused emotion work to created shared emotions that eliminate feelings of hopelessness or frustration; and if reciprocal emotions are fostered and everyday life obstacles are overcome, moving into collective action" (Reger 2004 p. 208). Applied to conservation photography, iLCP serves as an organizational space where conservation photographers' environmental concern can be becomes directed into action.

Practically, findings also suggest that organizations and individuals involved with environmental communication should pay attention and promote the successes of their work internally. The use of photography is not always something easily measurable and while photographers realize that, understanding they played a role in environmental communication success stories may go a long way to promoting career longevity among conservation photographers. Those individuals interested in encouraging environmental communication careers may find that allowing students to go out and become

environmental communicators as part of classes may spur interests in future careers focused on helping the environment. First, exposing students to nature may help them develop a concern for environmental issues. Next, offering them ways to either work together to protect or communicate about protecting the environment may provide them with outlets for moving their concern into action.

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## Chapter Four: "It gets tricky:" Activism and Journalism in Conservation Photography

### Introduction

"We definitely advocate for change and with the images we…are like a visual army of activists." –Aditya

[iLCP members], especially the core members, we are journalists. They're all people who know what they are doing." –Max, when asked about iLCP and activism.

Photographers focused on nature and the environment have played a pivotal role in the communication of environmental issues but scant research has studied the process by which they create their work. This chapter expands on research that considers the "culture-making practices and processes" that go into the creation and use of cultural products (Hart 1996: 91). In doing so, I find conservation photographers draw upon pre-existing cultural codes as they actively create cultural products (ibid). I specifically examine the influence of activism and journalism in conservation photographers' production of visual material in support of environmental conservation initiatives. Further, this analysis places professionals as the focus of analysis to help better understand their participation in action directed at social change efforts (Suh 2014).

As discussed in Chapter two, the iLCP was created in 2005 to fill a need photographers saw in the conservation movement landscape. The founding members of the group started the process of publicly presenting what it means to be a conservation photographer. The discourses the iLCP uses on their public online presences provides a

first glimpse of what they think it means to be a conservation photographer. According to the iLCP website and Facebook page, their mission is “to further environmental and cultural conservation through ethical photography.”

As outlined on their website, part of their goal is to establish a code of conduct for conservation photographers, which covers both business and field practices. To become an iLCP conservation photographer (or as they call it, a fellow), a photographer must adhere to three guiding principles: integrity, respect, and professionalism. In regards to integrity, iLCP notes: “The effectiveness of our work in furthering conservation is directly tied to its being accepted as authentic, accurate and honest.” About respect, they explain: “We believe in respectful and professional behavior toward our subjects, human or wild, as well as the people with whom we come in contact.” Regarding professionalism, they state: “Our behavior as individuals reflects on the image and integrity of every other iLCP Fellow and influences the impact and credibility of the organization as a whole.” While these principles provide a starting point for understanding what conservation photography is, in some cases iLCP photographers have different understandings of what these principles mean and how to put them into practice while performing conservation photography.

By constructing an occupational analysis of activism (Roussel 2007), I examine how professional photographers navigate through photographic expeditions in support of the environment. I find that conservation photographers primarily draw from two different types of logics as they take on the role of environmental communicators: activism and journalism. How they relate to activism and journalism influences their

relationships to organizations they work with, the topics they focus on, and the strategies they use to disseminate their messages. Photographers fall upon spectrums of activism and journalism and some photographers develop hybrid roles that draw from activist and journalistic logics. Overall, photographers are doing activism rather than being activists. They employ various strategies to maintain that distinction. Thinking beyond conservation photography, the findings highlight the importance of closely examining media production to help reveal the factors that influence the production of visual material used to communicate about social concerns.

**Activism Logics**

What makes an activist? There is a body of literature that looks at the socially constructed boundaries surrounding activism and those activities that are often found alongside political work. "Despite the larger-than-life nature of this image, the lifelong, intensely committed, and passionate activist is far from typical" (Corrigall-Brown 2012 p. 123). Many activists take part in a cause for a short period of time and then leave. Others disengage to return later, or to support a different cause (ibid). Indeed, many people engaged in social change work distance themselves from the label of activist, or engage in activism as one of many activities in their lives.

A study of the political meaning making of volunteers, cynics, and activists looks beyond traditional understandings of apathy and self-interest often attributed to people who are described as not politically engaged. Findings suggest that each type of participant uses cultural work to carve out space to take on different types of political

engagement, which depends upon how individuals position themselves in relation to powerlessness, emotion rules, and language used to discuss political issues. Volunteers tend to frame issues they cared about as not political. They felt like they could make a difference by being uncontentious. Alternatively, activists worked to position issues as political. Activists see talk as an activity that may make a difference while volunteers do not. Cynics do not believe they have power, but make great use of talk to air their political grievances. These findings highlight the importance of looking more closely at political meaning making and people's relationship to politics (Eliasoph 1998).

Previous research documents uncertainty and discomfort with an activist identity. Some political actors strive to have their actions not be seen as political as a result of gender stereotypes. Women often see activist political engagement as too contentious and instead use concepts of fairness to explain their work as this more aligns with images of women in society. Women attempt to distance themselves from contentious activist identity that is often associated with masculinity (Blackstone 2004, 2007). A study of purebred dog rescuers, for example, examines their place in the animal welfare/rights/liberation movement (Greenebaum 2009). Rescuers distance the work they do, which includes almost exclusively behind-the-scenes activities, from activism, which they consider very public and political and could have negative influences on their personal reputations as women. Overall, these rescuers do not view their work as important as the work of more politically oriented individuals. In addition, rescuers are concerned with the 'radical flank effect' or the positive or negative effects that radical groups have on more moderate groups. As they distance themselves from radical groups

they may benefit from having a positive radical flank effect, appearing more rational and acceptable to society than individuals in the radical organizations (Haines 1984 cited in Greenebaum 2009).

Other research finds people think that authentic activists should infuse their activist principles into every part of their lives and otherwise do not live up to being true activists. There are also values that align with who is and is not an activist. For example, humility and rigor are identified as the 'perfect standard' that activists think they need to live up to (Bobel 2007). Bobel (2007: 148) questions why people assume that social movement participants necessarily and automatically identify as activists, arguing that there is a disconnect between "'doing activism' and 'being activist.'" One can do activism without identifying as an activist; one can engage in collective action but distinguish one's personal identity from the collective identity of 'activist.' She finds that social change agents who have loose ties to one another do not necessarily form a group identity as activists.

Research specifically focused on environmental conservation studies the identities of Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) members and the ways in which they balance and negotiate meaningful "symbolic" identity boundaries that enable them to distinguish themselves as uniquely effective but also retain a level of legitimacy and justification for their approach to conservation. Members of the SSCS negotiate these prescriptive identities through their talk, in which they portray themselves as "ordinary" and "extraordinary" in terms of their commitment. SSCS participants construct activist

identities in ways that are intended to increase their perceived legitimacy (Stuart, Thomas, Donaghue, and Russell 2013).

Defining what activism is and taking on the role of an activist is not always straight forward. Some people take on social change work yet distance themselves from the label activist because it seems too contentious to them. Alternatively, others do not think what they are doing lives up to the rigorous standards of being an activist. Gender can influence individuals' relationships to activism as well. Women may shy away from taking on activist identities if they associate activism with masculinity. There are also opportunities for people to use the role of activist strategically to construct themselves as more legitimate, such as the SSCS members.

**Journalistic Logics**

In addition to activist logics' influence on conservation photographers' activities, journalism norms, journalistic norms play a role in the production process of conservation photography. Some of these traditional journalistic norms and values include 1) personalization, 2) dramatization, 3) novelty, 4) authority-order bias, and 5) balance (Boykoff 2011). First, personalization is "the tendency to downplay the big social, economic, or political picture in favor of the human trials, tragedies, and triumphs that sit at the surface of events" (Bennett 2003: 45). Dramatization refers to the focus on "crisis over continuity, the present over the past or future, conflicts" (Bennett 2003: 46). Novelty interacts with the previous journalistic norms and speaks to the need for newness of ways in which topics are presented. Authority order refers to the idea that journalists

get information from those individuals who are seen as experts on stories' topics. Balance is comparable to objectivity and showing both sides of a story (Boykoff 2011).

Journalists historically have had the goal of reporting the truth about the facts. Typically, if journalists adhere to the norms associated with journalism, it means they are leaving the interpretation up to the audiences to determine what 'truth' is (Boykoff and Yulsman 2013). However, some scholars argue that balanced reporting can lead to information bias when it comes to issues surrounding the environment as information is presented as though everything has equal standing in the debate, even if it does not. Instead, journalists should move beyond the he said/she said debates and interpret the information for audiences instead of just providing a balanced view (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004). The United States media may be moving away from the norm of providing a balanced view Below, I analyze how conservation photographers present information to their audiences and the extent to which they seek to adhere to or stray from dominant and traditional norms of journalism.

Agitating tends to go against what it means to be a traditional journalist, but is typically acceptable for activists. Organizations that adhere to journalistic news values are more likely to be accepted by society as legitimate than radicals because they adhere to these values. Movement organizations are likely to engage in adaptation, attack, alternatives, and abstention. Social movements cannot rely on the rules and mechanisms of the media because they are different than social movement logics (Rucht 2004).

Conservation photographers find themselves working within various, often conflicting spheres. How do conservation photographers navigate the occupational and

political logics they are faced with during photographic expeditions as they position themselves as environmental communicators?

## Navigating Logics

### *Conservation Photography and Activism*

Conservation photographers' work focuses on conservation issues but the way they view their roles in relation to activism varies among photographers. In a discussion of activist photography, Bogre (2012) questions what the difference is between activist and nonactivist documentary photography. She suggests that activist documentary photography comes when "a photographer thinks beyond the photograph" (p. xv). Photographer Jonathan Torgovnik states, "Sometimes it *is* the responsibility of the photographer to make a call for action" (Bogre 2012: xii). Some participants in my research echo this view, and view the call for action to go beyond the production of compelling images. For example, Adriana draws from a similar understanding of conservation photography when she describes what she sees as the role of the conservation photographer:

> It's not just the pictures. You really have to become the ambassador for your work and the ambassador for the place and the species that you photograph...You hear it all the time …photography can change the world. I have news for you: no, it can't. All it does is…raises awareness and it creates a constituency of support. … but it really takes a champion to take those photographs and move the agenda in any direction. So the conservation photographers are not just photographers; they have to be a spokesperson, ambassador, and diplomat.

Adriana asserts that for conservation photographers, making the photographs is only one step in the process of what it means to do conservation photography. Not only do they

become promoters of the photographs, but also of the places, people, and species shown in the photograph. She argues that people may see the photographs and become aware of certain conservation issues and it may create a group of supporters. But, for her, this is not enough as the ultimate goal of conservation photography is to influence the plan of action on environmental issues. Adriana brings up the roles of spokesperson, ambassador, and diplomat as parts conservation photographers may have to take on to do this. Using the term diplomat suggests a certain amount of sensitivity involved in their work.

All but one conservation photographer considered themselves part of the environmental movement but not every conservation photographer calls themselves an activist (although the one photographer who did not relate to the environmental movement did consider themselves to be an activist). Long-standing negative cultural understandings of activism and advocacy complicate the ability for photographers to take on the label of activist. David traces negative connotations of the label environmentalist "back to the fights in the 70s." Adriana explains that in the 1990s, the majority of society did not look upon environmentalists favorably. When it comes to communicating about the environment she reveals, "there have been so many exaggerations and so much misinformation that people have every right to think that we are a bunch of loonies." Adriana connects the negative views of environmentalists to inaccurate information. She also admits that there may be truth to this assessment. Sustained negative perceptions about environmental activists make it hard for conservation photographers to align themselves with the activist label. For this reason, some conservation photographers are

diligent about trying to obtain accurate information during photographic expeditions. They push back against terms like environmentalist or activist.

David explains that “the term conservation is more encompassing to me, because you’re conserving places, you’re conserving history.” He goes on to say,

> …conservation is a stronger term, maybe more or less accepted by the people on the other side, easier to sit down with a business about conserving the area where he is going to build his hotel, rather than saying environmentalist, saying you want to protect this; it gives you more common ground, I guess, less adversarial…

David thinks about the opponent, in this case a business, he may have to discuss conservation issues with when he considers how to label himself. He believes he will be met with less pushback as a conservationist than as an environmentalist, and the “conservationist” framework may allow them to start from a place of mutual interest instead of conflict. David uses the word “protect,” a word which he believes does not turn people off.

Similarly, Nancy rejects the activist label, which she believes people connect with “aggressive tactics in environmentalism.” She explains that the word activist is something “that some people might find offensive or view negatively and I spend a lot of time trying to get people interested in and educated about environmental and conservationist issues, and I don’t want to start them by feeling negatively.”

Nancy also wishes to create a positive space rather than a negative space to start the conversation about environmental issues. Joan reflects on her philosophy:

> I learned very early on that it doesn’t really do any good to preach to people and to beat them over the head and tell them that they have to live a certain way. No one reacts favorably to that, including myself. So I kind of take this approach of more of just trying to kind of gently and subtly educate people.

Joan also proposes actions that are not straightforward, but instead restrained and sensitive to the places that her audiences may be coming from and of what they will accept. For these conservation photographers, taking the label of activist would be associating themselves with activities and approaches that may be a turn off for the people they are trying to reach, the opposite of their goal of engaging various audiences.

Lars personally does not like the actions of many activists. He demonstrates a perspective that does not necessarily take audience perspective into account but still focuses on actions. Lars hesitates to call himself an activist, particularly "not a hard-core activist who runs in the street and takes part in every demonstration that comes along." He continues to distance himself from "activism in a fanatic way" when he describes activism surrounding the European minx:

> There are environmental activists or animal rights activists who set these animals free by the thousands and then they move away and they say, ok, they have to have a happy life. If you look at it as a photographer, you will see that after two days about half of the amount of animals that are released have been run over by cars, the other half is running around…in the vicinity of where they have been bred on the farm, and do not know what to do with themselves, and three or four days later they are starving and five days later they start eating themselves, cannibalism starts and this is some kind of activism that I do not like at all.

He adds on, "The fanatic part of it I do not like at all, where people stop thinking or where people are just thinking about a very, very narrow window of time and space and do not ask themselves questions about what their activism and what their actions might … lead to." Lars views "fanatical" activists as individuals who are irrational and impulsive and end up doing more harm than good. According to Lars, as a photographer he would think more rationally about the situation and be concerned for a longer term

than activists are. In this way he creates a boundary between being an activist and being a photographer.

Shirley's comparison of how people perceive her behavior compared to her partner Carl's helps to elucidate common understandings of activism. She explains:

> Carl is a hunter … he's logical, he's reasonable, he's measured and balanced. I used to be a member of PETA… but I'm more the jump up and down, emotional activist bunny hugger. Nobody really takes me seriously, because I'm a bunny hugger. Everybody takes Carl seriously because he is a hunter and because…he's logical, reasonable and can see both sides of the issue.

Shirley's description of herself as an activist mirrors one of society's understandings of activists as unreasonable and their information as unbalanced. While people view her as emotional and someone people do not take seriously, her description of her partner is the opposite: he is someone who is seen as a person who will provide them with unbiased information and take part in reasonable actions (even though he, like his partner, identifies as an activist). Her discussion also draws upon dominant gender stereotypes, with men thought of being inherently unemotional and balanced and women being inherently emotional and irrational. This provides another example of how gender shapes the way activism is socially constructed and understood (Blackstone 2004).

Fewer photographers drew upon positive views of activism. Typically, more positive views of activism come into play when the photographers discuss less radical activists; when photographers do take on the label of activist, they often insist that they are not a radical activist. Theo considers himself an advocate, but not an activist because activism denotes "a long-term commitment." He explains that he "wouldn't be in the forefront" but as an advocate he supports organizations like the World Wildlife

Federation and iLCP. For Theo, his understanding of authentic activists entails positive qualities like rigor and dedication (Bobel 2007).

Alternatively, David speaks to what he views as the importance of activism. Although he does not consider himself an activist, he states that he fully supports activists "to the point to where they would rattle the cage stronger than the others without breaking the law." He explains, "You need people who are activists to make the middle ground seem reasonable." David illuminates how he views activism and how the radical flank effect occurs within his work (Haines 1984 cited in Greenebaum 2009).

All of these comments suggest that many conservation photographers tend to draw from the most traditional understanding, which is often framed as negative, of what activism is when they position themselves in relationship to activism. This leads some photographers to resist the label of activist, as they do not want to be seen as overly contentious, illogical, or ill informed, qualities that go against what they want it to mean to be a conservation photographer.

*Conservation Photography and Journalism*

Adriana contends that the ethics related to journalism were at the forefront of how the iLCP was developed. She explains, "…the ethics of being a journalist, a photojournalist, you know this idea that photography bears witness; that only fairly recently photographs were permitted in the court of law." It is thought that photographs were first used in American courts in the late 1850's. To be used, photographs need to be relevant to the case and authentic (Mnookin 1998). Adriana continues speaking to the

ethics of journalism nothing, “I wanted the league to have that ethical standard…To be part of the league you need to have that professionalism.” It is not surprising, then, that journalistic norms influence iLCP photographers’ work.

iLCP photographers draw upon journalism norms in various ways. Some photographers associate themselves with journalism because of the importance of demonstrating multiple viewpoints. Lars explains what he appreciates about journalism:

> Storytelling about the different angles, about different people’s attitudes and their way of dealing with a conservation issue or being affected by it, that is something that I think is… related to storytelling in a way of good and professional journalism and that is what I personally like.

Lars highlights journalism’s professional norm of showing multiple perspectives within the story as a positive characteristic of journalism. He highlights the idea that people may be influenced by conservation issues in different ways and may deal with the issues in different ways. Similarly, Stephanie reveals how the qualities of 'good journalism’ can be used to bring people with different opinions together:

> Collaboration is better than division ... When I did the radiation story way back in the late 80s, it was a really good story because … all the anti-nuke people wanted to use our stuff and the pro-nuke people gave us a big award for having the most fair coverage of their industry. So that to me is kinda … the point of what good journalism and good coverage is. For both sides to see themselves in the coverage. Because you’re trying to be a fair and balanced person-- you bring everyone to the table to talk-- you’re gonna solve the problem. If you’re standing there yelling and screaming at everyone and looking like Rastafarians with long greasy hair, you’re not gonna bring anybody to the table, you’re going to just divide and so you have to…work at this in a way that everyone can come to the table.

For Lars and Stephanie, making sure different perspectives are shown is a vital part of what they do. In addition, Stephanie’s comment suggests that collaboration is a goal for her, and that journalism rather than activism or contentious behavior will help her achieve

that goal. She paints a vivid negative picture of an activist in direct opposition to positive qualities she attributes to journalism. For her, finding a solution requires bringing people from both sides of an issue together.

Tensions come into play between journalism and activism. Max asserts iLCP fellows are not activists, "because the people that are [iLCP members], especially the core members, we are journalists. They're all people who know what they are doing." Journalism and activism are not compatible from Max's perspective – one cannot be a journalist and an activist. Further, by crafting this dichotomy he indicates that journalists know what they are doing while activists do not.

A few photographers are hesitant to align themselves with the norms of traditional journalism. Although Adriana spoke of the importance of journalistic ethics in creating the iLCP, what that ethic means is not always so straightforward to her. She explains:

> Somebody said to me, 'You know so you're going out and you're taking pictures and you're only portraying the side of the environment -- as a journalist you have to speak of all the stuff,' and … that really got me thinking because I don't think so. … I think that when you have a big mining company, they have a big PR and load department, and they're going to put out their press releases… but whatever the stream and forest that have been wreck[ed] they don't have anyone to speak on their behalf. … if this was a question asked to me, you know, 30 years ago I would say no, as a journalist you would really have a duty to tell a story but as a conservationist or somebody who had seen just how close we are to ecological disaster…I said we don't have any time for that anymore. Journalism has become activism. Can you still call yourself a journalist? I mean that's an interesting question. So that's one of the contradictions that I'm dealing with and I'm not going to make apologies for it. I'm going to keep going out there and telling the part of the story that I think is not being told.

Adriana suggests that journalism may be changing and in her discussion she specifically focuses on the norm of balance. She does not see a problem with promoting a particular way of seeing an environmental situation or only showing one side of the story,

especially given the public relations work of corporations to justify environmental destruction. This aligns with a movement away from the he said/she said debate in journalism (Boykoff 2007) and may lead to a stronger conservation message. She maintains that the other side of the story will get told. The motivation behind the change in her way of thinking comes from the urgency of environmental issues about which she is communicating.

Other photographers question whether anyone can truly be objective but do not go as far as calling what they do activism. Kevin speaks to his understanding of activism, journalism, and his work. He states, “I guess I’m hesitant to say that I’m an activist, but all my actions suggest that I am” and goes on to say “I’m less interested in… the naming and I’m more interested in the actions… so I guess you could argue that I’m an activist.” He then expands on how he perceives his work:

> Although I approach my journalistic works with an objective end, I certainly have an interest in the subject matter that I document. So you could argue that, is it ever really that objective? This becomes an ethical question to me and I draw the line in the sand where I think you can do things or you can’t and I just will never cross that line so my ethics stay on par with my colleagues in the iLCP. And I think in the activism sphere, I think we still do things that don’t have the impact that they could and that energy could be repurposed for other means. It’s not to say that it doesn’t work cause we all know the case studies that do but I also think a more strategic approach might be the way I handle things.

Kevin shies away from the label activist and instead, initially, chooses to focus on his actions as a photographer which he hesitantly admits may actually align with activism. While he does question conservation photographers’ abilities to be truly objective because of their interest in the environment, he points to iLCP’s code of ethics as a way that he stays within his ethical comfort zone. In the end, however, he questions the

overall effectiveness of activism and notes that he tends to be more "strategic" or less confrontational in his choice of activities than activists.

Gabriel also speaks to objectivity in photography. He describes photography as a means of interpretation, where photographers are "always linked to reality, but … your own view of that reality." Being a journalist allows him "to be honest with my own view of the world." Similarly, Charles likens photography to French impressionism, with each artist painting the landscape as they saw and experienced it. He explains,

> We could all go out and stand on a hilltop somewhere with the same camera, same lens, point at the same direction and photograph something. I can guarantee you each one of us is gonna have a completely different picture. We're all looking at the same scene, but we're gonna have a different picture because we're all different people and we're all moved by something within that scene a little bit differently.

Because of this, Charles goes on to say that he finds it important to make sure he does tell an honest story, and not have his opinion shaped by one side or the other, which he sees as being driven by individual perspectives. For Charles, professional journalistic norms provide a way for him to provide an accurate depiction of situations he is involved in photographing. However, practically, scholars warn that this may weaken the message he is trying to communicate as all sides may appear to have the same level of veracity, even if it may not be the case (Boykoff 2007).

### *Hybridity*

Many photographers position themselves as fluid individuals who rise above the idea of labels such as journalists, artists or activists, which allows them to take on more

neutral, impartial roles. Charles describes how photographers transcend labels like scientists, artists, or activists:

> It's interesting…as a photographer, not being tethered … to any …labels necessarily. You often times walk into an arena where you go try to tell a story and you're talking to a scientist and then you go talk to an artist and then you go talk to an activist, somebody who's out there beatin' the drum in front of the capital doorsteps or … in the legislature or what not and what you find is that those folks … aren't contradicting each other at all. They're actually helping each other out but they may all be talking a little bit of a different language. If you can knit those different things together under one tent then you've done something and a lot of times photography and photographers have that ability to be able to do that because we can really sort of be all three at one time. So rather than there being 3 parallel streams going the same direction but never intersecting then all of sudden maybe it's more of a braid where they're all coming together and mingling…. You use that as a starting point for a conversation and I think that it's really interesting that conservation and conversation is just a flip of two letters.

For these photographers, the pushing away of these labels allows an ambiguousness to surround their roles, which allows them to speak with disparate individuals and possibly help them find a common ground. Charles presents the labels as things that could restrict the photographers' movements; however, he also notes that photographers can take on multiple roles at the same time. His use of metaphors like knitting and braiding and mingling provide insight into his goal of bringing people together and finding commonality. He suggests that there is a strong connection between conservation and conversation since the issue appeals to, and engages, different types of social groups that the photographers would like to see come together and find agreement in terms of making positive environmental changes.

Other photographers find space to work within science communication (which could be thought of as a particular type of journalism) and activism. For example, Kevin

encourages the use of strategic communication when trying to make environmental information accessible to broad audiences. He explains:

> … I'm having a lot of neat conversations with people expressing the idea that what if our environmental communications was a bit more strategic and so I suppose the scientists out there might argue that spinning our messages or not expressing all of the data might compromise the integrity or the authenticity of it but the question I pose to people is if the way we communicate science now doesn't exactly work then maybe it's time to think more strategically and perhaps more emotionally about the way we communicate.

But then, contemplating his approach further he concludes: "I'm less of a stereotypical activist, I think. I'd like to think of myself as being more strategic and more academic in my actions… and less raw and emotional." While he acknowledges scientists may not like the way he chooses to do things, he also believes he does not fit the stereotypical understanding of activism. He creates a place in between science communication and activism where he has a space to engage in his work. He points to emotion as something that may not be part of scientific communication now. He suggests emotion may be a positive addition to communicating about the environment if it is done strategically, which is different than how activists use emotion.

Photographers' perceptions of activism and journalism influence how they take on the role of conservation photographer. Many conservation photographers position themselves as individuals who are not activists, even if their activities may be construed by some as activist oriented. Journalism logics can provide ways that some conservation photographers legitimate their work. However, other conservation photographers actively work to place themselves outside of any particular label, which allows them to be more fluid in their conservation photographer activities. The next section will outline the

methods that conservation photographers employ as they navigate between activism and journalism.

## Managing Tensions

Photographers employ various techniques to manage the tensions between journalism and activism, including 1) making their relationship to activism dependent on the project, 2) making space for different shades of activism, and 3) choosing projects selectively.

### *Project Dependent*

Photographers promote the idea that you *do* activism instead of *being* an activist, as iLCP photographers take on different relationships to activism depending on the situation, some distancing themselves from activism at some points and other times embracing it.

Leah illustrates, “It gets tricky, like some of the work I do is straight journalism, I have to make sure when I’m doing that…I don’t want to say I’m unbiased, because I don’t really believe people are unbiased, but I have to have it based on fact.” For Leah, she considers what role and activities she needs to draw from based on the project on which she is working. Although she questions the ability for anyone to be completely unbiased, she still works from a traditional understanding that journalism as objective while other activities may not be. She must be able to discern when she should rely on

"straight journalism." Similarly, Joan explains her view of whether or not she is an activist:

> It kind of depends on what role I'm in. There are plenty of times where I'm telling a story and I feel like it's not my place to be an activist and advocate one way or the other … I'm just trying to tell a story and get some information across to people and then let them decide what is that they want to do with that information. So if they want to take some kind of action on whatever story presented to them then that's great but I don't always advocate that they do so one way or another. Sometimes they do and it just kind of depends [on] what role I'm in who I'm working with, who I'm partnering with.

Joan presents a traditional understanding of journalism and science communication that aligns with the deficit model of communication where people are simply unaware or misinformed about the issue at hand and just need to be presented with the environmental information in order to make their own informed decision. These two examples highlight the importance of the context the photographers are in. Photographers must be able to read the situation and understand what actions are appropriate for them to take based on the context they find themselves.

*A Spectrum of Activism*

Photographers' responses also suggest that there are different types of activism. Adriana describes that she differentiated herself from some of the early environmentalists:

> It was not a good thing to be an environmentalist … [it was] perceived as a very radical position, the advocates, the tie-dyed people. But I was not one of those environmentalists, I was a scientist, and so over the next ten years, I did a lot of lobbying photographers to convince them that it wasn't a radical idea to put forth your work in favor of nature…

By creating a boundary between ‘us’ (the more positive kind of environmentalists, the scientists) and ‘them’ (the more radical activists), Adriana creates space for a type of activist with a less negative connotation of what it means to be an environmentalist. She highlights her role as a scientist to help create this boundary. In a sense she was setting up a space that she thought conservation photographers would fill.

When asked about his relationship to activism, Zach explains: “I’m uncomfortable marching in the streets waving placards, but, I mean, I’m an activist in the sense of…raising the public consciousness… You can’t get engaged with this subject area and be detached.” He went on to note, “Even the scientists aren’t like that.” He holds scientists up to a particular standard, one that he compares himself to as he explains he is attached to environmental issues. When asked whether he considers himself an activist, he concludes: “Yes, I’m a cautious activist, but I’m not a table pounder. I think… I get more market penetration with gentle persuasion than I do strident persuasion.” Zach once again brings up the idea of being restrained rather than strident in tone with his work. Similarly, Charles offers a space where different shades of activism can emerge:

> I think activism is, it’s you’re active in your belief. It’s like church; it’s like religion, its faith. I mean I’m Christian and a major part of our belief system is just faith and faith is not just something that sits there on a shelf, it’s active, you try to be it, you try to live it. So, in work as a photographer, if you’re sharing that work and you’re telling those stories and you care about them because you want other people to care about them too and I think inherently you’re an activist. There are some folks who are much more comfortable being upfront all the time about things and then there’s others who do it very quietly but I think we’re all activists for the things that we care about in some way.

Zach and Charles highlight the possibility of multiple kinds and types of activists and activism. For them, not every type of activist has to fall into the stereotypical

understanding of an activist. They both note that there are less provocative means of being an activist than the stereotypical understanding of an activist.

Various types of indirect activism also emerge. Photographers suggest that while they are not activists, the organizations they work with in turn become the activist arm of the project when they receive the photographers' images and use them in some capacity. Howard explains how he sees activism as something that happens by organizations with his photos: "the groups that I work with will be doing activist type things with my images, for example, the coast, San Diego, they work a lot, they get images to show, show multimedia to Mexico City, so that their legislator sees them." Joan aligns with this perspective, stating:

> As a photographer, if I am partnering with an advocacy organization then what I'm generally doing is providing the images and stories that they can then use to go advocate for certain position on a certain topic. I typically partner with advocacy organizations but I personally don't always necessarily directly advocate for an issue one way or the other.

In this sense, the conservation photographers are able to position themselves outside the role of political activist and instead leave that to the organizations with which they work.

*Choice of Projects*

iLCP photographers also consider the projects on which they choose to work when reconciling journalism and activism. Although he does not consider himself an activist, Peter echoes the previous photographers' idea of indirect activism and expands on this by stating that project selection is a form of activism.

> You could even say people are indirect activists by using photojournalism and raising awareness of stories that aren't told. So you're going in and just reporting

> the objective facts and looking at both sides, so showing the complete story, but maybe these stories are way off in the wilderness where you know, it doesn't get much attention, so you're taking that step to go and…you know in some ways it's almost as if you're an investigative reporter. You're looking into it and you're getting that story out there and in a way that's a form of activism but it's different in the way that most people will consider activism, as you know, hanging signs off things and stuff like that. But it's, choosing that story, choosing what story to do, I guess is my form of activism.

Peter presents the choices he makes in regards to the stories on which he focuses as his form of indirect activism. In this way he is able to be an objective journalist while also letting people know about stories that he cares about and think should be a concern to other people as well.

Similarly, Max states, "I feel like activism is more biased than documentation… I would not feel good if I did a story and there was another side… as a journalist I feel like that is my job, to mention the other side." He does not think he's done his job properly if he presents "a skewed picture of something" but he also explains, "a lot of the stories that I work on, I pick them that way, because there isn't really that much of the other side." He then gives an example of using science as a way of clarifying why sometimes it is less important to tell both sides of the story. Describing a story he worked on about oil extraction in Yasuni in Ecuador, he explains, "I wouldn't feel the need of kind of trying to make the oil extraction…very positive because I think we have massive scientific ground to know that there isn't really anything positive about it." After a pause he adds on, "If the oil down there was something that was…the only cure for knee cancer, it would be a different story, right?" Max draws attention to the importance of science in how he perceives his work. He uses science to discern what he should focus on in his stories, even if the final story does not necessarily give equal time to both sides of a story.

By relying on science to help him be what he considers to be an objective journalist, he is comfortable telling the stories he does.

Speaking of partnering organizations, Peggy explains, “I want to know what their philosophy is, what they are trying to show or do, where they are going, because I don’t want to be a part of something that’s nasty or ugly for the wrong reasons.” Peggy notes she can refuse any projects that might lead her to support issues and organizations that she may not want to by making sure that she supports their goals. These examples suggest that even though some photographers do not identify as activists, they have ways that help them focus on and support social change goals that are important to them.

**Conclusion**

This chapter examined how conservation photographers position themselves as environmental communicators by looking at how they relate to activism and journalism. While photographers draw from pre-existing cultural codes while they work (Hart 1996), these relationships varied across my respondents. Often, relationships to activism and journalism were fluid and dependent upon the situations in which photographers find themselves working. How, and the extent to which, photographers identify as activists and journalists influence their roles as environmental communicators. This analysis adds to literature focused on the professional logics that may influence political activity (Roussel 2007). Professionals can be allies for social movements (Suh 2014) and it is important to understand the process that goes along with their social change work. In this case, I demonstrate that the norms of professional journalism influence conservation

photographers' environmental communication efforts, which often occur within political contexts. In addition, how photographers relate to journalism and activism reflects that social movements are faced with "the potential tension between meeting their goals and the means by which they build and sustain the movement" (Roy 2013 p. 238).

Specifically, a number of photographers resisted or were hesitant to apply the label of activist to themselves, supporting findings of previous studies (Blackstone 2004, Blackstone 2007, Bobel 2007, Greenebaum 2009). Many conservation photographers drew on negative stereotypes of activism to depict themselves as less radical than other activists, hoping for a positive radical flank effect (Haines 1984 cited in Greenebaum 2009). By staying away from radical activism, they hope to portray conservation photography as a legitimate source of information and conservation photographers as non-confrontational, legitimate sources of information. Further, by maintaining distance between themselves and activism, they may be mitigating some of the risk (McAdam 1986) they might take on by labeling themselves an activist in terms of securing future work from people and organizations who may be turned off by the idea of activism.

Photographers focused on three negatives attributes of activism. First, iLCP photographers suggest that activists may play a role in providing inaccurate or misinformation in the environmental movement. Second, they draw from the perception that activists often use antagonistic tactics or confrontational ways of speaking. Finally, photographers deem the work of activists as irrational and without calculated thought. When rejecting the idea of being an activist, these photographers compose a picture of what they consider a conservation photographer to be; namely, individuals comprised of

the opposite characteristics of their perceptions of activists. Conservation photographers should be well informed, use activities that encourage collaboration, and display rationality.

iLCP photographers also draw from journalism norms when resisting an association with activism. Photographers highlight the importance of adhering to balance as they perform their work. Balance provides a way to legitimize their work. Some photographers create a dichotomy between activism and journalism to distance themselves from the negative attributes of activism. This activity supports the assertion that media logics do not align with social movement logics (Rucht 2004). However, at the same time, some photographers explicitly or implicitly challenge what balance should look like as they manage the perceived tensions between activism and journalism in their work. Photographers will 1) make their relationship to activism dependent on the project, 2) consider a spectrum of activist activities, and 3) choose projects selectively. In this way, many photographers can focus on the areas and activities they wish to while maintaining a perceived legitimacy through the norms of journalism.

My findings support the assertion that doing activism can be distinct from being an activist (Bobel 2007): conservation photographers do not necessarily label themselves as activists even when they do activism and often do not wish to be identified by others as activists. However, while other studies find social movement participants reject the label of activist because they feel do not possess the qualities of rigor and humility (ibid), and some conservation photographers do the same as they feel they are not life-long activists, other conservation photographers draw upon negative conceptions of activism

as they resist the label (Suh 2014) because one of their goals is to bring people with differing perspectives together, which they do not see as possible under the label of activist. Further, they may be concerned with getting future employment. Therefore, the photographers provide additional reasons why people involved with social change initiatives may not identify as activists. Instead of living up to a 'perfect standard' (Bobel 2007), the photographers do not want to be associated with the stigma associated with being an activist. These differing reasons for why one would reject the activist label suggests that additional research should be done to better understand under what conditions individuals will draw from each of these explanations.

Conservation photographers' relationships to activism reflects what they face in their social, economic, and cultural realities. Their responses reveal that there is not a single definition of what it means to be an activist. Overall, the actions they take, or 'doing activism,' may end up being more important than the label they give themselves. However, to help facilitate more effective, successful processes, organizations like iLCP can help create situations in which photographers are comfortable doing as much as they want to do. Conservation organizations can create strategies that outline the actions they see photographers taking and make sure that all parties involved are aware of the plans.

Overall, much like celebrities, most conservation photographers hope that they, and their work, generate links between major players in environmental debates, such as scientists, policy-makers, and environmental institutions (Boykoff and Goodman 2009). Thinking beyond conservation photography, the findings highlight the importance of closely examining the logics that go along with media production to help reveal the

factors that influence the production of visual material used to communicate about social issues. Members of creative industries focused on other social issues may draw from different logics and cultural codes which may bring different groups and viewpoints together.

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## Chapter Five: Technology and Conservation Photography

### Introduction

In prominent photographer Dr. Alex Wild's (2014) online essay, *"Bugging out: How rampant online piracy squashed one insect photographer"* Wild outlines his battle with online copyright infringement and explains that it has led him to step away from his career as a photographer. He states:

> Copyright infringement for most artists is death by a thousand paper cuts. One $100 infringement here and there is harmless enough. But they add up… At some point, the vanishing proportion of content users who license content legally will turn professional creative artists into little more than charity cases, dependent only on the goodwill of those who pity artists enough to toss some change their way.

His battle highlights just one of many challenges photographers face today, in part because of widespread online technology, as our society has transitioned from an industrial information environment to a networked one (Benkler 2006). While internet technologies are often portrayed as revolutionary tools in various realms, using them can be challenging for individuals who depend on media for their employment, such as professional artists, and attempt to use the same media in their social movement endeavors.

Conservation photographers, or photographers who focus their work on communicating about environmental conservation issues, are an ideal case to study how individuals relate to emerging technologies as they balance their roles as professional artists who need to earn a living and roles as advocates pursuing social change. In this study, I analyze how conservation photographers manage these two roles by examining

photographers' media practices while they navigate their transforming media environment. Drawing from interview data from 33 conservation photographers, I describe the process by which conservation photographers negotiate the use of online technologies in their work. This study extends our understanding of resistance to using media by suggesting that this practice is selective and variable, and best understood as a complicated continuum, rather than a dichotomy (Wyatt, Thomas, and Terranova 2002).

There is variation in how conservation photographers respond to online technologies. I find that occupational identity shapes media practices of conservation photographers; those whose careers are constructed around using one form of media, specifically photography, tend to be more reluctant to use online forms of media. Photographers' understanding of how media work influence their media practices and their relationship to online technologies. Specifically, I find that photographers' 1) relationship to traditional media, 2) understandings of how technology impacts society, and 3) models of social change influence how they relate to online technologies. As findings of previous studies of professionals in creative industries reveal, such as musicians (Baym and Burnett 2009), photographers are challenged with concerns about digital labor, presenting mediated online personae (Marwick and boyd 2011), as well as issues surrounding copyright and ownership of their products. Conservation photographers are thus faced with changing work processes (Castells 2010) including pressures to engage in self-promotion and to manage distribution.

**The Networked Information Age**

Our society has transitioned from an industrial information environment to a networked information environment (Benkler 2006). Scholars and practitioners describe this new society as a "post-Fordism, post-industrialization, network society, liquid modernity, information society, 'new economy,' 'new capitalism,' and risk society" (Gill and Pratt 2008: 2). The economy is now centered on information and cultural production (Benkler 2006). Benkler (2006: 2) contends "A series of changes in the technologies, economic organization, and social practices of production…has created new opportunities for how we make and exchange information, knowledge, and culture."

The transition to a networked society has led to a more participatory culture, including a hybrid model of information circulation. In addition to traditional top-down distribution models, information also comes from bottom-up sources (Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2013). Benkler (2006) explains, "The various formats of the networked public sphere provide anyone with an outlet to speak, to inquire, to investigate, without need to access the resources of a major media organization" (p. 11). It is easy for many people to be a broadcaster using laptops and smartphones in conjunction with Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (DeLuca, Sun, and Peeples 2011).

Along with the expansion of distribution models, there is an expanding creative class (Florida 2014). Marshall (2011) also highlights the creative industry as particularly impacted by these changes in society: "The traditional forms of television, film, newspapers, magazines and radio are presenting different and extended patterns of distribution, decidedly new formations and deadlines for the production of material,

clearly shifted techniques for generating income" (p. 406). Castells contends that in the current labor environment, it is hard to determine how to win or lose. He explains, "Skills were not enough, since the process of technological change accelerated its pace, constantly superseding the definition of appropriate skills" (Castells 2010 p. 302).

Conservation photographers find themselves in the midst of this changing environment. It can be difficult for them to successfully navigate their rapidly changing production and distribution environments as, similar to other industries that make up the creative class, the photographers find that information technologies continue to redefine their work processes (Castells 2010). Photographers are faced with an era of social production, in which production is often done collaboratively, without individual or group ownership, and is often not financially motivated (Benkler 2006). Work is presented as "precarious, flexible, immaterial, service-oriented, and often tied to the management of one's own and others' emotions" (Baym 2015). The rise of services like iStockphoto, which enable amateur photographers to sell their photographs, have been market changing to professional photographers (Shirky 2008). Traditional media outlets, such as newspapers and *National Geographic*, are transforming their models or disappearing altogether. Freelance photography opportunities have diminished as traditional media outlets greatly reduced their travel budgets for such work. Reflecting the shifting conditions of work and compensation photographers now face, photographer Ted Wood, who often works for *National Geographic* and the *Smithsonian*, now looks to foundations and other sources for financial support rather than traditional media outlets (Boykoff and Yulsman 2013).

Conservation photographers' advocacy roles add another challenge. Anyone with resources and abilities can take pictures and upload them to online audiences using digital cameras and even mobile devices. The proliferation of Web 2.0 technology also introduces online user-generated content. Mobile applications like Instagram with various filters and photographic manipulation capabilities have created an entire class of amateur photographers (Shirky 2008). This could be a way for laypeople to become involved in documenting environmental issues, considered a win by many involved with the environmental movement, but it could also create tension between professional and amateur photographers. As the line between producer and audiences becomes increasingly blurred (Benkler 2006, Flew and Swift 2013, Shirky 2008), photographers are torn when it comes to using internet technologies. On the one hand, some photographers view these new online technologies as possibly benefiting communication about environmental causes, while on the other hand photographers work to reestablish boundaries between their roles as producers and their audiences as they attempt to generate income from their photographic work.

**The Environmental Movement and Media Practices**

Research studying the relationship between internet technologies and collective action has flourished (Bennett et al. 2008; della Porta and Mosca 2005; Diani 2000; Tufekci and Wilson 2012). Social movement participants use internet technologies to provide resources for participation, disseminate information, and create a sense of collective identity and community (Anduiza, Cantijoch, and Gallego 2009; Garrett 2006).

Further, using internet technologies is often touted as a way that social movement participants can bypass mainstream media (Bennett et al. 2008; Keck and Sikkink 1998; van de Donk et al. 2004). Internet users can use online technologies to create their own content and share it with their online networks (Bennett and Segerberg 2011, Kavada 2010). Most relevant for this study, social movement participants share visual information, such as photographs, using the internet (Castells 2012, Cottle and Lester 2011, Tufekci and Wilson 2012).

The environmental movement in particular has made use of online communications (Castells 2004, Hutchins and Lester 2011,) and the strategy of "mediated visibility," or making the hidden or unnoticed visible via the internet (Thompson 2005). While some research suggests the environmental movement could be doing more with new media (Bortree and Seltzer 2009, Lester and Hutchins 2009) and often focuses internet efforts on users who are already concerned about the environment (Hestres 2013), other research suggests that some environmental organizations actually change their communication style to fit various audiences (Merry 2012). As the environmental movement continues to negotiate their way through using the internet studying the online practices of members of creative industries in the environmental movement becomes even more important.

While different forms of media have long been part of the environmental movement's social change campaigns, the use of photographs has played important roles in supporting environmentalism (Bright 1992, DeLuca and Demo 2000, Palmer 2013, Schwarz 2013). Myriad environmental groups use visual material to communicate about

environmental issues such as deforestation, drought, and endangered species (DiFrancesco and Young 2011). Greenpeace, for example, routinely uses photographs to draw attention to environmental concerns (Doyle 2007).

Scant literature examines the relationship between online technologies, photographs, and the photographers behind these images. Seelig (2014) examines environmental photographers and includes iLCP photographers in her sample. She takes the perspective that photographers are embracing media platforms and emerging technologies. She finds that the environmental photographers are critical of how mainstream media cover environmental issues and argues, “mainstream media uphold existing ideology so it is up to environmentalist and conservationists to push the issues in a way that is useful, interesting and informative” (p. 312). Even with this criticism, the photographers use alternative media outlets such as social media to reach more targeted audiences while relying on mainstream media to reach wider audiences. Overall, photographers use online technologies to supplement more traditional forms of media (Seelig 2014). I find greater evidence of media resistance and variation in the levels and forms of engagement with online media among these photographers.

**Media Resistance**

I place this chapter in the literature on media resistance to examine conservation photographers’ negotiated use of online technologies. Studying the discursive and performative dimensions of media resistance can provide valuable insight into the factors that shape this resistance (Portwood-Stacer 2012). Studying non-users and their reasons

for not using certain media can also offer significant contextual information about the norms and assumptions of users (Hargittai 2004). A number of studies examine resistance of media use using textual analysis (Foot 2014; Portwood-Stacer 2013; Rauch 2011, 2014). Based on textual analysis and analysis of interviews with 20 people who do not use Facebook, Portwood-Stacer (2012) argues that media refusers are making a political statement through their resistance to using Facebook, even if it is not always intentional. Woodstock (2014) studies the practices of and reasons for resistance among media resisters drawing from interviews with 36 individuals who resist the use of media. Reasons people offer for not using certain media include attempts to create boundaries between their public and private lives, beliefs that the use of media may weaken social relationships, and to try to be more present (ibid).

The current chapter adds to the limited literature that employs interview data to study resistance to media use (Portwood-Stacer 2012, Woodstock 2014). Further, according to Wyatt, Thomas, and Terranova (2002), "the internet user then needs to be conceptualized along a continuum, with different degrees and forms of participation that can change over time" (p. 37). By looking at conservation photographers' negotiation of media use, this analysis moves beyond the dichotomy of user/non-user and instead reveals a continuum of use.

**Conservation Photography and Technology Use**

Conservation photographers offer the following areas of concern as they consider integrating the internet into their work: privacy and security; time commitment; internet characteristics; and questions of effectiveness.

*Privacy, Security, and Generational Identity*

Photographers focused less on issues of personal security, privacy, and trusting of media than on other topics, and when they did talk about the issue of security, privacy, or trust, inevitably they would turn to a discussion of their age. A husband and wife team brought up the idea of trust and the use of social media, but also suggest the mindset most likely comes from the fact that they are older. She explains, “We technically have a Facebook account, but I don’t use it because I don’t trust it, with all the schemes and identity thefts... We are old farts; we’re not up to speed on that.” Her explanation speaks to her distrust of online technologies but her indication that it may be because they are old is quickly followed up by a suggestion that their age is an excuse preventing them from learning more about the technologies. This may indicate that she is conflating the effects of generation (growing up before the spread of online technologies) with a general societal stance that there are security and privacy concerns related to the internet.

Another older photographer also falls back on generation when describing his perception about the general prevalence of smart phones in society:

> We don’t own a smartphone; we don’t own an iPhone. I refuse to have a smartphone. That may have caused some to frown… I don’t know how it is in America, when we go to Asia… in the city, you go in a Starbucks cafe, and I see 10 kids sitting around at the table and no one is talking and everyone is staring

> into their iPhone, I think there's something really wrong. It's a general attitude that I can't comprehend, but then again I'm a dinosaur. We chose to live in a countryside, in a rural area… to enjoy more life, real life, not being with an iPhone in your pocket, everybody knows where you are, I find that very not comfortable… it's like big brother is watching you 24 hours [a day].

He resists using any type of smartphone and suggests some people might find it odd that he does not. He discusses a mindset about communication that he does not understand. His comment indicates he sees a difference between talking (verbal communication) and communicating using phones (mediated communication) and indicates he privileges verbal communication. He notes that it may be his age, but then expands on his lifestyle in general – residing in a rural area – which may indicate that he thinks the choice of where he lives is indicative of his desire for privacy or what he seems to see as a simpler, technology-free life. His stance echoes concerns expressed about the proliferation of technology in society and the detrimental impact it has on people's abilities to relate to one another and be present with the individuals and information around us (Turkle 2012) echoing findings by Woodstock (2014). He juxtaposes real life with a life that includes the surveillance embedded in iPhones, revealing a perspective aligned with digital dualism, where there is a difference between real life and mediated online presences (Jurgenson 2012).

These photographers highlight the importance of considering privacy and security online but in their responses also tend to position themselves as outside of what is customary in society. Specifically, they offer being from older generations as a reason for their rejection of embracing internet technologies. However, Selwyn's (2004) study of older adult internet users suggests that most older adults have a difficult finding internet

technologies useful rather than drawing on societal narratives opposing internet technologies for reasons such as privacy and security like these photographers do. Other previous studies have noted privacy to be a concern among individuals, in general, who resist using different forms of social media (Portwood-Stacer 2013, Woodstock 2014). These responses also reveal that users of social media may view privacy and security as areas of concern that they are willing to accept when they decide to use social media.

*Time Commitment*

A number of photographers acknowledge that they limit their use of certain media or do not use them altogether because they do not have the time to devote to using social media. Kate explains, "I use Twitter somewhat. I think mostly it's a waste of time…" Taylor describes a general mindset against using Facebook that he has observed among fellow conservation photographers:

> A lot of them think it's a waste of time. There is a lot of the older members that say, 'F*** Facebook. I don't have enough time for that.' And I am like, 'Really!? But you have the time to send out cards. You are still sending out card announcements? All that printing! All those stamps! You have time for that but you don't have time for Facebook? Really?' It's just a mindset.

Taylor reengages with the issue of generation in his response. He aligns the particular mindset he describes with older conservation photographers. However, among the larger sample, being older does not automatically preclude the use of technologies. These photographers are making a choice as to what they will spend their time on and Facebook is not something in which they choose to take part. This mindset supports previous findings of media resistance research, which suggests that by labeling Facebook as a

waste of time, they position themselves as individuals who find value in being productive with their time (Portwood-Stacer 2012). Simultaneously, they are also making a comment on what activities they deem worthwhile to them as they perform their roles as conservation photographers.

Dan explains his reluctance to using social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter: "My biggest concern…is obligation of the time in order to maintain your circle of friends, time it requires posting new information, or responding to the information they are posting, I get overwhelmed really quickly, I just kind of avoid it." Dan's comment illustrates the amount of labor that goes into using social media as a conservation photographer. If photographers do decide to take on the role of online micro-celebrities, the digital labor involved is not trivial. This demonstrates the way that information technologies are redefining work processes (Castells 2010) and in the photography industry this may mean taking on more digital labor (Terranova 2000).

**Internet Characteristics and Work Methods**

The characteristics of internet technologies, such as self-promotion, the rapid pace of content, and sharing also challenge conservation photographers who want to use the internet in their work. Photographers face new work-related tasks that were not previously prevalent in conservation photography as well as obstacles to getting paid as a professional photographer.

*Self Promotion*

Social media in particular provides a venue that allows for self-promotion (Marwick 2013). Audiences have the expectation that they can have relationships with public figures through social media, or as Marwick and boyd (2011) call it "a new expectation of intimacy" (p. 157). The work the photographers do to maintain online presences and show the background labor is part of doing business for some conservation photographers but this work also puts them in a position of being digital laborers.

I argue that some photographers use online tools to create a "micro-celebrity persona," drawing on Marwick and boyd's (2011) understanding of celebrity as "an organic and ever-changing performative practice rather than a set of intrinsic characteristics or external labels" (p. 140). Some of these practices include 1) on-going maintenance of a fan base, 2) performative intimacy, 3) authenticity and access and 4) construction of a consumable persona. This is part of the rise of micro-celebrity, or "a mindset and set of practices in which audience is viewed as a fan base; popularity is maintained through ongoing fan management; and self-presentation is carefully constructed to be consumed by others" (Senft 2008: 140). They use online tools to give audiences a backstage look into their work, but they have to balance this with making them the focus versus the conservation issue, which most photographers maintain should garner the attention of audiences rather than the photographers.

A number of photographers reveal their unhappiness about the idea of sharing with users outside of their interpersonal networks. Paul describes his use of social media:

> …social media I use mostly just for connecting with friends. One of the things that has been addressed a few times but never really implemented was to…hire

> people to do social media, because I just don't have the energy…I think that we run into that conflict as conservation-oriented people; I'm not a person who likes to continuously tell everyone what I am doing… for me social media is a bit about that; I'm just simply more of a private person. So if I have to hire someone, it becomes less private for me.

Comments such as these draw attention to issues of privacy as previously discussed, but also the complications photographers face when trying to balance their public and private lives while dealing with the seemingly inherent logics of the internet that encourage them to share more about themselves. Photographers' statements suggest that they feel as though, in a way, they are expected to become micro-celebrities as part of their roles as conservation photographers, a role not all photographers are eager to adopt.

However, other photographers see a benefit to online self-promotion. Conservation photographers often use online promotion to help them create authentic brands (Banet-Weiser 2012), as individual conservation photographers and for the field of conservation photography as a whole. Many conservation photographers embrace the idea of creating online personae and integrate the practice into their work, often using social media to bring people along into the field during the production process. They also often share information about works in progress and assignments in progress. Gabriel explains:

> …It's another way to show actually … your philosophy about why you're doing [conservation photography]. Show people you are doing, you're not just talking about that, you're actually doing it. So I'm going to the Artic to take pictures of the bear because I think it's important. I'm not just saying that, I'm going to do so. It's a way to say you are actually doing what you believe, I think.

Similarly, Richard sees technologies such as camera phones as ways to humanize photographers when they are out in the field:

We now suddenly find ourselves making pictures as we always do with our other cameras. But then [we] screw around with our iPhones taking pictures of each other, taking pictures of our comradery... I have a very funny picture of Clyde Butcher, who …takes pictures of the Everglades Swamps. And he set out his 8x10 on a ladder, and then he tried to step from his boat over onto the ladder because he put the ladder into the swamp and then he put the camera up in the ladder. And his wife was taking pictures with her iPhone, and as he stepped from the boat, the ladder destabilized and he and the camera flipped over in the swamp. And it's [one of] the funniest damn pictures you'll ever see. And it makes for a great story. So now it becomes part of Clyde's social media…general storytelling outreach. And it makes it more human as a photographer. … To go on one of these expeditions with iLCP and to come back with pictures of monkeys, and butterflies, and beautiful flowers is one thing. But then to see the photographer, these famous photographers whose names people have seen in magazines all our lives, whose books they have seen on the shelves of Barnes and Noble... All of a sudden here is Tom Mangelson, with his arm around [another photographer] and they are both drinking beer. And they are laughing hysterically at a joke that has been made by Jack Dykinga. And they are real people. Or [a photographer] falls in the river, or he is chasing a monkey and he goes in the water after him, and Tom photographs [another photographer] doing it. I mean those are things that suddenly become enhancements to the pictures. Frankly I think because it makes the storytelling easier to do. So when we come back … we now have a human interest story as well as an activist portfolio.

Charles points out how social media allows them to show audiences parts of their jobs that were previously hidden, but cautions against making it all about the photographer:

Today one of the other advantages of having the internet available and social media and all that is you can carry people along with you as you're working on something. Whereas before you…hid everything and then you pulled the curtain back at the end and said here it is and that's great, but you may be missing an audience that you can take along with you on that journey and by doing that you get people to care along the way and understand and appreciation… whatever it is you're out there doing. It's not appreciation and understanding about you the photographer; it's appreciation and understanding about the project that you're working on that you think matters, and again you're building a community that's going along with you on that journey and I think that can be a powerful thing too.

The photographers claim that they use the internet as a way to help build community, or engagement around an issue, which is a counter perspective from previous photographers

who viewed the use of the internet and iPhones as contributing to a lack of community. Both sets of photographers value community, but differ in terms of whether they view online technologies as facilitating or limiting interpersonal interactions.

Photographers' responses indicate that the digital economy pushes labor, but not necessarily paid work, to the foreground. In fact, often "the commodity… is only as good as the labor that goes into it" (Terranova 2000: 48). This showcasing of photographers and expeditions through social media can also be tied to the idea of the "experiential life" (Florida 2014) wherein the creative class is viewed as experience driven. But, while the creative class is positioned as individuals who thrive on authentic experiences, it also leads to the commodification of those experiences. It may be that conservation photographers are now expected to share their experiences in the field as part of their final creative content, which then serves as a way to showcase their authenticity as conservation photographers. There is a balance that photographers must find between promoting the photographer and promoting the environmental issue.

*Pace of Content*

The rapid pace of content on the internet is a challenge for photographers. Lucas notes, "I don't like the idea of Facebook as a medium to publish images." He expands:

> I think that Facebook is something that is too…deliberate…I don't know if that's the right word but it's something where it's a very fast medium…and people don't take the time to look at something really, I think. People keep telling me they find real gems on Facebook all the time but if you ask them about two weeks later what this gem was, they couldn't name a single one of them. I mean, that's of course the idea behind this medium, I understand that. But it's not the way that I would like…my images to be seen.

Lucas questions whether Facebook is a good medium for sharing photographs. He highlights the rapid pace that content flows online and is unsure that people actually pay attention to what they see on Facebook. His comment suggests his work should be looked at for a longer period of time than Facebook allows and he hopes the photos may be something that people remember in the future.

*Free Sharing*

The affordances of sharing that the internet offers give some photographers pause when considering whether to share images online. Copyright issues become important when combined with the sharing environment found online. They also influence photographers' use of social media. Maura expands on how she thinks about sharing online:

> It's a challenge…and Facebook's a good example, if their policy says things like…by uploading your images you are surrendering all rights to your image, we can then use it in any way we choose… then it's our choice as photographers whether or not we want to play that game or not…we certainly don't have to use Facebook.

She uses the term 'game' to describe the debate around whether or not she uses social media with her images. In a way, the term game suggests members of creative industries and social network sites may not be on the same side. She does not consider using Facebook to be something that is required from her as a conservation photographer.

Similarly, Lucas points to the number of images online and the general idea of sharing as customary online as reasons he hesitates to put images online. He explains:

> I think maybe we consider the image as…being…undervalued if we put it on Facebook where there are millions of other images out there and where

> everybody…feels like they have a right to use it or to do with it whatever they want and then say they [don't] know about…copyright issues…Maybe we are a bit too precious about our images here … at least what I know from many of my colleagues who say I'm not going to publish this on Facebook because I want to use it in a book that is going to come out in five years. [Laughter] So that's…a very strange attitude…from a business perspective that is complete nonsense.

Lucas highlights the tensions between maintaining monetary value for images they make and the push to share images online. He sees the irony in holding images back from sites like Facebook for a more traditional medium like a photobook that has a very slow turnaround time compared to online publishing.

Bridgett shares her experience with images being shared online without her permission:

> I don't put things on Pinterest. There, again, things are ripped off. You just have to be very careful where you go with a lot of stuff. Right now I can at least keep some semblance of sanity through Facebook but when you start spreading things out too thin you can't track [the images]. I mean I have one signature image of mine and…it was ripped off about 4-5 years ago off of an online web story, which I gave permission for, but it's been ripped off like 5,000 or 10,000 times.

Bridgett uses the terms 'ripped off' to describe the activities she experiences online, indicating that she views the activities akin to stealing. Although she has stopped using Pinterest, she does use Facebook, where she can track the images she posts. Her knowledge of how people engage with material on Pinterest and inability to track photographs cause her to stay away from that site. In this case, her occupational position as a photographer and her need to earn a living from photography, presents an instance of situational non-use (Leavitt 2014). After having negative experiences, she finds it more advantageous to refrain from using certain internet tools as part of her work. Overall, the norm of assuming that online content is open for everyone to use is a challenge for

conservation photographers. This may mean they are selective about what technologies and tools they use to share their images, or it could mean they refrain from sharing all of the images that they have.

**Concerns about Effectiveness**

Hansen (2010) contends that, in the case of constructing environmental problems, the biggest implication of new Internet technologies is “the twin emergence and mass proliferation of sources of information about the environment combined with the concomitant erosion . . . of control over news and information about the environment, environmental problems, environmental damage” (p. 66). Similarly, other scholars warn that numerous competing environmental messages may oversaturate the public sphere and distract people from more serious environmental issues (Boggs 2001).

Photographers also question how effective internet technologies are for their work. Bridgett explains, “There’s some argument as to whether it’s effective or not. Yes, it’s growing, but it’s growing in a very young-based community and I’m not so sure it adds value to what I do.” This suggests that when thinking about whether or not to use internet technologies, photographers are considering the ‘imagined audience’ (Marwick and boyd 2011). The photographers are not sure whether the users they reach using internet technologies are actually the audience they want to reach with their conservation messages. This is because users may not desire to enact the social change that the photographers are seeking. Bridgett questions the value using internet technologies adds

to her work. Kristy expands on the idea of the internet's effectiveness by questioning whether it is the right venue for environmental issues:

> We can bring issues forward, we can do all the social media … crap…that's fine but it doesn't last very long-- it lasts as long as the campaign is there and then the next one comes in-and the next and the next. You know environmental concerns are long-term projects; they don't happen with one little social media event – these are things that you have to change peoples' hearts and minds and it has to be done over the long term. And it takes a lot more than one event. It takes a lifetime of work. And that's something that most people don't have – the concentration power; we've created a whole generation of people with ADHD who don't know how to concentrate for more than a few seconds at a time. …And that's very hard for people…to keep focus on that over a long period of time. …That's the problem…the overabundance of digital devices and the fact that…we're being bombarded by sounds and actions and noise and imagery – a lot of this has to be done with silent thought – creative thinking is done with silent thought – its not done with being bombarded by all kinds of social media crap. I think that it just makes people more jittery and anxious.

Kristy argues that the long-term campaigns she believes environmental issues require do not align with the way people use the internet and the way the designers of internet technologies present users with information. On the topic of environmental issues, scholars assert that issues like environmental disasters or other dramatic environmental events are more likely to get news coverage than slower environmental issues such as degradation processes (Cottle 2013). She and other photographers address the question 'can internet technologies be effective for environmental communication purposes?'

Kristy's perspective aligns with the conservation photographers mentioned earlier who point out the possible negative effects of technology on social relations (Turkle 2012). In addition, she speaks to what scholars have called supersaturation (Couldry 2012, Gitlin 2007). Couldry (2012) considers supersaturation "the unstable, nonequilibrium state when social life is filled with media contents at every level" (p. 5).

Photographers are challenged to keep people's attention in a whirlwind media environment.

## The Luxury of Resistance and Negotiated Use

Whereas scholars and practitioners often view the ability to bypass mainstream media outlets as a benefit of using online technologies (Bennett 2003), some photographers turn to more traditional outlets as a means of rising above the onslaught of online digital content. Leonardo contends: "You have too much information all of the time…too much information, too much photography, too much word, too much listening, too much of everything…and so, we are losing our voice." To overcome this challenge, he explains:

> The best strategy is [to] let the…big voice [do the] calling for you. The big voice for me is *National Geographic*…I let them use my images on the web also and … Instagram and so on. You know, I [have] maybe 20,000 followers but *National Geographic* [has] almost 3 million. So, the big voice.

In his response, Leonardo personifies a corporation, giving *National Geographic* a voice, and notes that as an individual person he is not able to share his information with the voice he would like to but corporations can. He highlights the importance of reaching a large number of people. He does not necessarily think about who the audience is he is reaching through *National Geographic*.

However, for those photographers who try to work with more traditional media outlets, they often have to weigh the costs and benefits of the topic on which they choose to focus, asking themselves if they will be able to sell their work after they spend weeks, months, or years on a particular environmental topic they consider important but may not

be attractive to traditional outlets. Max provides an example of how *National Geographic* still has influence on the particular content on which some photographers focus:

> "Right now, if something was in *National Geographic* in the last 10 years you basically can't do another story on it. So… and then maybe you find a different species that we haven't talked about, connected to that landscape and you talk about it that way."

If an environmental issue was not resolved after it was first promoted in these conventional outlets, it could be harder for conservation photographers to turn audiences' attentions back to the issue through traditional publications that are most interested in distinctive story topics.

Working for more traditional outlets also factors into when material is disseminated. Derek explains that working for magazines influences when he shares certain content on his own:

> Because a lot of my work is done for magazines, I cannot afford to put it out there while I'm shooting it. I only can release them after or a little before, I get published. You tend to hold back things for a while, having to say once you've done it you want to promote the location or event in front of you, in the future. Anything that is new you tend to hold back for a while.

Having to adhere to copyright and usage right permissions associated with many publishers means that conservation photographers cannot disseminate material as quickly as they might like and instead must rely on the timeline of the outlet. The time gap could be detrimental to bringing timely awareness to urgent environmental issues. Responses such as these demonstrate the conflicts the photographers find themselves faced with as they balance their work as photographers who earn a living selling photographs in the new economy (Benkler 2006) and using internet technologies individually to share

conservation messages. Even if they would like to share more, they feel constrained by more traditional models of media distribution.

## Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to examine the media practices of conservation photographers. By considering media resistance as selective by form and as a continuum instead of a binary we gain insight into what influence photographers' use of internet technologies. Rather than a simple use or non-use dichotomy, there is variation in how conservation photographers relate and respond to online technologies, as well as the extent to which they use them. Photographers' relationships to online technologies are influenced by their 1) relationships to traditional media outlets, 2) thoughts on how technology is influencing society, and 3) models of social change. Supporting previous findings about media resistance, conservation photographers highlight concerns about maintaining boundaries between their public and personal lives and a concern about how technology is negatively affecting the quality of social interaction by encouraging the reduction of face-to-face communication (Woodstock 2014).

Photographers draw attention to the occupational challenges associated with using internet technologies in their work in a more participatory, networked information society (Benkler 2006, Jenkins et al. 2013). Supporting the findings of previous studies of professionals in creative industries, such as musicians (Baym 2012), photographers are challenged with concerns about digital labor, presenting mediated online personae, as well as issues surrounding copyright and ownership of their products. Conservation

photographers find themselves faced with changing work processes (Castells 2010), like the encouragement to self promote (Marwick 2013) and the digital labor that goes along with that process (Terranova 2000). Photographers' professional concerns with making a living with their photography helps to explain some of the variation in the internet use among these photographers. In addition, some older photographers fall back on generational explanations when discussing their resistance to using online technologies in their work. However, instead of suggesting online technologies are not relevant to their lives like in past research (Selwyn 2004), these discussions tend to mirror a more critical view of internet technologies on relationships and society (Turkle 2012).

Media and social movement scholars maintain that environmental groups should develop strategies to "leverage the tactical and participatory potential of the Internet" (Lester and Hutchins 2009: 592). This study highlights the complexity behind this recommendation for some groups of social movement participants who use online technologies in various roles. In particular, the study shows the importance of considering occupational identity, or the structure of meanings in which individuals tie to their competencies and motivations with acceptable work roles (Meijers 1988), when examining the relationship between social movement participants and online technologies. Conservation photographers present an important case of individuals who rely on one form of media for their livelihood, which makes the use of other types of media more complex than the average internet user. Conservation photographers must manage the tensions they face online as they balance their roles as professional

photographers, who need income, with a desire to promote conservation messages among the public for social change.

Past research suggests that within the environmental movement, environmental groups tend not to create new models of working with traditional media or creating their own models of media use employing social media and instead maintain the status quo (Lester and Hutchins 2009). This research helps us understand why professional environmental communicators like conservation photographers may not be taking full advantage of new media – for example, while conservation photographers may want to spread photographs using the internet (Castells 2012, Cottle and Lester 2011, Tufekci and Wilson 2012) the day-to-day complexities they face as they strive to make a living from photography as well as be advocates for social change may prevent them from doing so.

Becker (2008) notes that art worlds are always in flux but that fully developed art worlds "provide distribution systems which integrate artists into their society's economy, bringing art works to publics which appreciate them and will pay enough so that the art can proceed" (p. 82). Conservation photographers have found themselves working during a time where the markets and distribution systems of the past are not as viable but new processes have not worked themselves out. It may be that for now traditional media outlets remain dominant as photographers balance earning a living with getting their messages into society in the most effective, efficient ways possible. This has implications for environmental communication and social movement initiatives, as the internet's purported democratic nature may not play out as easily for conservation photographers practically.

Trying to be the loudest voices has been a continuous challenge for social movement participants, who are often those individuals with less social and economic power (Earl 2014). New media may offer less powerful activists new ways to be loud. However, this research demonstrates that from the perspective of conservation photographers, the easiest and best way to be loud, and reach the biggest and more influential audiences, with internet technologies may be to go through more traditional media outlets. The photographers note, this may not be the best for the environmental movement in the long run as it may introduce corporate control over what and when content is distributed. Individuals in the creative class who want to use their professional skills for social change issues, as well as social movement organizations that may work with them, should continue to develop innovative strategies to help facilitate this process.

This chapter highlights numerous avenues that should be further examined to help make sure social movement participants and organizations are working with creative professionals in the best way possible in an ever-changing media environment. These avenues include issues surrounding online identity, sharing, compensation models and working with amateur photographers to promote social change.

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## Chapter Six: Conclusions, Contributions, Implications, and Future Directions

This dissertation examined the process by which conservation photographers do conservation photography, photography that seeks to promote the goals of the conservation movement, in order to obtain a better understanding of the underlying factors that influence their work. In this study I focused on four areas: 1) boundary work associated with performing conservation photography, 2) becoming a conservation photographer, 3) managing activism and journalistic logics in conservation photography, and 4) conservation photographers' relationships to emerging technologies. In doing so, I add to scholarship that examines cultural production processes (Roy 2010, Becker 2008) by studying different parts of the process of conservation photography. I also add to research that considers the role of alternative knowledge producers in creating knowledge used in discussions about environmental politics and policy (Ascher et al. 2010).

Chapter two used the concept of boundaries to examine how conservation photographers define their field. I argue that economic and technological contexts encourage conservation photographers to define themselves in relation to amateur photographers and nature photographers. Conservation photographers invoke three common boundaries as they talk about their experiences as conservation photographers in comparison to amateur and nature photographers. First, conservation photographers contend that they have a strong motivation for their work that hinges on environmental concern. Second, conservation photographers highlight the process of storytelling they use in their work. Finally, conservation photographers note that they actively do

something with the photographs they make, whether it be sharing photographs with organizations, disseminating images online, or presenting photographs to government officials.

Chapter three examined the factors that led participants to become conservation photographers. Environmental concern and perceiving success of conservation photography making some difference in supporting environmental issues are key aspects that lead to entry into this career.  Participants' environmental concern developed from spending time in nature as children and as adults, from their social networks, and from educational experiences. Photographers talked about efficacy in different ways. Photographers are motivated by the satisfaction they get from being successful in supporting conservation efforts in their careers. In addition, photographers find motivation from the fact that other people enjoy their work. They also continue their work because they believe it creates positive outcomes for conservation such as raising awareness and helping to create beneficial policy changes.

Drawing from conservation photographers' boundaries that I outline in chapter two, chapter four studied how photographers position themselves in relation to activism and journalism in their work. Although photographers doing something with the images they make to support conservation efforts and using the process of storytelling are important parts of being conservation photographers, I found that photographers had varying relationships to activism and journalism. More negative understandings of activism encourage some photographers to resist taking on the label of activist. Photographers use various strategies in their work. First, some photographers will align

themselves closer or further from activism depending on the project. Next, photographers suggest that there are different types of activism, or a spectrum of activism on which they place themselves. Finally, photographers will choose projects based on their relationships to activism and journalism. Photographers exemplify that one does not have to identify as an activist to be part of a movement for social change. Journalistic norms also influence conservation photographers. Some photographers draw from traditional understandings of journalism, such as balance and unbiasedness, to develop their stories while others draw on more contemporary understandings of journalism, often relying on science to make their case.

Chapter five examined how conservation photographers relate to emerging technologies using the concept of media resistance. Conservation photographers must manage the tensions developed between their professional roles and roles as advocates in how they approach using online technologies in their work. Internet use varies based on 1) their relationships with traditional media outlets, 2) how they see online technology related to building community, and 3) their strategies for bringing about social change. Photographers associated with traditional media outlets often find constraints to using their photographs but also taut the benefit of reaching larger audiences. Next, photographers have varying perspectives regarding online technologies and community building. Some photographers see online technologies as detrimental to building community while others present them as offering new opportunities for bringing people together. Finally, photographers differ in their social change models, such as sharing activities and engagement with online audiences.

Overall, this research adds to the scholarship that considers the importance of studying how people do culture. Findings demonstrate the importance of studying more than just the pieces of photography, music, or other artwork members of the creative class produce. Examining the entire production process can reveal valuable insights into social organization more generally (Roy 2010, Becker 2008). Specifically, this dissertation contributes to research that focuses on occupational identity and social change as well as photography and community building, storytelling, and gender. In what follows I discuss the major contributions, review the practical implications, consider the limitations of the study, and finally offer ideas for future research.

## Contributions

### *Occupational Identity and Social Change in the Creative Industry*

One major finding that is a core contribution to current literature is the importance of examining occupational identity to social change scholarship. Although past research has studied whether or not being employed influences of individuals' participation in social change activities, this study sheds light onto the intersection between professionals in the creative industry and social change.

Occupational identity influences conservation photographers in a variety of ways. I find that the desire to express authenticity becomes wrapped up in conservation photographers' occupational identities. Photographers strive to create authentic conservation photographer identities. They use traditional understandings of journalism and science to help position the process of conservation photography as an important

source of environmental knowledge. They use boundary work to help construct what an authentic conservation photographer is. In part, the boundaries that mark their occupational identity dictate what activities they take on as they must stay within the confines of the boundaries they associate with conservation photography. The majority of photographers note that it is not enough to have a strong conservation ethic and use the process of storytelling in their photographic work. In addition, they must make use of their photographs in some way to support conservation efforts. However, notions of what that looks like in practice vary among photographers, which allows them to take on activities and projects that align with their own understandings of taking action with their photographs.

Their position in the creative class has meant changes to many aspects of their jobs, including changes in the way photographers traditionally made a living with their work (Jenkins et. al 2013). Their equipment, which once was unavailable to a large number of people because of price, has now become much more affordable and commonplace. Further, many people have access to emerging technologies that allow them to disseminate the photos they take directly to audiences. These changes present conservation photographers with challenges and they work to create boundaries between what they do as photographers and what non-professionals do. Previously, society was more likely to view photographs as validation that something occurred. With the introduction of more photo manipulation software, people do not always assume that photographs are authentic. Further, the definition of what an authentic photograph may be changing. Photographs taken with cell phones by local individuals may be seen as more

authentic than photographs taken by professional photographers using professional equipment. The rise of the visual online has helped encourage this as well. Raw, awkward, imperfect photographs and photographers that make them provide a new kind of authenticity that some photographers gravitate towards and integrate into their personal brand.

Occupational identity also becomes important when it comes to conservation photographers' online activities. As noted earlier, the boundaries they create around conservation photography provide them with the opportunity to disseminate their photos, which includes online methods. However, while online technologies may provide the ease, the speed, and the large audiences that could initially appear to be advantageous to individuals involved in environmental communication, conservation photographers must find a way to monetize their work using a medium that in some ways encourages the free-sharing of information, including their photographs. Although photographers may want to use the internet to share their photographs, the current economic environment the creative class faces may not allow them to do so as they find it economically necessary to work with organizations and traditional media outlets that may ultimately restrict how and when they can share their work. As they try to support social change initiatives, their occupational identities make it difficult for them to benefit from the independence from environmental organizations and traditional media outlets that some scholars maintain the internet promises. Examining this tension found in the process of conservation photography reveals that in some cases traditional power structures maintain their authority within environmental communication.

Generalizations can also be drawn regarding occupational identity and social change overall. For example, the challenge of balancing economic and social change efforts is not unique to the environmental movement or to photographers. Social movements use of visual communication material and the internet is widespread. Professional visual artists are likely to want to work with social movements covering myriad social change topics. Organizers and creative professionals will need to work to develop mutually beneficial relationships as the creative class's economic arrangements continue to transform (Becker 2008). These transformations influence writers, musicians, filmmakers, as well as other types of creative workers (Jenkins et. al 2013, Florida 2012).

*Conservation Photography and Storytelling*

Another core contribution is the importance of stories to the creation of environmental knowledge by conservation photographers, thus adding to narrative scholarship (Polletta 2006). Conservation photographers use storytelling in a variety of ways. First, storytelling becomes a way that conservation photographers differentiate themselves from other photographers. Origin stories provide another way of building a collective understanding of what conservation photographers are and what they do. In their origin stories, they discuss their journeys to becoming conservation photographers. Themes overlap between their origin stories and the boundary work that they perform that helps them define conservation photography. For example, having concern for the environment becomes a part of how photographers became conservation photographers as well as something that helps them stand apart from other photographers. This inclusion

of concern for the environment in origin stories and boundary work that they do provides reinforcement about what it means to be a conservation photographer and how society views them.

Polletta (2006) suggests activists should "push for a redistribution of storytelling authority" (p. 179). Conservation photographers believe the visual narratives they create offer audiences with new perspectives on environmental issues. Conservation photographers provide an example of a group of people that must manage the lack of legitimacy often ascribed to storytellers with the creation of stories that are seen as legitimate sources of environmental knowledge by various, often disparate, audiences. In their work, conservation photographers restrain and expand the voices involved in their storytelling. They use storytelling to reify traditional sources of knowledge, like science, and also bring in voices that otherwise may not be heard, such as local knowledge (Ascher et. al 2010).

The conservation photographers' online activities provide another outlet for storytelling. As they work to create their own authentic conservation photography brands, photographers generate ways of continuing to tell stories using online tools such as blogs, Instagram, and Facebook. They attempt to generate interest before, during, and after the photographic expeditions and although there are also challenges, photographers highlight the benefits of bringing audiences along with them on their expeditions. The online labor they perform creates another opportunity for them to legitimize what they are doing in their work as they create a story about the projects they work on. Photographers can show

online users, organizations, and other stakeholders their commitment to and knowledge of particular environmental concerns.

*Conservation Photography and Community Building*

Most scholars contend that social change almost always involves some form of conflict. Similarly, the conservation photographers' expeditions, in which they attempt to help bring about some form of social change related to conservation, also entail stakeholders with multiple perspectives that do not always align. Conservation photography and the process of conservation photography can be viewed as a form of conflict as they become part of conservations surrounding conservation situations. However, a focus on community building rather than creating conflict is a theme that comes up regularly in discussions of conservation photography. First, in relating to activism, many photographers note their goal of getting people to agree with their understanding, or the understanding of the organization for which they work, of conservation situations. To do this, many conservation photographers push away from a contentious understanding of what activism means.

In addition, they focus on bringing people who might appear to have differing opinions on environmental issues together. In various instances the conservation photographers spoke to the importance of creating a collective understanding among audiences through their photographs. Policy makers and other decision makers are also a key group of people the conservation photographers hope to bring together with a shared view of environmental situations. I find that conservation photographers' ideas regarding

how to best bring community together influence their work. Some photographers are more likely to engage in online activities to bring people together while others prefer to focus on more traditional organizing methods, such as engaging with people in person.

Taken together, the goal of bringing people together and the shying away from conflict provide important insight into conservation photography. Photographers draw from traditional understandings of science and journalism and resist roles that may be too antagonistic. Some photographers present themselves as outside of traditional roles associated with knowledge production. In doing this, photographers may be missing an opportunity to assert themselves as knowledge producers, as people may not know how to place them, or their photographs, within larger discussion about the environment. As Ascher et. al (2010) explain,

> when all knowledge is uncertain…the priority should not be to compare the dependability of knowledge coming from both formal science and other forms of knowledge, but rather to find the best ways to organize the interactions among knowledge generators operating within different paradigms.

Ultimately, the process of conservation photography could also be seen as a "knowledge hybrid" (Ascher et. al 2010: 171) which helps to combine different types of knowledge that can be used in environmental policy debates.

This perception of conservation photography and photography in general may also position them as unassuming actors in social change initiatives which may provide them with more opportunities to be more contentious. Because of how they align themselves with journalism and activism, some photographers are more effective in

certain situations than others depending on the context of the conservation situation. While these photographers are focused on the environmental movement, photographers working towards other areas of social change may find themselves in similar situations. Organizations that are aware of the context of their situation and know they want to take on their opponents using soft resistance or more oppositional resistance can attempt to work with photographers whose activities align with the organizations' strategies.

*Conservation Photography and Gender*

Although not a main area of focus, my research also began to highlight areas where gender plays an important role in conservation photography. Among some of the older generation of female conservation photographers, conservation photography was often not the first career the women had, and instead came after raising children and having a career that gave them the availability and flexibility to care for families. This was not reflected in younger female conservation photographers which may indicate a transformation in the field of conservation photography as women enter the career of conservation photography from the start.

Next, gender played a role in constructing conservation photographers as reliable, legitimate sources of knowledge. Stereotypes of women as emotional and irrational were wedded to understandings of activism, suggesting activists may not be legitimate sources of knowledge. Taking this idea further, conservation photographers who take on more activist orientations in their work could be viewed as less legitimate knowledge producers

than those who do not. Initial findings in the area of gender suggest that examining gender in relation to conservation photography can offer a fruitful area of future research.

**Practical Implications**

The findings of this dissertation offer several practical implications that photographers, organizations, and other stakeholders involved in the environmental movement may benefit from putting into practice. First, organizations can continue to purposefully create more effective spaces and networks in which photographers can work. In making their photographs, photographers note the importance of strategically drawing from specific people and sources that legitimize and authenticate their roles. By ensuring these structures and resources are available to photographers, expeditions may be more successful. In addition, environmental groups and other members of the environmental movement can help position photographers in a way that encourages audiences, policy makers, and other decisions makers to see them as creators of legitimate environmental knowledge.

iLCP and partnering organizations can ask photographers to take part in expeditions in part based on what type of advocacy and activities they are willing to take on. All parties involved with the expeditions should work closely with photographers to articulate their strategies and their goals. They can provide photographers with a clear understanding of their roles and what is expected of them during the expedition. It is clear that photographers differ in regards to the roles they are willing to take on during the expeditions and after the expeditions.

Assuming the visual expedition format is considered to be the ideal way to generate visual environmental material, continued evaluation of expeditions should be included with each expedition. In addition to hopefully reaching their intended (and possibly unintended) goals, generating and documenting positive outcomes will help partnering organizations gain internal support for the use of photography in their work. Further, it will help conservation photographers continue to find motivation to do their work and create their collective conservation photographer identity.

Increased media literacy is also an area that could benefit photographers who wish to communicate about the environment. Although it is clear they make of use photographic media constantly in their work, in an ever-changing technological environment, there is not always time to keep up-to-speed on all of the online tools and technologies. Social media training would allow photographers to better understand what tools can best assist them as well as when they should and should not use certain tools. Additional training about the copyright issues surrounding online tools could also benefit conservation photographers and organizations.

Finally, policies about copyright, fair-use, and piracy of digital material are also relevant to the work of conservation photographers. While wanting to share their images with the largest and most appropriate online audiences possible to spread messages and create positive environmental social change, many also need to make a living from the work that they do. Their challenges, such as those surrounding sharing and ownership of media, can provide policy makers with valuable information about what to consider when creating policies associated with online photography.

## Research Limitations

This project only focused on photographers associated with the iLCP. While they are the group that established the term, they only have one understanding of what conservation photography is. There are other organizations that have emerged that also use the term conservation photography. As time goes on and the field of conservation photography grows, only looking at photographers from iLCP may not provide a complete picture of the field of conservation photography. The sample also may have contained a certain type of iLCP photographer which could have influenced the findings. These photographers travel often and those who responded to my query for an interview may have been more available. They may have been at certain levels of success that are different than those who did not agree or have time to be interviewed.

Because iLCP photographers are located all over the world I was not able to interview the photographers in person, and instead used Skype. This may have led to fewer opportunities to develop rapport. Alternatively, some people may have been more willing to be open because we were not face to face. Although interviews provide valuable insight into the process of conservation photography, the method does have limitations. I had to rely on information that participants remembered and what they said without knowing the veracity of the statements. Participation observation could help provide a different perspective on the process of conservation photography. Participant observation methodology could help further this analysis as researchers would be able to observe if activities during expeditions match up with what conservation photographers say about them.

**Avenues for Future Research**

My research focused on the conservation photographers. This was an important starting point to better understand the dynamics behind doing conservation photography. However, it is also important to look at the entire network that works together on the expeditions to get a more complete understanding of factors influencing the process of creating visual narratives about the environment. This includes iLCP staff, the conservation organizations involved, the local community, and the audiences. Much more work can be done by focusing on the process of conservation photography. Drawing from political process theory, researchers can examine the opportunity structures that align with conservation photography to better understand the factors that influence the conservation photography process. This can be done through content analysis of media associated with the expeditions, interviews, and participant observation.

Social background can also be further examined. As this is an occupation taken on by photographers around the globe, studying this group from a more global perspective would also be fruitful and allow for further comparison between conservation photographers from different areas of the globe who may offer differing perspectives. Continuing along the lines of more traditional research about visual material, research can also analyze the photographs that conservation photographers make. Visual analysis can provide insight into movements' messaging, framing, and narratives themselves. Photographers' social backgrounds and understanding of what conservation photography is may influence the stories they tell about particular environmental issues and therefore influence the construction of environmental issues.

The gendered nature of social movements is important, even for movements that do not focus specifically on gender issues. I hope to engage a gendered analysis of conservation photography in a future study to examine the challenges and opportunities that come from photographers' genders. Initial analysis suggests that gender stereotypes influence how organizations and audiences view photographers and how they view photographers' work.

Imagery plays an important role in social change initiatives more generally, not only in the environmental movement, but also in movements that support other social issues. Future research could also include a comparative study of different types of social movement photographers to examine the similarities and differences between them and how that influences the work that they do. The logics which other kinds of photographers draw from may lead to different framing or narratives for the movements that they would like to support. Using this project as a guide, research could examine the production process of visual material by photographers affiliated with other types of social issues. This can help illuminate the factors that affect how photographers do culture, thus influencing the construction of social problems.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

## iLCP Photographer Interview Guide

How/why did you become a conservation photographer?

Social background (name, location, educational background, occupation and how long)

What is your environmental philosophy? How did it develop? How is it reflected in your work?

How did you become part of the iLCP? Why? What does your participation mean to you?

How does the iLCP relate to the environmental movement? How do you?

Why focus on conservation? Explain environmental vs. cultural conservation?

Do you ever deal with contradictions between your attitudes about the environment & work activities?

### *Expedition Specific*

What factors go into deciding to volunteer for an expedition?

Describe what happens during an expedition.

Describe the roles people in the expedition play. (Before, during, after)

Probe: iLCP staff, partnering organization, staff, photographer, community?

What communication tools does the iLCP create? When/why are each used?

Who's involved in deciding what happens with the communication tools?

How can you tell if an expedition is successful/unsuccessful? Examples?

### *Science/Art/Activism*

Do you identify as a scientist? As an artist? As an activist?

What past training/experience do you have as each.

Which of these identities do you identify with most, and why?

How do you define science? What role does science play in your work?

How do you define art? What role does art play in your work?

How do you define activism? What role does activism play in your work?

What is the relationship between science, art, and activism?

Do you ever deal with contradictions between science, art, and activism?

### *Narratives*

How does iLCP use storytelling? Why storytelling?

Who develops the stories?

What are limitations to storytelling? How have you been able to overcome any challenges?

How do you develop visual narratives?

What makes a successful environmental visual narrative? Example?

How does the medium influence the narrative?

### *Technology*

What makes a successful online environmental visual narrative?

How can you tell if the online portion of the iLCP event is successful?
How is online technology used before/during/after the expedition?
What specific online tools are used? How are they used?
How has technology influenced photographers' abilities to tell stories?
How have advancing technologies influenced your work in general? (mobile devices, internet).

***Specific Expedition***

Why this expedition?
Tell me about the expedition.
What was the goal of the expedition? Audiences?
What was your role in the expedition? Others' roles?
Tell me what happened before/during/after the expedition.
Who's involved in deciding narratives/communication tools?
How did science/art/activism play a role in this expedition? Were there times when there was conflict between science/art/activism during the expedition? Describe. How was it resolved?
What communication tools did the iLCP create? When/why are each used?
What was the role of online technology before/during/after the expedition?
What was the goal of the online portion of the photographic expedition?
Was the expedition successful? Why/why not?
Examination of the photos of the expedition itself (describe what's happening in the photo; science/art).