



Mabel Denzin Gergan is an Assistant Professor in the Asian Studies Department at Vanderbilt University. A geographer by training, her research examines the relationship between the Himalayan borderlands and 'mainland' India through the lens of infrastructure, hazards, Indigenous politics, and education driven migration. More recently, she has collaborated with scholars working on Indigenous politics in British Columbia and the Navajo Nation, focusing on youth activism, infrastructure politics, and decolonial futurity. Born in Sikkim, and raised in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, she has lived and worked both in the Eastern and Western Himalayas.

Indigenous Youth and Decolonial Futures in Dzongu, North Sikkim, and the Navajo Nation

This presentation draws on a collaborative paper on Indigenous environmental activism in Dzongu, Sikkim and the Navajo Nation. Within the Navajo Nation, the largest Indigenous territory in the United States, the decline of its coal industry, a mainstay of its economy has spurred its youth to develop viable alternatives in partnership with national environmental groups. While in Sikkim, a surge in hydropower development has been met with active opposition from Lepcha youth, also in partnership with national and international actors. In analyzing Indigenous activism across these two contexts, this presentation highlights how Indigenous youth are excluded from

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