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3/1/11, Geog696

Moderation Debriefing: Good, bad or 'necessary evil'? Reinterpreting the colonial burning experiments in the savanna landscapes of West Africa

- Purpose of the paper and cherry picking.
 - The purpose of this paper was to critique and reinterpret modern day fire models and strategies as these are based off of colonial science that is flawed or interpreted wrong. Note was also made of how the paper almost seems to be cherry picking. The results and data seemed to be used only to support the predetermined solution. It was almost as if a narrative was created to create only one solution, instead of an analysis of the full phenomena. This may have been because many of the results were pulled in from other articles and papers, and thus we did not see the methods displayed in these. The author may also have been so involved in the project that they could not see the grand scheme of the article and how it would present to people who may have not been exposed to any other literature on this area.
- Structure and “patchiness” of the article.
 - It was noted how the article was somewhat patchy, and the structure was almost backwards. The author seemed to have almost stated the results in the very beginning of the paper, and then proceeds on to prove them. This is contrary to most paper formats as the results are at the end. This caused some confusion when reading this article.
- Colonial science and legacy.
 - We also discussed how it's ironic that the legacy of colonialism pervades even into modern day science of the region. Far after the countries have been liberated they still have colonial policies and other tendencies that still affect their everyday lives. This is a result of the areas using the best science of the time, but this science is still based off of colonial history and thought.
- Discussion and Conclusion
 - As mentioned before it felt as if this paper was a narrative created to cherry pick out the conclusion. This is most evident in the conclusion. As the author brings in multiple articles and separate models to prove his point, he strays from the original methods of the article. This creates a disconnect between the methods and results and the discussion. The reader has no prior knowledge of the other articles, and thus feels as if the author is making unsubstantiated claims. It was mentioned that if the remote sensing part of the article felt

almost tacked on, and could have been done in a separate report. This would have made not only its results stronger but also the synthesis of all the results stronger as well.

- Mention was also made of how different methods were used in the discussion as opposed to what was introduced. This mainly had to do with the use of ecological models and other ecology theory that was largely ignored in the introduction and methods.