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Editorial

Introduction to themed issue: "Green security in protected areas"

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ABSTRACT

This introduction to the themed issue discusses the articulation of protected areas, conservation, and security in issue contributions. Protected areas are presented as localized sites to address global crises, such as anthropogenic climate change and the "war on terror." When they are sites for securitization and militarization, protected areas articulate state and subject formations through violence. As threat discourses have amplified in recent years, communities once deemed putative eco-destroyers have been interpellated as potential threats in wars on drugs and/or terror. The themed issue reveals that reframing environmental crime as organized crime has significant implications for expanding claims of what counts as legitimate use of force in protected areas policing, as well as potential prosecutions. It is apparent that security for one group may hinge on the insecurity of another group at different historical and political moments. In this special issue we challenge conservation actors as well as those critical of conservation to ask: for whom does conservation provide security, under what circumstances, and at what cost?

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1. Protected areas as sites of (in)security

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, globalized fear frameworks have extended to the realm of conservation in protected areas,[1] which are now produced as sites of insecurity ranging from anthropogenic climate change to the "war on terror." Major economic and political powers in the US and Europe increasingly understand climate change as a *global crisis* that can be mitigated in far away places including rural territories in Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia. These imaginative geographies often originate from urban, wealthy Global North communities that posit their viewpoint as universal (Gregory, 2004).[2] In displacing these crises, states in the Global North, NGOs, and para-statal organizations increasingly represent rural protected areas in poor countries as sites of (in)security. These (in)secure protected areas simultaneously afford opportunities and threats: to mitigate deforestation, slow biodiversity loss, provide ecosystem services and restrict terrorist access to valuable resources and nation-state borders. As such, conservation articulates with securitization, the process by which spaces and subjectivities become targets of regulation and surveillance in the name of 'security' (Williams and Massaro, 2013), in turn reproducing unequal economic and racial privileges. By 'green security,' we refer to the overt use of policing and militarization of protected areas' vast territories (land or maritime) in the name of security. Violent performance of protected area management, funded by far-away state agencies, conservation BINGOs, and multilateral organizations, constitutes a thread that weaves together a patchwork of uneven geographies of securitization and militarization stretching across continents.

Particularly when located in international border zones (Westing, 1998; Lunstrum, 2014), protected areas frequently play important roles in national-level projects of territorialized securitization. Border parks prompt discussions of unprecedented environmental threats to national body politics and mobilize political actors to support the exclusion of foreigners (armed or otherwise), the assertion of sovereignty over land and/or sea, and the quelling of insurgencies born in the nation's periphery (Balzacq, 2010; Dwyer et al., 2016; Massé and Lunstrum, 2016; Ybarra, 2016). Transnational protected areas are often created as buffer zones between states, and thus become the liminal zone between governable and ungovernable areas (Ferradás, 2004; Büscher, 2013; Ybarra, 2016). Equally important, they become sites for state authorities to perform their judgments of "governability," allowing them to sanction certain land-uses, occupants, and property regimes while branding others as unruly, dangerous, or

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[1] Following Brockington et al. (2008, 9), we focus on the historical and institutional strain of Western conservation that dominates the field in terms of ideology, practice and resources brought to bear in conservation interventions.

[2] For example, siting REDD+ climate change mitigation in poor countries' protected areas contributes to their interpellation as problem places, while displacing political attentions away from dense, urban areas in rich countries that contribute disproportionately to climate change.

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inappropriate. Dovetailing with the increasingly diffuse military-industrial complex, the securitization of conservation areas in many ways creates new *raisons d'etre* for national militaries in post-Cold War and/or post civil war eras, as it is often policing and military agencies that are incorporated into protected area surveillance and enforcement strategies (Peluso and Vandergeest, 2011; Ybarra, 2012; Lunstrum, 2014; Dwyer et al., 2016).

Building on works that consider the relationship between security and conservation (Peluso, 1993; Peluso and Watts, 2001; Gregory and Pred, 2007, inter alia), authors in this issue emphasize the *political* dimension of political ecology to explain the co-constitution of violence and conservation. Rather than reading violence as coincident to conservation, or a necessary response in defense of nature, contributors analyze securitized conservation practices and rhetoric as strategies of state and subject formations.

This issue offers three key contributions. Below, we first situate the issue in the recent florescence of work building from Fairhead et al.'s (2012) innovative analysis of "green grabbing," particularly in terms of the relationship between neoliberal ideologies and accumulation by dispossession. Then, we examine the implications of twenty-first century conservation's links with securitization (including the "war on drugs" and the "war on terror") and their implications for violence in state formations. Finally, we broaden analyses of environmental subjectivities by considering the effects of changing territorial dynamics and how actors' positionalities shape their understandings of (in)security.

2. Green grabbing and futures dispossessed

Fairhead et al. (2012, 238) define green grabbing as "the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends" in emergent processes of commodification and privatization for capitalist networks. As with the broader land grabbing literature (e.g., Borras et al., 2011), Fairhead et al. think through dispossession in terms of site-specific processes, but their analytical framework privileges neoliberal commodification in structuring dispossession. Their provocative analytic interrogates the implications of new appropriations of nature for contemporary agrarian social relations. Rather than assume the eventual demise of the peasant, the green grabbing literature asks how dispossession restructures rural economies and what the implications are for the futures of dispossessed peasants.[3]

Contributors to this issue tease out empirical links between dispossession and neoliberalism. Authors' approaches also embrace the insights of imaginative geographies to understand how nature imaginaries produce symbolic, structural and physical violences (Gregory, 2004). Rather than assume an neoliberal capitalist imperative, authors enact a lively debate over whether and to what extent conservation, and concomitant security "threats," can be read as a primary cause of violent action. Empirics drive our analyses over theoretical imperatives, suggesting that the articulations of capitalism, conservation, and violence are contingent on historical and political contexts. In Colombia (Bocarejo and Ojeda, 2016) and Honduras (Loperena, 2016), state mandates for promoting ecotourism economies authorize racialized dispossession. In Laos, borderland insecurity helps justify exceptional territorial arrangements, privileging militarized commodity extraction over the creation of "green" commodities like carbon credits (Dwyer et al., 2016). Cases in Africa emphasize the power of perceived national and global security threats over potential economic benefits. For example, Duffy (2016) shows that the primary driver of conservation's securitization is the growing – and false – claim that poachers are also terrorists. It is on this basis, rather than mitigating climate change or promoting tourism, that conservation in sub-Saharan African governments, NGOs, and international organizations wage war with highly advanced technologies including UAVs, camera traps, and gunfire alert sensors. Likewise, Massé and Lunstrum's (2016) analysis of accumulation by securitization finds that the economic rationale for enclosures of land and wildlife are secondary to cross-border security concerns between Mozambique and South Africa.

While non-state actors have always been involved in conservation, these are "more deeply embedded in capitalist networks, and operating across scales" than at previous moments in the history of protected areas (Fairhead et al., 2012, 240). Rather than argue that this tendency constitutes a kind of non-state capitalist conservation, however, papers in this issue posit that militarized conservation is part of a broader phenomenon of violence in practices of state and non-state government. Authors in this issue move beyond the false binary of globalized markets and local biomes to think through the ways that global conservation interventions serve to violently instantiate national territoriality.

3. Beyond the fortress: conservation's violence in the production of state territories

This collection of articles brings together the materialist concerns of rural political ecology with new insights from critical security studies. To a great degree, these works demonstrate the ways that new literature on land grabbing hearkens back to older debates around land tenure security in the wake of international smallholder privatization in the 1980s and 1990s (Bruce and Migot-Adholla, 1994), with a critical lens on the actors who demand security and how they seek to achieve land control (Hall et al., 2011; Peluso and Lund, 2011). Contributors challenge the primacy of the nation-state and the military in their considerations of security by portraying situations where globalized discourses of security rationalize state and non-state collaborations to establish sovereign territorial claims through violence. Duffy (2016) highlights the ways that conservation practitioners and advocates played an important role in producing the *poacher-as-terrorist* imaginary that authorized violent policing in Kenya. Lombard (2016) interrogates how experiences of an *absent* state enable and constrain different groups' claims to territory and resources via violence or the threat of violence in northern Central African Republic.

Academic analyses of security have tended to mirror historical dynamics – realist international relations approaches were prevalent from the beginning of the twentieth century, and then a prominent social constructivist critique emerged from the Copenhagen School (e.g., Buzan, 2007). Realist approaches naturalized the existence of nation-states through emphasis on *national security*, as exemplified by the US approach to Latin America through the National Security Doctrine (Fitch, 1998; Grandin, 2006). Historical productions of protected areas and other territorialized conservation spaces fit neatly within these security frameworks. Indeed, scholars have shown that protected areas, along with military actions and counterinsurgency campaigns, helped colonial and post-colonial nation-states assert control over both territory and populations (Caldwell and Williams, 2012, 7). These state-led conservation strategies also reinforced national economies and industries (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995), even as they disrupted societies through mass violence (Neumann, 1998; Brockington, 2002). While critical geopolitics challenged the primacy of nation-states in security studies during the Cold War, territorialized conservation spaces remained intimately linked with

[3] We use this term to describe peoples whose direct access to farmland is part of their identity and livelihood. Given current debates around dispossession, we recognize that "peasants" may not own the land that is their means of production, nor is farming necessarily their primary income source.

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