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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, con-

servation 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 multi-lateral 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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E-mail addresses: abk@berkeley.edu (A.B. Kelly), mybarra@uw.edu (M. Ybarra).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.

inappropriate. Dovetailing with the increasingly diffuse military-industrial complex, the securitization of conservation areas in many ways creates new *raison d'être* 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 conserva-

tion'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.

nation-state security, and the role of protected areas in acting as buffers to create peace on potentially conflictive nation-state borders increased (Tuathail and Agnew, 1992; Tuathail, 1996; Paasi, 1998; Büscher and Ramutsindela, *in press*).

With the end of the Cold War, Northern and Western national security strategies began to emphasize issues of terrorism, so-called rogue states, environmental security, and public health. Security discourses shifted scales from national security to *global security* on the one hand, and individualized *human security* on the other. All of these concerns were intimately linked with landed territory and natural resources, as well as the environment writ large. For example, Homer-Dixon's (1994) essay on "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict" posited that environmental scarcities could precipitate international conflict, a fear recently echoed in *Tropic of Chaos* (Parenti, 2011). More optimistically, Dalby (2002) called for an imaginary of global security that addresses the ecological foundations of political, social and economic security. While these authors have fundamentally different outlooks, they each call for collective action for conservation in the name of global security.

As with broader geopolitical security discussions, conversations about security in relation to protected areas changed in the 1990s. While the role of protected areas as territorial buffer zones (between nation-states, or as frontiers between governed and ungovernable spaces) was historically implicit in conservation practices, post-Cold War policymakers have begun to explicitly narrate these spaces as contributing to security at national, regional and global levels (Arias and Nations, 1992; Büscher, 2013; Barquet et al., 2014). Further, explicit linkages between environmental issues and global security enabled conservation organizations to frame problems like deforestation and species extinction as global crises, notably through Conservation International's invention of biodiversity hotspots (Myers, 1988; Mittermeier et al., 1998). Likewise, scientific and discursive processes identified anthropogenic climate change as a global crisis, setting further processes of nature enclosure into motion in an "economy of repair" to mitigate environmental harms (Peet et al., 2011; Fairhead et al., 2012).

As the scope of conservation-security changed, so too did the actors involved. Global anxieties over climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource scarcity articulated with the rise of neoliberalism to create the conditions where proponents and managers of protected areas were often not state officials but representatives of the "global community" based in the Global North, especially Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (Chapin, 2004). Indeed, as Corson (2011, 707) shows, "transnational conservation NGOs and private sector organizations are becoming increasingly powerful as they influence and act under the auspices of state power across international, national, regional and occasionally even local scales." These new territorializing actors and actions come with new power, and financial relationships between public and private social groups (Fairhead et al., 2012). These changing configurations of power and territorial authority have meant that the performance of security is increasingly difficult to parse from other governmental practices, whether by state or non-state actors.

Even as concerns over local environments became matters of global security, increased international emphasis on "human security" (e.g., UNDP, 1994) pushed protected area planners to direct their gaze toward human communities in the places they sought to conserve. One key example is the 2003 Dana Declaration at the 5th World Parks Congress in Durban, which called for more inclusive paradigms of protected areas creation and maintenance. As a result, protected area planning eschewed fortress conservation (i.e., "fences and fines" approaches) in favor of conditional inclusivity, "giving" local communities restricted access to the land they live on or near through community-based natural resource man-

agement or co-management projects. As these projects met with limited success and much criticism, some conservation practitioners argued for a revanchist territorial retrenchment (Terborgh, 1999). As Duffy (2016) shows, however, conservation organizations may pose their work as defending nature rather than reverting to fortress conservation, despite obvious moves to do just that.

As authors in this issue show, (re)constructing or militarizing fortresses on the landscape can serve several purposes. Ybarra (2016) and Massé and Lunstrum (2016) demonstrate the ways that violence in the name of conservation is a practice of territorialization that performs sovereignty in borderland regions. These violent conservation practices follow a resurgence of militarized territorial practices meant to establish sovereignty where it is imagined to have not previously existed. The contemporary positioning of fortress conservation areas to defend nature against people who have exercised rights of passage in, or lived in, these areas for centuries harkens back to earlier histories of settler colonialism wherein the nation's security was posited as defense against indigenous peoples as an internal enemy (Banner, 2009). Recognizing these parallels, authors in this issue use the empirical and historical nature of their research to situate claims to new environmental crises and management schemes within longer histories of crises and violences (Lombard, 2016; Dwyer et al., 2016).

4. Environmental subjectivities and competing claims of (in) security

Critically analyzing the meaning of security also helps contributors frame their discussions of securitization in terms of actors' positionalities. Brockington et al. (2008) argue that conservation practice often creates "winners" and "losers." Exploring this concept in detail, case studies in this issue reveal the ways that security for one group often directly causes the insecurity of another group. For example, the common denominator for colonial and post-colonial protected area creation and management was how far-away policy makers' influence on "local" peoples shaped rural communities' vulnerability. Colonial science often began from the assumption that peasants were environmental destroyers, a definition that colonial administrators used to justify their removal or restriction. In a post-colonial development context (as well as many settler colonial contexts), international conservation practitioners and state administrators reframed their territorially-based conservation goals in terms of environmental education. In this context conservation practitioners often framed themselves in a positive relationship with affected communities. Here "community participation" was a tool to teach people how to live in harmony with their land, based on the often incorrect presumption that they were not doing so already, or were incapable of learning themselves (West, 2006; Li, 2007). Many of today's protected areas and territorialized conservation spaces continue to violently dispossess inhabitants of their livelihoods, land, and sacred places in the name of a global security. In this regard, current securitization builds on centuries of violently territorialized conservation. Rather than a failure of community participation, then, our cases suggest that conservation is a modality of unequal power relations.

4.1. Criminalization

Papers in this issue seek to continue long-running conversations about the role of criminalization in conservation as a key theme in political ecology (Thompson, 1975; Peluso, 1993; Neumann, 1998), exploring the material effects of the criminalization of occupation and natural resource use within specific territories on rural communities over time. Papers in this collection also seek to extend these conversations to ask questions about dis-

courses of abandonment and the ways that protected areas are sites of negotiation between state–society relations.

As putative poachers, terrorists, and narcos who invade and destroy the environment, some communities within or adjacent to sites slated for conservation have been turned into trespassers “by the stroke of a pen” (Peluso and Lund, 2011, 674). While the everyday lives of people deemed eco-threats may have stayed the same (Ojeda, 2012), global security strategies have enveloped protected areas in their networks and technologies of surveillance and interventions, thereby transforming the effects of conservation territoriality. For example, while people hunting in parks have long been persecuted, authors have witnessed a significant amplification in threat discourses in recent years (Duffy, 2016; Massé and Lunstrum, 2016). Further, the cases in this issue that focus on Africa and Latin America suggest that the rise in securitization has transformed interpellations of rural communities from putative forest destroyers to broader security threats as potential actors in the “war on drugs” and “war on terror” (Bocarejo and Ojeda, 2016; Duffy, 2016; Massé and Lunstrum, 2016; Ybarra, 2016). Reframing *environmental criminals as organized criminals* has significant implications for legitimate use of force in the field as well as potential prosecutions. While the authors of this issue do not attempt to replace mass criminalization with a mass romanticism of rural peoples, they argue that claims of increased threats must – at the very least – be met with corresponding care in exercising due diligence to respect rural lives and livelihoods on the part of donors, cooperating agencies and state agencies that use increased force. As political ecologists, we must continually question the ways protected areas managers’ framing of environmental subjects may be used to police them, potentially dispossessing them of political claims to territory and livelihoods.

In the face of mass criminalization, issue authors insist that the distinction between eco-guardian and eco-threat articulates with racialized, spatialized, and national constellations of power (Ojeda, 2012; Mollett, 2014; Dwyer et al., 2016; Lombard, 2016). Loperena (2016) and Bocarejo and Ojeda (2016) highlight the role of racialization in authorizing dispossession and other forms of violence. In a few key instances, case studies reveal that environmental enforcers may themselves participate in environmental crimes (Lombard, 2016; Ybarra, 2012). In other cases, claims that poachers are related to organized crime (including drug trafficking organizations) or terrorist groups are unfounded, despite their rapid dissemination (Duffy, 2016; Ybarra, 2016). These extreme cases are suggestive of the impacts of differential enforcement along a broad spectrum, where the lines between the rule of law and corruption, consent and coercion, are often blurred in practice. In response to criminalization, some groups have taken up arms and framed themselves as part of a political rebellion, thus claiming recognition as political subjects beyond the frameworks of environmental security (Lombard, 2016).

Finally, authors’ ethnographic insights offer an against-the-grain understanding of how peoples see themselves in relation to the central nation-state. While some authors in this issue follow the longstanding political ecology tradition of positing local peoples against a repressive state (Bocarejo and Ojeda, 2016; Duffy, 2016; Ybarra, 2016), Lombard challenges this view with ethnographies of peoples living in and near protected areas who call on the state (sometimes using violent means) not to abandon them (see also Kelly, 2014). Each of these case studies demonstrates the ways in which rural residents experience and respond to histories of state repression. Whereas *de jure* rules seem to be written in black and white with clear “winners” and “losers”, *de facto* realities of environmental subjects mean that they often negotiate within shades of gray (Kelly and Gupta, forthcoming). Such considerations will not only help us better understand the role of multiple violences in environmental subject formations, but also point to the

need for adaptive, long-term and worst-case scenarios in protected areas planning. Regardless of their location, all case studies point to the urgent need for political ecologists to take up the question of how global insecurities figure in local landscapes of risk and everyday lives in conservation spaces.

5. Concluding thoughts

As of 2010, 14% of the world’s total land area fell into the category of “protected area” (UNEP-WCMC, 2014).⁴ Projects like REDD+ and international Peace Parks portend to encompass even more land in the coming decades. Although project proponents may proffer claims of increasing global environmental security, we argue that such protestations should not be taken at face value. Instead, we challenge conservationists, planners, managers, and politicians to “rethink security from the bottom-up” (Booth, 2005, 9 cited in Schnurr and Swatuk, 2012, 4). In this special issue we challenge these actors as well as those critical of conservation to ask: for whom does conservation provide security, under what circumstances, and at what cost?

This challenge is particularly important given that major international conservation organizations have already met their proposed goals for establishing protected areas (Brockington et al., 2008). With these goals met, conservation organizations are now focusing on long-term institutionalization and adapting parks management to the task of climate change mitigation. Advances in ecological knowledge and an increasingly small quantity of land left unprotected has led protected area planners to call for new or different types of conservation territories. In some cases, parks once deemed ecologically important are sidelined in favor of places more critical to global concerns over climate change (Kelly, 2014). In other cases, marine protected areas are created, covering vast stretches of the ocean with similarly dire consequences for dispossessed marine resource-dependent communities (De Santo et al., 2011).

Reflecting on the contributions to this special issue, we as editors challenge our readers to consider debates and questions that arise in these articles: Are we seeing a new turn in the linkages between capitalist advancement and protected areas? Is the militarization of protected areas an example of what Massé and Lunstrum (2016) term accumulation by securitization? How is this linked with historical desires to establish national or international authority and control over certain places and people (Ybarra, 2016; Duffy, 2016; Massé and Lunstrum, 2016)? What effect does the militarization of protected areas have on the protection of wildlife within park limits? What effects will new technologies of surveillance have on these outcomes? How do issues of nationalism and racial formations shape who is branded a criminal and who is celebrated as an environmental steward (Bocarejo and Ojeda, 2016)? What are the long-term effects of militarized conservation on local communities and ecologies? How do these securitized conservation spaces open up new negotiations over power, authority, and access? While our authors do not answer all of these questions, they do help us begin to grapple with them. We hope that this issue will be the first in a series of critical advancements in the literature that may deal with these issues more completely.

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This collection includes papers presented in panels on Nature, Property and Violence at the Association of American Geographers

⁴ This is a lower-bound estimate, as the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) only tracks a list of official state activities, thus omitting private initiatives (Brockington et al., 2008).

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