Negotiating the Idea of Peace Parks: 
*From Conservation to Conflict Resolution*

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Irritated policymakers and journalists

• “but what does planting trees have to do with peace?”
  • *The Economist, on Wangaari Maathai’s Nobel Peace Prize 2004*

• To abjure violence, it is necessary to have no experience of it
  • Bruce Bawer quoting Orwell in his article “The Peace Racket.” *L A Times, 9/2007*

• Peace parks sounds quite like a “pie in the sky” idea
  • BBC Interviewer 2007: regarding Siachen case

• Why should we call them “peace parks?” This may offend governments.
  • IUCN officials in Bangkok, 2006
Environmental Security Pathways

- **A**: Fear of depletion → Cooperation → Differentiated Opportunities
  
- **B**: Lack of trust between users → Awareness → Resource axis
  
- **C**: High uncertainty of future benefits → High uncertainty of future benefits
  
- **D**: Distribution of benefits → Governance → Technological Change → Hegemonic Motives → Conflict → Shadow market for loot

**Resource axis** and **Hegemonic Motives** are major factors influencing the **Cooperation** and **Conflict** pathways.
Pathways to eco-cooperation

- *Distributional cooperation over a necessary resource*
- *Cooperation over common aversion of diminished environmental quality*
- *Coordination in crisis as catalyst of lasting cooperation*
Current state of affairs

• 227 trans-boundary protected areas worldwide (list keeps growing):
  – http://www.tbpa.net/

• Yet most of these are not “peace parks” if we define them in terms of:
  a) Instrumentally useful in resolving disputes even if the dispute is “non-environmental”
  b) Sustaining peace between neighboring jurisdictions
Policy Challenges and Solutions

• Endogeniety: perception that conservation is a consequence rather than a constituent of peace-building
  – Solution: Dialectical policy – consider conservation as a trust-building activity in a feed-back loop

• Preexisting local conflicts undermine peace-building by labeling it as cooptation and dispossession
  – Solution: Resolve micro-conflicts beforehand, acknowledge past grievances and make process transparent to local residents

• Conservation agencies are external to security decision apparatus
  – Solution: Make conservation a strategic asset in foreign policy matters with participation of scientists and environmental agency staff in deliberations

• International NGOs that may work in these are are hesitant to interfere in border issues due to fear of denied access or political retribution – or some may follow a confrontation approach that leads to their marginalization
  – Solution: NGOs should play an epistemic role – exchanging knowledge between parties and mediating for community members on all sides
Some next steps

• Prospects for moving towards an international treaty on trans-boundary environmental management

• Cooperative monitoring systems that ensure security concerns need to be developed and made mainstream

• Empirical research on the psychological and strategic efficacy of conservation and conflict resolution