

## SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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**Title: How environmental regulations may lead to conflictual situations?**



This contribution provides a critical reflection about opportunities linked to national parks and environmental protection for conflict resolutions and peace building. If literature mainly focus on positive impacts of shared transnational resources management or national protected areas, reality on the field shows that a poor governance both from national authorities and international funders may lead to population impoverishment and conflict situations.

Indeed, in the case of Burkina Faso, all international and national observers agree in saying that environmental protected areas, and more specifically grievance induced by government agents, are the roots of the country's insecurity threatened by several transnational armed groups. However, if we focus in the case of W. and Arlit international parks, we can see that the situation lies in greed and violence from national government actors, but also due to initial project development bad design as well as poor management of its international partners.

This presentation is based on field research work realised in Burkina Faso between October 2018 and April 2019. Interviews conducted with security actors, international observers, government representatives, European Union representative and populations living in the W. park protected area shows that both national environmental regulation and poor designed international development project lead to creating a fertile breeding ground for conflict.

This case study may be helpful to understand under which conditions international environmental regulations and protected areas can open opportunities for peace-building process, and under which conditions it can make things worse and lead to a conflictual situation. It may also stress the importance of previous political, social and economical studies in the design of this kind of initiatives that often hurt and disturb local social and economical organisations.

Finally, this contribution may fully illustrate challenges to sustainable development in current and post-conflict areas, raise by the Conflict, Security, and Development meeting theme. Furthermore, it can contribute to the current debate on environment and conflict issues as well as the literature on peace-building and development studies.