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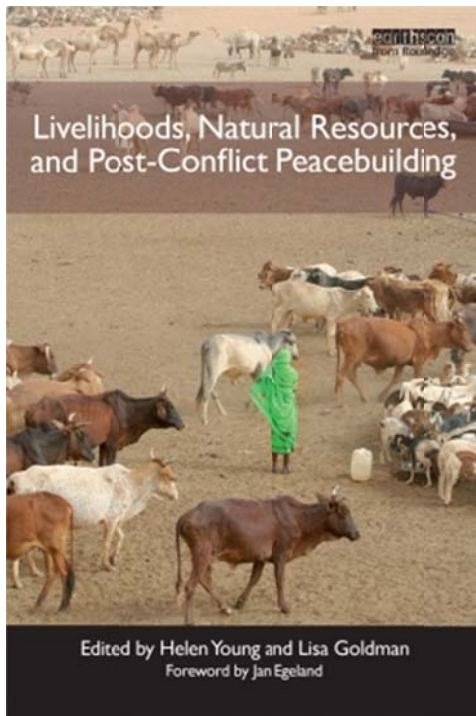
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### **Social Identity, Natural Resources, and Peacebuilding**

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# Social identity, natural resources, and peacebuilding

*Arthur Green*

What do coca growers marching in Colombia, communities struggling over property rights in Timor-Leste, and Somali clans disputing charcoal rents have in common? These diverse struggles are all examples of failures to adequately consider social identity in post-conflict natural resource management (PCNRM). This chapter examines how links between social identity, natural resources, and armed conflicts affect peacebuilding and PCNRM. It outlines ways in which social identities are mobilized in conflicts in which resources have political and cultural values. It argues that, contrary to popular perceptions of ancient identities locked in conflicts, social identities are flexibly constructed and linked to natural resources through both individual actor decisions and elite manipulation of political discourses. In conclusion, it proposes a framework for understanding how links between social identities and natural resources may influence PCNRM and, ultimately, peacebuilding processes.

Natural resources are often affected by armed conflict and implicated in conditions that lengthen or intensify armed conflicts (Le Billon 2007). One of the central challenges of PCNRM is identifying how links between natural resources and conflict dynamics continue to impact natural resource management in post-conflict situations. These links affect the ways in which PCNRM programs can define and distribute rights to access, own, or otherwise use and profit from natural resources. Failure to manage these links may lead to both unsustainable resource extraction and renewed or continued violence. For example, successful sanctions on “blood diamonds” show that understanding how the economic rents of natural resources are linked to armed conflict is not only important for sustainable resource management but sometimes critical for peacebuilding and for disrupting incentives and opportunities to pursue violence (Le Billon 2008).

Many studies have examined how the management of economically valuable natural resources influences the onset and duration of armed conflict and can

## 20 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding

positively or negatively affect peacebuilding (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2004, 2005; Ross 2004; Weinstein 2007). These studies indicate the critical role that natural resource rents can play in rebel recruitment, rebuilding of national economies, and other processes. Yet natural resources are important for more than just their economic value. They can play potent symbolic roles in ethnonational discourses, be deeply embedded in local social relations, and be framed in identity-based claims that serve strategic political interests. Despite ample evidence indicating the central role of social identity in conflicts over everything from territory to oil and coca plants, little attention has been directed toward understanding how the cultural and political values of natural resources must be managed in PCNRM. Indeed, there is no analytical framework for understanding how the construction and mobilization of social identities (or the cultural and political values linked to natural resources) impact PCNRM. As a result, PCNRM strategies may often fail to include practical steps for managing the complex links between natural resources, social identity issues, and conflict.

This chapter's focus on social identity is not intended as a rejection of the importance of research on economic values and resource rents in PCNRM. On the contrary, the construction of social identities during armed conflict often involves economic incentives and opportunities for both elites and ordinary people (Fearon and Laitin 2000; Caselli and Coleman 2006). This chapter attempts to broaden existing analytical lenses to include ways that political, cultural, and economic values interact and ultimately affect the ways that social identities connect to natural resources and influence PCNRM.

There are many competing definitions for the terms used in this chapter. Terms such as *natural resources*, *peacebuilding*, *conflict*, and *social identity* are plagued by conceptual debates.<sup>1</sup> It is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a defense of all the specific concepts used in the chapter. Indeed, future studies should use alternative conceptualizations of these terms in order to examine different theoretical and practical foundations for exploring the nexus of social identity, natural resources, and peacebuilding. Surely, different basic concepts may produce alternative interpretations and conclusions.

The following sections review literature that links social identity and natural resources to armed conflicts, outline four ways that links between social identity and natural resources affect PCNRM and peacebuilding processes, suggest policy options for situations in which social identity concerns are critical to successful PCNRM, and suggest avenues for future research.

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<sup>1</sup> Stathis Kalyvas recognizes that violence, conflict, and war are often confounded in popular and scholarly accounts even though they express concepts that must necessarily be analytically different (Kalyvas 2006). He notes that the literature on armed conflict—and civil war in particular—suffers from lack of conceptual clarity. This lack of clarity is evident with other terms as well. There is also considerable confusion over terminology in the field of conflict studies, with well over a hundred different ways of classifying types of conflict (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2005).

## **SOCIAL IDENTITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN ARMED CONFLICT**

An elaboration of links between social identity, natural resources, and peacebuilding requires first examining theories linking social identity, natural resources, and armed conflict. Examination of PCNRM programs' successes and failures in taking these links into account must consider not only post-conflict situations but also situations in which armed conflicts might have ended sooner, or not relapsed into violence, if such links had been considered.

### **Social identities and armed conflict**

There is well-developed literature on the links between social identities and armed conflict.<sup>2</sup> Much of this literature focuses on ethnicity or ethnic conflict (Nagel 1994; Gurr and Harff 1994; Gurr 2000; Eriksen 2001; Toft 2003); yet ethnicity is only one type of identity. The ways in which different authors and disciplinary approaches define social identity influences how they describe the links between social identity and armed conflict. It is necessary to consider both the broad literature on social identity development and the more narrowly framed work on ethnic conflict to understand how social identities have been linked to armed conflict.

Approaches to social identity can be located on a continuum between two stances: primordialism and constructivism. Primordialist approaches conceptualize social identity as a fixed collection of traits that are genetically inherited (in the strong sense of primordialism) or determined by cultural narratives and social structures (in the weak sense of primordialism). Primordialist approaches are both essentialistic and deterministic in their understanding of identity as a stable aspect of group and individual psychology (Gurr and Harff 1994; Gurr 2000). Samuel Huntington's well-known work on the clash of civilizations is a modern example of how a primordialist perspective frames some conflicts as the inevitable result of irresolvable, ancient prejudices and predicts people's behaviors along lines of historical identity categories (Huntington 1997). On the other hand, constructivist approaches argue that identity is not fixed and recognize the complex ways in which social identity and collective action are simultaneously constructed through social psychological framing, context, and discourse (Bowen 1996; Kaufman, Elliott, and Shmueli 2003). Constructivist approaches look more at contextual factors and actors' decisions concerning overlapping social roles, the framing of discourses, and historical experiences. In other words, constructivist approaches accept the idea that social identity is historically constructed, multi-faceted, and contextually dependent (Gardner 2003). Examples of constructivist

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Huntington (1997); Fearon and Laitin (2000); and Kaufman, Elliott, and Shmueli (2003).

## 22 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding

approaches to identity include Anthony Smith's perennialism (Smith 1998), political opportunity theory (Meyer 2004), social identity theory (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995), and social movement theory (Tilly 2003).

The choice of a primordialist or constructivist viewpoint influences understanding of how social identity relates to natural resources, armed conflict, and peacebuilding. For example, a primordialist would see the link between identity and homeland territories as a fixed relation. Not only would the relation be fixed, but it would determine the types of possible interactions between identity groups with competing claims for the same homeland and would inevitably lead to conflict. On the other hand, a constructivist would argue that violent conflicts are not inevitable but the result of strategic interests and political discourses linking identity to territorial or resource claims. For example, claims by Greece advocating for the return of portions of the southern Balkans to Greece and the flexible links between identities and livelihoods in Darfur show how territory or resource claims are often manipulated or contextually framed as social identity claims (Peckham 2000; Young et al. 2009). These cases move beyond an understanding of identity as a fixed personal attribute to reveal how different contexts bring forth different sorts of identity frames (Gardner 2003). The concept of identity frames illustrates the different ways people understand themselves with respect to others, a specific context, or a specific conflict. Where a primordialist approach envisages inevitable conflict between fixed identities, a constructivist approach encourages a search for ways to reprioritize these flexible identity frames in order to find possible avenues for peacebuilding (for example, deemphasizing some identity claims while creating new identity frames by emphasizing the benefits of shared user rights or pointing to common interests in maintaining resources).

In this chapter, the definition of *social identity* is based on social identity theory—a constructivist approach that emphasizes ways that both structural factors and individual actor decisions play a role in framing and choosing identities (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995). The emphasis of social identity theory is less on how intragroup roles interact and more on how categories (or frames) are formed through intergroup interaction. This approach is useful for moving beyond simply finding identities in conflict to finding out how identities are constructed as categories, interact with each other, and are linked to natural resources in conflicts. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper identify some key conceptual distinctions that need to be made when investigating how types of social identity are constructed (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). First, does social identity refer to relational or categorical modes of identification? Second, does the act of identification come from an external source or through self-identification? Brubaker and Cooper recognize that the divisions between relational and categorical modes of identification, and between externally imposed identification and self-identification, are not always clear but can be analytically useful. For example, identification by positioning in a relational web (such as kinship, friendship, or business ties) may sometimes overlap with identification through categorical attributes (such as race, ethnicity, language, or citizenship), but these represent two very

different modes of identification. Likewise, an externally imposed identity (such as legal citizenship) can be incompatible with self-identification. For example, the Belgian identity cards issued in Rwanda in 1933 rigidly classified residents of Rwanda into ethnic categories of Hutu or Tutsi and denied the mixed heritage and self-identification of many residents. Identification could not allow for anything other than what was specified on the residents' identity cards.

These distinctions can be important for understanding the different phenomena described as social identity in cases involving natural resources and armed conflict. The social identity formed through externally imposed categories (for example, by the colonial state) is analytically different from and plays a different social role than the relational modes of self-identification that are so important in defining incentives in recruitment processes and armed conflict dynamics. Indeed, the social identities discussed in peacebuilding processes commonly involve categorical modes of self-identification and external identification relevant to establishing political negotiation positions or to gaining access to resources or post-conflict aid.

For example, in exploring how economic rents from natural resources are used to recruit soldiers for rebel groups, Jeremy Weinstein examines how young men develop identities tied to rebel groups through relational modes of self-identification (Weinstein 2007). Such dynamics are also evident in places like Darfur, where identities often considered to be ancient labels for ethnic groups or tribes actually have a more fluid and permeable nature in which political alliances, ecology, and livelihood strategies cause individuals or groups to adopt new identities based on context-dependent opportunities (Young et al. 2009). On the other hand, categorical modes of identification are also powerful social organizing tools. For example, the designation of recipients of aid and the timing of aid was affected by ways in which conflict refugees and disaster refugees in post-tsunami Aceh, Indonesia, were categorized by external organizations or through self-identification (Burke and Afnan 2005). Another example of categorical modes of identification can be found in the negotiations leading to the Permanent Court of Arbitration's redrawing of the borders for historical land claims in the Abyei region of Sudan. These negotiations arguably used an understanding of identity based on externally and internally imposed categories that bore little resemblance to the actual historical character of communities and kinship networks in the region.<sup>3</sup>

### **Natural resources and armed conflict**

The literature linking natural resources to armed conflict has mushroomed since the 1990s. As potential sources of plunder or spoils of war, natural resource access and ownership have long been recognized as conditions that sometimes lead to armed conflicts (Galeano 1973; Dyer 1985; Yergin 1991; André and Platteau 1998).

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the Abyei conflict, see Salman (2013).

## 24 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding

The control of natural resources has also long been recognized as critical for financing, recruitment, and military strategy (Dyer 1985; Yergin 1991). Yet since the 1990s, an increasing interest in the ways that competition for control over natural resources might contribute to armed conflict at several social scales has led to rich debates over causal pathways and the links between types of armed conflicts and types of resources (Homer-Dixon 1994; Gleditsch 1998; Le Billon 2001; Peluso and Watts 2001).

Several issues in this field have gained attention in the popular media. One such issue is the resource-scarcity-versus-resource-abundance debate, wherein arguments that resource scarcity triggers armed conflict in several ways have been criticized by authors who point to the way that petroleum and other examples of resource abundance better predict and explain interstate and intrastate armed conflicts (Homer-Dixon 1999; Peluso and Watts 2001). Popular interest in global environmental change and its potentially dramatic impact on human societies has inspired a large body of research and some misguided popular speculation on the potential for future resource wars caused by environmental degradation, scarcity, and migration (Nordås and Gleditsch 2007; Dyer 2008).

One influential model of the links between resources and armed conflict is the greed-and-grievances model (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2004, 2005). The gist of this model is that high-value natural resources provide incentives (for greedy rebel leaders) or opportunities (for rebel groups) that encourage armed conflict and undermine peacebuilding (Aspinall 2007). This model has inspired much theoretical work on how the characteristics of resources affect both rebel group formation and conflict types, and it has driven policy approaches that focus on intervening in resource commodity chains to stop rebel financing and build peace in places such as Liberia and Afghanistan (Ross 2004; Le Billon 2008). But this model has also been criticized by scholars who emphasize that natural resources affect a wider range of economic, political, and cultural factors (Ballentine and Sherman 2003; Ross 2003, 2004; Fearon 2005). For example, an abundance of a high-value resource like petroleum has been shown to destabilize governments by causing macroeconomic instability, to undermine the state's ability to govern dissenting groups, to lead the state to adopt policies that encourage opposition groups to use violence, and to encourage competition over state control when state control becomes equivalent to control of high-value resources (Humphreys 2005). Macartan Humphreys discusses how, in the case of Chad, violent conflict was not maintained through resource rents; rather, alternative revenues were raised in advance to fight for control of the Chadian state and the future oil revenue that would come with control of the state.

While the symbolic value of resources (especially territorial resources) is often recognized as an important factor in conflict escalation, duration, and intractability (Kahler and Walter 2006), popular models like the greed-and-grievances model tend to focus on the economic value of resources as the main causal and limiting factor in the escalation and duration of violence. While the model is useful for understanding many groups engaged in modern conflicts, and

responsible for policy prescriptions that undermine rebel financing and capacity to wage war, it does not do much to explain the escalation and duration of armed conflicts over resources that have little economic value. It is also inadequate for explaining the ways in which armed conflicts over identity resources (such as sacred forests, fishing rights, and homelands) and locally valuable livelihood resources occur and become intractable.

### **Links between social identities, natural resources, and armed conflict**

Cultural or political values associated with land, sacred forests, fisheries, water, and other natural resources play a role in ethnonational discourses, livelihood struggles, and religious narratives, and link to many identity frames. Of course, these links between social identity and natural resources exist outside the realm of armed conflict as well. Rather than reviewing the extensive literature on social identity and natural resources, this section focuses on some ways in which the links of social identities to natural resources influence armed conflict.

Theories of armed conflict often undertheorize the complex links between social identities and natural resources (Ballentine and Sherman 2003; Ross 2003; Aspinall 2007). The relationship between identity and resources involves at least four links to armed conflicts. These links are not isolated, and one or more may be found within any one conflict:

1. Identity claims involving ownership of or privileged access (symbolic or material) to resources can lead to armed conflict.
2. Identity can influence claims of inequitable distribution of resource rents and thus lead to grievances and armed conflict.
3. Identities are used by both elites and ordinary people to mobilize collective action in conflicts over natural resources.
4. Identity framing facilitates conflict over natural resources.

The first link includes identity conflicts over the historic use or symbolic value of resources. For example, narratives that influence the legal alienation of Arab lands in Israel draw from historical claims to the land (Forman and Kedar 2004). The second link is represented in several center-periphery relationships in which rents from high-value natural resources located in peripheral regions are captured by urban elites or states and not equitably distributed to populations in these peripheral regions that often bear the environmental and social costs of resource extraction. In situations in which center or periphery groups can be linked to identity frames (like ethnic groups), identity often becomes one of the primary frames through which claims to equitable distribution are pursued. For example, Mohamed Suliman's study and work by the International Crisis Group on the dynamics of the Nuba and Baggara land conflict in Sudan's South Kordofan state



## 26 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding

indicate how identity has been shaped by center-periphery relations and conflict dynamics (Suliman 1999; International Crisis Group 2008). Munzoul Assal and Suliman argue that the state escalated the conflict and that the conflict itself has heightened the collective sense of a Nuba identity (Assal 2006; Suliman 1999).

Before the onset of violent conflict in the Nuba Mountains, the diverse Nuba people were fully aware only of their clan affiliations. They neither perceived themselves as a Nuba nation nor actively sought to be one. Their relations with their Arab neighbours, the Hawazma and Misiriya, were tolerable. They exchanged goods and services, and intermarriage was an acceptable practice especially among Arabs and Muslim Nuba. At the beginning of the conflict, many Nuba even sided with the government, because they perceived the conflict to be a political discord, rather than an ethnic or economic strife. . . .

Most violent conflicts are over material resources—actual or perceived. However, with the passage of time, ethnic, cultural, and religious affiliations seem to undergo transformation from abstract ideological categories into concrete social forces. In a wider sense, they themselves become contestable material social resources and, hence, possible objects of group strife and violent conflict (Suliman 1999, 219).

The third link is one often presented in Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler's line of research (greed and grievances), wherein greedy political entrepreneurs create or manipulate existing local identities in order to profit from new political and social arrangements or continuing conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 2005). Case studies of Rwanda have sometimes cited the underlying land conflict as a source of tension and indicated the role of political entrepreneurs in using this tension to drive the genocidal conflict (Percival and Homer-Dixon 1996; André and Platteau 1998). Other authors see perceived grievances against a perceived community as one of the main ways in which identity becomes a primary mobilizing frame for conflict. Daniel Robinson's study of the role of natural gas and oil extraction in mobilizing collective identity and legitimizing violence in Aceh, Indonesia, illustrates such a causal chain, from natural resource extraction to political manipulation, identity grievances, and conflict (Robinson 1998).

Examining whether the construction of ethnicity (as a type of identity) raises the likelihood of armed conflict, James Fearon and David Laitin propose three pathways through which identity is constructed: (1) through the logic of cultural discourses, (2) through elites' strategic manipulation of identity categories or relational networks, and (3) through strategic action by ordinary people to maintain specific group boundaries and rights (Fearon and Laitin 2000). Using case studies from Sudan, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Rwanda, and the Balkans, they suggest that in many armed conflicts, so-called ethnic or identity-based violence is actually a mask for strategic actions by elites or ordinary individuals. This seems to indicate that cultural and political values are best understood as ways to mobilize groups during armed conflicts in order to achieve strategic gains in resources or power, which supports the concept of rational economic agency described in the greed-and-grievances model.

The fourth link is subtly different from the third in that it argues that a specific type of identity frame must be present prior to political manipulation and mobilization in armed conflict, rather than assuming that political manipulation can mobilize any identity frame for armed conflict. For example, Edward Aspinall argues that collective grievances and legitimization of violence in Aceh could not have occurred without a specific type of preexisting identity frame:

Rather than seeing natural resource grievances as a source of conflict, or as a catalyst or accelerant for the crystallization of identity, I emphasize that it was the evolving framework of Acehnese identity that provided a prism through which natural resource exploitation was interpreted in grievance terms. Put more bluntly, one might say that without the identity framework there would have been no grievances, at least no politically salient ones. Instead, natural resource exploitation in Aceh may have been viewed as unfair and irritating, but also as banal and unavoidable, as it arguably was in other provinces. In this view, grievances should not be seen as trigger factors, antecedent to the discourses that motivate violence. Grievances are instead integral to the ideological frameworks through which the social world, including notions like “justice” and “fairness,” are constructed and understood (Aspinall 2007, 957).

Despite arguments between scholars prioritizing different causal mechanisms, identity and natural resource conflicts are not mutually exclusive themes in the study of conflict. Natural resources are linked in several ways to social identities in armed conflicts. The ways in which social identities are mobilized in resource conflicts affect how links between social identities and natural resources might positively or negatively affect PCNRM.

## **SOCIAL IDENTITY IN POST-CONFLICT NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Although literature often refers to the role of social groups in PCNRM and peacebuilding, theoretical links are rarely drawn between natural resources, identity, and peacebuilding. Several cases illustrate how failure to consider such links may undermine both theoretical understanding and practical applications of PCNRM and peacebuilding.

One example is the conflict between coca growers and livelihood projects in Colombia (Rojas 2003). In the Apurímac and Ene River Valley in 2002, coca growers (*cocaleros*) rallied against “zero coca” alternative-livelihood projects supported by international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Opposing these international livelihood projects, participants in a peasant rally asserted their cultural right to produce and grow coca by chewing and displaying coca leaves as part of an array of ethnic symbols that included traditional clothing and the Tawantinsuyu (Inca) flag. They rejected externally imposed programs to replace coca cultivation and, soon after, they forced CARE to leave the region, displaying their willingness to forgo foreign aid programs in order to continue engaging in coca production. An obvious question in this case is whether, if coca

## 28 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding

had no economic value, its cultivation would have been so energetically defended as a cultural right. Nonetheless, this example shows how cultural, political, and economic values can become united in an identity-based discourse.

Another example of the failure of PCNRM to consider complicated ways in which social identity issues interlink to natural resources can be drawn from the Acehnese separatist movement in Indonesia. John McCarthy argues that the grievances concerning the Indonesian government's failure to adequately distribute rents from gas and oil reserves in Aceh were not the primary cause of conflict in Aceh. Rather, the state-managed resource exploitation had a demonstration effect that exemplified other grievances and provided a rallying point that encouraged a solidification of the Acehnese identity as an aggrieved and exploited community (McCarthy 2007). He argues that this demonstration effect is one of the primary ways in which institutionalized prejudices that limit economic opportunity intermix with social identity to result in political violence. He identifies other examples of how resource exploitation resulted in identity-based grievances and ethnic violence in the cases of the Ogoni people in the Niger delta region of Nigeria; the separatist war involving the Rio Tinto Panguna mine in Papua New Guinea; and violent conflicts involving the Freeport-McMoRan mining company, the government of Indonesia, and the Free Papua Movement (Organisasi Papua Merdeka) in the Indonesian province of West Papua (formerly West Irian Jaya). While all these situations illustrate the role of natural resources in conflict escalation, they also illustrate the failure to adequately manage resources or reframe resource demands during negotiations that occurred during pauses in the violence. Reframing of demands away from strict ethnonational identity claims on resource rents and toward comanagement, as is now being pursued in Aceh, could have helped transform these armed conflicts into stable post-conflict situations.

Charcoal production in Somalia might also be considered an example of the impacts that a failure to consider identity can have on the success of PCNRM and peacebuilding.<sup>4</sup> Charcoal trade provides income for producers, traders, retailers, and wholesalers in the Somali informal economy. Yet production reduces local wood supplies and has severe ecological impacts on local communities that do not benefit from the trade. These communities often organize themselves by clan to demand their share of profits. However, clan affiliation in Somalia does not reflect simple or essentialist tribal formations; it expresses a complex relational mode of identification that changes according to context and opportunity. According to this case study, some clans resort to violence in order to claim charcoal profits and thus undermine political stability in the region. One approach to this problem is to seek ways for clans to access an equitable amount of profits from charcoal. A more nuanced approach to social identity might identify how clan membership is simply an organizing principle and how efforts to restore environmental

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<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed discussion of charcoal production in Somalia, see Christian Webersik and Alec Crawford, "Commerce in the Chaos: Bananas, Charcoal, Fisheries, and Conflict in Somalia," in this book.

resources or to provide alternative livelihoods to selected geographic areas may be more effective than engaging in identity-based negotiations.

While attention to identity framing and the cultural and political values of natural resources seems essential to PCNRM, there are several reasons why it is under recognized in theory and practice. For example, PCNRM projects necessarily have a time-limited, practical focus that emphasizes economic recovery. This may cause important cultural and political dynamics to be overlooked (Bush and Opp 1999; Paris 2004). Social identity might also be undertheorized in the PCNRM literature because recent theoretical work relies heavily on the greed-and-grievances model of conflict and tends to downplay identity claims based on cultural and political values as simple grievances resulting from political manipulation.

### **Conflicts of interests and conflicts of values**

As mentioned above, taking either a primordial or constructivist approach to social identity can influence the understanding of the role natural resources play in both armed conflict and peacebuilding. While the primordial approach provides a limited understanding of conflict and thus options for peacebuilding, the constructivist approach allows for an examination of whether an armed conflict involving resources is a conflict of interests or a conflict of values, and what the appropriate steps for natural resource management would be in each case.

While the line between a conflict of interests and a conflict of values is fuzzy (Aubert 1963); understanding the distinction between the two types of conflict can guide the selection of appropriate approaches to peacebuilding. It is easiest to explain the distinction through an example. In Cameroon, Nyem-Nyem farmers need access to lowlands for nonirrigated agriculture; Mbororo herders need access to these same areas for seasonal pastures for their cattle (Green 2005). To the extent that access and use of these areas is a conflict of interests, it might be resolved through arrangements that specify the time, space, and scope of usage and access rights. However, if Nyem-Nyem farmers define their ownership of the land by their ability to exclude Mbororo herders from it, then any access or usage rights granted to the Mbororo will be seen by the Nyem-Nyem as infringing on their property rights (Green 2005). This latter scenario is an example of a non-negotiable conflict of values. A conflict of values is thus of a different magnitude than a conflict of interests; it is characteristic of identity conflicts and protracted social conflicts in which negotiation often fails to resolve conflicting political or cultural claims that may not have any underlying economic rationale.

If identities are believed to be primordial, one might expect to encounter nonnegotiable conflicts of values that cannot and will never be resolved. If identities are believed to be socially constructed and dependent on context, one can search for creative solutions even to difficult conflicts of values. Addressing identity concerns, but deemphasizing categorical identities in favor of relational identities, may be a better way to approach resource conflicts than simply dividing resources among identity groups, especially when such divisions are impossible. Solutions

### **30 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding**

that focus on constructed identities might attempt to change the primacy of identity frames, search for a common ground in procedural justice (which is concerned with process) rather than substantive justice (which is concerned with outcomes), or expand the focus of peacebuilding beyond the limits of formal negotiations between belligerent groups to informal mechanisms for building cooperation between interest groups. For example, Joane Nagel argued that the idea that there is a clash of civilizations (conflict of values) in the Middle East based on historical communities obfuscates a real understanding of the historical extent and variations of these communities and the conflicts between them (Nagel 1994). This misperception of a clash of civilizations portrays conflicts of interests as conflicts of values, and it conceals ways in which foundations for meaningful peacebuilding can be laid:

To assert that ethnicity is socially constructed is not to deny the historical basis of ethnic conflict and mobilization. . . . For instance, to argue that the Arab-Israeli conflict is simply historical antagonism, built on centuries of distrust and contention, asserts a certain truth, but it answers no questions about regional or historical variations in the bases or extent of the conflict, or about the processes through which it might be ameliorated. In fact, scholars have asserted that both Israeli and Palestinian ethnic identities are themselves fairly recent constructions, arising out of the geopolitics of World War II and the Cold War . . . (Nagel 1994, 13).

#### **Links between social identity and post-conflict natural resource management**

Social identities affect and are affected by conflict over natural resources in at least four ways that should be taken into account when establishing PCNRM programs. Two of these links are primarily related to conflicts of interests, and two are related to conflicts of values.

1. Resources can be at the center of conflicts between groups that have mobilized according to historic identity frames or in which group affiliations have become defined in reference to the resource conflict (conflict of interests).
2. Social identities can be the main way in which people organize resources in the absence of a centralized territorial authority (conflict of interests).
3. Resources can have such strong cultural or political meaning to identity groups that any limits to their use or ownership would threaten a group's identity (conflict of values).
4. Winning or losing in itself can take on a symbolic significance, even when resource ownership or access is of marginal importance (conflict of values).

The first of these four links occurs in situations in which identity groups are mobilized to fight over a resource that has little symbolic significance. For example, diamonds partially funded armed conflicts in the late 1990s over political

power in Liberia and Sierra Leone and enriched political elites in the process (Le Billon 2008). In this situation, the cultural significance of the diamonds was less important than the control of revenue streams. If an alternative lucrative, lootable resource became available (for example, if there was a sudden price spike for sapphires), there would be little hesitation to abandon diamonds in pursuit of alternative revenue streams. In these cases, eliminating revenue streams (through sanctions or other direct interventions) and providing alternative livelihoods are often the most practical ways to undermine capacities to wage war and thus to initiate peacebuilding. This link is also manifested in other situations where peacebuilding through decentralization of governance (and thus of resource control) can actually exacerbate identity conflict by stirring up “historic grievances concerning intergroup domination and horizontal inequalities” (Diprose and Ukiwo 2008, 26).

The second link involves the ways in which communities manage resources in the absence of, or in resistance to, a centralized legal state order. Jon D. Unruh, for example, examines how the existence of multiple legal and normative orders influences land tenure regimes in post-conflict situations and how these competing orders can be conceived as communities of interest or identity and affect the peace process (Unruh 2003). Unruh’s work illustrates how inadequate understanding of identity groups and their claims to property, inadequate recognition of their need and right to use alternative types of evidence (for example, community testimony rather than statutory titles), and inadequate recognition of their ability to manage resources undermine post-conflict efforts to create and enforce state-administered land administration systems.

For example, in Timor-Leste, centralized land administration is complicated by many overlapping land claims and conflicting practices regarding land management. Indigenous communities throughout the country have claims to communal and private lands, and they define and manage rights in ways different from the state. Timor-Leste has also been exposed to several waves of colonization (Portuguese, Japanese, and Indonesian) that imposed legal systems over and sometimes co-opted or became parts of local customs. Many refugees, absentee land owners, and current residents of Timor-Leste make claims using documents from these different legal systems. Moreover, the country’s legacy of forced internal migrations, the destruction of land administration documents in the 1999 post-referendum period, and the subsequent creation of urban refugee communities have also contributed to the confusion surrounding land claims. In response to this confusion, local communities often established informal agreements regarding land access that drew from previous local customs and sometimes became another layer of confusing claims that state and international officials could not easily penetrate (Fitzpatrick 2002). Several interest or identity groups can be identified either on a relational or categorical basis in this setting: urban and rural refugees, expatriated landholders with Portuguese or Indonesian documents, holders of parish certificates of residence, current residents without paperwork, landholders with rights under traditional custom, and others. PCNRM as it relates to land in Timor-Leste

### 32 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding

has been severely hindered by the political manipulation of elites, confusion over legal frameworks, and conflicting land tenure regimes (Fitzpatrick 2002).

In Timor-Leste, international and national land administration specialists have made considerable efforts to design systems that take into account different types of evidence, provide data in formats that leave boundaries somewhat negotiable, and incorporate just processes for making property claims and negotiating disputes over property. However, the failure of policy and law to adequately recognize different identity groups has frustrated the realization of a clear legal framework for recognizing land and property claims for more than a decade since independence. For example, the 2009 draft land law prioritized statutory claims over all other claims and failed to recognize the importance of communal and informal identity groups' claims to land.<sup>5</sup> Particularly problematic were cases wherein formal title had been issued or deed certified under the Indonesian or Portuguese legal system; the draft land law prioritized these types of paper evidence over local claims based on continued use or adverse possession (the principle under which legal title is awarded to people who occupy or use land for a duration of time during which they do not possess legal title). Recognition of adverse possession can give local communities formal ownership of property they have traditionally managed or used. The draft law impacted both traditional communities and more recent interest groups, such as internally displaced persons who based property claims in urban areas on continued occupation and use of land since independence or since the 2006 violence. These issues led then president José Ramos-Horta to reject the proposed land law in 2012 on the basis of its deleterious impacts on communal groups' property claims. As of 2013, the draft land law is undergoing revisions that incorporate greater recognition of communal title and of adverse possession, yet the draft law illustrates the failure to adequately consider interest and identity group claims and forms of evidence. Indeed, interest group claims often overlap with and develop into identity claims as group identities come to be defined or mobilized around property disputes. While interest and identity groups in Timor-Leste are clearly influenced by the cultural and economic value of land, the land law's recognition (or nonrecognition) of specific interest groups can result in collective mobilization and additional political values being assigned to resources.<sup>6</sup>

The third link involves the symbolic significance of resources. A resource may have conflicting cultural or political significances for different identity groups. Paullina Raento and Cameron J. Watson reveal the way that particular places in the landscape in the Basque region of Europe, like the town of Gernika (Guernica), have not only economic and livelihood value but also serve as focal points for articulation of cultural values and national identities for separatist movements like Basque Homeland and Freedom (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna) (Raento and Watson

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<sup>5</sup> The 2009 draft land law is formally known as the Special Regime for the Determination of Ownership of Immovable Property.

<sup>6</sup> For an analysis of post-conflict land management in Timor-Leste, see Miyazawa (2013).

2000). As evident in Zimbabwe, division of land or provision of alternative land is in some cases unacceptable to groups whose identity is bound to certain places (Moore 2005). Demands by refugees forced to flee during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina to return to their earlier homes reflect both the need for material recovery and the social and psychological value of certain places (Mikelic, Schoen, and Benschop 2005). The settler dilemma in Israel also reflects different identity groups' conflicting values regarding land (Kedar 2003; Forman and Kedar 2004). This link is often involved in conflicts of values, though these conflicts of values are not inevitable or unmanageable once the dynamics driving them are analyzed.

Elite manipulation and internal group dynamics sometimes bring about a sudden increase in the political or cultural value of natural resources or territories. For example, an area surrounding the 1,100-year-old Hindu temple Preah Vihear on the Thai and Cambodian border has been contested since at least the nineteenth century. As French forces left Cambodia in 1954, Thai forces occupied the temple. Violent skirmishes ensued, and Cambodian protest against the Thai presence led to the case being heard in the International Court of Justice, which ruled in 1962 on the legitimacy of territorial claims to the area.<sup>7</sup>

The court focused, not on cultural or historical claims, but on the technicalities of a border demarcation survey conducted by the French in 1907 in order to fulfill boundary settlements made in the Treaty of 13 February 1904 between Siam and Indo-China.<sup>8</sup> Another important criterion for the court was the way Thailand treated the resulting treaty and the Annex I map of the Dânggrêk mountain range, where Preah Vihear is located. Although Thailand never approved the map, its actions in the years between 1907 and 1954 had seemed to respect the placement of Preah Vihear in Cambodia, so in 1962 the International Court of Justice awarded the temple site to Cambodia.

In July 2008, Thai forces once again moved into the area around the temple (Parry 2008). This move seems to have been influenced by tensions between Cambodia and Thailand regarding a controversial Thai political figure, deposed prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Since his election in December 2007, Thai prime minister Samak Sundaravej had been under pressure from protesters who accused his government of connections with Thaksin. There was speculation that the July 2008 invasion and ongoing presence of Thai troops at the temple was the result of these pressures and may have been a military test of the convictions of Samak's government. When Cambodia invited Thaksin to be an economic advisor in late 2009, Thailand withdrew its ambassador to Cambodia. Also in 2009, the Administrative Court of Thailand declared unconstitutional a joint

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<sup>7</sup> International Court of Justice, Case Concerning the Temple of Preah Vihear (Cambodia v. Thailand), Merits, Judgment, 1962, 6.

<sup>8</sup> The formal title of the treaty is the Convention between France and Siam Modifying the Stipulations of the Treaty of 3 October 1893 Concerning the Territories and the Other Agreements. It was signed in Paris on February 13, 1904.



### 34 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding

Thai-Cambodian communiqué supporting Cambodia's bid to list Preah Vihear Temple as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

In the case of Preah Vihear, elite manipulation and internal group dynamics periodically increase the cultural and political value of the temple and its grounds. These cultural and political values were not fixed, but changed according to the way politicians used identity to frame conflict over the temple and used the conflict itself to advance domestic political strategies. In some ways, the ambiguity of sovereign claims over Preah Vihear serves as a strategic political resource for gaining nationalist support in the domestic politics of Thailand and Cambodia. Several periods of violence have been followed by friendly concessions during negotiations (such as allowing visitation without visas or passports and not requiring cultural relics taken from the temple to be returned). Yet the International Court of Justice decision in 1962 and subsequent approaches to the problem have focused on absolutist claims to territorial sovereignty rather than ways in which shared territorial status in the region might end the violence surrounding claims to the land.

Preah Vihear is not only an example of the cultural and political values invested in a contested resource and the role of political manipulation in conflicts of values, it has become an example of the fourth link listed above: Victory now means more to Thai and Cambodian identity than the temple itself. The act of winning or losing this conflict has taken on symbolic value. Victory itself has become a new source of political value, whether or not the resource itself is economically valuable.

In another example of this fourth link, the Permanent Court of Arbitration's redrawing of the border in the Abyei region of Sudan in 2009 took on symbolic significance for the Ngok Dinka that went beyond their material interest in the allocation of the region's rich petroleum fields.

Redrawing the borders of the region, the ruling gives the north uncontested rights to rich oil deposits like the Heglig oil field, which had previously been placed within Abyei.

But the decision leaves at least one oil field in Abyei and gives a symbolic victory to the Ngok Dinka, affirming their claims to the heartland of the fertile region.

"Who controls Abyei has taken on a symbolic importance beyond the traditional tensions over oil," said Colin Thomas-Jensen . . . (Otterman 2009).

The Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling resulted in an unequal division of the oil riches but recognized both the territory's significance to the Ngok Dinka (a type-three link) and the importance of avoiding defeat to both parties (a type-four link).

In addition to the four links just described, the dynamics and identity categories relevant to larger conflicts can often spill over into smaller disputes over resources and into PCNRM projects that do not seem to be related to the central problems of the larger conflict. For example, land administration programs in Aceh from 2005 to 2008 did not adequately recognize separatist identity issues

and how these issues affected the legitimacy of the Indonesian state in the separatist region or the appropriate timing and location of development programs (Green 2013). The shadow of identity conflict can be cast over resources not directly involved in armed conflict. Where existing frames for cooperation and legitimacy do not exist and cannot be created, community participation—especially in land use decisions—may not be forthcoming (Kaufman and Smith 1999).

## **POLICY OPTIONS**

Because the four links described above may occur in any combination in a conflict or post-conflict situation, there can be no single recipe for PCNRM policy. To be effective, policies must recognize that social identity plays a key role in PCNRM, and that it is not inherited but constructed (either categorically or relationally), defined either externally or internally, and results from a framing process. Where a conflict of interests exists between groups, economic incentives can often contribute to peacebuilding; however, conflicts of values are more difficult to address and require either more intense reframing away from conflict identities or strategies for partial recognition. PCNRM policy options are described in more detail in tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Conflict of interests: Policy options for post-conflict natural resource management that consider social identity**

<i>Social identity–natural resource link</i>	<i>Possible policy responses</i>
Natural resources are at the center of conflicts between groups that have mobilized according to historic identity frames or defined themselves in reference to the natural resource conflict.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interrupt capture of high-value resource commodity chains, and provide alternative livelihoods.</li> <li>2. Interrupt relational or categorical modes of identification with narratives from alternative historical periods or interest frames.</li> </ol>
Social identities are the main way in which people organize natural resources in the absence of a centralized territorial authority.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seek state recognition of group property rights.<sup>a</sup></li> <li>2. Implement community-based natural resource management with appropriate legal frameworks.</li> <li>3. Recognize the authority of identity groups or assign authority to them.</li> <li>4. Seek state-led reorganization of property rights, where it is possible to equitably implement such programs in accordance with existing rights and obligations.</li> </ol>

<sup>a</sup> This can be done by advocating for land administration systems and legal frameworks capable of recognizing communal and individual titles and developing social tenure domain models. A social tenure domain model is a type of land administration system that uses alternative representational formats (for example, a point instead of a polygon) to represent property ownership in situations where strictly defined, parcel-based land administration does not correlate to actual (and often informal) rights and responsibilities on the ground. Social tenure domain models represent an effort to develop pro-poor, flexible land administration systems that move beyond the limitations of current concepts of private property (Lemmen 2010).

### 36 Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding

**Table 2. Conflict of values: Policy options for post-conflict natural resource management that consider social identity**

<i>Social identity–natural resource link</i>	<i>Possible policy responses</i>
Natural resources have symbolic cultural or political meaning that may make it impossible for competing identity groups to share them.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disaggregate the demands of groups to see if separate rights, timing, locations, or other variables can be negotiated according to identity group.<sup>a</sup></li><li>2. Reframe identity beyond categorical modes of identification using references to alternative historical periods or interest frames.</li></ol>
Winning or losing takes on a symbolic significance even if the natural resources themselves are of marginal importance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disaggregate the demands of groups to see if separate rights, timing, locations, or other variables can be negotiated according to identity group.<sup>a</sup></li><li>2. Seek agreement on procedural justice standard—for example, referral to the International Court of Justice or Permanent Court of Arbitration.</li><li>3. Reframe identity beyond categorical modes of identification using references to alternative historical periods or interest frames.</li></ol>

<sup>a</sup> This approach may reveal that there is no real conflict of values, or it may at least clarify what the conflict of values is about.

## CONCLUSION

The links between social identity and natural resources in armed conflicts affect the strategies that can be used for PCNRM. There are four key ways in which identities are constructed in reference to armed conflicts involving resources, and four ways in which social identity and natural resources are linked in PCNRM. The four PCNRM links and the policy responses identified in this chapter provide the beginning of an analytical framework for understanding connections between natural resources, social identity, and peacebuilding. Applying this framework may provide insights into ways to manage resources for peacebuilding in situations that have been considered intractable. While current policy responses frequently focus on fixed social identities, permanent territorial boundaries, and ways to equitably divide resources between identity or interest groups, alternative approaches that engage with constructivist understandings of social identity may provide opportunities for creative solutions. These creative solutions might involve reframing identities in order to disrupt incentives to violence, searching for ways to recognize group rights, establishing procedural justice standards for negotiation, or disaggregating group demands into negotiable subsets. Further work in this area might focus on which resources commonly accrue high symbolic value and how these resources can be managed. Further research is also needed to examine how alternative definitions of social identity and different forms of violent conflict at different social and political scales might change the links and thus foundations of the analytical framework identified in this chapter.

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