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Green Militarization: Anti-Poaching Efforts and the Spatial Contours of Kruger National Park

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Building from scholarship charting the complex, often ambivalent, relationship between military activity and the environment, and the more recent critical geographical work on militarization, this article sheds light on a particular meshing of militarization and conservation: *green militarization*. An intensifying yet surprisingly understudied trend around the world, this is the use of military and paramilitary personnel, training, technologies, and partnerships in the pursuit of conservation efforts. I introduce this concept, first, as a call for more sustained scholarly investigation into the militarization of conservation practice. More modestly, the article offers its own contribution to this end by turning to South Africa's Kruger National Park, the world's most concentrated site of commercial rhino poaching. Focusing on the state's multilayered and increasingly lethal militarized response to what is itself a highly militarized practice, I illustrate how the spatial qualities of protected areas matter immensely for the convergence of conservation and militarization and the concrete forms this convergence takes. For Kruger, these include its status as a national park framed by a semiporous international border and its expansive, often dense terrain. Steering clear of spatial determinism, I equally show how spatial contours authorize militarization only once they articulate with particular assumptions and values; for Kruger these amount to political-ecological values regarding the nation-state, its sovereignty, and its natural heritage. The result is an intensifying interlocking of conservation and militarization that frequently produces unforeseen consequences. *Key Words:* *conservation, militarization, sovereignty, violence, wildlife crime/poaching.*

本文以描绘军事行动和环境之间复杂且经常是矛盾的学术研究、以及更晚进有关军事化的批判地理学研究为基础，揭示军事化与保育之间特定的紧密配合：意即绿色（环保）军事化。此般运用军事以及准军事人员、训练、科技和伙伴关系至追求保育的工作中，是世界上正逐渐加剧、但却出乎意料地鲜少被研究的潮流。我首先引介此一概念，用以呼吁对保育实践的军事化进行更持续的学术探讨。本文亦透过关注南非的克鲁格国家公园——这个世界上最集中的商业犀牛盗猎之地，谦逊地对此一目标做出贡献。我透过聚焦南非对于本身便是高度军事化的实践所做出的多层次且逐渐致命的军事化回应，描绘保育地区的空间质量，如何对保育和军事化的聚合、以及此一聚合的具体形式产生巨大的影响。对克鲁格而言，这些包含了其作为以半通透的国界和广阔且密集的地势所构成的国家公园之身份。避开了空间决定论，我将同样展现空间结构，如何仅在其与特定预设和价值接合时授权军事化；对克鲁格而言，这些等同于关乎国族国家、主权及其自然袭产的政治—生态价值，其结果便是保育与军事化之间逐渐加剧的相互扣连，并经常导致不可预知的后果。关键词：保育，军事化，主权，暴力，野生动物犯罪 / 盗猎。

A partir del cuerpo de erudición que delinea lo que a menudo es una relación compleja y ambivalente entre la actividad militar y el medio ambiente, y basándome también en el trabajo geográfico crítico más reciente sobre militarización, en este artículo busco esclarecer un entramado particular de la militarización y la conservación: *la militarización verde*. Lo que se presenta alrededor del mundo como tendencia con creciente intensificación pero sorprendentemente poco estudiada, es aquello que hacen el personal militar y paramilitar en entrenamiento, tecnologías y pactos de colaboración como esfuerzo en favor de la conservación ambiental. Introduzco este concepto, primero, a título de clamor por una investigación académica más sostenida sobre la militarización de la práctica conservacionista. Más modestamente, el artículo ofrece su propia contribución a ese propósito dirigiendo la mirada al Parque Nacional Kruger de Sudáfrica, que es el lugar del mundo en donde se concentra más la caza furtiva comercial de rinocerontes. Enfocándome en la respuesta estatal, variada y crecientemente militarizada y letal, a lo que es en sí misma una práctica altamente militarizada, ilustro cómo las cualidades espaciales de las áreas protegidas importan inmensamente en la convergencia de la conservación y la militarización, lo mismo que las formas concretas adoptadas por esta convergencia. Para el Kruger, en estas formas se incluye su estatus como un parque nacional enmarcado dentro de una frontera internacional semiporosa y su vasto y a menudo montuoso terreno. Mostrándome libre de determinismo espacial, muestro igualmente cómo los contornos espaciales permiten la militarización solo en tanto aquellos se articulan con particulares supuestos y valores; para

el Kruger éstos quedan representados por los valores político-ecológicos en lo que concierne al estado-nación, a su soberanía y heredad natural. El resultado es un entrelazado de militarización y conservación que con frecuencia genera consecuencias impredecibles. *Palabras clave: conservación, militarización, soberanía, violencia, crimen contra lo silvestre/caza furtiva.*

Home to the world's single largest population of rhino, South Africa's flagship Kruger National Park has in recent years become the world's most intense site of commercial rhino poaching. The state has pursued an impressive range of strategies aimed at addressing the problem both nationally and internationally. Within Kruger, however, these amount primarily to a militarized response: In addition to the expansion of the paramilitary ranger force, the Army itself has reentered Kruger to assist rangers with anti-poaching efforts and to guard the international border with Mozambique where many poachers originate (Figure 1). In addition, South African National Parks (SANParks) has recently hired a retired Army Major General to oversee Kruger's anti-poaching operations and has increased air surveillance by means of reconnaissance aircraft, including a remotely operated drone, procured via partnerships with military firms. The mil-

itarization of conservation practice in Kruger, and the subsequent militarization of the park itself, is striking in several respects. It is characterized by multiple layers of militarization, from the ground to the skies, and enabled by a range of actors, including rangers, soldiers, military leaders, and military firms, both public and private. It also emerges from what is essentially an arms race between poachers and anti-poaching forces; as each side becomes more sophisticated and potentially lethal via militarized methods and technologies, the other follows suit to keep up. The resulting state-side militarization in particular has proven lethal, with more than 300 suspected poachers killed over the last five years (Mabunda 2013; Macleod and Valoi 2013).

What is arguably most striking, however, is that the militarization of Kruger is not altogether unique. Rather, it reflects a broader and intensifying pattern of militarization transforming conservation practice around the world. National armies, for instance, have played important roles in instituting conservation measures, often by force, from Guatemala and Colombia, to Nepal and Indonesia, to various countries across Africa, with the protection of Botswana's national parks one of its Defense Force's primary responsibilities (Peluso 1993; Henk 2006; Ojeda 2012; Ybarra 2012; Ethirajan 2013; Piombo 2013). In Cameroon, the Congo, and the Central African Republic (CAR), national soldiers—along with foreign mercenaries and French troops in the CAR—are deployed to fight increasingly militarized elephant poachers (Gettleman 2012; Lombard 2012; Reuters 2012), resulting in a conservation-inflected arms race similar to the one unfolding in Kruger. Furthermore, military aerial technologies have long surveilled protected areas (Peluso 1993), a trend that has amplified recently with the introduction of surveillance drones, emerging from military technology, now hovering above protected areas across Europe, Asia, and Africa (World Wildlife Fund [WWF] 2012; Conservation Drones 2013; Kariuki 2013).

Taken together, these reflect a larger pattern of what I call *green militarization*, or the use of military and paramilitary (military-like) actors, techniques, technologies, and partnerships in the pursuit of conservation. Set against a surprising lack of scholarly



Figure 1. South Africa's Kruger National Park.

investigation that takes as its core focus the militarization of conservation practice, I introduce the concept of green militarization in hopes of generating more sustained scholarly investigations into this process. More modestly, the article offers its own contribution to this end, shedding light on both why green militarization is taking place and how the concrete forms of militarization unfold as they do. I argue, more specifically, that the spatial characteristics of protected areas matter immensely for the convergence of conservation and militarization.

Grounding this in Kruger, I show how its status as a national park framed by a semiporous international border and characterized by expansive, obscure terrain shape the militarization taking place, where and how it unfolds, its impacts, and equally begin to provide its justification. Spatial qualities, to be sure, do not authorize militarization in any objective or geographically determinist way. On the contrary, I show that they do so only once they articulate with particular assumptions and values. For Kruger, these amount to political–ecological values regarding the nation-state, its sovereignty, and resources, particularly values that interpret rhinos as part of the nation’s rich natural heritage and poachers as border-violating decimators of this heritage. The result is a heavily militarized and increasingly dangerous landscape. These arguments bring together and extend the literature on military activity and the environment and the critical geographical literature on militarization. After situating the study within these literatures, I provide an overview of rhino poaching. I then turn to how concrete forms of green militarization are shaped by a protected area’s spatial qualities, examine the values that mesh with these qualities to authorize militarization, and close by returning to my call for a more substantial dialogue on green militarization and offering an initial critique of the process.¹

From Investigations of Military Activity and the Environment to Critical Studies of Militarization within Geography

Some of the earliest and ongoing studies of military activity and the environment have investigated the profound ecological destruction of military activity, especially militarized conflict (see, e.g., Westing 1975). Building from here, Seager (1993) has argued that military activities have left a “chain of militarized environmental destruction that stretches around the world” (14). Such destruction includes official conflict zones

as well as the massive environmental harm caused on and near military bases (Woodward 2004). In addition, weapons testing has created sacrifice zones in which human and nonhuman worlds alike are destroyed (Kuletz 1998; Solnit 1999; J. Davis 2005). Armies also exploit wildlife to fund their efforts, often aimed at destabilizing rebel forces if not other countries (Ellis 1994; Loucks et al. 2009). Taken together, the crux of these studies is that militarized activities, during and beyond times of conflict, profoundly harm the environment, underscoring that the two are indeed antithetical.

More recent studies have shown a more complicated if not ambivalent relation. The creation of military buffer zones, training areas, and “demilitarized” zones have actually led to the protection of biodiversity, albeit mostly unintentionally, usually by excluding other environmentally destructive activities such as commercial development (Thomas 2010; Machlis et al. 2011). We can add military-to-wildlife (M2W) conversions wherein former military bases are converted into wildlife refuges, resulting in paradoxical sites that are at once highly contaminated and rich in biodiversity (Havlick 2011; Krupar 2011). Furthermore, military tactics and practices have been used to “modernize” natural environments to bring them more fully into the purview of the state and its strategic security interests (Lackenbauer and Farish 2007; Peluso and Vandergeest 2011). Although not denying the environmentally destructive impact of military activities, such examples call for a more nuanced understanding of the relation between the two.

Additional nuance can be found in the ways in which conservation practice rests on militarized actors, techniques, and technologies. Several studies touch on this relationship, but very few, if any, take it as their core focus. In light of this, I develop the concept of green militarization to both highlight and incite sustained scholarly discussion of these processes. Building from insights in the literature, we know that those doing conservation work on the ground have long come with military backgrounds, and even today the Army and police are important vocations for recruiting rangers given that military-style discipline and skills are precisely those seen as necessary for effective wildlife policing (Ellis 1994; Carruthers 1995; Neumann 2004; Warchol and Kapla 2012). Military skills and militaries themselves have also been used to forcibly evict populations to create, maintain, or expand protected areas, reflecting one of the core ways conservation rests on the use of violence (Peluso 1993; Gibson 1999; Spence 1999; Neumann 2001; Ojeda 2012; Ybarra 2012).

Conservation has long had deep military roots, but it saw an intensification of militarized practices in the 1980s. Responding to heavily armed elephant and rhino poachers, many African governments provided their rangers with more rigorous militarized training, more lethal weapons, and permission to use more deadly force. In the most extreme cases, including in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and the Congo, this has translated into controversial shoot-on-site or shoot-to-kill policies in which rangers are given permission to shoot suspected poachers rather than arrest them (Bonner 1993; Peluso 1993; Neumann 2004; Duffy 2010; Gettleman 2012). Such practices are enabled in part by powerful discursive constructions. As Neumann (2004) shows, by the 1980s within official and popular conservation rhetoric, wildlife began to be understood as belonging to an expanded moral community, and poachers were denigrated as ruthless and morally lacking. Such assumptions have led to the dangerous view that conservation has become a “just war,” which leads to the normalization of militarized practices like shoot-on-site policies. Conservation-related violence and militarization hence rest on discursive constructions of conservation’s “enemies” (also see Ybarra 2012) as much as militarized weapons and training.

Taken together, these investigations into military activity and the environment show that the relation between the two is not a unilateral one in which the former merely harms the latter. What is more, the tightest fit between the two emerges with green militarization. How might we push beyond this to grasp additional features of green militarization and in so doing further expand the insights of this rich literature? One fruitful path leads to the critical geographical work on militarization.

Much scholarly ink has been spilled in the cross-disciplinary critical study of militarization and militarism. Most scholars share an understanding of militarism as an ideology that privileges military culture and values—including violence as an appropriate response to conflict—and that justifies the expansion of these values and culture into nominally civilian spheres (Enloe 2004; Bernazzoli and Flint 2010; Dowler 2012). Militarization, rather, is a process, one in which society mobilizes for conflict or the “production of violence” (Geyer 1989, 79). Although distinct, the concepts come together in the fact that militarism is often what justifies—indeed what gives life to—militarization (Higate and Henry 2010).

Geographers have begun to enter these debates by examining the intersections between the military and

identity (Woodward 2004; Cowen and Gilbert 2007; Kuus 2009), how elite practices facilitate militarization (Gregory 2006; Hannah 2006), how popular media reinforces military values (Dittmer 2005; Dalby 2008), and resistance to such practices (Woodward 2004; S. Davis 2011; Loyd 2011). Some of the most compelling insights have emerged when geographers examine the militarization of spaces themselves. These include military bases and testing sites (Woodward 2004; J. Davis 2005; S. Davis 2011) along with towns adjacent to military bases (Woodward 2004; Bernazzoli and Flint 2010). In addition, innovative work spearheaded largely by feminist geographers has investigated how military practices and ideologies transform seemingly banal spaces, ranging from the “home front” (Loyd 2011) to storefronts (Dowler 2012) and city streets (Katz 2007). Dowler (2012) hence contends that militarization is “an everyday and malevolent process that lurks in our everyday spaces” (491). Such place-specific studies of militarization, however, are sparse, prompting Bernazzoli and Flint (2009) to call for more grounded studies that examine the specificities of place, looking at “how place contingency impacts the ways in which militarization unfolds” (403).

Reflecting the need for more place-specific studies of militarization in general and of green militarization in particular, I turn to Kruger to investigate how the spatial characteristics of protected areas matter for the meshing of conservation and militarization. Whereas Bernazzoli and Flint (2009) are interested in spatial features defined primarily by their relation to the military and military–civilian distinctions, I am interested in spatial features more broadly. For Kruger, these include its qualities of being an expansive, densely wooded national park framed by an international border. I hence employ the general, even vague, term *spatial qualities* given that it can encompass a whole host of qualities relevant to various sites of militarization, protected areas or otherwise. With Kruger, the term is general enough to include both explicitly territorial qualities, like a (colonially inscribed) international border, and biophysical qualities, including the park’s expansiveness and dense topography. Even these latter qualities, however, should not be mistaken for “natural” qualities. Both are as much political artifacts as the border itself: The park’s expansiveness is a result of the state’s active unpeopling of the land in creating the park (Carruthers 1995); and, related, if human settlement had not been precluded through forced eviction, we likely would see a much less densely forested landscape than we do today (Interview 2012). The space of these geographical qualities

that authorize militarization is hence best understood as the open-ended effect of always context-specific and historically sedimented practices. Furthermore, I illustrate that spatial qualities invite militarization only to the extent that they mesh with particular values and assumptions. This reinforces that militarization is as much a material process as a discursive one (Woodward 2004) that is rooted not only in militarism but, in the case of Kruger, related but not reducible assumptions regarding the nation-state and its resources.

This analysis productively departs from this literature in two additional respects. The emphasis on national parks, especially flagship parks like Kruger, requires us to focus not on banal spaces but rather symbolically charged spectacular spaces. National parks are state-owned and state-regulated spaces that, at least in theory, straddle or bring together state and society or nation, especially as they are asked to embody and protect the nation's equally national and natural heritage, however these might be defined (Carruthers 1995; Spence 1999). Through its formation in the early twentieth century, Kruger became a venue for combative British and Afrikaner factions to set aside differences and work together to build a unified white (supremacist) nation-state. As African inhabitants were forcibly removed, the park became a spectacular site of national "wilderness" and national belonging for the white settler nation (Carruthers 1995). More recently, the park administration has worked to reinvent Kruger as a site of nation building and national belonging for all South Africans (Meskell 2012), one that protects wildlife as the embodiment of the nation's natural heritage. Kruger's status as a symbolically overdetermined, state-owned space of the nation and its heritage, as I show later, constitutes much of the ground on which the state's intensively militarized response is built. The point here is not to dismiss provocative studies of the militarization of banal spaces. Rather, in reading them alongside spectacular spaces like national parks, we begin to better grasp Woodward's (2004) observation that "[m]ilitary geographies are everywhere" (3) and develop a more robust architecture for understanding the ways militarization takes hold of an immense range of seemingly distinct spaces, from the banal to the spectacular.

In addition, highlighting the futility of locating clear distinctions between military and society, war and peace, and violence and nonviolence, Bernazzoli and Flint (2009) argue for a shift away from militarization and toward studies of securitization. This avoids these untenable binaries and related assumptions that there has ever been a pure civil society that was subsequently

militarized and opens our gaze to actors beyond the formal military. Despite these insights, this article defends retaining the concept of militarization. I find the argument for this shift in focus overstated, especially just as the critical study of militarization is beginning to take off and in light of the undeniable global growth of military activity within and beyond formal conflict settings (also see Farish 2013). Militarization, as I employ the concept, does not have to fall back on untenable binaries and, related, can refer to an intensification of (para)military practices, technologies, and actors, rather than a wholly new process.

Overview of Rhino Poaching in Kruger

South Africa's Kruger National Park is the country's, and indeed one of the continent's, most iconic and visited protected areas, one teeming with charismatic megafauna like the rhino (Figure 2). After a successful campaign to reintroduce both white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum*) and black rhinos (*Diceros bicornis*) into the park beginning in the 1960s, South Africa is currently home to 83 percent of Africa's and 73 percent of the world's approximately 28,000 remaining rhino, with well over half of these residing in Kruger (Emslie, Milliken, and Talukdar 2012). Kruger is, in short, the world's single most important site of rhino conservation. After several decades of strong growth rates, by 2008 Kruger's rangers began to notice a drastic spike in rhinos shot and dehorned (Interviews 2009, 2012), with an unprecedented 606 lost in 2013 (Figure 3). Standing behind these numbers is a skyrocketing demand for rhino horn coming from Vietnam and increasingly China, where growing affluence has made



Figure 2. One of Kruger's charismatic megafauna: the rhino. Photo by author, 2004. (Color figure available online.)

Rhino Poaching in South Africa, 2000-2013

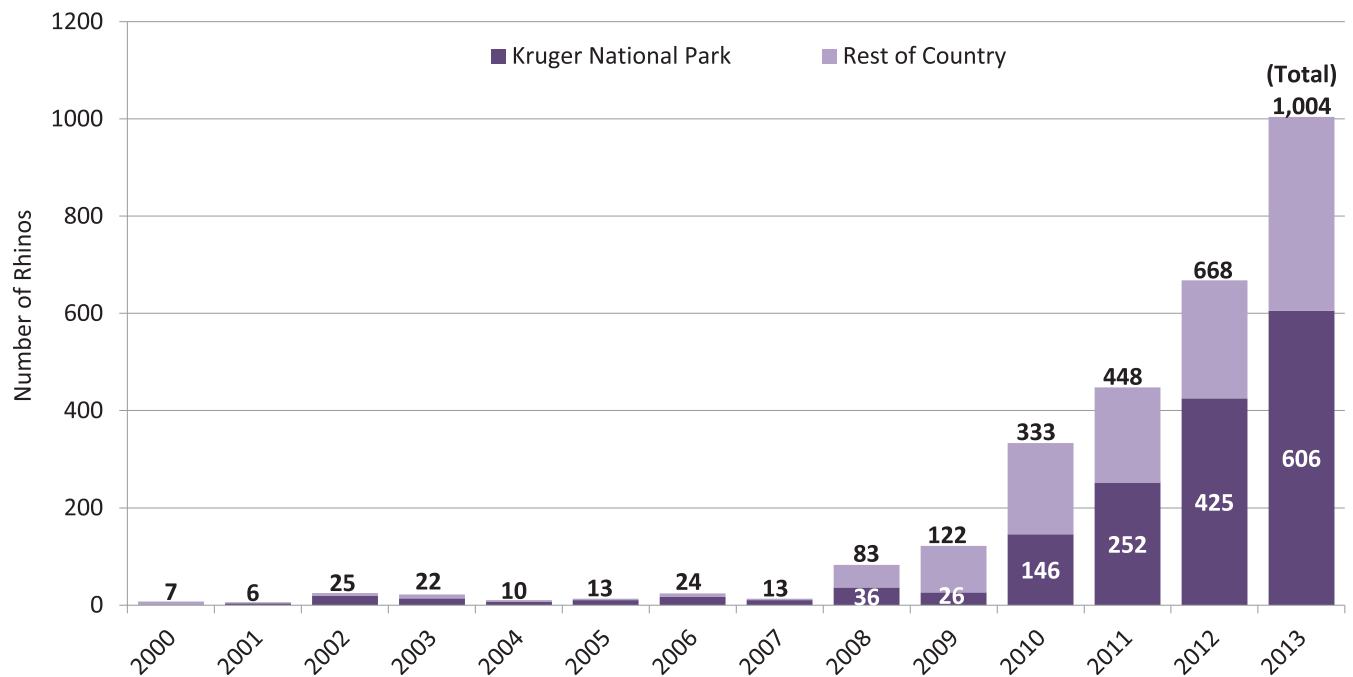


Figure 3. Rhino poaching statistics for South Africa, 2000–2013. *Source:* SANPARKS/South African Department of Environmental Affairs. (Color figure available online.)

the horn available to a larger consumer base despite the illegality of its sale. The horn is valued for its perceived medicinal properties, with critics quick to point out it is made of keratin (the same substance as human fingernails and hair) and that its effects are psychosomatic at best. At US\$65,000/kg on the black market, more than the price of gold and cocaine, rhino horn also stands as a sign of wealth (Interviews 2009, 2012, 2013; Emslie, Milliken, and Talukdar 2012).

Given the potential profit, the trade in rhino horn has been rapidly transformed from a relatively haphazard activity into a highly organized enterprise and transnational commodity chain run by criminal syndicates. These syndicates actively contract men on the supply end to do the poaching, paying between US\$1,000 and US\$9,000 per kilogram, depending on their position within the poaching team (Interviews 2012, 2013). There is no lack of willing participants. There are few other comparable job prospects, and the region is equally characterized by an often uneasy relationship between conservation and surrounding communities due to a long and ongoing history of dispossession (Carruthers 1995; Interviews 2012, 2013; Meskell 2012). Such unease has only intensified with the recent creation of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier

Park (GLTP). This three-country project links Kruger to Zimbabwe's Gonarezhou and Mozambique's Limpopo National Parks and is subsequently displacing from its borders several Mozambican communities, some of which have become important sites for recruiting poachers (Interviews 2012, 2013; Lunstrum 2013).

Rhino poaching has raised profound concerns within and beyond South Africa. Most obviously, there is fear for the future of the species. With predictions of population decline by 2016, poaching could lead to the extinction of South African rhino in the wild, a fate recently met elsewhere by several other rhino species (Interviews 2012; Ferreira, Botha, and Emmett 2012). The iconic rhino has indeed seen better days. Rhino poaching, moreover, threatens "the reputation, eco-tourism industry, and the public image of South Africa" (Department of Environmental Affairs 2010, 4). Reflecting a point commonly surfacing in popular denunciations of rhino poaching, the animals also embody South Africa's rich natural heritage, a point to which I return later. Hence, an attack on the animal becomes an attack on the nation itself, economically, ecologically, and symbolically.

Rhino poaching additionally poses grave threats to those responsible for the animals' protection, including

rangers and soldiers. Poaching teams are highly militarized, arriving well trained and well armed with a variety of weapons, not all intended for rhinos (Interviews 2012, 2013). As a senior ranger explained:

[Poachers have] come in with AK-47s, the well-known AK-47. . . . [W]e know from having spoken to some of the poachers [that] those AK-47s are [there to be used against us]. . . . We arrested one [poacher] with a hand grenade in his possession. You don't poach rhinos with a hand grenade. We've arrested a number of them with pistols. You don't shoot rhinos with pistols. So, yes, there's huge danger involved for our rangers, our field staff. And that is why we go to huge trouble, ongoing [efforts] to train and retrain our staff members in that regard. And we're talking military doctrines, dash down, crawl, observe fire . . . [Recently we] picked up an RPG-7 rocket grenade.² What do you think? You don't poach rhinos with that either. (Interview 2012)

In addition, poaching teams are increasingly aggressive. In the words of a SANParks official responsible for training Kruger's rangers:

They're willing to take a stand; they're willing to fight. . . . We haven't lost a field ranger or a ranger yet. But that will come. (Interview 2012)

In short, rhino poaching threatens far more than rhino populations.

To grasp the state's militarized response to these threats, it is useful first to note that this is but one side of a larger process of military buildup, something alluded to in the longer quote earlier. Poachers and state actors both enter the park willing to engage in deadly force, seen in the increasingly common shootouts between the two. Kruger is in this sense experiencing a *dual militarization*, particularly one leading to a conservation-related arms race: As commercial poachers become better armed and more brazen and sophisticated in their tactics, park rangers and soldiers follow suit, and vice versa. Hence, a violent, intensifying cycle of militarization unfolds, with rhinos, poachers, rangers, and soldiers all caught in the crossfire.

Green Militarization in Kruger

The South African state has responded to rhino poaching with a comprehensive, multipronged approach. This includes partnerships and disciplinary mechanisms with end-user countries in Asia to reduce demand, with the Mozambican government to compel it to strengthen anti-poaching efforts, and with South African communities to prevent their involvement in

the trade. Other efforts involve intelligence gathering, bringing down criminal syndicates, closing syndicate-exploited loopholes in the legal hunting of rhino, instituting extensive jail terms, and exploring the legalization of the trade in rhino horn (Interviews 2009, 2012, 2013; Emslie, Milliken, and Talukdar 2012). Within Kruger, however, the state response amounts primarily to the intensive and multilayered militarization of the park, which is often seen as offering a more immediate response to rhino poaching than many of the approaches previously discussed (Interviews 2013). Contributing to our understanding of green militarization, I draw from this case to show how a protected area's spatial qualities shape and partially justify the concrete forms that militarization takes. For Kruger, these qualities include the park's eastern border and its expansive, often dense terrain.

Kruger as Border Space

Much of the world's protected areas and biodiversity "hotspots" are located in international border zones (Westing 1988). This is not by accident. States tend to locate urban-industrial zones centrally, which often leaves these remote border zones as the only viable spaces for large-scale conservation. Kruger reflects this pattern, with its entire eastern boundary constituting much of the South African-Mozambican border (Figure 1). This very status as a borderland has proven a vexing problem for anti-poaching efforts and a boon for rhino poaching syndicates. More explicitly, the vast majority of men coming to hunt rhino within Kruger are Mozambicans. They are actively sought after by criminal syndicates because they, often unlike their South African counterparts, have honed sophisticated wildlife tracking and hunting skills while growing up in rural environments (Interviews 2012). In addition, many come with useful military skills gained during the Mozambican "civil" war (1977-1992) or during more contemporary military service, including current deployment with the Mozambican Army and Border Patrol (Interviews 2012; Appel 2013). Hence, military training in the use of weaponry and violence is as useful for poaching practice and economies as it is for conservation.

As many poachers originate from Mozambique, they also quickly return there with rhino horn in hand, given that the country offers an ideal escape route. Especially compared to South Africa, Mozambique has extremely lax wildlife legislation that is poorly enforced (Interviews 2012, 2013). In addition, South African rangers and soldiers cannot cross into Mozambique in

hot pursuit of a poacher. As explained by a senior investigator of SANParks' Environmental Crime Investigation (ECI) Unit:

We don't have the mandate [to operate in Mozambique]. And in political terms, [governments] speak in terms of sovereignty of another country. We cannot [engage in hot] pursuit. If we're chasing a poacher to a certain level, and then he goes over the [border] fence, he's in a comfort zone. . . . We have to stop immediately. [Poachers know this and] are taking advantage of [it]. (Interview 2012)

This is made more frustrating by the lack of an extradition treaty between the countries and the fact that criminal syndicates are now using Mozambican ports to ship South African rhino horn to Asia (Interviews 2012; Emslie, Milliken, and Talukdar 2012). Hence, once rhino horn has left South Africa via Mozambique, it is usually gone for good, with poachers and syndicates acting with impunity. Although bilateral talks to address these issues are currently underway, no agreements have yet been reached (Interviews 2013).

In response to this problem of the border, South Africa has deployed several hundred South African National Defence Force (SANDF) troops to patrol Kruger and especially the border, reflecting a much broader global pattern of turning to militaries to institute conservation measures (see earlier). The Army's current deployment in Kruger is in fact part of the much larger Operation Corona, which brings in the military to secure South African land borders en masse. Soldiers deployed in Kruger, in what has been named Operation Rhino, work in conjunction with Kruger's rangers—as Joint Forces—on anti-poaching patrols and active pursuits. Together, they have employed their well-honed military and bush skills to arrest hundreds of suspected commercial poachers and engage in shootouts with others who violently resist arrest. In militarizing the border, Joint Forces hence work not to flatten this spatial barrier but to reinforce it to their advantage. Further consolidating the state's militarized response, retired Army Major General Johan Jooste, a veteran of the South African Border War with Angola (1966–1989), was recently hired to oversee all anti-poaching efforts in Kruger. This includes explicitly militarized responses, including coordinating the work of Joint Forces and intelligence gathering, as well as activities like advising the development of bilateral legislation with Mozambique³ (Interviews 2012, 2013; SANParks 2012b; Department of Defence 2013; Wild 2013).

It is worth highlighting several historical points to further elucidate the militarization of Kruger and of protected areas more generally. First, current military buildup in the park fits within a longer history of militarization. During apartheid, the infamous South African Defense Force (SADF) was centrally involved in thwarting antigovernment activity threatening white minority rule that was coming both from within the country and from neighboring countries like Mozambique. Set against this context, in the 1980s the SADF entered Kruger and militarized the border—via deployments of soldiers, construction of several military bases in the park, and the electrification of stretches of the border fence—to stop the cross-border movement of anti-apartheid activists and Mozambican refugees (Ellis 1994; Interviews 2009, 2012). During this time, park rangers were also transformed from a “colonial era” policing body into a sophisticated paramilitary force to combat commercial elephant poaching (Interview 2012). Although park rangers remained a paramilitarized force, a pattern we see elsewhere in Africa (Neumann 2004; Duffy 2010), the Army eventually retreated from the border, tied in part to the demise of apartheid (and the larger context of the Cold War) and the threats it had effectively created (Interviews 2009, 2012). So although the park has remained paramilitarized, the border has been remilitarized via Operations Corona and Rhino.

Second, as apartheid fell in 1994, the newly created SANDF, which replaced the SADF, faced a crisis of legitimacy: With a “threat” no longer imminent, it was a “military in search of a mission” (Cilliers and Heineken, quoted in Piombo 2013, 267). The SANDF was able to establish its significance in part by returning to national border patrol in 2009 via Operation Corona (Piombo 2013) and more recently by assisting with anti-poaching operations in Kruger. The park has hence enabled the SANDF to fulfill both missions of border patrol and conservation simultaneously, dually reinforcing its relevance. More broadly, this entry of militaries into conservation practice as a means of justifying their continued import is a trend in the interlocking of conservation and militarization we see beyond South Africa (see, e.g., Ybarra 2012).

Kruger as Geographically Expansive, Obscure Terrain

If Kruger's status as a national park adjacent to a porous international border shapes the state's militarized response, so too does the park's expanse and



Figure 4. Kruger's expansive, dense terrain. Photo taken by author, 2012, near the Mozambican border. (Color figure available online.)

topography. At almost 2 million hectares and taking two to three days to cross on foot from east to west, Kruger's landscape is indeed vast. In addition, much of the park, including much of the border, is a heavily forested landscape of mixed woodland and Mopani bushveld that is especially thick with vegetation in the rainy season (Figure 4). Much of the border also includes the undulating and rocky Lebombo Mountains, which makes for "ankle-breaking" patrols. These qualities together leave the park difficult to patrol, enabling rhino poaching teams to slip in and out of the park often undetected (Interviews 2012). Due to budget restrictions, as of mid-2013, Kruger had fewer than 500 rangers, which, due to the park's size, amounts to approximately one ranger per 4,000 hectares. These qualities of expansiveness and obscurity, in fact, frequently characterize conservation areas around the world, making them difficult to patrol under normal conditions, let alone during times of commercial poaching.

The difficulties Kruger's topography poses intensify further as they articulate with something considerably smaller: rhino horn and its particular biophysical properties. Unlike elephant tusks, rhino horn is easy and quick for a skilled poacher to remove, taking only a few minutes. Explained a member of SANParks' ECI Unit, "It's easy to cut off horns if you know where to chop" (Interview 2012; see Figure 5). Unlike ivory, an average rhino horn weighs about 4 kg, so a poacher can easily run with several horns in a backpack, lessening the burden posed by the park's expanse. This has created a severe challenge for anti-poaching teams. With commercial elephant poaching in the 1980s, when rangers heard a shot, they had time to sneak up on poachers

to arrest them. Now, assuming they hear the shot in the first place, Joint Forces must run or get on a helicopter in hopes of arriving before the poaching team has escaped. As the same ECI member explained:

You must get there as soon as possible because otherwise you'll just find a bleeding-nosed dead rhino. And it's difficult to catch up with the person because the moment the horn is off, it's in a bag, and then they just run back home. (Interview 2012)

This advantage is multiplied further if home is Mozambique.

It is precisely Kruger's vast reach and challenging topography—coupled with the speed of rhino horn removal and transport—that have further shaped the militarization of the park. In addition to the redeployment of the Army, SANParks has recently hired an additional 150 rangers, many of whom receive advanced paramilitary training (Interviews 2012, 2013; SANParks 2012c). Although he could not provide much detail due to security concerns, a SANParks official who trains rangers explained this consists of skills needed for smaller deployments that spend extended time in the bush, using it to their advantage, in hopes of apprehending poachers (Interview 2012). Hence, such paramilitary training is aimed at reversing some of the disadvantages posed by the extensive bush.

This expanded ranger force, even backed by the military, is nonetheless limited in how much ground it can cover. The solution is to look upward. SANParks has begun to employ sophisticated surveillance technology in partnership with military firms, both public and private. One (rather secretive) partnership is with the Denel



Figure 5. Kruger's vast and dense terrain articulate with the biophysical properties of rhino horn (quick and easy removal) to confound antipoaching efforts. The clean cut across the nose of the skull in the foreground indicates the rhino was killed for its horn. Photo by author, 2009, at one of Kruger's section ranger headquarters. (Color figure available online.)

Group, a state-owned aerospace and defense conglomerate that has loaned an unmanned aerial vehicle, Seeker 2, a drone, to SANParks to assist its anti-poaching efforts. "Details of the intervention," we are told, "cannot be released for security considerations and other key operational sensitivities" (SANParks and Denel 2012). At a minimum, this "intervention" brings military drone technology into Kruger—technology that can potentially lessen the problems of distance and invisibility posed by the park's expanse and dense topography. In a far more well-publicized partnership, SANParks has received additional military aerial surveillance technology from the Ichikowitz Family Foundation, which is the charitable arm of the Paramount Group, itself the continent's largest privately owned defense and aerospace company. Their donation consists of a Seeker Seabird specialist reconnaissance aircraft equipped with a "FLIR Ball infrared detector [that] will deliver more enhanced and powerful observation capability to [Kruger's] rangers, making it very difficult for poachers to hide" (SANParks 2012a).

These unions with the Paramount Group and Denel highlight the expansion of militarized players and partnerships in conservation practice, with the Paramount Group reflecting SANParks's broader neoliberal commitment to public-private partnerships (Meskell 2012; SANParks 2012a). More than this, these military part-

nerships enable a technologically sophisticated *vertical* militarization, one of the skies, again a response to Kruger's topography. Kruger has hence become intensively militarized at various levels, from the ground, by rangers and soldiers, to the air above. In addition, central to economies of green militarization, entry into conservation generously benefits military firms. It provides an expanded market for military expertise, hardware, and technology and, perhaps more important, enables a form of greenwashing, effectively masking or otherwise detracting attention from military firms' immensely destructive practices elsewhere.

Briefly, the use of such military technologies extends both into the future and beyond Kruger's boundaries. SANParks plans to deploy drone and other aerial technologies to address elephant poaching that will likely soon arrive in Kruger as commercial poaching diminishes elephant populations in countries to the north (Interviews 2012). While this article was entering production, Kruger's rangers discovered the first elephant killed for its ivory in a decade. Furthermore, if state responses to poaching in the past are anything to go by, once the Kruger ranger force became a paramilitary force in the 1980s, it was never demilitarized, suggesting that once conservation practice is militarized, it stays militarized. So if aerial militarization proves useful, we are unlikely to see it put away, nor the underlying

partnerships with military firms severed. This merging of conservation and militarization extends beyond Kruger as well. The Peace Parks Foundation, an influential conservation organization spearheading transboundary protected areas like the GLTP, is working to acquire drone technology to surveil the Mozambican side of the GLTP adjacent to Kruger to assist in halting cross-border rhino poaching (Interview 2013). In a more expansive project, the technology giant Google recently awarded the WWF a US\$5 million grant to procure an undisclosed number of surveillance drones for sites of commercial poaching around the world (WWF 2012). We now see such military technology hovering above the skies in commercial poaching hotspots across Africa and Asia (Conservation Drones 2013; Kariuki 2013). As long as conservation areas pose challenges to policing and regulation—due, for example, to their vastness and dense topography—and as long as their resources embody competing values, such green military technologies are only likely to spread, suggesting further urgency in the study of green militarization.

The Values and Assumptions Authorizing Green Militarization

To stop analysis here, with how spatial qualities shape militarization, would risk falling back on a spatial determinism that naturalizes green militarization and makes this appear as the obvious answer to the problem of commercial poaching. Such an answer is neither obvious nor objective. Put simply, spatial qualities only authorize deployments of militarization—green or otherwise—to the extent that they articulate with particular assumptions and values. The critical militarization literature has convincingly shown that militarization emerges from and is justified by the values and ideology of militarism (Enloe 2004; Higate and Henry 2010). Turning to protected areas forces us to push beyond militarism to focus on distinct yet not disconnected political–ecological values. In the case of Kruger, these are values concerning the territorial nation state, its sovereignty, and its natural resources.

Beginning with the latter, both popular and official discourses of rhino poaching in South Africa frequently frame rhinos not merely as wildlife but as an embodiment of the nation's natural heritage. One of African wildlife's "Big 5" emblazoned on South African currency, rhinos, like the other Big 5, have come to embody the very heritage a national park is entrusted to protect. Such a framing also shapes official discourse of the state's militarized response, productively authorizing it.

For instance, in discussing the Jooste appointment, which further strengthened the state's militarized response, SANParks CEO David Mabunda lamented the unprecedented loss of the country's rhinos, pointing to Jooste's hiring as an encouraging sign: "It is therefore our hope [his hiring will bring] much needed invigoration in [this] fight against the decimation of our natural heritage" (SANParks 2012b). Jooste and various SANDF leaders have similarly commended soldiers and rangers alike for their work not merely in defending rhinos but, in so doing, defending the nation's heritage (Rakoma and Mampa 2013; SAPA 2013). Such discourse has also celebrated, indeed authorized, the turn to military technology and related partnerships. In announcing the aerial surveillance technologies, Mabunda, Denel CEO Riaz Saloojee, and the Paramount Group's Ivor Ichikowitz all deployed this discourse of rhinos as natural heritage (SANParks 2012a; SANParks and Denel 2012). Mabunda and Ichikowitz both upped the ante by reinforcing how military business has an important role to play in protecting rhinos as natural heritage, with Mabunda exclaiming:

The mindless slaughter of rhinos in the wild has called for a multi-pronged strategy. We are actively enlisting and broadening our engagement with the private sector to protect and conserve wildlife. We will find the right solutions and fight this war. . . . We are very happy to announce that the Ichikowitz Family Foundation is contributing to conservation in the Kruger National Park for the benefit of the country's heritage. (SANParks 2012a)

Diverging from Neumann's (2004) observation that elephants are invited into an expanded human community through anti-poaching conservation discourse, rhinos are invited into an expanded national community. This is a national community nurtured and protected within the territorial bounds of a national park, again a symbolically charged spectacular space designed to protect not just wildlife, but this as the nation's heritage. Once reframed as natural heritage—especially one that is sheltered in a state-owned space of the nation over which the state holds a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence—militarization rather effortlessly becomes authorized as an answer to the vexing problem of commercial poaching (again, of the nation's heritage). Hence, although a protected area's spatial qualities might shape militarization, this is only authorized once it meshes with certain values, here ones that interpret rhinos as part of the national community.

If rhinos are read through certain values regarding the nation-state, so too are poachers, especially in the

borderland context of Kruger, as they presumably threaten the sovereign nation-state of South Africa, its territorial integrity, and its borders. We see this articulation in the words of Jooste as he accepted the position of head of Kruger's anti-poaching operations: "It is a fact that South Africa, a sovereign country, is under attack from armed foreign nationals. This should be seen as a declaration of war against South Africa by armed foreign criminals. We are going to take the war to these armed bandits and we aim to win it" (SANParks 2012b). Similarly, reflecting on a 2013 Easter weekend incident, SANParks spokesperson Ike Phaahla explained, "It's a military incursion that we are experiencing. . . . You have people crossing an international border, armed" (Conway-Smith 2013).

Rhino poaching is hence framed not simply as a war, a common rhetoric used in the justification of militarized conservation (Neumann 2004), but as a war in which South Africa is under threat from outside forces, what Jooste frequently describes as an "insurgency war" (see, e.g., Appel 2013; Wild 2013). These outside forces include higher ranking members of criminal syndicates but also Mozambicans as the armed foreign nationals hired to do the poaching on the ground. By framing rhino poaching as an issue of national security in this way, Mozambican poachers are rendered doubly foreign: to Kruger as a national park dedicated to the conservation of wildlife and natural heritage and to South Africa as a sovereign nation-state. Neither citizen nor tourist, they are rather foreign infiltrators.

So the problem, to which the militarization of Kruger and the international border is the solution, is not merely one of poachers killing rhinos. Instead, the problem is one of armed foreign nationals transgressing the international border and violating national sovereignty to decimate South Africa's natural heritage. Not limited to state discourse, anti-poaching civil-society groups increasingly deploy similar rhetoric to demand a stronger militarized response (e.g., Thompson 2013). Such a discursive move hence justifies a war to defend national sovereignty, particularly a national park as a sovereign space that protects valuable national-natural resources. In short, Kruger's status as a borderland national park is read through powerful assumptions regarding the territorial nation-state, the border, parks as sites of national heritage, rhinos as national treasures, and poachers as concurrent violator of all these. This reading ultimately authorizes the militarization of the park, along with the border itself. It subsequently provides a context for greater state violence, leading to the killing of more than 300 Mozambicans and a

smaller number of South Africans suspected of rhino poaching over the past five years (Mabunda 2013; Macleod and Valoi 2013). South Africa does not endorse shoot-on-site policies on the grounds that, unlike its neighbors, it respects human rights (Interviews 2012). Even bracketing off shoot-on-site practices, these numbers lay bare that green militarization and the values authorizing it have proven deadly.

Such rhetorically powerful and demonstrably dangerous reframing of poaching as an issue of national sovereignty and security is not limited to South Africa. In 2012, Hillary Clinton, while U.S. Secretary of State, upgraded wildlife trafficking to a national security threat. She argued that those involved in the trade, worth US\$7 billion to \$10 billion annually, "are undermining our borders and our economies" and promised to fight this through a US\$24 million grant to fund a "global system of regional wildlife enforcement networks" (Clinton 2012). More recently, President Obama established a Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking that similarly frames wildlife as an issue of national security. Task Force membership subsequently includes senior-level representatives from the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security along with National Security Staff (Obama 2013).

This recent reframing of wildlife crime is surely motivated in part by the fact that wildlife trafficking is a global enterprise, but it has long been global. A more telling explanation rests in a generalized border and national security anxiety after 11 September 2001, with militarization and securitization held up as its remedy (Papastergiadis 2010; Gregory 2011). Such unease is leading to the militarized fortification of South Africa's land borders en masse through Operation Corona and of borders on a global scale. This anxiety becomes the lens through which political artifacts like international borders are read and subsequently fortified and through which the related militarization of conservation—framed as an issue of border transgression and national security—begins to make sense. Furthermore, this framing of poaching as an issue of border transgression and national security and specifically of "insurgency" reflects a reawakening of the Cold War rhetoric of insurgency used to justify militarized methods of territorial control in general and specifically in the realm of natural (national) resource management from Africa to Southeast Asia to South America (Peluso and Vandergeest 2011; Ybarra 2012).

Such discourse regarding the violated nation-state in need of military protection is not, however, impermeable. A potential for disruption can interestingly be

found in the words of those who institute the state's militarized anti-poaching response, including rangers and members of the ECI Unit. Diverging from much of the official discourse denigrating poachers, they often hold in high regard the impressive tracking abilities of poachers and are sympathetic to why someone living in poverty would be drawn to poaching (Interviews 2009, 2012). Many also find poaching syndicates particularly ruthless precisely because they exploit potential poachers. These come together in the words of a ranger working in one of the hardest hit sections of Kruger:

[Not all poachers] want to get rich off of this rhino poaching. Some are doing it because they're poor. . . . The person who is organizing, who is bringing the money down to influence that poor person on the ground, he's the main culprit. And if something can be done to explore those rich stinking people that are sending poor people [in harm's way, that would be good. These culprits] have no heart. . . . [They send poor people in who] get killed in the process. And what do they say? Nothing. (Interview 2012)

It would be too strong to say that these rangers and members of the ECI Unit entirely reject the state's militarized approach. They nonetheless offer a more nuanced, sensitive understanding of rhino poachers, treating them not so much as infiltrating decimators of national treasures but rather in a way that underscores their vulnerability and even their loss as part of the larger tragedy.⁴ It is here that the discourse underlying the green militarization of Kruger potentially begins to unravel. Hence it is here where we can begin to launch a preliminary critique of such practices, not in terms of their consequences but in terms of the very logic on which green militarization comes to be seen as the obvious answer to rhino poaching.

Conclusion: Toward New Lines of Inquiry and Critique

The state's militarized response to rhino poaching in Kruger shows in no uncertain terms the militarization of conservation practice and of a conservation space itself. Such green militarization is not entirely new, but we are witnessing its intensification in terms of more sophisticated militarized and military actors, partnerships, techniques, and technologies, a trend we see in commercial poaching hotspots within and beyond Africa. Speaking back to broader scholarly concerns, the spatial contours of a place matter as they influence the types of militarization deployed. Yet these qualities by

themselves have little if any causal power; it is only when they dovetail with certain assumptions, here regarding the nation-state, that militarization is justified and indeed authorized.

My broader goal has been to introduce the concept of green militarization to invite a more sustained, wide-ranging investigation into the militarization of conservation practice. At a minimum, this body of work could investigate green militarization's varied justifications, the multiple alliances and actors—human and nonhuman—enabling it, and how local specificity articulates with global trends to produce distinct patterns and economies of militarization over both time and space. Such spaces could include protected areas characterized by spatial qualities that differ from Kruger along with spaces constitutive of the illicit trade in wildlife products stretching beyond protected areas, such as retail markets, airports and transit routes, and sites of end user consumption. Related, it could begin to highlight how different interests—state and nonstate—converge, or even conflict, to effect particular types of militarization across particular locations, as we see with the convergence of the South African state's interwoven interests in securing its international borders and “natural treasures.” These studies could additionally extend our understanding of militarism, highlighting how it productively intersects not only with nationalism (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009) but also, more specifically, with natural resources, constructed or understood as such.

Although I have found insight in the broad scholarly literature on military activity and the environment and the critical geographic literature on militarization, a more robust understanding of green militarization would come from engagement with additional scholarly debates. This could include, for instance, the vigorous debates on neoliberal conservation (e.g., Brockington and Duffy 2011; Ojeda 2012; Roth and Dressler 2012), especially as state conservation offices hook up with private military firms and donors (like Google) to gain access to new technologies, as they outsource green military services to soldiers-for-hire as in the CAR, and as private reserves build private militarized security forces. Furthermore, I would argue that the trend toward green militarization reflects a hardening of the authoritarian and exclusionary “fences and fines” approach to conservation. The dominant model of conservation through the colonial and early to middle postcolonial periods, it was challenged by more decentralized, community-based models of conservation in the 1990s, with the pendulum swinging back toward

the more exclusionary approach a decade later (Hutton, Adams, and Murombedzi 2005). We can ask how green militarization fits with these larger trajectories, including where it intersects and departs from earlier exclusionary approaches and logics and even how it might shape community-based conservation efforts, especially as it becomes normalized and as drone technology becomes more cost-effective.

Reflecting my own skepticism regarding militarization as a response to contemporary concerns—even very real concerns like commercial poaching—I would like to see these analyses move beyond the descriptive to launch a critique of green militarization. I close by offering such a critique, again one grounded in Kruger. To be clear, none of this is meant to justify rhino poaching. Like many I criticize in this article, I also fear for a world without rhinos and in general support efforts to keep them safe. I am also deeply sympathetic to the grave risks that rangers daily confront during anti-poaching patrols. What I take issue with is the large-scale militarization of conservation efforts. Not only does this amount to a deeper infiltration of militarization across various spaces, but it also rests on a logic of violence as an appropriate means of resolving conflict (Dowler 2012). Green militarization in particular further reinforces the seeming necessity of military forces even and especially when their relevance is questionable, as in postconflict situations, and allows a greenwashing of the destructive practices of military corporations. It additionally rests on and reinforces violent, and indeed lethal, distinctions between friend–nation and enemy–infiltrator as we see with the joint discursive reinvention of rhinos and poachers.

Add to this the fact that these militarized activities do not seem to have paid off—as the rate of rhino poaching only continues to increase—with each failure followed by another round of militarization. More broadly, many rangers remain unconvinced that the militarized response will pay off given the increasing gains of rhino poaching, which far outweigh the ever-more-severe risks (Interviews 2012). In fact, this is linked to the broader arms race of the poaching–anti-poaching dialectic. As both sides beef up resources and force in response to the other, the value of rhino horn increases accordingly, giving poachers even more incentive to poach and to fight back using militarized means (Interviews 2012), resulting in further militarization state-side and more deaths. This suggests that perhaps the only viable solution is to stop end-user demand or perhaps, more controversially, legalize the trade in rhino horn, as suggested by several SANParks

officials and rangers (Interviews 2012, 2013). Significantly, these options, too, might generate or hinge on new patterns of green militarization. My sense is that they might provide a more effective and less violent, lethal response, but they certainly require more detailed investigation.

Green militarization carries with it further unanticipated consequences. First, the intensive dual militarization of Kruger also creates a dangerous space for innocent bystanders who risk getting caught in the crossfire (also see Neumann 2004). Residents on the Mozambican side of the border, for instance, tell of a young man who in 2012 was walking through Kruger to find work in greater South Africa. Mistaken for a poacher, he was shot dead (Interviews 2012). In addition to the loss of his life, fear of such incidents has led to a standstill in undocumented migration through Kruger on foot, shutting down a long-used migration route into South Africa depended upon especially by poorer migrants (Interviews 2012).

One of the most weighty long-term consequences, however, might be the related damage that militarization does to community relations on both sides of the border. On the South African side, where a smaller number of poachers originate, rangers have been attempting to improve community–park relations; for example, by assisting communities in harvesting nonwildlife resources. Such efforts have translated into conservation successes, with communities providing information on commercial poaching activities. The killing of poachers has begun to erode this trust (Interviews 2012, 2013). When asked why he thought the relationship between rangers and communities has worsened because of poaching, one ranger elaborated:

It's because of the shooting. . . . The poachers are armed, coming with rifles. The rangers are armed as well, and in the process of arresting [men] out there in the bush, some resist arrest, and [rangers shoot back] at them. But a ranger is a well-trained somebody. When he shoots back, the possibility of some fatalities is there. And once that's happened, you've dented your image in the community. [People are saying] "You are a killer, you're killing our children out there, you're killing our husbands . . . you're killing our people out there." (Interview 2012)

This reputation as a state-backed killer of people's loved ones only disrupts the potential for building strong relationships that successful long-term conservation, including anti-poaching work, depends on.

On the Mozambican side of the border, the context is even more complicated. Mozambique has long had a

rocky relation with its much more powerful neighbor. The height of tension was surely during apartheid South Africa's assistance in destabilizing newly independent Mozambique during the country's "civil" war. Such conflict helped forge a trail of destruction, weapons, and poverty (Lunstrum 2009) from which Mozambique has still not fully recovered. Mozambican communities adjacent to Kruger, left poor in part by the war, have also generally not benefited much from Kruger and the larger conservation economy. They are, in fact, now further alienated and expelled from both given the opening of the GLTP, which is evicting several Mozambican communities from its bounds, along with the militarized shutting down of Kruger as a migration route into South Africa. Added to this are the body bags crossing the border, often containing men who are at once suspected rhino poachers and the husbands, brothers, fathers, and children of these communities. As a senior Mozambican conservation officer expressed, such loss is souring the relation between conservation projects and communities (Interview 2012). These are, in fact, the very communities with whom Kruger needs to build trust to stop the recruiting and harboring of poachers. These methods of militarized conservation could hence backfire, especially as communities in Mozambique are further alienated from Kruger, the larger GLTP, and their potential benefits. In short, the militarization of protected areas like Kruger might end up reading as a cautionary tale, even as green militarization is likely to continue taking hold of and reshaping conservation spaces and conservation practice more broadly.

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Notes

1. This research is based on fifty interviews conducted in 2009, 2012, and 2013 with SANParks employees, including those directly involved in anti-poaching efforts; sixty-three interviews conducted on the Mozambican side of

the border with GLTP officials, project funders, and village residents; official media releases; research reports; and popular sources including newspaper articles. For security reasons, it was not possible to conduct interviews with residents in Mozambican communities focusing extensively on rhino poaching. Nonetheless, the topic did routinely come up in discussions of the general politics of conservation in the region. I have withheld the names of all interviewees to protect confidentiality.

2. The RPG-7 is a portable Soviet-made rocket propelled grenade.
3. Although Jooste supports the state's militarized response, he sees this as but one piece of a successful anti-poaching strategy with other components including developing better relationships with communities and related community development (Interview 2013).
4. This points to a tension in how poachers are understood: as both an increasingly dangerous militarized force and a vulnerable, poor population. Neither quality excludes the other, but further study of this tension and of commercial poachers and their varied motivations could add valuable nuance to our understanding of poachers and poaching economies.

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