

Fábio Reis

Phd Student in International Politics and Conflict Resolution

Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra

fabioreis@ces.uc.pt



Thesis Title: The Role of Environmental Peacebuilding in the Creation of a Sustainable Peace in Post-Conflict Contexts

Abstract

As concerns about environmental stresses, resource scarcity and violent conflict grew after the Cold War, decisionmakers concluded that tackling environmental issues was indispensable in peacebuilding processes. Environmental peacebuilding emerged in this context, both as a global research agenda and a conflict resolution tool, thus seeking to address, mitigate and resolve the deep-rooted environmental sources of conflict, to the point that hostile attitudes between conflicting parties fade away. In theory, the concept bears a significant potential to achieve meaningful conflict resolution and nurture environmental cooperation in post-conflict scenarios, as it seeks to work at the grassroots level in local communities. Notwithstanding, so far, environmental peacebuilding lacks a coherent practical framework, which appears to lead to unfruitful outcomes in the field. To a great extent, such issue arises from the highly technical United Nations (UN) environmental peacebuilding approach, which aims to reduce environmental scarcity and degradation using technical solutions that disregard both local contexts and the environmental causes of conflicts. In light of the above, the aim of this research is to understand the contribution of environmental peacebuilding in post-conflict communities. Furthermore, by discerning the shortcomings in the implementation of the concept in the field, by the UN, the research seeks to propose an alternative notion of environmental peacebuilding, to enhance the concept's potential to promote a sustainable peace under the current institutional framework in which it operates within the world organization.