Recommendations for Sustainable Tourism in Patagonia: An Exploratory Analysis of Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica, the Nordic Region, and Thailand’s Communities

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Recommendations for Sustainable Tourism in Patagonia: An Exploratory Analysis of Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica, the Nordic Region, and Thailand’s Communities

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BAIS 395 Honors Thesis Seminar, Professor John Zarobell

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores different levels of governance and its role towards actualizing sustainable tourism in Patagonia. With the growing threat of climate change, international destinations such as Patagonia are looking to continue building their tourism industries in a sustainable way. Through analyzing case studies of national governance in Costa Rica, multi-national governance in the Nordic region, and community-based tourism in Thailand, we can better understand how each form of governance has the potential to create a sustainable tourism industry. With this understanding of successful governance in my case studies, as well as understanding the historical and political forces that have shaped Patagonia, this thesis will make recommendations for how Patagonia can further enact sustainable tourism. These three forms of governance mentioned are lacking in Patagonia with respect to sustainable tourism. National governance is lacking in both Chile and Argentina to make the necessary changes to mitigate climate change and facilitate sustainable tourism. A multinational approach has largely been absent where there are opportunities for Chile and Argentina to collaborate on environmental issues, particularly in Patagonia. The community-based approach could be further developed in small towns in Patagonia. Each level of governance is explored and shown to benefit Patagonia’s tourism industry and approach to climate change.

KEY WORDS
Sustainable Tourism, Patagonia, Environment, Governance, Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica, Nordic Region, Thailand
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APN: Argentina National Park Administration

CBT: Community-Based Tourism

CONAF: Chile National Forestry Corporation

CST: Certification for Sustainable Tourism

PSA: Payment for Environmental Services

SETENA: Costa Rican National Environmental Office

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

TAT: Tourism Authority of Thailand

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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INTRODUCTION

In the Netflix Series *Our Great National Parks*, former President Barack Obama refers to Chilean Patagonia as “untouched wilderness,” (Our Great National Parks: Chilean Patagonia, 2022). This is a very common remark amongst tourists visiting Patagonia, a landmark destination at the southernmost tip of South America. Patagonia is known for its stunning landscapes including arid steppes, glacial fjords, and grasslands, which contribute to the perception of Patagonia as “untouched wilderness.” With these unique features, climate change is a huge threat that Patagonia faces while simultaneously working to develop their tourism industry.

With the rising threat of climate change, various industries are now recognizing the need for greener solutions, including the travel and tourism industries which are becoming aware of their environmental impacts in many ways. The transportation involved in travel is harmful to the environment, often requiring a plane or car. Tourism can also influence the physical area being visited, as well as the local people and economy. Recognizing the overall impact on the environment, various strategies have been employed globally to mitigate some of the impacts of tourism. One form of combating these impacts is through sustainable tourism, a newer concept referring to “tourism that takes into account current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the environment, and host communities,” (Altmann et al. 2016, Fernandez et al. 2020).

This paper will focus on making recommendations for sustainable tourism in Patagonia through an examination of case studies on three levels of governance. These case studies are used as examples of positive governance relating to climate change and sustainable tourism. Costa Rica is displayed as a model of national governance, the Nordic Region of multi-national governance, and Thailand's communities of community governance. Given Patagonia’s unique
position being governed by both Chile and Argentina, the significance of Chile and Argentina’s histories, and encompassing many unique cultural towns, these three levels of governance are all important in working towards sustainable tourism in Patagonia.

My interest in sustainable tourism began earlier this year on a study abroad program in Patagonia, Chile. I conducted research on sustainable tourism in Torres del Paine National Park, and much of the inspiration for this research comes from my experience in Chile. However, this paper takes a more international approach to Patagonia and focuses on addressing sustainable tourism by examining case studies of governance present in other parts of the world. That being said, I believe my experience in Chile to be a tremendous asset to my continued research on this topic, and I hope that my perspective can contribute to further conversation and action regarding sustainable tourism in Patagonia. I also recognize this may have created some bias towards the focus of my research and what I believe to be the most significant issues in Patagonia. During my study abroad program, my research was focused in Torres del Paine National Park, and I did not visit the Argentine side of Patagonia.

After visiting Chilean Patagonia and seeing the work being done in relation to sustainable tourism, it is not my intention to make it seem as though Patagonia is incapable or unaware of the climate issues present and the role of tourism in climate change. In fact, Patagonia is making important strides environmentally in the tourism sector. This paper examines what other places around the world are doing to promote sustainable tourism, but ultimately local people are the ones who are the most knowledgeable about their communities and will make the best decisions regarding policy in Patagonia. I simply want to provide recommendations based on research of how other destinations are practicing sustainable tourism.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Dictatorships of Chile and Argentina

In order to understand the context of the governmental approaches Chile and Argentina have taken towards addressing climate issues and tourism in Patagonia, it is important to first understand the history of the dictatorships that have taken place in these two countries. Argentina has endured six dictatorships throughout the 20th century. The first dictatorship began in 1930, with the bloodless overthrow of Hipolito Yrigoyen. Yrigoyen was part of the Radical Party which was generally a social-liberal party which valued human rights, secularism, and free elections (May et al. 2005). General Jose Félix Uriburu rose to power under an interim dictatorship using the doctrine of “de facto” which was used to legitimize his presidency as well as that of the following three dictatorships (Luna, 1997). Taking place in 1943, 1955, and 1962, the following three dictatorships maintained a similar pattern of temporary presidencies.

While the first four dictatorships were relatively temporary, the final two dictatorships were intended to be established more permanently. The coup of 1966 overthrew President Arturo Illia, also a member of the Radical Party. He was replaced by Juan Carlos Onganía with a dictatorship which called itself the “Argentine Revolution,” establishing themselves as the permanent government. This dictatorship adopted a “fascist-Catholic-anticommunist” ideology and was backed by the United States and many European countries (Moyano, 1995). The final dictatorship of Jorge Rafael Videla was initiated in 1974 by a military junta. Videla’s dictatorship was one of the bloodiest dictatorships of the 20th century with an estimated 30,000 people murdered or disappeared. Since the fall of the last dictatorship and the transition to stable democracy, Argentina has made “unparalleled progress” in dealing with the human rights
violations that took place during these dictatorships. Since 2005, hundreds of former officials tied to the dictatorships have been convicted for their crimes (Kaleck, 2016).

Chile has had a relatively stable democratic history up until the 1970s. In the early 1970s, President Salvador Allende, a socialist democratically elected President, governed Chile. In 1973, Allende was overthrown and killed in a military coup where Augusto Pinochet rose to power and became the dictator until 1990. Pinochet “fired military leaders, shut down newspapers, militarized the universities, and even outlawed singing in public,” (Kurtz, 2009). This dictatorship consisted of many assassinations, incarcerations, tortures, and the “disappearance” of over 3,000 people. Under the Pinochet rule in 1980, a new Constitution was adopted which established highly neoliberal ideals and “consolidated power in the presidency,” (Kurtz, 2009). This effectively established Pinochet as dictator and removed all political barriers to his rule. While the dictatorship formally ended in 1990, the 90s were characterized by a complicated shift towards democracy, as Pinochet continued to remain in control of the military until 1998.

Even today, the lasting effects of the dictatorship are still felt in Chile. Presently Chile still operates under its Pinochet-era Constitution where the government acts as a subsidiary to the market economy. The Chilean Constitution has been modified several times since its origin in 1980 to remove any overtly dictatorial policies, yet still contains undertones of Pinochet’s neoliberal policies. One significant remnant of this is Chile’s privatized water system, which allows the market to delineate the price of water and who ultimately has access to water. This has caused many problems in Chile with water rights being accumulated by mining and agricultural companies, and making water a large expense for individuals (Bauer, 2015; Larraín and Schaeffer, 2010). Water management has been an issue in many Latin American countries, and
the lack of access to drinking water is known to be a “problem of poor governance, not a problem of water scarcity,” (Baer, 2014). While there has been much debate regarding the ethics of water privatization, in 2010, the United Nations General Assembly formally recognized water as a human right. Campaigns for water being declared as a human right are “rooted in the broader critique that neoliberal policies like privatization pose a threat to human rights,” (Baer, 2014; Nelson and Dorsey, 2008).

**Constitutions and Policy Post-Dictatorships**

With Chile’s present Constitution promoting neoliberal policies, there has been a growing recognition of a need for a new Constitution. In 2019, more than thirty years after the fall of the dictatorship, Chilean citizens overwhelmingly voted for a new Constitution, yet there has been much contention surrounding this new Constitution and what it should entail. In 2022, a new Constitution was proposed which contained comprehensive legislation addressing climate change, water policy, indigenous rights, and women's rights (Bartlett, 2022). In the September 2022 election, the proposed Constitution was rejected by Chilean voters, with many citing the new Constitution going “too far,” (Bartlett, 2022). There seems to be a stark divide in the kind of values that voters wish to be illustrated in their new Constitution, with some wanting to maintain more traditional values while others are eager for progressive change. Currently, the Chilean government is looking to draft another version of their Constitution which they hope will appeal to a wider range of voters.

Constitutions are important political documents that are used to enact legislation and create law, and are highly significant towards enacting environmental legislation in particular. That being said, it is important to understand the different legal systems which impact how Constitutions can be applied. We cannot compare the United States’ Constitution which uses a
Common Law system to that of many countries in Latin America, including Chile and Argentina, which use a Civil Law system. A Common Law system is derived from medieval English law where Judicial decisions are the primary source of law. This makes sense given our Supreme Court which works to interpret our Constitution in order to determine the extent of its reach. On the other hand, a Civil Law system, derived from Roman law, “codifies principles” that serve as the primary source of law (Adams and Bischoff, 2019). This means that the Chilean and Argentine Constitutions leave almost no room for interpretation and must explicitly state the intent of each article in their Constitution. With respect to the environment, this means their Constitutions must be extremely specific towards protections for the environment, otherwise not much can be done. In understanding the role of national governance as related to Patagonia and its management, it is important to be aware of the context of Constitutions in relation to government and their role in interpreting their Constitutions.

Management of Patagonia by Chile and Argentina

Patagonia is fairly decentralized, and is comprised of a few small cities and national parks. These cities and national parks are often hundreds of miles away from one another and yet share common characteristics such as international desirability, a hospitality oriented economy, and landscape. Looking at the history of Patagonia and its industries, we can see that international tourism was not always encouraged by the government. While the Chilean and Argentine governments once embraced livestock farming due to its profitability, more recently these governments have rejected the livestock industry in favor of international tourism and protected areas because tourism is now seen as a more viable industry (Mendoza, 2017). In Argentina, Mendoza describes how the ecotourism industry has greatly expanded under the Kirchner administrations with sustainable development, land conservation, and ecotourism as
high priorities for the region (Mendoza, 2017). At the same time, this administration has tried to achieve a form of “sustainable capitalism” where tourism could exponentially grow while remaining in line with sustainability goals.

Local regions such as Magallanes, one of the southernmost in Chile, have created their own goals. Specifically, the Magallanes region set a number of ambitious goals for 2020 that need to be updated. One of their main goals was to create “desarrollo económico sostenido y sustentable,” (Resumen Ejecutivo, 2012). Translated into English, this means sustained and sustainable economic growth. This source speaks a lot to the development aspect of tourism as a way for the region to grow economically, and addresses the sustainability aspect as more of an afterthought: the paper does not seem to define a strong relationship between tourism and sustainability. This is significant to sustainable tourism in Magallanes if they are not able to recognize the importance of foregrounding sustainability in their development goals.

Individual national parks such as Torres del Paine which handle large fluxes of tourists have also outlined their goals for sustainable development. While Patagonia is shared amongst the Chilean and Argentine governments, their management of entities like forests, wetlands, lakes, air quality, and tourists is not synonymous. In terms of managing tourism, there are discrepancies in the ways that Chile and Argentina are prioritizing tourism. Feifan et al. describe how Chile lacks funding and support from the government to prioritize tourism in comparison to Argentina (Feifan et al, 2015). At the time of publication, Chile was given an equivalent of $2 million USD to promote tourism. By contrast, Argentina spent $20 million USD promoting tourism within the country. Feifan et al. also explain that Argentina has an airport tax specifically for the tourism board, whereas Chile does not have this or anything equivalent (Feifan et al, 2015). This stark difference in the funding received between the two countries is certainly
significant towards the management of Patagonia. This in part explains why the Argentine side of Patagonia receives more visitors than the Chilean side, and why most people probably associate Patagonia with Argentina. Generally Argentina has done more to distinguish itself as an international destination and has worked hard to build its tourism industry. Chile also has the limitation of not having many large cities in Patagonia. Even by remote standards, the Argentine side has larger cities and a greater quantity of cities than the Chilean side. This makes it more difficult for Chile to build up the tourism industry without larger cities which make travel and hospitality more accessible.

It is also true that there are challenges to tourism in Patagonia that impact both countries. For one, Patagonia as a whole has accessibility issues. It is located at the southern tip of South America, with most tourists originating from North America or Europe. Feifen et al. describe how there are no direct flights from Patagonia to the United States, and this typically requires multiple days of traveling to arrive in Patagonia (Feifan et al, 2015). Aside from this, destinations located within Patagonia are also very decentralized and require lots of travel without many public transportation options available. Additionally, foreigners tend to have negative impressions of Latin America as a whole which have been hard for these countries to overcome. Specifically for Chile and Argentina, their histories of violent dictatorships have led both countries to develop negative reputations globally (Feifan et al, 2015).

The divide along the Patagonian border separating Chile and Argentina has historically created issues for indigenous communities as well. Prior to the delineation of the border, indigenous groups such as the Tehuelche and Chonos were living a “nomadic, hunter-gatherer” lifestyle in the region (Benwell and Nunez, 2019). The source explains the tension created between the indigenous groups around the late 19th century when both countries began
commodifying land. “The traditions and mobilities of indigenous communities were a direct threat to the 'pacification' of the region for economic exploitation, challenging the control of private capital, as well as state efforts to incorporate these frontier regions,” (Benwell and Nunez, 2019). Throughout the 20th century, there have been numerous conflicts between the two governments and the indigenous groups over the division of Patagonia’s mountains, lakes, and canals, as well as the general management and commodification of the land. Most notably, there has been conflict at the border dividing the frontier towns of Los Antiguos in Argentina, and Chile Chico in Chile (Benwell and Nunez, 2019). Historically, we can see how the management of Patagonia by the two governments has shaped Patagonia’s industries and created the tourist destination that we associate with Patagonia today.

**Modern Theories on Sustainability and Tourism**

With the continuous threat of climate change, in the last few decades the tourism industry has made attempts to reduce emissions while continuing to develop economically. Sustainable tourism seems like the perfect solution to both developing economically and reducing emissions. Discussions surrounding sustainable tourism are prevalent in Patagonia, as it is a region that faces visible climate degradation while also being a hub for economic development through tourism and other industries.

As previously discussed, sustainable tourism attempts to take a more comprehensive approach and involves considering the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism (Altmann et al. 2016; Fernandez et al. 2020). One common characterization of assessing the sustainability of a certain practice or industry gauges levels of exploitation and extraction. Ruiz et al. discuss how tourism in protected areas is a “non-extractive activity” that can act as a source of financing for conservation and protected areas (Ruiz et al, 2019). This is an important
component of sustainable tourism, since the conservation of these areas could happen more quickly and effectively with a consistent source of revenue from the market economy, rather than relying on government subsidies or private donations. Ruiz et al. believe having these areas designated as protected means the land will be safeguarded from other industries such as livestock. The reality is throughout history various human forces have contributed to what Patagonia is today, and this idea of tourism being “non-extractive” is not taken for granted amongst conversations about tourism.

Scholar Núñez sees this increase in tourist development as a modern form of extractivism, referring to it as “eco-extractivism,” (Núñez, 2020). Scholars Núñez and Holmes are critical of this development in tourism, as each describes the perceived tension between conservation and economy through a critique of what is referred to as “green grabbing,” (Núñez, 2020; Holmes, 2014). This process of acquiring land and designating it as protected is common in Patagonia and around the world, and is highly controversial. Many of these ‘pristine’ places acquired through “green grabbing” are designated as conservation spaces and remain under the control of the government or private institutions. While this can be helpful in conserving biodiversity and protecting against development, local people, oftentimes indigenous groups, are displaced from these areas they once freely inhabited. Scholar Schlüter insists that with proper management, it is possible for Patagonia to achieve sustainable development that serves both human and non-human beings (Schlüter, 2001). There are many conversations amongst scholars surrounding the development of Patagonia to serve both human and non-human beings, and there is much contention around effective solutions.

The impact of tourism on local economies has been studied globally in places similar to Patagonia where tourism is a prominent economic sector. Scholar Hall discusses numerous case
studies where the viability of sustainable tourism is measured (Hall, 2000). The idea of ‘community’ is emphasized and shows the importance for sustainable tourism to be oriented towards the community. Within the realm of sustainable tourism, another popular tourism label is community-based tourism. Abbreviated as CBT, community-based tourism is a subset of sustainable tourism where “local communities have full ownership and management of the tourism experience, so that the economic benefits of tourism stay within their community,” (Intrepid). CBT is in contrast to traditional forms of tourism which typically extract from the community and can often displace residents.

Sustainable capitalism is a newer concept that has formed under the pretense that capitalism in its current state poses a major threat to the environment, as issues relating to the environment are seen as externalities and not typically considered within economic frameworks. At the same time, capitalism is still seen as a viable path for countries to develop and thrive economically. As such, there is conversation among scholars about the viability of both sustainability and capitalism for the future of nations. Kovel, known as the founder of ecosocialism, takes the approach that the very essence of capitalism requires endless growth, and therefore capitalism must be eliminated in order to preserve the earth (Kovel, 2007).

On the other hand, scholars such as Lovins et al. take the approach that we can be successful in achieving both sustainability and economic growth through business (Lovins et al, 2007). These scholars have created a four part roadmap which they believe can achieve this idea of “natural capitalism.” Their roadmap is as follows: “dramatically increase the productivity of natural resources; shift to biologically inspired production models; move to a solutions-based business model; reinvest in natural capital,” (Lovins et al, 2007). The idea is to create a closed-loop system which creates no waste through regenerative processes. Similarly, scholar
Ikerd recognizes the current issues with modern day capitalism, but believes that social and ethical values need to be integrated into capitalist economics. By implementing this hybrid of both sustainability and capitalism, Ikerd believes this can create thriving nations (Ikerd, 2005). Various scholars have theorized about the economics of sustainable development, and this has large implications for the direction of sustainable development goals and future political agendas.

METHODS STATEMENT

In thinking about sustainable tourism in Patagonia, I chose to examine the way different levels of governance have been utilized to implement sustainable tourism. Scholars Bauza and Held et al. note the importance of governance in leading solutions on climate change (Bauza, 2022; Held et al. 2011). I chose to examine governance as it is an important factor in the ability of a country to develop and implement climate policy, and also because I believe that multiple levels of governance are required to find adequate solutions.

There are three levels of governance I chose to highlight: national governance, multi-national governance, and community-based governance. I chose to examine case studies from Costa Rica, the Nordic Region, and communities in Thailand because I feel these can be useful for Patagonia to address their gaps in sustainable tourism. With each of these destinations, I wanted to highlight ways they have addressed tourism in relation to its climate impacts. While there are many destinations making impressive strides towards sustainability in the tourism industry, I chose these because of their shared characteristics and feasibility to replicate in Patagonia. I will use information on each of these case studies gathered from journal articles, government websites, and environmental rankings to explore how different levels of governance in each place have been effective at working towards achieving sustainable tourism. Once I have
established how these governance forms have been effective, I will also explain how and why I think Patagonia could replicate these practices.

I selected Costa Rica as my case study for national governance because of their commitment to reducing emissions and their impressive strides towards implementing renewable energy throughout the country. While this is not exclusively beneficial to the tourism industry, having an economy running on renewable energy and working to reduce fossil fuels is part of the foundation for creating a sustainable tourist experience and ensuring the longevity of the tourism industry. Costa Rica’s strides within renewable energy are heavily tied to their high concentration of rivers, dams, and volcanoes. These landscapes are also present in Patagonia, and this is another reason why Costa Rica is an excellent case study for Patagonia.

I selected the Nordic region as my case study for multi-national governance because of how these countries have worked together on climate policy. The Region is often recognized for their impressive strides on sustainability and implementation of environmental policy. Multi-national governance is significant as Patagonia maintains shared governance between Chile and Argentina. There are many opportunities to increase collaboration to further each country's strategy towards meeting sustainable development goals, as well as improving sustainable tourism in Patagonia.

I selected Thailand as my third case study because of their impressive community-based tourism experiences. I will analyze how Thailand has successfully implemented community governance through two quantitative studies by scholar Breugel and one qualitative study by scholars Lo & Janta. In the three communities researched, a problem is identified and the community works together to solve this problem either directly through community-based tourism, or these tourist experiences form unintentionally as a result of community collaboration.
The success of these communities in Thailand are applicable to Patagonia which also has many small, decentralized cities with rich culture and traditions which could implement community-based tourism.

I believe Patagonia can learn from these places and how they have adapted to similar challenges. No singular place on their own is perfectly sustainable, but combining what they have overcome, Patagonia can more successfully address its own challenges with respect to sustainable tourism. Patagonia has many challenges when it comes to implementing sustainable tourism, but they are not insurmountable. I will use these examples to show that several of the issues Patagonia faces within its tourism industry are ones that are being addressed more successfully in other places. In finding and analyzing my data, I sorted through many ranking systems and searched for standout countries that were doing important sustainability work within the tourism sector. I considered exclusively using environmental rankings lists, but I felt that these did not tell the whole story, were not necessarily related to tourism, or were not relevant to Patagonia. Instead, I used these ranking systems in combination with journal articles and government websites. The journal articles included specific research that was done in these places which confirmed the sustainability and could also be more tailored to the tourism industry and the specific level of governance being studied. The government websites had more quantitative information regarding the sustainability of these places, and included specific policies that aided these efforts.

From the research I have done for this project, there are some limitations concerning the scope of my project. The method of choosing my case studies is based on my own personal discretion in terms of what I see as being most helpful to Patagonia, and perhaps others would find relevance in other tourist destinations or tourism issues in Patagonia that I had not
considered. Additionally, there was limited time to complete this project. While I began researching sustainable tourism in Patagonia earlier this year during my study abroad in Chilean Patagonia, the idea for this project was not formed until the beginning of this semester. Had I been given more time, I would have liked to find experts to better understand each place I was researching. While I did not conduct any formal interviews, the direction of my research was heavily aided by Professor Ramatal, both for my interest in sustainable tourism and also towards better understanding Chile's history and current political situation. Had I been given more time, I would have liked to talk to someone in Argentina who could provide more context on Argentina’s history and current political situation. I would also have liked to speak with experts working in sustainable tourism in Costa Rica, the Nordic region, and one of Thailand’s communities. Having someone to give more context on each of these places would have allowed me to better represent each destination I studied. Additionally, there is also the limitation of the language barrier. While I am conversational in Spanish, I would not be able to fully understand sources in Spanish without translation. Most of the sources I used were in English, and therefore this limited the sources and information used to form my research on Chile and Argentina, which speak predominantly Spanish. My case studies also were limited by the language barrier, as the places studied speak languages such as Spanish, Danish, Finnish, Swedish, and Thai.

**FINDINGS**

Each of my case studies on Costa Rica, the Nordic Region, and Thailand's communities represent a different type of governance that is relevant towards implementing sustainable tourism in Patagonia. Costa Rica represents a mostly successful national approach to sustainability that has significantly benefited their tourism industry. The national approach is significant to both the Chilean and Argentine governments, as they each have strong influence on
the tourism industry in Patagonia. In the Nordic region, their multi-national approach has been highly important in addressing climate change and the environmental impacts of their tourism sector. Additionally, multi-national governance is significant for Patagonia as it is managed by both Chile and Argentina, despite it being seen as one continuous place. Thailand’s community based tourism model represents how small villages have foregrounded community culture through providing tourist experiences. Community governance is highly important for Patagonia as the cities are highly decentralized and could provide unique experiences stemming from local culture. While none of these places have perfectly emulated their approach to sustainable tourism, each has made important strides that can serve as a model for Patagonia. It is also important to note that each of the countries represented in these case studies share a history of extractivism which they have begun moving away from, partly due to the implementation of environmental policies and various forms of sustainable tourism. Both Chile and Argentina are still largely reliant on extractive economic practices and could use these case studies as examples of how to create more sustainable economic models.

**Costa Rica and National Governance**

Costa Rica has been a global leader in using national governance to create a sustainable tourism industry. They have excelled at this through national efforts towards reforestation and renewable energy. It is important to understand how the Costa Rican government has facilitated the movement towards sustainability through examining their certifications and the historical forces that were a catalyst for environmental change.

**Costa Rican Certification and Global Recognition**

The Costa Rican government attempts to create sustainability in both the public and private sectors through its certification process. In 1997, the Costa Rican Tourism Institute
established the Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) to provide guidelines for the hospitality industry and to help recognize businesses making important strides towards sustainability. There are many certified national entities and private services in Costa Rica that meet the rigorous standards for this certification including: tour operators, lodging, theme parks, protected areas, and others. There are currently three protected areas in Costa Rica that meet the CST standard: Carara National Park, Manuel Antonio National Park, and Poas Volcano National Park (Costa Rican Tourism Institute, 2020). CST is a rigorous standard that employs a number of different sustainability measures in order for entities to qualify. The certification evaluates entities through their fulfillment in the following categories: business management; social, economic and cultural impact; environmental impact; and other specific indicators (Costa Rican Tourism Institute, 2020). This certification process is important as it can motivate businesses to choose more sustainable options. Especially in the tourism sector, having these certifications makes businesses more attractive for tourists. It is also important for transparency so that tourists can make more informed choices when planning their trip.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council has recognized the CST standard, noting it as an important marker of sustainability globally (Certification for Sustainable Tourism, 2022). Randy Durband, CEO of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, explains that CST is a “well established certification program with a clever scheme of market incentives for participating businesses,” (Global Sustainable Tourism Council, 2022). This kind of incentivization is crucial for helping to create sustainability in the tourism industry. Much of the success that Costa Rica has had in branding itself for sustainable tourism is related to these certifications that allow for recognition and visibility. Having national standards not only incentivizes entities within the country, but also creates a model for other countries to follow suit.
Reforestation

Costa Rica is known as the only tropical country in the world to reverse deforestation (Linking Tourism and Conservation, 2019). However, similar to many other countries, Costa Rica was not always in pursuit of conservation. At the beginning of the 20th century, Costa Rica’s economic development was primarily focused in agriculture, where forests were regularly cut down to grow crops and raise animals. This led to their deforestation problem in the subsequent decades: between 1940 and 1980, nearly half of the country's mature forests were cut down (Rodríguez, 2022). In the 1970s the government began to acknowledge the deforestation crisis, noting the relationship between their largely agricultural economy and the impact on their forests and overall country.

By the 1980s Costa Rica began taking action to reverse this process of deforestation (Linking Tourism and Conservation, 2019). At its lowest point in 1986, Costa Rica was made up of 40% forest cover, and today the country includes 59% forest cover (Rodríguez, 2022). This 19% increase in forest cover is certainly significant as Costa Rica was heading towards a path of further deforestation which would have dropped their forest cover even lower than 40% had they continued with their agricultural and deforestation processes. Costa Rica being able to reverse this process is quite an achievement as the trajectory of deforestation is a common phenomenon globally. While these strides towards reforestation are impressive, these successes are not without support from the national government and a rapid change in their economy. Costa Rica has been able to fund their reforestation efforts through the development of tourism, as well as national incentives.

The government created national incentives to increase forest cover and protected areas. In 1997, the Costa Rican government instituted the Payment for Environmental Services
program, or PSA, paying landowners to preserve forests on their property. PSA is based on the idea that forests provide environmental services such as carbon sequestration, watershed protection, and biodiversity conservation (Porras et al, 2012). Having the funding from PSA is important because it helps protect these vital environmental services, and it also means these forests are economically competitive against other uses, such as for agriculture or development. The PSA program has been one of the most significant policy developments in Costa Rica’s reversal of deforestation and the development of sustainable tourism.

Another important component to the reversal of deforestation is the Costa Rican National Environmental Office (SETENA) whose goal is to balance growth in the development sector with the need to conserve ecology (Costa Rica Information, 2022). The government also has more specific laws related to trees and wildlife with conservation as the underlying rationale. For example, the Almendro Amarillo tree is prohibited to be cut down, despite high demands from lumber companies, because of its slow growing tendencies and its habitat importance for the Green Macaw, a critically endangered species. Through PSA and SETENA, we can see how the Costa Rican government was able to reforest their country through tangible government policy.

**Renewable Energy**

Costa Rica is also a world leader in renewable energy. The country is able to produce a large amount of renewable energy as a result of their high concentration of rivers, dams, and volcanoes. In 2020, renewable energy supplied over 99% of the energy for the country, ranking Costa Rica in the top 10 countries with the highest percentage of renewable energy. Figure 1 provides context by showing how Costa Rica’s electricity production compares to the rest of the world. Figure 2 compares Costa Rica to the United States, Chile, and Argentina. In the United States, about 20% of electricity comes from renewables, and globally around one-quarter of
electricity comes from renewables (Ritchie, 2022). Comparatively, Costa Rica is doing quite well transitioning to renewable energy. Presently, Costa Rica generates renewable energy using 67.5% hydro, 17% wind, 13.5% geothermal, and <1% biomass and solar (Young, 2020). Much of this energy is kept within the country, but Costa Rica is also able to export excess energy to other countries which provides another source of income for the country. While this is a very impressive accomplishment for Costa Rica, it is also important to note that Costa Rica still has a “gasoline-dependent transport sector,” meaning renewables make up less than a quarter of the nation’s total energy use (Fendt, 2017). With the continued use of cars, planes, and other transportation being reliant on gasoline, Costa Rica continues to contribute significantly to fossil fuel extraction and climate change. Costa Rica has set a great road map for the rest of the world to transition to renewable energy, but it is crucial for Costa Rica to transition their transportation sector to run on electricity.

Figure 1. Share of Electricity Production from Renewables, 2021 Global Map (Ritchie, 2022).
Being a middle income country, it is somewhat amazing that Costa Rica has been able to devote so much of its national budget to conservation and the environment. It is significant to note that there were economic and political forces that contributed to the country’s ability to prioritize conservation and reforestation during the 1990s. One economic force was the collapse of the global meat market. This caused a shift where Costa Rica now had unused land that was no longer profiting from this industry. This created the conditions to consider alternative use for the unused land, which later led towards conservation efforts and reforestation. The other force was the ending of the Central American War in the 1980s (Porras et al, 2022). While Costa Rica was never directly involved, the ending of the Central American War created a time of peace for Costa Rica where they could now focus on investing in their domestic resources and industries. This is inclusive of their decision to implement policies like PSA which have been vital in their
sustainability efforts. Both the collapse of the meat market and the ending of the Central American War led to local investment and the development of social and environmental movements that were crucial in Costa Rica’s environmental leadership.

**National Governance and Implementation in Patagonia**

**Certifications in Chile and Argentina**

The kinds of environmental feats made possible in Costa Rica are in large part due to the coordination of the national government. Chile and Argentina each have their own laws and governance strategies related to sustainability and tourism. In terms of general goals, Chile and Argentina both signed the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030 as part of the 193 member countries, including Costa Rica. This agreement commits these countries to the “fulfillment of a new sustainable development program,” (United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2022). While this is an important step, both Chile and Argentina could benefit from a certification system similar to that of Costa Rica’s CST. Doing so in both countries would help motivate the hospitality industry to improve their sustainability efforts, as they could use this certification as a promotional tool to attract tourists. According to Expedia Group’s Sustainable Travel Study, nine out of ten consumers look for sustainable options when traveling (Mandich, 2022). This shows a desire by the traveler to be aware of their impact and choose sustainable options. Despite wanting to have a sustainable experience, 70% reported “feeling overwhelmed by starting the process of being a more sustainable traveler,” (Mandich, 2022). A big issue with navigating sustainable tourism is that there are not many trusted sources which provide comparable information. Most of the time it is left up to the company to advertise their own sustainability, but it is very easy to showcase misleading messaging. As a tourist, it can be hard to determine what is reliable, and even more difficult to compare one business to another.
Having a certification like CST would help travelers make more informed decisions and choose more sustainable options.

**Renewable Energy in Chile and Argentina**

Aside from the hospitality industry, both Chile and Argentina could work towards producing more renewable energy. Chile in particular has many opportunities in this sphere with their multitude of landscapes. Chile has “sun-drenched” and “wind-rich” areas which provide ample opportunity to utilize wind and solar (Horwath et al, 2021). Similar to Costa Rica, Chile also has a high concentration of rivers, dams, and volcanoes which can be utilized for the development of hydro and geothermal energy. Chile’s most recent former president Sebastian Piñera launched a National Green Hydrogen Strategy in November of 2020 with the goal to “create the cheapest green hydrogen on the planet by 2030,” (Horwath et al, 2021). Achieving this goal would be an excellent step for the country economically, and towards greening their country.

Argentina has similar opportunities to Costa Rica and Chile for renewable energy sources. Argentina has “year-round sunshine in the northwest,” and “hydropower and biomass” from rivers and farmland (Bauza, 2022). Despite this opportunity, Argentina has historically been reliant on fossil fuels and has been slow to transition to renewables. To combat this gap, in 2015 Argentina set a goal to produce 20% of the country's electricity from renewable sources by 2025 (Kidd, 2022). As of 2017, Argentina was only producing 2% renewable energy, however since then Argentina has made great improvement towards this goal. As of 2021, Argentina now produces 13% of its energy from renewables (Kidd, 2022). This is a significant improvement as Argentina continues working towards its sustainability goals.

**Reforestation in Chile and Argentina**
As for reforestation, both countries have made attempts to increase reforestation. Chile’s Decree Law 701 issued in 1974 attempted to improve forestry through subsidizing 75% of afforestation costs. Unfortunately this decree law has been cited as having very negative environmental impacts. A study from University of California, Santa Barbara found that this law “subsidized the replacement of native forests with profitable tree plantations,” (Tasoff, 2020). Reforestation can be a tool for sequestering carbon, increasing biodiversity, and building healthier ecosystems if done correctly. While there can be many benefits, simply reforesting land cannot be the only goal for forest management and measure of sustainability in the country. Instead, in future reforestation efforts, Chile should take more care to ensure their practices are actually effective towards sustainability goals.

Chile has also recently experienced intense wildfires due to climate change, but exasperated by poor forest management. AIDA, a law and science organization, cites “inadequate legislation” as a major factor in the increase in frequency and size of fires in Chile, referring to the emergence of “large-scale pine and eucalyptus plantations in Chile” as the result of Decree Law 701 (Ortúzar, 2017). Despite trying to reach palatable environmental goals, it is important to practice a holistic view of sustainability when enacting environmental policy. In relation to forestry, design policies are important in achieving the “biodiversity, poverty alleviation and climate impacts you intended,” explains Professor Robert Heilmayr (Tasoff, 2020). Going forward, Chile must do more to ensure that their environmental policies take into account multiple factors and are actually helpful in advancing environmental protection.

Argentina is also looking to reforest through ForestAR 2030, an “inter-agency platform to boost the economy and environmental sustainability through massive reforestation,” (The Nature

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1 Robert Heilmayr is a professor at the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management at University of California, Santa Barbara
Conservancy, 2022). Launched in 2018, the aim of this program is to increase forest plantations from 1.3 million hectares to 2 million hectares by 2030 (Eversheds Sutherland, 2018). Since ForestAR 2030 is a newer program, the impacts have not been extensively studied. My hope is that this program yields better results than Chile’s Decree Law 701, and takes into consideration a multitude of factors when evaluating the results of this program.

**Multi-national Collaboration in the Nordic Region**

**The Nordic Council of Ministers**

The Nordic Region is a collection of countries and territories in northern Europe including Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland. The partnership between the Nordic countries is known to be the “oldest regional partnership,” and the multi-national approach can be helpful in addressing various issues, especially with respect to politics, economics, culture, and the environment (Natur Vards Verket, 2022). The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official governing body that helps to create a unifying direction for the region. While the Nordic Council of Ministers works on a variety of issues regarding the region, one of their primary goals has been to become the “most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030,” (Natur Vards Verket, 2022). This shows both a recognition of sustainability as an important goal and also demonstrates the power that multi-national collaboration can have towards achieving sustainability.

The Nordic Council has a number of sub-councils which work on various multi-national issues in the Nordic Region. The first of these sub-councils is the Nordic Working Group for Circular Economy. They work to improve product design and communicate products' environmental characteristics to the market. They specifically work on improving the sustainability of cross border shipments, reduction of food waste, and reducing plastics.
sub-council is the Nordic Working Group for Climate and Air which works to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollution. They are specifically focused on the implementation of the Paris agreement SDGs and keeping the Nordic region “at the forefront of the green transition,” (Natur Vards Verket, 2022). It is particularly impressive to have these sub-councils working towards regional environmental problems and gives insight into how the Nordic countries are so successful in their sustainability efforts.

Recognition of Countries in the Nordic Region

Individual countries in the Nordic region are recognized globally for making environmental strides, and this is evident through many environmental rankings. In 2015, The United Nations enacted the New World Sustainability Vision, which includes 17 SDGs which are expected to be implemented globally by 2030. The Sustainable Development Goal Index ranks countries based on their progress towards meeting these goals which cover various social and human rights topics such as poverty, hunger, education, gender equality, sustainable management, climate change, and conservation. In 2019, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland ranked in the top 3 for implementation of the SDGs. Norway and Iceland also placed in the top 20 (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2020). This is a significant indicator of the capabilities of the Nordic countries to achieve these goals, but it is important to recognize how the Nordic collaboration has played a part in the ability of these countries to meet these goals.

The Nordic Collaboration

One example of how the Nordic Collaboration has been implemented is examined through a study done by the KTH Royal Institute of Technology which outlines how transport

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2 Other Nordic sub-councils include: Nordic Working Group for Chemicals, Environment, and Health, Nordic Working Group for Biodiversity, Nordic Working Group for Oceans and Coastal Areas, and Nordic Working Group for Environment and Economy.

3 The Sustainable Development Solutions Network is a global initiative associated with the United Nations.

4 The study was conducted through the School of Architecture and the Built Environment at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden.
planning has made important sustainability efforts for the Nordic Region (Sævarsdóttir, 2020). The Nordic countries are known for their liveable cities with great public transit options and prioritize walking and biking as legitimate forms of transportation through their city planning. Transport planning is significant in mitigating climate impacts created from the use of vehicles, mainly from airplanes and cars. Globally, the transportation sector accounts for around 22% of global CO2 emissions, making reductions in emissions from transportation an essential part of creating a sustainable society (Rodrigue, 2022). As early as 1947, Denmark has been a leader in this sphere with their five-finger plan which designates five corridors in Copenhagen that guide city planning (Sævarsdóttir, 2020). This ensures efficiency to reduce urban sprawl and also makes implementation of public transit much easier.⁵

Finding ways to mitigate the impacts of transportation is another way that the Nordic region has created sustainable cities and countries. They each practice “collaborative planning” whereby collaboration between “stakeholders and experts in the form of workshop or working groups” is used to ensure the success of their planning projects (Sævarsdóttir, 2020). The KTH study notes the importance of early-collaboration: “Integration of environmental concern in early planning stages has been identified as important in terms of reducing environmental problems in later stages,” (Sævarsdóttir, 2020). The significance of this early-collaboration is evident in how it is used even in cases where it is not required by law. In Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, this type of collaboration is not formally required by law to complete these projects, however planners often advocate for early-collaboration, seeing it as an important part of the sustainable planning process (Sævarsdóttir, 2020). Rather than taking the approach that

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⁵ Other Nordic countries have national and regional coordination that focus on the implementation of sustainable planning. Finland’s Ministry of Environment adopted the Land Use and Building Act, a legal framework to regulate land use and planning. Iceland’s government has the National Planning Strategy which oversees their Planning Act, Environmental Impact Assessment Act, and Strategic Environmental Assessment Act. Norway’s Ministry of Local Government and Modernization oversees their Planning and Building Act (Sævarsdóttir, 2020).
sustainability should be evaluated later in the process or recognized as a nice addition to the transportation sector's goals, in the Nordic region sustainability is taken seriously early on in the process of city planning. Having innovative city planning and transportation is an important component in sustainable tourism.

**Multi-national Collaboration and Implementation in Patagonia**

**Patagonia Border Conflict and Lack of Collaboration**

Given the governance of Patagonia by both Chile and Argentina, both countries should have an interest in multi-national collaboration. This has not necessarily been the case, and Chile and Argentina have mostly chosen to govern Patagonia separately and work towards their respective goals independently. This has largely been impacted by the ways in which borders were formed and relations between the two countries since then. The border separating Chile and Argentina was formally established in 1882 and modified in 1902 (Sepulveda & Guyot, 2016). Figure 3 shows the establishment of these parks along the border of Chile and Argentina in northern Patagonia. Learning how these borders were formed is crucial to understanding the history of protected areas in Patagonia and how they have been used for political and economic power.
We tend to think of protected areas as being for the purposes of conservation and environmental protection. However, in the early 1900s, protected areas were created in Patagonia in order to “reaffirm the state’s sovereignty over resources,” (Sepulveda & Guyot, 2016).

Northern Patagonia was seen as an “open frontier” where protected areas were designated as such in order to delineate this space. A portion of the forest reserves gained autonomous status which produced the first national parks in Chile (Sepulveda & Guyot, 2016). While the

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6 Protected areas included: Alto Bio Bio Forest Reserve, Villarrica Forest Reserve, and Llanquihue Forest Reserve.

7 The first national parks in Chile included: the Vicente Pérez Rosales National Park (formed in 1926), Villarrica National Park (formed in 1940), and Puyehue National Park (formed in 1941).
governments saw this space as “open,” it is important to recognize that these areas were inhabited by indigenous peoples, mainly the Mapuche people. Both governments saw an opportunity for political and economic gains through the expansion of land and the development of tourism, and as a result the indigenous groups were displaced. Globally, this is not an uncommon process. The creation of many National Parks in the United States has a similar origin story: Sepulveda & Guyot compare this process in Patagonia to the origin of Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming.

Argentina had a similar mindset of securing land on the border for the purposes of promoting tourism and distinguishing border lines. Southern National Park\(^8\) was established in 1922 as the first protected area in Argentina. It was one of the first in a series of border parks established. The creation of Southern National Park is known as one of the “essential historical elements towards securing the territorial stability of the region bordering Chile,” (Sepulveda & Guyot, 2016). Argentina placed six additional national parks along border lines with Chile, and delineated others along their borders with Brazil and Paraguay.

It is important to understand the role that protected areas have played in dividing borders in Patagonia. Understanding this gives us perspective on why historically there has not been successful collaboration between Chile and Argentina. The fight over land and border delineation obviously perpetuates conflict between the two nations and makes collaboration seem less enticing. That being said, in many ways these border parks are even more of a reason for the respective countries to implement multi-national collaboration. Having these national parks along borders means that both countries are highly impacted by what happens in and around these border parks. This is significant in terms of tourism and the flow of people, but also in relation to natural disasters like wildfires.

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\(^8\) Southern National Park is presently known as Nahuel Huapi National Park (Sepulveda & Guyot, 2016).
**Recommendations for Collaboration**

Wildfire prevention is one of the few cases where Chile and Argentina have collaborated along these border parks towards a common goal. UNESCO describes the “recent alliance” between Argentina’s National Park Administration (APN) and Chile’s National Forestry Corporation (CONAF) formed in early 2022 to fight fires in these protected areas. Rodrigo Munita, the executive director of CONAF, explains that this collaboration is designed to “improve coordination and understanding” while battling threats which “endanger natural and cultural resources,” (UNESCO, 2022). There seems to be a growing recognition of the need for collaboration between the two governments and hopefully these collaborations will be expanded to push forth other environmental agendas. In particular, the two countries are also impacted by other environmental threats such as water and air quality, and glacial recession. There may also be opportunities for collaboration on public transportation. As we have seen in the case of the Nordic Region, having multi-national collaboration can lead to many innovations and create positive change that benefits all parties, especially in relation to sustainability and climate goals.

**Thailand and Community Governance**

Thailand has been successful at using community governance in several places around the country. While many places around the world have begun implementing CBT, Thailand has many examples of how CBT can be a more sustainable alternative to traditional forms of tourism. In this section, I will discuss the implementation of community-based governance in three communities. Scholar Bruegel has researched CBT using quantitative methods in Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi. Scholars Lo et al. have researched CBT in Muen Ngoen Kong using qualitative methods of analysis. I will delineate the research done by scholars Bruegel and Lo et
al. to articulate the significance of CBT in Thailand, and then relate the findings from these communities to Patagonia.

**Mae La Na**

Mae La Na is a community located within the region of Mae Hong Son in northern Thailand. There are many iterations of CBT around the world, and in Thailand the Mae Hong Son Community Based Tourism Network is a network of twenty communities which practice CBT and “share local life and culture” with tourists (Mae Hong Son Green Map, 2022). Mae Hong Son is not a particularly popular tourist destination, but many come for hiking and climbing opportunities.

While CBT takes place around the world, Thailand's Mae Hong Son is a great example of its practical implementation. CBT is functioning in many villages in Mae Hong Son, including the Mae La Na which scholar Breugel has extensively studied. The people who inhabit Mae La Na are Shan people who migrated from Burma and have inhabited the area for over 100 years. The Shan practice Buddhism, have their own language, and have unique cultural practices. There are about 600 people living in Mae La Na, and the main economy is farming (Breugel, 2013). In Mae La Na, the origin of CBT is quite fascinating. Prior to 1994, tourism was practiced in a more traditional manner with guided tours run by people from outside Mae La Na. The caves in Mae La Na had been a popular attraction for tourists, but the people living in Mae La Na believed that going into the caves was bad luck, so there was no involvement from locals in these tourist experiences. It was not until 1994, when villagers entered the caves with a priest and became comfortable and saw the beauty of the caves, that villagers in Mae La Na became involved in tourism. Once they entered the caves, they realized there had been significant
damage due to tourism, and a few of the villagers decided to create their own tours for visitors from outside so they could prevent further damage to the caves (Breugel, 2013).

What happened in 1994 was the initial catalyst for community-based tourism, however it was not until 2001 when Mae La Na received financial support and adequate leadership that the idea really took hold. Since 2001, Mae La Na has had an active CBT industry and maintained a “well organized tourism infrastructure,” (Breugel, 2013). Around 30 families in Mae La Na participate in CBT, often hosting tourists in their homes. Aside from the already existing attraction of the caves, the community has created other activities for tourists such as traditional dancing, weaving, and medicine groups. Local guides also provide trekking experiences through the mountains.

One of the most significant differences of CBT as opposed to other forms of tourism is the way that community members are able to control the way it develops. Oftentimes when tourism is unmanaged and left to be determined by the market economy, communities experience the negative impacts of tourism such as displacement, gentrification, and loss of cultural practices. While there is no way to completely eliminate these factors in any sector, Breugel’s questionnaire gives insight into the ways that community members believe CBT has impacted Mae La Na. As shown in the first statement of Figure 4, residents in Mae La Na involved in CBT were asked on a scale of 1-5 to rank their opinion on the following: “I believe that my community has control over tourism development in my community.” The mean score from this statement was 4.29, indicating that the majority of residents surveyed agreed with the statement (Breugel, 2013). Additionally, the average score economic impact statement in Figure 5 summarizes community views on CBT: “I believe that tourism development in my community
has brought more advantages than disadvantages.” The mean score for this question was 4.14, also indicating that the majority of residents surveyed agreed with the statement (Breugel, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe that my community has control over tourism development in my community</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>I believe that I personally have control over tourism development in my community</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Overall participation</td>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Do you have direct contact with tourists?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, more than once a week</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, less than once a week</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, monthly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but rarely</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been involved in any type of meeting where you discussed tourism development in your community?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, many times</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but only once or twice</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been asked about your opinion on tourism by those who plan tourism development?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, many times</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but only once or twice</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When major decisions concerning tourism development in your community, were you informed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, many times</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but only once or twice</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that major decisions concerning tourism development in your community are made primarily by ......</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole community</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A group of people in the community</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>81,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People outside the community</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Survey on social, environmental, and economic impacts of community-based tourism in Mae La Na (Breugel, 2013).
Figure 5. Survey part II on social, environmental, and economic impacts of community-based tourism in Mae La Na (Breugel, 2013).

The overall results from the survey are indicative of a highly positive view of CBT in Mae La Na. This is a very good indicator that CBT has been successful in Mae La Na, however it is also important to understand the drawbacks of CBT. In Mae La Na, most of the drawbacks come from the attention placed on the community that is not wanted or cannot be accommodated. One illustration of this is how many organizations have come to Mae La Na with ideas for new projects, when the community felt there was “no need” for these projects. One interviewee mentioned having to “make an effort to stop the projects from happening,” (Breugel,
A comprehensive assessment of CBT in Mae La Na allows us to have a better understanding of how CBT can be beneficial, and how to anticipate and prevent some of the potential drawbacks.

**Koh Yao Noi**

The other community studied by Breugel was Koh Yao Noi. This island is located in southern Thailand in the Yao district which consists of 44 islands. This region is a very touristic part of Thailand, however Koh Yao Noi is not well visited by tourists. The people living there are mostly fisherman and most identify as Muslim. While mass tourism has been present on surrounding islands such as Phuket, Koh Yao Noi has historically maintained a relatively small tourist industry (Breugel, 2013). The origin of the CBT industry in Koh Yao Noi was based on a desire for conservation. In the 1980s, the community was experiencing issues with large-scale overfishing in the Phang Nga Bay. There were many using illegal fishing methods that were degrading the Bay. In the 1990s, the island formed a partnership with the Responsible Ecological Social Tours project who helped develop a CBT program on the island. The goal of this program was to “share their struggles with Thai society and demand law enforcement,” (Breugel, 2013). This brought many journalists, academics and cultural tourists to the island which drew attention to the degradation of the Bay. In 2001, they finally received attention from law enforcement which shut down illegal fishing in the Phang Nga Bay. Despite the original goal being for CBT in Koh Yao Noi to eliminate illegal fishing, CBT has remained an important part of their economy. Education surrounding local fishing traditions, Muslim culture, and local conservation are incorporated into their CBT practices (Breugel, 2013).

An identical survey in Mae La Na was also conducted in Koh Yao Noi. In the same way, residents of Koh Yao Noi ranked their belief on the following statement: “I believe that my
community has control over tourism development in my community.” As shown in Figure 6, the results from this statement yielded 3.69. This indicates a somewhat positive answer, but lacks a definitive opinion from the community. The second statement was also surveyed: “I believe that tourism development in my community has brought more advantages than disadvantages.” As shown in Figure 7, this statement had a slightly more positive response at 3.92, meaning most agreed, but not definitively (Breugel, 2013). With these mixed results, it is important to understand some of the community concerns expressed in this survey. Many of the more negative responses cited “overcrowding” and tourism “growing too fast” for the community (Breugel, 2013). Additionally, since the community is majority Muslim, they have specific traditions which have not always been adhered to by visitors. Scholar Breugel notes the importance for tourists to “adapt their behavior” in order to gain respect in the community. Despite these challenges, Koh Yao Noi is recognized nationally and internationally as a successful example of CBT. They have received several awards from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), as well as the World Legacy Award by the National Geographic Traveler and Conservation International (Breugel, 2013).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe that my community has control over tourism development in my community</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that I personally have control over tourism development in my community</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall participation</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.53</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No.resp.</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have direct contact with tourists?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, more than once a week</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, less than once a week</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, monthly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but rarely</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been involved in any type of meeting where you discussed tourism development in your community?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, many times</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but only once or twice</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been asked about your opinion on tourism by those who plan tourism development?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, many times</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but only once or twice</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When major decisions concerning tourism development in your community, were you informed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, many times</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but only once or twice</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that major decisions concerning tourism development in your community are made primarily by ......</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole community</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A group of people in the community</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People outside the community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=58, *Statements were answered on a 5-point scale, 1 indicating strongly disagree, 5 indicating strongly agree*

Figure 6. Survey on social, environmental, and economic impacts of community-based tourism in Koh Yao Noi (Breugel, 2013).
Figure 7. Survey part II on social, environmental, and economic impacts of community-based tourism in Koh Yao Noi (Breugel, 2013).

### Muen Ngoen Kong

Muen Ngoen Kong is a community located in Chiang Mai, a popular tourist destination in Thailand. Muen Ngoen Kong is known for its famous ancient architecture, community culture, and history. It is located just south-west of Chiang Mai City in a relatively quiet area. In a qualitative study done on Muen Ngoen Kong, Lo & Janta identify benefits and shortcomings of
CBT in this community. The two main benefits of CBT for Muen Ngoen Kong were an “abundance of tourism resources,” and “security related concerns,” (Lo & Janta, 2021). Being located in Chiang Mai has afforded Muen Ngoen Kong an abundance of tourists coming to the area looking for attractions. In this case, CBT allowed the community to utilize this asset and expand their economy through tourism. Additionally, security is typically a major concern for CBT in Thailand as many communities have struggled with criminal activity as a result of their growing economies. Despite this trend, Muen Ngoen Kong has “succeeded in strengthening and supplying effective crime prevention,” (Lo & Janta, 2021). The community has employed a volunteer police presence, and this has been shown to reduce violence in the community. With the implementation of CBT, the majority of informants reported the absence of a security problem in the community.

As for challenges to CBT, there are two main challenges for Muen Ngoen Kong. First is the challenge of resource ownership, where many guest houses and businesses are owned by outside investors. This has created problems where many feel that the “loss of the right to possess and own the land has incurred more costs than benefits,” (Lo & Janta, 2021). CBT is meant to be centered around community values and allow the community to reap the full benefits. When outside forces are involved, they often extract from the community, rather than benefit the community. Going along with this, the second challenge for Muen Ngoen Kong is financial issues. Ownership is a big issue, as these communities often require “funding or donor support” from government sectors or stakeholders (Lo & Janta, 2021; Reed, 1997). This is difficult given that CBT is based on the principle of community governance, yet these communities often lack the initial funding to build a successful tourism industry on their own.
Community-based tourism in Thailand is a great start in recognizing the potential for small communities to provide tourism experiences. From these studies, we can see that these communities have not perfectly implemented CBT, but they are extremely beneficial for other places to learn from. In particular, Patagonia can replicate some of their successes and learn from their shortcomings.

**Community Governance and Implementation in Patagonia**

**Puerto Natales**

The communities in Thailand mentioned have each managed to create community-based tourism industries that have been moderately successful. Each community made the decision to pursue a type of tourism oriented towards their community cultures and values. In the case of Patagonia, there are many small communities that also have tourism industries that could be adapted using CBT in order to center them around community culture and values. One example is Puerto Natales, a small fishing village in the Magallanes province of Chile. This town is a popular destination for tourists looking to visit Torres del Paine National Park, one of the biggest attractions on the Chilean side of Patagonia. Being in close proximity to a popular tourist destination gives the community a “locational advantage” where there is a great opportunity for CBT. With this location, tourists can “enjoy one or more destinations and CBT sites at the same time,” (Lo & Janta, 2021; Tamir, 2015). Given the popularity of Torres del Paine, Puerto Natales has a unique opportunity to attract tourists and provide a cultural experience for travelers. The Chile Travel website describes Puerto Natales as having a “cattle ranching identity” and “growing adventure activities,” (Chile Subsecretaría de Turismo, 2021). With these attributes, Puerto Natales could implement CBT if locals had the desire to share more of their community with tourists. While Puerto Natales’ tourism industry is largely based upon the attraction to
Torres del Paine, they could also integrate more experiences from locals and make the town itself more of a destination.

*El Calafate*

Another example of a town that could implement CBT in Patagonia is El Calafate, a small town in the Santa Cruz province of Argentina. El Calafate is famous for its proximity to Glacier Perito Moreno, one of the biggest attractions in Patagonia (Municipalidad El Calafate, 2018). Aside from the glacier, El Calafate is known for its performances and events which could be used as an attraction for tourism as well. The town recently hosted *El Calafate Baila*, a performance with over 800 dancers from around the region and country. Additionally, El Calafate also hosts a *Cultural Agenda* each year where they have local and regional artists perform (Municipalidad El Calafate, 2018). These kinds of events and activities could be further developed and promoted in Puerto Natales and El Calafate. Having this kind of community-based tourism could allow for many benefits to local people and their livelihoods.

**CONCLUSION**

Throughout this paper, I have delineated the ways in which Patagonia has been shaped by human forces including: conceptions of sustainability, Chilean and Argentine histories, governmental legislation, and various levels of governance. After reading this paper, I hope it is clear that Patagonia is more than just “untouched wilderness.” This mischaracterization of Patagonia contributes to the idea that as humans we live separately from nature and that “environment” only refers to non-human beings. This ultimately leads us to develop a false sense of security in believing that climate change will only affect “nature” and that as humans we are shielded from these devastating impacts. By creating this stark divide, we are able to ignore
many of the devastating impacts of climate change, despite the continual proven impacts on humans.

My intention with this paper is to identify specific ways that Patagonia could positively influence its tourism industry. Specifically through the lens of governance, I was able to identify three different aspects of sustainable governance at the national, multi-national, and community levels. I was then able to find ways that each of those case studies could be implemented in Patagonia. No country, region, or community has all the answers to the environmental crisis, or even sustainable tourism, but I wanted to highlight aspects of sustainability that can act as a model for each type of governance. Patagonia has specific issues it needs to work through, but I do not think sustainable tourism is impossible for Patagonia. In fact, I think sustainable tourism could be effectively implemented in Patagonia with the right leadership and incentives.

Patagonia needs to improve all three levels of governance in order to achieve sustainable tourism. Nationally, both Chile and Argentina can learn from the way that Costa Rica has been able to implement certifications, renewable energy, and reforest their country. Additionally, Patagonia has an issue of multi-national governance with a lack of coordination between the Chilean and Argentine governments. The Nordic region has collaborated to implement environmental policy for the whole region, and the Chilean and Argentine governments can do the same in managing Patagonia. As for the community level, Thailand's communities are a great example of community-based tourism and how local culture can create a successful community-based tourism industry. Patagonia also has many small towns that have unique local culture that could be effectively utilized to create a socially and economically beneficial tourism industry.
National and multinational governance is going to be particularly challenging for Patagonia. Having the right leadership and incentives is the key to this, and this rests a lot on Chile and Argentina’s politicians and their willingness to direct their respective countries towards sustainability goals. However, this is influenced by public perception and international agreements. In the case of Chile’s ongoing elections with their new Constitution, public perception is actually quite important. The most recent iteration of the Constitution has been rejected and will continue to be re-written with the intention of being approved by a majority vote. As previously mentioned, a Constitution with language explicitly discussing the environment is vital in enacting environmental policy in a Civil Law system.

Ultimately the Chilean and Argentine governments have a strong role in the direction of environmental policy. With multi-national leadership, there is also the issue of cooperation between two countries that have historically struggled over border disputes. Despite their historical lack of cooperation, I believe that in the coming decades both countries will see the benefit of having collaborative leadership over Patagonia. Particularly with climate change and its growing impacts, I hope that the Chilean and Argentine governments will find value in having consistent and effective environmental legislation in Patagonia.

With respect to community governance, I believe this to be the most feasible to successfully implement in Patagonia. Community governance in Thailand is a great example of how communities have been able to implement sustainable tourism without strong support from the national government. Since Patagonia is similar with many small, decentralized cities, this could be relatively feasible if there is a desire stemming from these cities to do so. In understanding how each of these case studies of governance has been effective, it is also
important to understand the history of these countries and how they have been able to enact sustainability in their tourism industries.

Of course the ideas shared regarding Costa Rica, the Nordic region, and Thailand’s communities are applicable to other parts of the world as well. Being from the United States, there is much that we can also learn from these case studies and apply to our country’s governance structures. There are limitations to what any place can do, but understanding how these successful governances were enacted provides a missing guide to conversations about sustainable tourism, and climate change more broadly. So much of the time, rhetoric regarding climate change is very negative and it can cause feelings of hopelessness. With this paper I wanted to share success stories and advocate for improvements to Patagonia’s tourism industry. Patagonia has proven to be highly resilient, and with proper governance Patagonia can achieve sustainable tourism.
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