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Article

What the Gringos Brought: Local Perspectives on a Private Protected Area in Chilean Patagonia

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Abstract

Privately Protected Areas (PPAs) are a growing trend in conservation and have been promoted by global environmental institutions such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as an essential component for achieving conservation targets. PPAs are on the rise worldwide and particularly in Chile, where neoliberal reform has created new spaces in conservation management for private individuals and civil society. However, little empirical research examines their effects on local people. Drawing from critiques of the neoliberalisation of nature and the intertwining of capitalism and conservation, this research explores the case of a particular PPA in Chile, Patagonia Park; asking specifically: what are the impacts of this particular PPA on local residents? Based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews, this research finds that the park has been detrimental to local livelihoods, disrupted systems of production, and elicited emotional responses of pain, sadness, and loss. The relation between the park and community has been characterised by a lack of information and understanding, and reveals deeply contrasting views of nature held by park administrators and local residents. We find that, in this case, the social impacts of the PPA are similar to those that have long been documented and criticised in state-run, 'fortress conservation' models. When we look closely at the history of many state-run protected areas, we see that private capital has always played a central role in conservation. This research suggests then that there may be little truly novel about PPAs in terms of both process of development, and the ways that local people experience them.

Keywords: privately protected area, Patagonia, Chile, neoliberalism, conservation, neoliberal conservation

INTRODUCTION

"Saving Patagonia?! More like destroying everything that Patagonia is!" a middle-aged man who had spent his whole life working with livestock exclaimed indignantly when asked about the role of wealthy North American entrepreneurs Doug and Kris Tompkins and their Private Protected Area (PPA), Patagonia Park. Up until 2004, this man had spent most of his life in Valle Chacabuco, a fertile, steppe grassland located in Southern Chile's Aysén region that functioned as a sheep ranch for most of its modern history. The son of members of a peasant cooperative, he passed the early years of his childhood in the valley, had family members buried there, was forced out under the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship, and later returned to the lands to work as a ranch hand until it was sold overnight to the Tompkins. This local outrage, that the Tompkins and Patagonia Park are destroying Patagonia, contrasts sharply with the story found in park materials: rescue and rehabilitation, saving an abused landscape, contributing vitally to global conservation efforts.

This research explores the case of Patagonia Park, asking specifically: *what are the impacts of this particular PPA on local residents?* Based on semi-structured interviews with people with varying relationships to the park as well as analysis of park promotional materials (website, videos, online content)

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this research finds that the PPA has entailed many negative effects from the perspective of local residents. The purchase has damaged local livelihoods, disrupted systems of production, and elicited emotional responses of pain, sadness and loss. The relation between the park and community, at least thus far, has been characterised by a lack of information and understanding, and reveals deeply contrasting views of nature held by park administrators and local residents.

Although PPAs have been touted as an essential tool to achieve biodiversity targets and are becoming increasingly mainstream in conservation (Stolton et al. 2014); we find that, in this case, the social impacts of the PPA replicate those that have long been documented and criticised in state-run, 'fortress conservation' models (Neumann 1998, Igoe 2004). Furthermore, this research argues that when we look closely at the history of many state-run protected areas, private capital, private interests and values have always played a central role in conservation. This research finds that Patagonia Park has been facilitated by neoliberal policies and in some ways is exemplary of neoliberal conservation, and yet simultaneously reiterates older practices imported from US conservation and philanthropy. In terms of how local people experience it, we find that the social impacts of this PPA resemble those of exclusionary, fortress conservation. These findings contribute to a gap in the existing literature examining the social impacts of PPAs.

PPAs and Neoliberal Conservation

PPAs have grown in size and number over the past two decades, and form a large but understudied piece of the increased role of the private sector in conservation (Stolton et al. 2014). Although the concept of a privately owned nature reserve has existed for centuries, there is a growing push for more recognition of and support for PPAs. A recent report from the IUCN calls PPAs "an essential component in achieving CBD targets," (Stolton et al. 2014: x). Despite the importance and attention placed on them, precise inventories of PPAs are elusive due to the great heterogeneity of owners, governance structures, sizes, and objectives (Stolton et al. 2014). The IUCN defines PPAs as a protected area under private governance, which may include individuals, groups, NGOs, commercial companies, for-profit owners, or research entities. Despite rising prevalence, there is a dearth of critical attention (Holmes 2015). In this section, we explore some of the key issues surrounding PPAs, as well as the broader interconnections between private interests, capitalism, and conservation.

It has been argued that PPAs may have potential to address social issues that have long surrounded state run PAs that go beyond conserving unprotected ecosystems; filling gaps in state run Protected Area (PA) systems; being more flexible; and potentially faster to respond to conservation needs. Langholtz and Lassoie (2001) argue that PPAs can contribute to devolution of resource control to local peoples and provide opportunities for public participation. Similarly, Stolton et al. (2014) discuss how PPAs provide an opportunity for conservation to include a diverse array of stakeholders. These authors suggest that PPAs may provide an opportunity for conservation to be more "bottom up," inclusive, and democratic.

There are also several key social challenges surrounding PPAs, mostly related to the process of land acquisition and the power held by PPA proprietors. PPAs may be part of larger trends of dispossession and elite land ownership and may become, as Langholz and Lassoie (2001:1083) say, "island of elites," where wealthy individuals enjoy privileged natural landscapes, while local residents receive few benefits and/or lose access: as with traditional state-run PAs, PPAs can distribute benefits and costs unequally. This is exemplified in the cases of the Greater Lebombo Conservancy in Mozambique (Masse and Lunstrum 2016) where residents were dispossessed of lands, and in the Loliondo region of Tanzania where locals lost access to traditional grazing areas after those lands were converted into a private game reserve (Ngoitiko et al 2010). Even in cases such as the San Rafael Managed Resource Reserve in Paraguay where management is more participatory, local people are not directly represented on management committees (Quintana and Morse 2005). PPAs may serve to deepen inequalities in land ownership and further concentrate benefits of conservation into elite hands (Brockington, Duffy, and Igoe 2008). PPAs may also fit into larger processes of, "land grabbing" or "green grabbing," (Holmes 2014), wherein powerful actors are able to use economic, legal, or physical force to expropriate areas of land against the will of local people living nearby or inside an area (Fairhead et al. 2012).

PPAs form one piece of a broader trend where the private sector and civil society play an increased role in conservation. Associated with neoliberal policies starting in the 1970s and 80s, where states adopted policies to facilitate the free functioning of markets, critics have referred to this trend as neoliberal conservation (e.g. Igoe and Brockington 2007). Fletcher (2010:172) offers a concise summary of characteristics of neoliberal conservation: 1) the creation of capitalist markets for natural resource exchange and consumption; 2) privatisation of resource control within those markets; 3) commodification of resources so that they can be traded within markets; 4) withdrawal of direct government intervention from market transactions; and 5) decentralisation of resource governance to local authorities and non-state actors like NGOs. PPAs in many ways fill the void left by the state that has been "rolled back," in terms of conservation, and have been facilitated by policies expressly designed to invite foreign capital. Also, PPAs have been considered a neoliberal form of conservation through the opportunity to profit with for-profit PPAs (Buscher and Whande 2007). Thus, PPAs are often associated with neoliberal modes of conservation (Holmes 2015).

Although literature on neoliberal conservation is diverse and heterogeneous, a central feature is shifting constellations of environmental governance frequently exemplified by PPAs. A reduction in state-led conservation efforts has been

accompanied by the rise of complex networks of corporations, conservation NGOs, and states, or "hybrid governance arrangements, that appear to be direct products of neoliberal thinking," (Brockington and Duffy 2011:479). Central to this, conservation NGOs have grown in size and power, increasingly have close ties to both businesses and states, and are themselves run like corporations (Igoe and Brockington 2007).

Conservacion Patagonica typifies such a hybrid governance arrangement. Founded by former CEOs of large clothing companies, its board of directors includes Yvon and Malinda Chouinard, owners of Patagonia, Inc., both the former CEO and chief financial officer of the Esprit clothing company, a former biodiversity advisor from the World Bank, and a strategist from The Nature Conservancy (Conservacion Patagonica 2017). The clothing company Patagonia Inc. is a main supporter and promoter of the project. They send Patagonia Inc. employees to volunteer at the park, sponsor trail construction, and publicise the project. Promotion includes blogs accessed via the Patagonia Inc. website, stories, and pictures in the clothing catalogue, photo boards in retail stores illustrating the project, as well as videos about the park featuring Patagonia Inc. sponsored athletes. In this case, working to ultimately donate lands back to the state, this network of 'transnational conservation elite' (Holmes 2011) form an intricate nexus of money, ideas, and individuals (Igoe and Brockington 2007). Typifying neoliberal governance, the line between philanthropy, private enterprise, and NGO are blurred beyond recognition (Igoe and Brockington 2007).

In this sense, Patagonia Park could be considered a form of neoliberal conservation. However, looking back at some of the most emblematic state run parks in the USA, we see that a complex relationship between state conservation initiatives and private capital is hardly novel. Although PPAs have grown in tandem with the spread of neoliberal policies and logics and are frequently associated with the neoliberal turn in conservation (Vaccaro et al. 2013), a sharp distinction between PPAs and public conservation projects may be a false dichotomy. Tracing back to some of the most famous national parks of USA, we see that the idea of eco-philanthropy (the buying of lands by wealthy individuals for conservation) has blurred the lines between public initiatives and private interests in both historic as well as contemporary conservation efforts.

The idea of buying up vast tracts of land for conservation/preservation has a history, particularly in the USA where the first national parks were advocated for by powerful capitalists (Brockington and Duffy 2010). For example, John D. Rockefeller donated 5 million dollars during the Great Depression to create the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Similarly, Rockefeller bought 14,000 hectares in Jackson Hole, Wyoming in the 1920s in hopes of combining the property with the recently created Grand Teton National Park. The project received considerable resistance from local ranchers and businessmen who were concerned about losing the land for agriculture and as a tax base (Butler 2008). Finally, in 1943, President Roosevelt designated he land as a National Monument; in 1950, President Truman merged it with the other lands already designated as part of Grand Teton National Park (Zeller 2005). During the same time period, Percival Baxter, who built his fortune in the canning industry, bought and donated the land containing Kathadin Peak in Maine to create Baxter State Park in 1931 (Butler 2008).

Taking an historical perspective, we see that although neoliberalism has facilitated the recent growth of PPAs, examples of private interests playing formative roles in state-led conservation projects are easily traced through many "public" parks. Patagonia Park in particular is reminiscent of the actions of Rockefeller and other influential donors who have facilitated the development of protected areas by purchasing tracts of lands with intent to donate to the central state. With these similar origins in mind, the remainder of this paper will examine the social impacts of one such initiative.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Chilean Environmental Governance, PPAs, and the New Patagonian Imaginary

PPAs have grown in Chile in recent decades. Since the USA CIA-backed coup d'état in 1973, the country has been a laboratory for extreme neoliberal reform. Counteracting and undoing socialist, redistributive policies of the previous administrations of Eduardo Frei Montalva and Salvador Allende, the 16-year military dictatorship led by Augusto Pinochet completely restructured Chile along neoliberal lines. The military government privatised public assets and industries, opened up natural resources for exploitation and export, created policies that facilitated direct foreign investment, and eliminated any barriers to free trade (Harvey 2007). Despite Chile's return to a democracy in 1989, neoliberalism remains institutionalised, even calcified in Chilean politics and society (Carruthers 2001; Latta and Aguayo 2012).

Chile's long and deep engagement with neoliberalism has facilitated economic growth, but precipitated a dizzying array of environmental impacts. From industrial-scale commercial agriculture in the central valley and mines in the north, to timber harvest and aquaculture in the south, private ownership of natural resources oriented toward extraction and exportation has characterised natural resource governance in Chile's neoliberal regime (Altieri and Rojas 1999). Environmental regulation slowly developed in Chile with the passage of the National Environmental Framework Law (NEFL) in 1994, however scholars agree that this law accomplishes only minor restrictions on environmental destruction and does little to challenge the notion of indefinite growth based on raw resource extraction (Carruthers 2001; Latta and Aguayo 2012; Silva 1996; Tecklin, Bauer, and Prieto 2011). In terms of protected areas, somewhat surprisingly, almost 19% of the country is included in the state system of protected areas administered by the hybrid public-private agency The National

Forest Corporation (CONAF). However, of this 19%, a large portion is located in ice fields, mountainous areas, and other high elevation landscapes with relatively low biodiversity (Pauchard and Villarroel 2002).

Limited state-led initiatives for conservation combined with policies specifically designed to attract direct foreign investment and invite unlimited foreign land ownership has resulted in an explosion of PPAs in Chile since the 1990s (Holmes 2015; Tecklin and Sepulveda 2014). Chile is home to some 500 heterogeneous PPAs, covering around two percent of the country (Meza 2009). The majority are owned by private individuals, NGOs, businesses (largely timber companies), 'conservation communities,' (a group akin to a time-share retirement community,) and eco-real estate ventures (Corcuera, Sepulveda, and Geisse 2002). PPAs in Chile are nominally recognised in Article 35 of the NEFL, but are not officially defined nor incentivised in this law (Stolton et al. 2014; Tecklin and Sepulveda 2014).

Patagonia, or the region containing the two southernmost provinces of Chile, in particular has seen a rapid increase in PPAs over the past three decades. This is partially due to the highly scenic landscapes characteristic of the region, relatively cheap land prices, and lack of development as compared to the rest of the country (Holmes 2015). On another level, as Mendoza et al. (2017) argue, "Patagonia" has become a powerful territorial regional imaginary in international circles revolving around green developmentalism. Despite great variety in operating model, types of owners, and ideological orientation (from altruistic to profit-driven) (Holmes 2015), PPAs and their associated eco-tourism and recreation contribute to the vision of Patagonia as an eco-region and pillar of green development. Harmonising with Mendoza et al. (2017), this research shows how this vision is not without friction and resistance between various actors working to define "Patagonia."

History of Patagonia Park

Doug and Kris Tompkins have been influential in the development of PPAs in Chile since the 1990s. Doug Tompkins first visited the Patagonia region in the late 1960s as a climber and mountaineer (Tompkins Conservation 2017). He later co-founded both the North Face gear company and the Esprit clothing company. After a successful career in the gear and fashion industries, Tompkins became involved in the Deep Ecology movement in late 1980s, and started the Foundation for Deep Ecology (The Foundation for Deep Ecology 2017). According to the foundation's website, Tompkins realised that the consumer culture he had helped promote as a businessman was a destructive manifestation of an industrial growth economy that is harmful to nature (The Foundation for Deep Ecology 2017). After selling his business shares, he committed full time to conservation in the mid-1990s (The Foundation for Deep Ecology 2017).

Kris Tompkins has a similarly impressive history in both the apparel and conservation worlds. She served as CEO to the Patagonia Inc. clothing company for 20 years, and then later moved to working full time in conservation and founded Conservacion Patagonica (CP), the NGO behind Patagonia Park. Together, Doug and Kris, under various NGO auspices including Fundacion Pumalin, The Conservation Land Trust, and Conservacion Patagonica, have led the private land conservation charge in Chile. These 'sister organisations' fall under the umbrella of Tompkins Conservation, which has a board of directors in the United States and various project directors around Chile (Tompkins Conservation 2017).

The Tompkins role in Chilean protected areas and politics has been wrought with controversy. Their first project in Chile, Parque Pumalin started in 1990 and stretched from the Argentinian border to the Pacific Ocean. This project was highly contentious, both because of the means of land purchases, and because it was seen as a threat to national sovereignty and opportunity for natural resource extraction and development (Holmes 2015; Tecklin and Sepulveda 2014). The project sparked many conspiracy theories, including the idea that Tompkins was creating a homeland for Jews (Tecklin and Sepulveda 2014). The Tompkins have continued to played a controversial role, receiving ire from many who see them as an impediment to development, and/or mistrust the motivations behind the projects.

Patagonia Park (Figure 1) is the most recent of the Tompkins projects. The approximately 80,000-hectare area was purchased by Conservacion Patagonica in 2004. Patagonia Park functions with limited commercial activity, charges a minimal entry fee for camping, free access to trails, and offers a high-end lodge with boutique rooms (Conservacion Patagonica 2017). The Tompkins have long publicly committed to donating their lands to the Chilean state, however, so far donations have been limited (currently two areas have been donated to the country: Corcovado National Park, and Yendegaia National Park, and one, Pumalin Park, has been donated as a nature reserve (Tompkins Conservation 2017)). In the case of Patagonia Park, the area borders two publicly owned protected areas, Jeneimeni National Reserve and Tamango National Reserve. The goal of the project is to donate the lands in Valle Chacabuco to the Chilean state; and together all three protected areas would become Patagonia National Park (Conservacion Patagonica 2017). In March of 2017, the Chilean government signed an agreement to accept the lands in Valle Chacabuco among others (Tchekmedyian 2017), although little is known about the timeline or details of the actual transfer (L. Pedrasa pers. comm. October 20, 2016).

The park website tells a simple narrative of Conservacion Patagonica purchasing a supposedly bankrupt and mismanaged ranch; however, this belies the complex socio-ecological history of the valley, and the importance of the Valle Chacabuco in Aysén's settlement. Due to the inhospitable weather and topography of the region combined with low national priority, Aysén was settled late in Chile's colonial history. In the late 19th century, both Chilean and Argentinian governments initiated violent campaigns to dispossess and extirpate native populations of the Patagonia region in order to open the area

for colonist settlement and integration into capitalist production for national and global markets (Mendoza et al. 2017). Valle Chacabuco was vacant of native peoples when early Chilean settlers arrived (Martinic 2005) however the broader legacy of this process is still navigated and challenged today by indigenous peoples in other regions of Chile and Argentina, (for further discussion on indigenous land struggles in relation to PPAs see Meza 2009).

In 1903, amid border disputes with Argentina, the Chilean government granted concessions to livestock companies to encourage settlement and prevent annexation (Martinic 2005). These concessions covered almost the entirety of Aysén, and one of the largest included Valle Chacabuco (Martinic 2005; Biblioteca Nacional de Chile 2016). The ranching operation in Valle Chacabuco drew Chilean and European immigrants, and formed the pillar of economic and social life in the region, eventually precipitating the development of Cochrane, the nearest town (Martinic 2005).

The livestock concession functioned under this arrangement until 1967, when the state withdrew the concession and incorporated the lands into agrarian reform (Martinic 2005). As part of nationwide policies aimed at empowering the peasant classes and demolishing the oligarchical *hacienda* system (the historic tenure arrangement wherein the largest estates of the country belonged to the elite classes) the major estates of the country were appropriated by the Frei Montalva administration (Bellisario 2007a). Valle Chacabuco was placed into the hands of the state and managed by the public agency CORA (The Corporation for Agrarian Reform). As with many other estates in the country, Valle Chacabuco was granted to a group of peasants who formed an *asentamiento*, or cooperative, where land was collectively managed and exploited for production. Twenty-six families from neighbouring towns of Coyhaique and Cochrane moved into the valley to participate (H. Vasquez pers. com. October 2, 2016). Although the *asentamientos* were meant to be a temporary arrangement from which involved families could eventually own the land, political changes prevented most *asentados* from ever gaining access to land titles (Kay 2002).

Figure 1
Map of Patagonia National Park
Source: Courtesy of Conservacion Patagonica

Ushering Chile into a fully capitalist political and economic system, the military government led by Augusto Pinochet reversed Frei and Allende era agrarian reforms by re-appropriating reformed lands and dividing and selling others (Bellisario 2007b). Based on the assumption that large, highly efficient and capitalised farms would make Chile's agricultural sector competitive in global markets, Pinochet era counter-reforms functioned to consolidate small and medium sized farms, and leave many farm workers as landless proletariat (Bellisario 2007a), and Valle Chacabuco was no exception. The families of the *asentamiento* continued to work and live in the valley until 1981, eight years after the coup, however CORA administrators, (associated with the previous administrations) were removed and replaced with military personnel. (H. Vasquez, L. Calindo, L. Carasco pers. comm. October 6, 2016). Eventually, after futile efforts to remain in Valle Chacabuco and obtain title to the lands, the members of the *asentamiento* desisted and left under pressure from the regime (H. Vasquez, L. Calindo, L. Carasco pers. comm. October 6, 2016). In 1983 the military government reclaimed the land, and sold it in public auction to a Chilean born man of Belgian descent, Francisco de Smet, who reinitiated the sheep ranching operations (C. de Smet pers. comm. October 4, 2016).

Although privately owned by de Smet, from 1983 to 2004, The Estancia[1] Valle Chacabuco, as it was known during these years, was home to around 40 families and employed over one hundred workers at the high periods of branding and shearing (C. de Smet pers. comm. October 4, 2016). Wool and livestock were shipped to the central valley of Chile and then distributed to broader markets, while meat supplied regional markets and local consumption (C. de Smet pers. comm. October 4, 2016). The ranch during these years functioned as a primary employer of residents of the town of Cochrane, and the principal supply of meat to local residents. The one-hundred year vocation as a sheep and cattle ranch came to an abrupt halt in 2004 with the purchase by the Tompkins.

Data Collection and Analysis

This paper focusses on the time period beginning in 2004. This research examines Patagonia Park in a case study approach to interrogate the ways a broad phenomenon is playing out in a historically, culturally, and politically situated context, with close attention to the perspectives of local people. Research sought to elicit participant worldviews, and explore experiences and understandings of the changes initiated by Patagonia Park through a qualitative approach.

Field research was conducted from September through December of 2016 in the Aysén region. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with people from a variety of relationships to the park[2]. In a combination of purposive and snowball and sampling, people with varying relationships to the park were initially contacted, and then asked for referrals to others who knew a lot about the park or had long relationships with the valley. Sampling was intended not to be representative of the population, but rather capture a variety of perspectives, with an emphasis on local residents with a current or past relationship to the lands now in the park.

The total 15 interviews included high-level park administrators (2); park rangers[3](4); local residents who do not work for the park (8), and a CONAF protected area manager (1). The eight non-park affiliated local residents included two of the parks neighbors, two local politicians, two long term employees of the former ranch, and one daughter of *asentados* (members of the cooperative) who lived the early years of her life in Valle Chacabuco. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, and lasted from 45 to 110 minutes, with the exception of one interview of 20 minutes. Interviews were carried out in the park, in people's homes in Cochrane, in Coyhaique, the capital of Aysén, and in Puerto Varas, where Tompkins Conservation headquarters are located. Participants were asked about their history in and connection to Valle Chacabuco; descriptions of the valley before and after the park had been established; attitudes and reactions to the park; impacts of the park; and any perceived benefits or lack of benefits from the park. Interview scripts were piloted on a local Chilean to check for clarity and appropriateness.

Interviews were recorded on a digital recorder, and then transcribed verbatim in Spanish. Of the 15 interviews, 10 were transcribed by the researcher, and five were transcribed by a professional Chilean transcriptionist. Interviews were coded in QSR Nvivo software. The transcripts were left in Spanish throughout the coding process to maintain the nuance and context of the original language while searching for themes. At first, codes were organised topically according to common words, phrases or concepts, and generally followed the interview questions. In an iterative process of rereading transcripts and reorganising codes, descriptive and topical codes were eventually organised into more conceptual and abstract themes. Interviews from the different groups were analysed simultaneously to compare the way participants from different sub-populations understood and were experiencing the park. The analysis focusses on specific practices (e.g. activities associated with raising livestock) mentioned by interviewees as an entry point to understand broader social change initiated by the park.

This research also draws from park materials collected from fall of 2016- 2017. This process began with gathering, downloading, and archiving all pages of the Conservacion Patagonica website (www.conservacionpatagonica.org), the blog found on the site, promotional videos produced by Conservacion Patagonica, and other videos featuring Kris Tompkins which showcase the project (e.g. a speech given at a LinkedIn speaker series.)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: LIFE DISRUPTED, HISTORY ERASED, AND A NEW PARK BORN

Although PPAs are a rising trend in conservation, particularly as mainstream environmental efforts are increasingly carried out through combinations of philanthropists, NGOs, and businesses, and are driven by the interests and values of private capital as opposed to a central state; we find that the impacts, in this case, resemble those that have been documented in critiques of fortress conservation models and represent a larger trend of green grabbing by conservation elites across the globe. Our interest here is to document the impacts, as experienced by local residents, of this process of buying and enclosing land for conservation with the overall intent of returning it to the state as a national park.

According to participants, the purchase of Valle Chacabuco by the Tompkins has been catastrophically disruptive to their lives. Specifically, interviewees suggested that the park has damaged local livelihoods (both in terms of elimination of employment at the ranch and harm done to neighboring livestock producers), limited access to meat, and unravelled the social practices involved in both producing and consuming meat.

Many participants emphasised that the park has negatively impacted small livestock producers. Interviewees consistently mentioned the damage done to small producers by pumas and foxes, and insisted that predator behavior and prevalence has changed since the park has been established. People used the word "threat" and "threatened" repeatedly, and insisted that predators were causing much "damage." One man's thoughts on predation came out when asked about the community's opinion of the park, saying:

> "They are against it. Why? Because we raise sheep and cows, and the sheep, they are attacked. Then, you are left with no more sheep. You raise them until they are all eaten by pumas."

A local politician echoed this concern, saying, "The abuse to the small producer is incredible."

In addition to impacts on small producers, many interviewees discussed how meat had become more expensive since the ranch had been shut down. Many of these used the word "*abastecer*," "supply, provide," to describe the role of the ranch before being sold, and emphasised that "common people" could afford to buy lamb. As one local resident explained:

> "A lamb, historically, when the *estancia* Valle Chacabuco existed, anybody could consume a lamb. Today, it has become very difficult for a citizen, a run of the mill person, like a retired person, a person with a minimum salary, it is very difficult for them to be able to buy a lamb, because you don't buy a lamb for fewer than 40,000 pesos. You can't, and five or six years ago, when the *estancia* existed, you bought one for 13,000, 15,000 maximum."

The issues surrounding impacts to small producers and access to affordable meat were also linked to the rituals around raising and consuming meat. In a very emotional moment, one man expressed concern over the loss of these practices. He said that, as tourism kept growing, that maybe tourists would enjoy seeing some of what he called "the culture of Patagonia," mentioning specifically the branding of calves, marking of lambs, and shearing of sheep. He suggested that tourists might enjoy sharing an *asado* together with many people. Then he said, "All these things in Patagonia are ending. All of them."

In terms of actual practices of raising livestock, access to meat, and the ritual *asado* barbeque, interviewees communicated that the transformation of the ranch to park has been disruptive. This disruption was discussed in both practical terms, through the mention of numbers of livestock killed by predators and the rising price of lamb since the ranch shut down, but also in a more qualitative perceived erosion of local identity. As one person explained, "All of us in Cochrane are *campesinos*[4], or children of *campesinos*, or grandchildren of *campesinos*." Here we see the disruption of sociocultural practices that are linked to historic livelihoods brought about by the park.

Accompanying this process of disruption was a tense and even antagonistic relationship between the park and local residents. Respondents from the community and within CP explained that the park did not adequately engage in relationship building with members of the community. Key elements of the poor relationship between the park and community discussed by participants were a lack of communication, information, and understanding of the project. Many community members expressed that they really didn't understand what the park was all about, and multiple people described the park as a "mystery." Below is a typical comment:

> "In the case of Valle Chacabuco, one doesn't manage to understand, still, doesn't manage to understand yet, why in the end a multimillionaire who- clearly, he is a person who is on the extreme end of conservation- buys this land and transforms it."

Another, woman, when asked if the community played any role of power in the transformation echoed the point emphatically: "No! No! A role of power?! We were not even informed."

Various participants described a disconnection between the park and the community. This disconnection was expressed sometimes subtly, in the use of phrases like, "the park people" "Tompkins people" and Tompkins in "his" park, or one politician calling the park "isolated." In other moments the disconnection was blatant. A local politician said, "After many conversations with people from here, it's like, the story that [The Tompkins] produce has nothing to do with the people here."

Interviewees from the park perspective recognised this disconnect as well. As one park ranger put it, "[The park] was late, in forming a relationship with the town." Similarly, a park administrator said, "The critique that we have here inside the park is that we wanted the topic of community relations to have started more or less when the land was bought." Despite listing some examples of community outreach, one park ranger also said, "The people from here, raised here, those don't come."

A few community members expressed the idea that the park had its own customs that existed separately from the rest of the area. In making this argument, one interviewee said that he had talked to people who work in the park, and that they expressed to him that "they felt like people in another country," with "totally different customs." Another person echoed this idea, saying, "They have their own culture there, and the people who work there tell me it is not the culture from here." Another interviewee illustrated the idea that the park has its own social norms, saying:

> "It is very tragic, what has happened. You show up here, to a house, and anyone will open the door for you, and if you drink *mate* they will drink *mate* with you. They will invite you to an *asado* and have a conversation with you. There, you show up, and this does not happen. All of our culture, all of the caring of the people of Patagonia has been lost."

To make the point that the park ignores traditional customs of the region, this man referred to the ritual of drinking *mate,* a green tea which is sipped from a gourd through a metal straw, and shared communally through a very particular social process. A similar case is the *asado* is, a barbeque wherein a whole lamb is roasted over an open fire and shared amongst a group. Both of these activities are unique to the southern regions of Chile. As Mendoza et al. (2017) discuss, here we have a crystallised example of conflicting versions of Patagonia: this man defines the region by its social practices and hospitality which are being eroded by outsiders, who ironically claim to be working in the region specifically to defend Patagonia.

This disconnect between the park and community was solidified in conversations on the relationship between the park and the remaining neighbors in the valley. One park administrator said that the relationship was "quite conflictive." The perspective of the actual neighbors was outright antagonism; they mentioned being threatened with fines for animals crossing onto park land and being viewed as nuisance. As one woman said:

> "I do not see them as friendly. Why do I tell you that? Because my husband and I are a rock in the sole of their shoe, we are history for Patagonia Park."

When asked if the park had made attempts to have a relationship with them, another neighbor said, "No. To get rid of us. That more than anything."

One park ranger explained how atypical this tense relationship is for the area:

> "The relationship with [the neighbors], from what I can see, no… they never visit. They don't talk or anything…. Because no one gets together as neighbors, to visit, or if they have a problem- no. We don't even know what happens with the neighbors! Almost everywhere, neighbors visit each other, if one has a problem, or you need this or that, or need support."

In summary, although the park has made attempts to form relationships with the town of Cochrane, many interviewees emphasised that there was little interaction between the park and community, while others insisted that the park antagonised local residents and disregarded local social norms, customs, and ways of interacting.

This fraught relationship is characterised not only by miscommunication and lack of understanding, but belies deep disagreement and misalignment of values between the park and local residents. In interviews, this disagreement was expressed via counter narratives about the park, nature, and conservation. Many local residents seem to value Valle Chacabuco as a working landscapes and source of production, whereas park administrators and park promotional materials emphasised the value of the place for its pristine nature, aesthetic value, and wildness. Interestingly, the narratives of local people in opposition to the park were frequently incorporated into a discourse of supporting conservation, but a different version where production and non-human nature coexist.

The value placed on Valle Chacabuco from the park perspective came through when asked about motivations for establishing a park in this particular location. One administrator emphasised that it was an ecologically important place because it still contained all of the species of wildlife that have historically existed. In multiple other occasions, park administrators emphasised the aesthetic value of the place. As one administrator described when asked about the goals of the project:

> "…to connect the people to the beauty of their place, not the production, not just with *livestock production*, but with the beauty, with appreciation of the place. To transform the vision of the territory into pride, into local pride…"

When asked about motivations for establishing the park in Valle Chacabuco, she said, "All our projects have been "driven" [in English] by beauty… and the truth is that this valley is spectacularly beautiful."

Just as it was assumed that many Africans were too ignorant to appreciate the beauty of their landscape (Neumann 1998), this interviewee insinuates that that local people need to be taught to re-see their surroundings in terms of aesthetic value. In sharp contrast, many local residents did not understand the appeal of just looking at a landscape, and were confused by the idea of Valle Chacabuco being a spectacle to be observed. As one person explained:

> "You can't have a grassland there just to look at. You can see the beautiful grassland there, if you want you can take a photo, but it's not going to produce much for you."

Many participants conveyed a different vision of conservation, one where conservation is incorporated into working landscapes rather than non-use. As one man said, "I am in agreement that you have to conserve the soils, and that they should not be degraded, but this means that you must use them in a rational way." Another echoed the idea of a conserved but working landscape: "I understand that you can conserve your land working in harmony with the environment and with the communities. For me, that is conservation." Another interviewee emphasised that Tompkins conservation was an extreme version, he insisted that "[Tompkins] is one type of conservation, but there's no greater vision. One could perfectly conserve and continue to maintain livestock." Here we see quite different understandings of the way local people understand the land and their place in it: many called into question the idea that nature can only be preserved by removing humans.

Another element of this argument that recurred through interviews was that people and wildlife had always coexisted in the valley, and thus Valle Chacabuco did not need to be conserved in the form of a park. One man who had grown up in the valley and worked there all through the ranch years said, "Before, there were guanacos[5], there were pumas, there were sheep, there was everything! Everything was maintained!" Another woman who lived in the valley as a child said, "We grew up out there, and there was a lot of livestock and a lot of pumas and there were a lot of guanacos-" then her daughter chimed in, "There was enough for everybody!" The woman confirmed, "Everybody. There was food for everybody." Two park rangers also reiterated the fact that there has always been coexistence of wildlife and livestock.

This contrasts sharply with content from the park website. With sleek photographs of crowded sheep, dusty fields, and buzz-cut bunch grass, park materials document the story of nearly one hundred years of mismanagement through shortsighted and backwards ranching practices. The valley before the purchase is described as "beleaguered," "decimated," and "sick;" a victim of "rampant overgrazing" on a "downward spiral." In interviews, local residents doubted the need to create a park in order to preserve wildlife, and many argued that the valley was not actually degraded. Unfortunately, scientific evidence supporting either claim is unavailable. As with many historic parks, in Valle Chacabuco, the ecological justification for conservation actions was and is highly contested (Igoe 2004).

Woven throughout counter narratives about how the valley should be used/valued and by whom, interviewees conveyed that the conversion of Valle Chacabuco from a working ranch to a park had been a source of pain and emotional trauma.

Interviewees discussed feelings of anger, sadness, and alienation from a place they had been attached to. Embedded in their emotional responses was a sense that the development of the park had literally and figuratively erased their history on the landscape.

The emotional trauma experienced by local people arose when asked about initial reactions to the park. When asked about reactions, a local politician answered in no uncertain terms, "Everybody says to you, 'Listen, we don't want Chacabuco to be sold, that it be transformed into a park.'" Similarly, a park administrator alluded to the conflict around the sale saying, "there was a lot of noise," around it. Going a step further, a few respondents mentioned organised resistance to the park. Headed by one interviewee, a group of local residents travelled to the valley for a protest against the park, and had attempted to work with politicians at higher levels to reverse the sale to Tompkins. The leader of this protest explained,

> "So we laid it out in all of the avenues. I went to *La Moneda*[6], I went to the television channels, I went to all the places and expressed our worry, our disagreement with this project. In the end, we have had no response. We did a protest there too, right there in the village, with 133 people."

Similarly, one man who had participated in this protest explained that the only way he would set foot in the valley now would be to, "take it back," to go "where [he] grew up and take a stand," "even if it meant going to prison."

In addition to anger, many people mentioned feelings of loss, sadness, and shame. Typical responses included one man who said he "lamented" the "loss" of the lands. Another said that process "had been very sad for Cochrane…very sad." Feelings of sadness were not limited to non-park affiliated interviewees- one park ranger expressed sadness when asked about the current conditions of the park. He said:

> "I find it- I feel sorrow. Of course, because I am a man who was raised with animals. … And I like animals a lot….I like horses, cows, calves, sheep. So for me, it was a shame. Not to see one lamb around here, how it was before. Nothing."

These responses of anger and sadness were woven throughout larger narratives of place attachment and acute awareness of the socio-cultural importance of Valle Chacabuco in both the historical development of the region, and maintenance of contemporary local practices of raising livestock. To illustrate the historic importance of Valle Chacabuco as a livestock operation, many participants mentioned the fact that the livestock concession in the valley was the specific reason that settlers had come to the area. As one politician explained, "For those of us who are children of pioneers, these lands are emblematic." This statement followed an explanation of how the first settlers of the area arrived through Entrada Baker, the west end of the valley, by people who came to work on the ranch.

A park administrator also stated that one of the challenges the park had faced was the attachment local people felt to the land as a ranch. As she put it, "the problem- it's not a problem, but the thing is that Cochrane was founded by people who came to work at the *estancia*."

Two interviewees were children of *asentados,* or members of the cooperative which occupied the valley during the period of agrarian from 1967- 1980, and so had lived part of their childhood in the valley. These people expressed great sadness over losing this piece of their own past. They emphasised that their history had been physically erased by the park. As one man said:

> "Well, the lands are the same, a person who has grown up there has love for these lands. But you don't see what was there before. Because, I would have liked, I would have loved to go where my life was. To return there…. Because sometimes, I think back to my childhood. I see these fields around, which look nothing like the fields [where I grew up]. Nothing at all."

The other respondent who had partially grown up in the valley repeatedly mentioned that everything had been "erased." This woman and her daughters who joined the interview lamented the fact that even names of locations and lakes in the valley had been changed. In the same interview, a woman explained that emotional connection to the land had been removed since the park was initiated:

> "Or what they think could make us feel proud is not the same as is for them, if nobody has an emotional connection with something that the gringos brought and that they invented."

The idea that the park works to physically remove history recurred throughout the interviews. As one man said, "[Tompkins] made history disappear." Another detailed the claim, saying:

> "Everything that was cultural patrimony, historical patrimony, was eliminated. The *puestos*[7] of the caretakers, everything was taken out. With excavators they demolished everything, so today there is nothing left, all that's left are some hotels that they have there that are basically made out of rock and cement, they have nothing to do with the typical or traditional infrastructure that was there- that was all eliminated."

The idea that the park intended to erase history and create a new vision for the land was cemented in a response from a park administrator. In one moment, when asked a question about Valle Chacabuco, she cut off the researcher mid-sentence, correcting, saying, " It's Patagonia Park [not Valle Chacabuco]," She said, "it's taken *years* to get people to stop calling it that."

As has been argued by scholars of political ecology and emotion, struggles over access to, ownership of, and use of natural resources are not only material, but emotional (Farhana 2011). Emotional connections to place, like those

expressed by interviewees, highlight the connections between emotion, memory and identity (Dallman et al. 2013). We see this illustrated as interviewees detailed the "loss" of lands, or their threatened identity as "*campesinos*," and children of pioneers- Valle Chacabuco was an important part of local history and identity; emotional reactions point to a larger social process of erosion of shared history. The emotional responses detailed above ground the conflict over Valle Chacabuco as a lived and embodied struggle experienced by participants (Farhana 2011).

Accompanying the emotional responses of pain, sadness, and loss of a meaningful place was an acute sense of powerlessness. Many respondents repeated things like, "what is there to do?" or, "That's the way things are, unfortunately, there's nothing to do about it." Multiple people repeated the phrase, "there's nothing to do about it," throughout the interview.

Local people also suggested that the park was never intended to benefit local people, but rather outside elites. One man mentioned that Tompkins was opposed to any sort of development because it would, "interrupt his paradise." Another local politician echoed this, when asked who the park is for; he chuckled and said frankly, "for them." Multiple people responded to the same question with a variation of "foreigners."

Multiple participants commented that the park was for the upper classes. One elderly woman said, "We have no reason to have this class of people to come here and raise pumas." Others used colloquial terms: multiple people said the park was not for "*el perraje*," a Chilean slang word for lower classes (literally derived from the word for a pack of dogs). Still others said that the park was not intended for use by or benefit to people who were "*comun y corriente*" or, "the common people," and others referred to Tompkins as a "powerful capitalist."

As detailed by respondents, the purchase and conversion of land in Valle Chacabuco spurred emotional reactions of sadness, loss, anger, powerlessness, and resistance. These emotional reactions constitute a larger sense of losing a place that held meaning for many residents (Dallman 2013). Both physically through tearing down fences, restoring native grasslands, and removing old structures, and discursively through changing the names of locations within the landscape and the valley itself, the park works to re-produce the place as pristine and wild nature, bearing no marks of its former uses or inhabitants. As has been detailed in fortress conservation projects in national parks in the US (Spence 1999), Tanzania (Brockington 2002), and elsewhere; the wilderness as an asocial space, completely separate from humans, is actively created in Valle Chacabuco, despite the rich and complex human history of the valley. Layered like sediment over earlier rounds of colonial expansion and the dispossession of native people of the region, followed by appropriations under the Pinochet regime, respondents detail yet another round of dispossession and dehumanisation, albeit in the name of nature conservation.

CONCLUSION

The development of Patagonia Park is just one example of a PPA but represents a growing trend in conservation globally, one that has the strong support of powerful conservation organisations such as the IUCN. It is becoming widely recognised that state-run protected areas are not sufficient to address the growing biodiversity crisis globally. PPAs are touted by the IUCN as an integral component to meeting the Aichi Target 11 and to fill in gaps of ecological representation. However, little attention has been given to the social impacts of PPA development.

Bearing in mind that many of the most emblematic state-run parks have been influenced by private capital, we argue that this PPA is reminiscent of state-run fortress conservation models in terms of both process of development and its social impacts. In many ways, the development of this PPA and its impacts are not novel at all but rather a repeat of the process that influenced the creation of state-run parks in the USA, a model that has and continues to influence conservation globally. Indeed, across one of the main park web pages, a quote from Bruce Babbit, former US Secretary of the Interior reads, "Patagonia National Park will be the Yellowstone of South America," (Conservacion Patagonica 2017). Despite very different historical context and enabling conditions, the ways local people experience this project are eerily familiar to those documented in fortress conservation in USA, Africa, and elsewhere.

This research supports the claim made by Vaccaro et al. (2013) that neoliberal conservation, accompanied by a concentration of capital, science, political power held by private interests, has sparked a backlash of neo-fortress conservation. Contributing to the lack of critical scholarly attention to PPAs as a form of neoliberal conservation, we argue that in this case, the phenomena is playing out in similar ways for people who lived in and around such projects. However, we also acknowledge that PPAs are a growing and diverse phenomenon and although the results from this research show that social impacts are largely negative and similar to those of state-led fortress conservation, much more research is needed to fully understand the spectrum of impacts on local people from PPAs.

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NOTES

1. *Estancia* is the term used in southern Chile for a working ranch.
2. This project and concomitant interview scripts were approved by the University of Montana Institutional Review Board for Research with Human Subjects.
3. All park rangers are currently employed by the park, but are long term Aysén residents who formerly worked in livestock production, either in Valle Chacabuco or elsewhere.

4. *Campesino* has no direct translation. It derives from the word for field or countryside, and refers to smallholder farmers, farm laborers, or peasants.
5. A camelid native to South American similar in appearance to a llama, which is very common in the valley.
6. The capital building of Chile.
7. Outposts dispersed throughout the valley where workers lived during the ranching years.

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