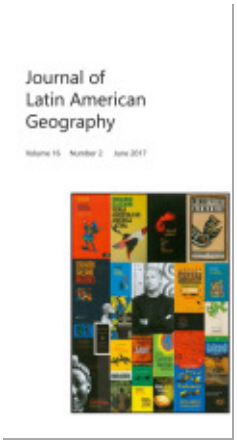
The Patagonian Imaginary: Natural Resources and Global Capitalism at the Far End of the World



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The Patagonian Imaginary: Natural Resources and Global Capitalism at the Far End of the World

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Abstract

This paper examines how Southern Andean Patagonia has been increasingly incorporated within networks of global capital since the 1990s. Once defined by military violence against indigenous societies, white settler colonialism, and livestock farming, this remote region has become an iconic center for green development in Latin America. This article develops the argument that a regional territorial imaginary—grounded in a history of borderland geopolitics—has facilitated this recent shift towards green development across the resource domains of land conservation, hydropower, and forestry. The discussion addresses the different ways in which forests, waterways, and protected areas (public and private) have been integrated into a hegemonic vision promoting eco-regionalism among state, corporate, and civil society actors. This analysis thus contributes to scholarship on global capitalism, natural resource governance, and green development in Latin America by developing the concept of the regional territorial imaginary to describe these dynamics. This analytic highlights how processes of capitalist specialization and regionalization occur through the open-ended consolidation of master images that build upon spatial histories, transnational regimes of representational value, and political struggles among diverse actors.

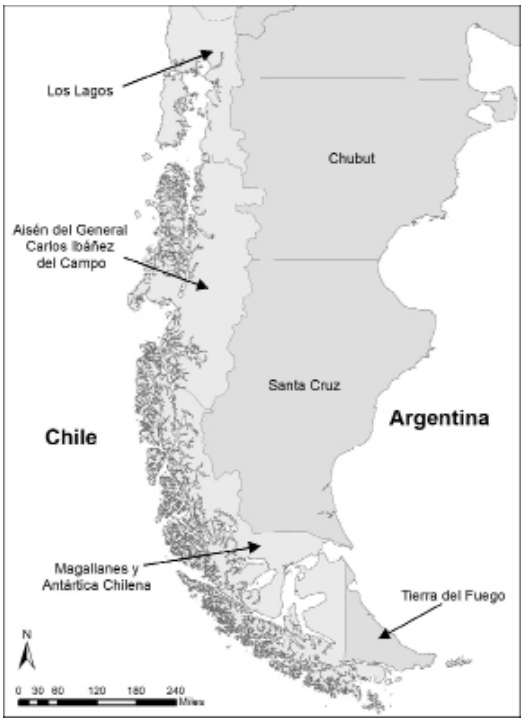
Keywords: *Regional Territorial Imaginary; Green Development; Global Capitalism; Patagonia*

Resumen

Este artículo examina como la Patagonia Andina Austral ha sido incorporada crecientemente en las redes del capital global desde los 1990s. Alguna vez definida por la violencia militar contra las sociedades indígenas, el colonialismo blanco, y la ganadería, esta region remota se ha convertido en un centro icónico para el desarrollo verde en América Latina. Este artículo desarrolla el argumento de que un imaginario territorial regional—basada en una historia de la geopolítica de la frontera—ha facilitado este reciente cambio hacia el desarrollo verde respecto de los recursos naturales ligados a la silvicultura, la energía hidroeléctrica, y la conservación de la tierra. La discusión aborda los diferentes modos en que los bosques, el medio acuático, y las áreas protegidas (públicas y privadas) han sido integrados en una vision hegemónica que promueve el eco-regionalismo entre actores del estado, las empresas, y la sociedad civil. Este análisis contribuye así a la investigación sobre el capitalismo global, la administración de los recursos naturales, y el desarrollo verde en América Latina, desarrollando el concepto del imaginario territorial regional para describir estas dinámicas. Este marco analítico recalca cómo procesos de especialización capitalista y regionalización se producen a través de la consolidación abierta e ilimitada de las imágenes marco que se basan en historias espaciales, regímenes transnacionales de valor representacional, y luchas políticas entre actores diversos.
Palabras Claves: *Imaginario Territorial Regional; Desarrollo Verde; Capitalismo Global; Patagonia*

Introduction

This paper explores how Southern Andean Patagonia has been increasingly incorporated within networks of global capital since the 1990s.[1] This Patagonian region is a mountainous zone marked by forests, glaciers, lakes, fjords, and the Hielos Continentales (Patagonian Icefields), the largest icecaps in the Southern Hemisphere outside Antarctica. Inhabited by indigenous populations before, during, and after Spanish colonialism, the region became a site of "white settler" incursion (Gott 2007) in the mid to late nineteenth century as the Argentine and Chilean states established beachheads of territorial sovereignty in Tierra del Fuego and the southern coast of the mainland (Bandieri 2005). Military violence helped subjugate native populations and establish a zone for capital investment, initially organized around livestock farming for the world market. By the twenty-first century, however, Southern Andean Patagonia had become an iconic center for ecotourism, conservation, and protected areas in Latin America. This new "green development" (Adams 2003) paradigm pertained not just to conservation and tourism, but also shaped industries often labeled extractive.



Map 1. Southern Andean Patagonia. Cartography by Stephen G. Harris, Center for Archaeological Research, University of Mississippi.

This article develops the argument that a regional territorial imaginary—grounded within a history of borderland geopolitics—has increasingly facilitated this recent shift towards green development in Southern Andean Patagonia. For centuries, border disputes between Argentina and Chile have not only rendered salient the issue of territorial sovereignty, but have also created the geopolitical context in which governments embraced and then rejected livestock farming in favor of international tourism and protected areas. Building on this state territorial vision, a regional imaginary has emerged around transnational regimes of representational value pertaining to tourism, the outdoor industry, and environmentalism. This imaginary has helped forge a hegemonic front among resident, corporate, and state actors supporting eco-regionalism: Southern Andean Patagonia as a space committed to green development.

Many scholars have examined the intersection between global capitalism and resource exploitation in Argentina and Chile. Ethnographies of hydropower (Ribiero 1994), copper (Finn 1998), oil (Shever 2012), and soy (Gordillo 2014) have explored the connections between strategic resources and state development schemes, as well as the effects that different types of commodity extraction have on laboring populations and the environment. In Patagonia, scholars have studied similar processes as they play out within ecotourism markets (Fletcher 2014), green philanthropy (Jones 2012), green land grabbing (Holmes 2015), private protected areas (Holmes 2014; Tecklin and Sepulveda 2014), forest certification programs (Henne 2015), and conservation politics (Mendoza 2016;

Silva 2016). In Patagonia, research has often focused narrowly on distinct types of green markets and natural resource domains without providing a unifying regional framework to guide investigation. Based upon a collective thirty-nine months of field research in the region from 2000 to the present conducted by the various authors, this paper offers the first region-specific theorization of the linkages between conservation, forestry, and hydropower within Southern Andean Patagonia.[2]

This article contributes to scholarship on global capitalism, natural resources, and green development more generally by developing the concept of a "regional territorial imaginary." The "imaginary" refers to the shared understandings and interpretive frameworks that naturalize practical engagements with the world (Taylor 2004). A territorial imaginary denotes the master images and diverse fields of collective representation that become associated with distinct places, regions, and environments. Implicit to this process is the delimitation of a "territory" as meaningfully different from surrounding terrains. Our discussion highlights how "Patagonia" operates as a master image and floating signifier (Laclau 2007) that unifies diverse fields of meaning and representation among distinct actors. The crystallization of Southern Andean Patagonia as an eco-region becomes a central point of consensus among state, corporate, and civil society sectors. Nevertheless, this consensus is tremendously fragile, since there are multiple forces competing to define the eco-region. By focusing on Southern Andean Patagonia, we show that a particular form of global capitalist integration—green development—is dependent upon histories of spatial production and contemporary forms of representation and politics. In developing this analysis, our paper contributes both to theorizing the ways in which extraction and conservation are linked within the sustainable development framework of global capital and to understanding the role of Patagonia within this new regime.

We begin by situating our study within previous research concerning dynamics of capital accumulation and natural resource management. Second, we examine the history of borderland geopolitics and the production of regional space. Third, we conceptualize the territorial imaginary with respect to tourism, the outdoor industry, and environmentalism. Fourth, we investigate land conservation, forestry, and hydropower as resource domains that this imaginary has differently affected. Land conservation has become a core project through which green development is accomplished. Although forestry is often viewed as extractive, the industry has also begun to embrace the "natural capital" of forests associated with carbon markets. Hydropower is, however, a contentious field of struggle. Though states and corporations have advanced discourses of "green energy" to legitimize the construction of hydroelectric dams, social movements have challenged this rhetoric and called for projects' termination to maintain the ecological integrity of the region. We finish by exploring how our analysis of this regional imaginary contributes to global geographies of nature.

Global Capital at the Far End of the World

This analysis contributes to a rapidly expanding body of research on green development and logics of natural capital formation, protection, and exploitation. Since the 1970s, scholars have increasingly understood natural resources as scarce elements of capitalist production that must be sustainably managed for their long-run provision. O'Connor

(1994) has theorized the rise of an ecological phase of global capitalism—a process that Smith (2009) has termed the shift from the formal to the real subsumption of nature under capital. Over several decades, political ecologists have documented numerous cases in which natural resources previously externalized within conventional commodity markets have been commodified as forms of natural capital in quest of further profit through enclosure and sale within neoliberal markets (McAfee 1999; Heynen and Robbins 2005; Heynen *et al.* 2007; Castree 2008, 2010; Bakker 2010). This process is alternately termed, among other labels: market environmentalism, green capitalism, green neoliberalism, and the neoliberalization of nature.

While the majority of this literature focuses on conventional processes of resource alienation and extraction from spheres previously marked as commons or community owned or public property, a growing subset investigates the opposite process, whereby global efforts to preserve natural resources from extraction and use have become progressively neoliberalized, a trend labeled neoliberal conservation or Nature™ Inc. (Sullivan 2006; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Brockington and Duffy 2010; Büscher *et al.* 2012; Büscher *et al.* 2014). While extracted resources can be transformed into tangible commodities capable of transportation from their site of origin for sale in other places, conserved resources must be consumed in situ, and thus require creative mechanisms of commodification to harness their value for profit without extraction (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Büscher *et al.* 2012; Fletcher and Neves 2012; Büscher 2013). While at first glance it may appear that biodiversity conservation is a means of removing natural resources from global capitalist chains, the expanding literature on neoliberal conservation has recognized that it can equally be understood as an alternate way of extracting value from nature. Phenomena such as ecotourism and payments for ecosystem services are both conservation tools as well as sites for speculation and profit accumulation.

Several features have been identified in the literature as new or much more prevalent in recent engagements between conservation and capitalism (Büscher *et al.* 2014; Büscher and Fletcher 2015). New commodities and markets have emerged, such as carbon credits, and existing ones, such as ecotourism, have been greatly expanded. As part of this process, states are rolling back from direct involvement in biodiversity conservation, but rolling out to create new regulations, incentives and other structures that facilitate the creation of commodities out of the conservation of natural resources. This is accompanied by supporting discourses from governments, businesses, and conservation organizations enthusing about creating win-win solutions in which conservation can be successfully combined with economic growth, without need for compromise (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Holmes 2015).

Despite substantial overlap in their foci, however, the neoliberal natures scholarship focused on extraction and conservation, respectively, have developed in parallel thus far, with relatively little dialogue between them (Büscher *et al.* 2012). Building on Büscher and Davidov's (2013, 2015) pioneering discussion of an "ecotourism-extraction nexus," we bring these two lines of analysis together by conceptualizing extraction and conservation as two sides of the same neoliberal coin seeking to commodify natural capital in different ways. One of the prime means of doing so has been to link processes of extraction and conservation such that the degradation wrought by the former can be ostensibly offset

through investment in the latter to attain an overall no net loss of the resource in question (Brockington *et al.* 2008; Sullivan 2013).

Another way to connect these processes is through their embedding within a regional territorial imaginary to form a hegemonic consensus. A shared commitment to green development becomes a unifying thread for drawing together conservation and extraction industries. In Southern Andean Patagonia, commercial forestry has demonstrated incremental progress towards green capitalism by foregrounding its work to create and profit from natural capital—in the form of carbon credits—as part of the ongoing extractive process. Moreover, governments and corporations have employed environmentalist discourses to reconfigure the image of hydropower industries to better align them with the values of the eco-region. Social movements, however, have mobilized the discourse of extraction to challenge the state and corporate greening of hydropower. Thus the articulation between conservation and extraction within the regional territorial imaginary is both conjunctive and disjunctive. There are fraught political efforts to link (for some actors) or to delink (for others) conservation and extraction as part of the ongoing struggle to define what counts as green development. Our analysis of Southern Andean Patagonia attends to how green development is agonistically forged through efforts to establish carbon markets, green energy, and ecotourism as distinct forms of natural capital.

The Regional Territorial Imaginary

A related line of research has emphasized the growing importance of place making to global capitalism. The dialectical opposite of growing abstraction and deterritorialization within the global economy (Appadurai 1996) is the search for concreteness in unique localities (Harvey 2001). Industries like tourism, viticulture, locally-sourced agriculture, and artisan craft production depend on place branding strategies and the ability of producers and consumers to monopolize the symbolic capital pertaining to the uniqueness of bio-physical environments, populations, and methods of production (Creswell 2013). Beyond places, nations and regions may be built through a similar logic, particularly as state tourism agencies work to define domestic attractions, destinations, and patrimonial values for visitors and consumers (Büscher and Fletcher 2016). In Southern Andean Patagonia, this bi-national territory is constructed as a region not by any one field, but rather through the open-ended combination of multiple regimes of representational value that delimit and frame the import of its material infrastructure: its human and non-human populations, parks and roads, rivers and towns, forests and mountains. Our analysis thus reveals how Patagonia has been re-territorialized in the contemporary period as a particular regional imaginary, as the basis of a new phase of global capital in which extraction and conservation are dialectically coupled, both directly on the ground as well as in the region's promotion as an archetype of wild nature in discourses concerning sustainable development within the global public sphere. The regional territorial imaginary concept thus allows us to go beyond the single-site studies dominating the neoliberal natures literature to date, in order to better understand how these process are distributed, and conjoined, across a broader landscape.

The Patagonian territorial imaginary is not just a transnational framework of representational value, but also the basis of naturalized assumptions about development. The

imaginary has helped forge a hegemonic front uniting state, corporate, and civil society actors around a shared commitment to eco-regionalism. Laclau (2007) has theorized hegemony in terms of the floating signifier, the axis around which different social forces coalesce, investing a slogan like "democracy" or a charismatic leader with different types of affective meaning. Condensation is the winnowing down of the multiple meanings of the floating signifier within a shifting field of political contestation. While Laclau's theory of hegemony pertains to populist politics, the notion of the floating signifier is appropriate for conceptualizing the multilateral processes of image making that are integral to the regional territorial imaginary.

"Patagonia" is a floating signifier that condenses meanings at two distinct levels. First, there are the transnational regimes of representational value associated with tourism, the outdoor industry, and environmentalism. Second, there are distinct actors—state, corporate, and civil—that build political coalitions on the ground within resource fields like hydropower, forestry, and conservation. These resource fields are sites of political contestation in which coalitions of actors attempt to define eco-regionalism: what counts, or does not count, as green development. This suggests that the Patagonian territorial imaginary is inherently open to transformation as new actors and regimes of representational value realign the hegemonic front. Unlike the highly unstable currents of populist politics, however, a territorial imaginary arises within a historical landscape that structures the boundaries of its potential meanings. In the case of Southern Andean Patagonia, there is a geopolitical history that has prepared this trans-boundary zone for its twenty-first century specialization.

The Patagonian Imaginary in the Post-Independence Context

Border Geopolitics and the Production of Space

Following the wars of independence, Argentina and Chile claimed territorial rights over Patagonia according to the principle of uti possidetis, which "defines borders of newly sovereign states on the basis of their previous administrative frontiers" (Szary 2007: 3-4). Indigenous societies, however, inhabited this vast region on both sides of the Andes. For political elites, the native population forestalled the successful integration of national territories and the civilizing of a region long viewed as a desert (Nouzeilles 2007). In the mid-1800s, the Chilean government established Punta Arenas as a key port of transshipment and entry into southernmost Patagonia Austral. In subsequent decades, an intense geopolitical dispute erupted between the two countries over the delimitation of regional boundaries. In the 1870s, the Argentine military begin a methodical campaign to push back the internal frontier and establish territorial integration, using genocidal violence to subjugate indigenous peoples during the so-called Conquest of the Desert. In Chile, the military moved to pacify the Mapuche living in Araucanía. This process of accumulation by dispossession opened the region to white settler colonialism (Gott 2007). Within the context of geopolitical uncertainty, governments moved to promote European immigration, establish private property rights, consolidate capitalist production, and incorporate the region into the world market.

The Argentine and Chilean governments promoted visions of state territoriality based on export-oriented agrarian capitalism to secure rival claims over Southern Pata-

gonia. European capitalists began to consolidate huge tracts of land for livestock farming. Land barons gradually built up latifundia and established oligopolistic control over production and distribution networks to foreign markets (Bandieri 2005). By the early twentieth century, settlers had begun to colonize the forested Andean zones in Southern Patagonia, including the Chilean zone of Aysén, only accessible via Argentina (Robinson 2013). Following governmental directives, settlers burned forests to open up lands for pasture. Smallholders carved out semi-subsistence livelihoods that included commodity production. This form of development resulted in low population densities that undermined national claims to territorial sovereignty. Political elites had to rethink the production of regional space.

A profound re-territorialization of Southern Andean Patagonia occurred in the 1930s. To overcome the perceived weakness of agrarian capitalism, the Argentine government founded a national park administration and carved out a set of protected areas in geopolitically sensitive areas in Northern and Southern Patagonia. The new president of the Argentine park service, Exequiel Bustillo—in office from 1934-1944—recognized the failure of the previous development model and viewed international tourism as a progressive vision for colonization, security, and capital accumulation. Bustillo (1999 [1968]) sought to reimagine the Patagonian Andean desert as an alpine wilderness—a Latin American analog to the Swiss Alps. In Southern Andean Patagonia, the park service took legal custody—largely in name only—of the new protected areas. The Chilean government eventually followed suit, establishing Torres del Paine National Park in 1959 and a series of new parks from the 1960s-1980s. Not until the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, did tourism begin to outstrip livestock farming as the primary economic activity.

A new regionalism began to emerge in the 1990s following the end of military authoritarianism. Civilian governments began a concerted effort to resolve the remaining sites of geopolitical contention to promote a trans-border regionalism based on market integration. Governments successfully concluded most issues through bilateral diplomacy and international arbitration (Allan 2007). Coinciding with the rise of global neoliberalism, Southern Andean Patagonia became increasingly connected to its metropolitan national populations and the Global North through tourism, the outdoor industry, and global environmentalism.

The Patagonian Imaginary

Building off the geopolitical history of the border and the production of regional space for conservation and tourism, the Patagonian territorial imaginary has foregrounded the value and vulnerability of its alpine wilderness. Circulating in the global public sphere, this imaginary has bundled together three regimes of representational value related to tourism, the outdoor industry, and environmentalism. Each of these regimes has invested the region with specific forms of value, while also generating powerful representations of its natural landscapes that are dispersed across Latin America and the Global North. Moreover, contemporary center-left and center-right governments in Argentina and Chile have embraced the import of regional green development, despite distinct approaches to building national capitalisms ranging from neoliberalism to neo-developmentalism (Wylde 2012; Mendoza 2017).

First, transnational tourism has formulated Southern Andean Patagonia as an exotic landscape of consumer value for bourgeois leisure. The region has become a play space for globe-trotting, upper middle class tourists seeking out wilderness adventure through activities including kayaking, rafting, trekking, mountaineering, cycling, fishing, and boating (Fletcher 2014). A bi-national tourism circuit has formed around Los Glaciares, Torres del Paine, and Tierra del Fuego National Parks, becoming the central hub for the development of more peripheral corridors like Chile's Aysén zone. The improvement of transportation routes, the easing of border controls, and the beginning of trans-boundary conservation work between the national park administrations has accompanied growing tourism flows. Affluent tourists have repatriated concrete experiences of distinct national parks to their home countries. These destinations, however, have been organized as place brands through processes of political-economic collaboration between park rangers, land managers, tourism entrepreneurs, and local Chambers of Commerce. As such, tourists have repatriated distinct representations of Patagonian parks that had been assembled and staged for the tourist gaze (Urry 2008). The branding of destinations has included: Ushuaia, The End of the World; Puerto Natales, Trekking Capital of Chile; El Calafate, Glacier Capital of Argentina, and El Chaltén, Trekking Capital of Argentina. This bundle of place brands—supplemented by the secondary ones of Coyhaique, Futaleufú, Puerto Aysén, and Esquel—has formulated the region as an archetypal wilderness for bourgeois subjects to accumulate classed signs of aesthetic distinction (Bourdieu 2002; Fletcher 2014). In this respect, Patagonia competes with other alpine landscapes like the Alps, the Himalayas, and the Rockies.

Second, the Euro-American outdoor industry plays a key role in generating the Patagonian imaginary. The outdoor industry refers to companies like The North Face, Patagonia, Inc., Mammut, Arc'teryx, Columbia, Marmot, and Jack Wolfskin that sell technical gear for adventure sports like mountaineering, kayaking, and trekking, as well as clothing for outdoor and urban settings, to middle class consumers. Companies sell both products and the outdoor adventure lifestyle by using imagery from globally renowned wilderness areas like Patagonia, while also presenting these zones as the ideal places to wear their products. The outdoor and tourism industries are thus mutually reinforcing. Anticipating a harsh wilderness, tourists buy the commoditized symbols of adventure produced by the outdoor industry, and then transport these to Patagonia. Moreover, the outdoor industry invests in sponsored athletes—such as mountaineers—who travel to Patagonia to engage in extreme sports. These athletes then deliver stories, images, videos, and online content about their Patagonian adventures to these companies, which use them to commoditize their newest product lines.

Within the industry, Patagonia, Inc. plays a seminal role in representing this Latin American region as a playground for consumer adventure. The company website, catalogues, and brick-and-mortar stores frame Patagonia as a space that invokes "the voice of conscience" while also "beckon[ing] friends to venture somewhere wild" (Patagonia 2002: 2). The image of an ostensibly wild, rugged landscape is used to market the clothing that, the company suggests, will allow one to exercise one's freedom and agency most effectively within this landscape. Also significant in this strategy is that Patagonia, Inc. has framed its commercial model as a challenge to business-as-usual within mainstream global

capitalism. The corporation champions the purchase of its products as a form of ethical consumption that directly contributes to social and environmental causes in a variety of ways, from the use of recycled materials in production to donations made to various causes through the company's "1% for the Planet" campaign to direct work in building conservation areas in the region that inspired its name (Cuevas 2015). In short, the outdoor industry—including Patagonia, Inc.—generates a second-order representational scheme of commodity signs that operates alongside the place branding logic of the tourism industry.

Third, global environmentalism contributes to the Patagonian imaginary. Scores of local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—such as International Rivers, Greenpeace, Chile Sustentable, and Agrupación de Defensores del Espíritu de la Patagonia—have banded together to form the Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia (Patagonia Defense Council or CDP). Indeed, the CDP explicitly invokes this notion of a regional imaginary, explaining that, "Patagonia in the global imaginary reflects an unconquered, savage, and virgin landscape. The reality [however] involves a unique natural setting battered by failed continuing policies of colonization and development" (CDP 2016). Transnational environmental coalitions like CDP have helped constitute the ecological value and vulnerability of the region's icecaps, rivers, lakes, steppe, flora, and fauna, and especially their exposure to hydropower installations.

In a region dominated by national parks, the environmental movement has acted through three key fronts: 1) state actors including park rangers, superintendents, and land managers pushing from within the Argentine and Chile conservation states for robust sustainability protocols to regulate development in protected areas, though not always successfully; 2) NGOs, private companies, and individual citizens mobilizing their wealth and/or funding networks to purchase and consolidate private estates and private protected areas; and 3) political mobilization by a combination of state and civil society actors to defend communities and ecosystems from large-scale development projects that threaten Patagonia. The environmentalist movement has foregrounded images of the sublime landscape as a way to represent the region as ecologically at risk to domestic and global publics. This third regime generates a separate line of imagination that inscribes tourism flows and the outdoor industry within an encompassing environmentalist framework.

These three regimes of representational value converge to produce the territorial imaginary of Patagonia that builds off geopolitical history. Furthermore, these domains coalesce as an assemblage and feedback loop (Büscher and Fletcher 2015) to create the evolving multilateral image and floating signifier of Patagonia. The imaginary anchors the hegemonic front surrounding eco-regionalism, which influences land conservation, forestry, and hydropower in distinct ways. The actors involved in each resource domain appropriate and attempt to reshape the meanings of green development contained in the imaginary.

Land Conservation

The dynamism surrounding land conservation by NGOs, private companies, and residents has emerged within the context of the Patagonian territorial imaginary. In recent decades, non-state actors have consolidated private estates and created private protected areas (PPAs), supplementing the existing Argentine and Chilean national park systems. In

some cases, their owners have earmarked these PPAs for incorporation into the national park systems, helping to expand the public green estate (Mendoza 2016). This expansion of public and private land conservation has depended on the interwoven forces of tourism, environmentalism, and the outdoor industry.

In Argentina, national land conservation began with a donation made by Patagonian explorer Francisco Moreno to the federal government in 1903 (APN 2012: 12). However, the national park service and the federal protected area system were only legally constituted in 1934 in response to geopolitical tensions. Over much of the twentieth century, the park service concentrated its efforts on protected areas (PAs) in Northern Patagonia, representing them as alpine landscapes linked to a Euro-American wilderness aesthetic (APN 2012: 13). Towards the end of the twentieth century, global tourism began to impact Southern Andean Patagonian parks, facilitating the growth of service industries, labor markets, and permanent populations. Though working to privatize, deregulate, and liberalize the Argentine economy, the Menem administration (1989-1999) actively promoted conservation and greatly expanded the federal protected area system. The currency devaluation following the economic crisis of 2001 stimulated the ecotourism industry in Southern Andean Patagonia. Tourists visiting the crown jewel of Patagonian parks, Los Glaciares, increased from 176,000 during the 2002-2003 season to 476,000 during the 2013-2014 season.[3] Embracing an explicitly anti-neoliberal agenda, the Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2015) administrations expanded the federal protected area system (APN 2012), maintaining the community-based conservation efforts which began in the 1990s, and deepened the integration of national parks into global tourism markets.

Chile's first protected areas were established largely to preserve forests for long-term timber production. Later, wilderness-style protected areas were created in the far north and south of the country, in locations selected according to landscape aesthetics rather than distribution of biodiversity (Pauchard and Villaroel 2002). Protected areas were administrated by CONAF, a state-owned forestry corporation, which overwhelmingly focused on maximizing production on exotic tree plantations, although it owned an enormous extent of PAs in Southern Andean Patagonia, such as the Patagonian ice fields and alpine landscapes around which ecotourism markets have developed (Tecklin and Sepulveda 2014). On both sides of the border, the national systems have strengthened over the last two decades with accelerating tourism flows. Indeed, a mega-park of adjacent PAs conserves virtually all of the Southern Patagonian Icefield (13,000 km^2) in Chile's Torres del Paine and Bernardo O'Higgins National Parks, as well as Argentina's Los Glaciares National Park. This mega-park is the principal axis on the mainland for the regional tourism circuit, recruiting adventure tourists interested in trekking, mountaineering, fishing, skiing, and boating. Land conservation has become a hegemonic pillar of green development for governments, political elites, and political parties from center-right to center-left.

Beyond government land conservation efforts, the Patagonian green estate has expanded greatly through private protected areas (PPAs), conservation areas under individual, NGO, corporate, or cooperative governance. These cover around 4.5 percent of Chilean Patagonia, and while data are less reliable for Argentina, some PPAs there extend

to approximately 15,000 ha (Holmes 2014). This trend was made possible by reforms which strengthened private property and liberalized property markets, ostensibly to attract foreign investment in primary industries, but which also allowed conservationists to purchase extensive tracts (Holmes 2014, 2015; Tecklin and Sepulveda 2014). While tourism and environmentalism have facilitated the growth of public PAs, the Euro-American outdoor industry has played a key role in the expansion of PPAs. Yvon Chouinard (founder of Patagonia, Inc.) and Doug Tompkins (co-founder of The North Face) have enlisted corporate funds and personal wealth to fund land purchases for PPAs. Tompkins (now deceased) and his wife, Kris Tompkins (former CEO of Patagonia, Inc.), have created the two biggest land trusts in the region, Conservación Patagónica and the Conservation Land Trust, while promising to donate their PPAs to the Chilean and Argentine national park administrations to become public entities. The Tompkins foundations have acquired approximately 634,000 ha for conservation in Chilean and 85,000 ha in Argentinean Patagonia since the early 1990s (Tompkins Conservation 2017). Many PPA owners, including the Tompkins, first came to Patagonia as tourists, and their visits directly inspired their subsequent purchases (Holmes 2014).

Many PPAs have attempted to wed land conservation with capitalism. A minority seeks profit from carbon credits, ecotourism or limited property development within a protected landscape (Holmes 2014; Tecklin and Sepulveda 2014). In recent years, speculators have purchased PPAs to combine conservation with profiting from rising property prices (Holmes 2015). Other PPAs have emerged from failed attempts to profit from natural resource extraction. For example, Karukina Natural Park (275,000 ha) was formed from a bankrupt timber project, as discussed below.

The formation of private parks has generated opposition in certain cases. Powerful landowners have been accused of land grabbing (Holmes 2014). In the early 1990s, right-wing think tanks and politicians in Chile criticized PPAs for locking up natural resources. In 2001 a group of Chilean senators unsuccessfully proposed limits on the extent of land included in PPAs within any municipality, although the more extensive landholdings of foreign forestry and utilities companies have not been subject to the same critique (Tecklin and Sepulveda 2014; Holmes 2014). Proposals to limit foreign landownership in Argentina have had more traction. PPAs in both countries are accused of harsh and illegal treatment of local populations, of occupying indigenous land, and of illegally restricting public access to their property (Holmes 2014).

The growth of land conservation in Southern Andean Patagonia has occurred in tandem with the ongoing expansion of ecotourism (Fletcher 2014). The ascent of ecotourism has stoked interest among national, provincial, and local power brokers and politicians to inscribe more lands into the public domain by creating new national (or provincial) parks, or expanding existing ones. The strengthening of green development has spurred further investment by individuals, corporations, and NGOs in private environmentalist efforts, which can be donated to governments, held in trust for non-profit reasons, or used to generate revenue. U.S. green philanthropists and outdoor industry executives have helped direct corporate revenues and private wealth into land conservation efforts. In the process, state and non-state actors have articulated a hegemonic front for green development.

Forestry

In the forests of Southern Andean Patagonia, long-held commitments to resource extraction coexist and are simultaneously challenged by contemporary neoliberal approaches to conservation and forest stewardship. Large, international timber companies—such as Arauco, CMPC, and Masisa—dominate the export market of timber products in the Southern Cone, with mass production of pulpwood, chips, and paper products critical to this market. Though the historic trajectories of forest market entanglement differ in Chile and Argentina, today the material outcomes of these processes are quite similar. These include the incorporation of primary (or "native") forests into private timber and pulp operations, with the resultant exclusion of rural people and livelihoods from the landscape, and the dramatic afforestation of formerly agricultural lands and grasslands. More recently, the green development turn has shaped approaches to managing forests in Patagonia. Smaller companies in the region market themselves as eco-friendly, such as Forestal Russfin in Tierra del Fuego, a company that harvests local lenga (Nothofagus pumilio) for high-end furniture production. Almost all forest product companies are attuned to the potential of carbon markets, even if only strategically. While these shifts reflect global trends, indigenous and environmental activists in the region have challenged traditional approaches to forestry by making claims to the economic benefits of forest conservation and sustainable approaches to harvesting.

Since the Pinochet dictatorship, economic growth in Chile has been reliant upon the export of natural resources. The transition to a deregulated economy and neoliberal economic system particularly impacted Chile's forests, with between 400 and 900 thousand hectares of native forest lost to pine and eucalyptus plantations, agricultural development, and fires (Castañeda 1999: 236). Still, plantation forestry and related industries have been central to Chile's environmental history since the 1930s and key to the making of the modern Chilean state (Klubock 2006). Klubock's account of southern Chile's environmental history situates regional deforestation as integral to larger cycles of settlement, colonization, and related transitions to agriculture (Klubock 2006). The Chilean forestry sector experienced rapid growth even during the Christian Democratic administration of Eduardo Frei (1964-70) and the socialist government of Salvador Allende (1970-73). For example, the Compañía Manufacturera de Papeles y Cartones, a paper and pulp company, had significantly more assets than any other company in Chile in 1969 (Gwynne 1996).

The socio-ecological dynamics of neoliberal policy and practices has been uneven and episodic, with agricultural policy in the period immediately after the coup geared toward reversing the agrarian reforms initiated during the Frei and Allende administrations, then modified toward a more pragmatic approach after the economic crisis of 1982 (Gwynne and Kay 1997). Yet even during this period of extreme neoliberalism, Gwynne and Kay argue, the military government heavily subsidized the forestry sector (1997: 4). With the transition to democracy, neoliberal policies have continued to shape the forestry sector, including increasing consolidation of small Chilean forestry corporations by multinational companies and through joint ventures between large Chilean corporations and international companies.

In comparison, Argentine governmental support for the timber industry has been less consistent over time. Profitability may be impeded by a lack of explicit national policy,

import barriers for new technologies, and inadequate infrastructure (USDA 2013). While Argentina produces 10 million tons of wood annually, much of this ends up as charcoal because of these production issues (USDA 2013: 2). Deforestation in Argentine Patagonia began with European settlement, mainly to enable other forms of agricultural development, such as cattle grazing (Gea-Izquierdo *et al.* 2004). Harvesting of native lenga forests began in the mid-20th century, and remains the targeted species in the region.

In Southern Andean Patagonia, native forests are harvested for timber and, less often, replaced by plantation timber production. For the most part, timber companies have used clear-cutting techniques. Lenga forests are logged for the sawmill industry, while in earlier decades demand for firewood accounted for the dominant use of timber (Gea-Izquierdo *et al.* 2004). A few companies in Chilean and Argentine Tierra del Fuego have experimented with retention approaches (Gustafsson *et al.* 2012), although the widespread implementation of sustainable forestry has been uneven and stymied by lack of infrastructure and, in Argentina, low oversight by the provincial government, and in Chile by continued wood extraction for pulp (Gea-Izquierdo *et al.* 2004). Gea-Izquierdo and colleagues (2004: 345) argue that the legacy of uneven harvesting methods has created an impoverished forest structure in Argentine Tierra del Fuego, with low market value. Harvesting for firewood remains significant in Patagonia, where firewood is a primary fuel source for households, particularly in Chile. Firewood certification programs have had mixed success in meeting biodiversity, air quality, and social equity goals (Henne 2010; Conway 2013). Still, research on retention harvesting in Patagonia suggests that there are multiple ecological and social benefits, including improved bird conservation, plant biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation.

Plantation forestry in Patagonia is not only a process of deforestation, as much of the pine and eucalyptus is planted in former agricultural areas and rangelands, particularly in Argentina. In other words, a significant percentage of Patagonia's contemporary forest canopy is successional, with timber and other forest product industries replacing prior capitalized landscapes. After European settlement, afforestation also occurred in some areas of Patagonia after indigenous guanaco hunters ceased burning the steppe (Veblan and Lorenz 1988). Today, throughout Patagonia, forest managers are interested in the economic potential of forests for carbon sequestration, engaging the Patagonian imaginary and green development opportunities. As Sedjo describes, "In a world where carbon sequestration has monetary value, investments in planted forests can be made with an eye to revenues to (at least two) joint outputs: timber and the carbon sequestration services" (1999: 1). Managers of plantation forests are interested in capitalizing carbon because the Patagonian wood industries are not considered sufficiently profitable, while managers of protected areas see carbon markets as a potential conservation strategy.

While most forest livelihood strategies in Patagonia are governed by the logic of global markets, there are exceptions. In Northern Patagonia, Mapuche activists have been joined by peasant organizations and environmentalists equally alarmed by the destruction of temperate rainforests and lack of access for traditional subsistence activities, such as the collection of wild foods and harvesting of firewood (Klubock 2006). In the far south, in one of the most significant environmental victories in Chile, activists defeated plans for a 400,000 ha forestry project proposed by the US based Trillium Corporation. Trillium's

Rio Condor project aimed to sustainably harvest lenga forests (Ginn 2005), and although the company had all the necessary legal permits and funding for the project, Chilean environmental activists were able to use the media to create considerable doubt about the actual environmental impacts of the project and, ultimately, use the Chilean courts to slow the project's implementation and drain the project's financial resources (Klepeis and Laris 2006). The creditors who received the land title, Goldman Sachs, donated it to an international NGO (Wildlife Conservation Society) to create a PPA. Mirroring contemporary conservation strategies, Karukinka aims to partially fund its running costs by selling carbon credits based on its extensive forest and peat reserves.

Hydropower

Hydropower is the resource domain that most illustrates the contentious limits of the Patagonian imaginary and eco-regionalism. State and corporate actors have worked together to facilitate large-scale dam projects—such as HidroAysén and Represas Patagonia—against the backdrop of looming energy crises and the desire to eliminate dependence on hydrocarbon imports. Yet social movements in both countries have contested the green energy discourses advanced by governments, configuring hydropower as extractive, interventionist, and disruptive to ecotourism and conservation. Protests and lawsuits have challenged the state-corporate alliance and worked to maintain the ecological integrity of Southern Andean Patagonia.

Since the 1880s, hydropower has been considered a key element of the Chilean energy matrix (Susskind *et al.* 2014: 427). During the 1940s, the developmentalist state (Caldentey 2008) took the lead on electricity development and planning, creating ENDESA—in those days, the state-owned electricity company—and the first National Electrification Plan. ENDESA and CORFO (the Corporation for the Promotion of Production) established hydroelectricity as a crucial national resource (ENDESA and CORFO 1943). During the dictatorship, the emphasis on hydropower remained. Pinochet's neoliberal administration privatized ENDESA in the late 1980s in a controversial process that also transferred water rights from the state to private conglomerates (Bauer 1998; Mönckeberg 2001). Currently, ENDESA is an electricity and gas corporation belonging to Italian conglomerate ENEL. In Chile, high rates of economic growth and mining expansion have generated a sustained increase of energy demand (Ministry of Energy 2014). Government authorities have promoted the expansion of hydropower as a renewable, clean, national resource (CADE 2011; Ministry of Energy 2014).

The Chilean state has viewed Southern Andean Patagonia as the last frontier for hydropower expansion. The energy potential south of the Puelo River in the Aysén Region was estimated to be 6,000 megawatts (CADE 2011), but companies owning the water rights did not create concrete plans to enter the region until the 1990s.[4] In 2004, ENDESA announced its intention to build dams in the Aysén Region, through a joint venture known as "HidroAysén" with Colbún, a Chilean conglomerate. HidroAysén proposed two dams on the Baker River and three on the Pascua River. Supported by both center-left and center-right administrations, HidroAysén would have been the largest hydropower complex (2,750 megawatts) built in the history of Chile and would have flooded some 5,900 ha. A 2,000-kilometer power line would have been built to bring electricity from Aysén

to Santiago and the northern regions of the country, where various mining projects are located (Romero Toledo *et al.* 2009; Segura 2010).

Hydropower has also contributed greatly to the energy matrix of Argentina. Under President Perón, the Argentine government created the state company, Agua y Energía Electrica, which promoted national development by building dams and hydropower capacity (Ortega 2009: 1). Energy self-sufficiency became a cornerstone of the developmentalist state beginning with Perón, which entailed commitments to public investment and diversification (Recalde *et al.* 2015). President Menem (1989-1999), however, restructured the energy market along neoliberal principles, privatizing state water and energy companies. A significant period of disinvestment occurred in the 1990s, which ended a thirty-year golden age for large dam construction (Ortega 2009: 1). The neo-developmentalist administrations of Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2015) selectively nationalized privately owned water and energy utilities following falling capital investment and increasing reliance on imported fuels, with negative effects on the balance of trade (Lewis 2009). Beyond asserting stronger state control over the market, the Kirchner-Fernández administrations also promoted GENREN—a renewable energy program to develop wind and other alternative power sources—and prioritized the completion of an integrated national electricity grid that included Southern Patagonia and their political power base in Santa Cruz Province.

Presidents Kirchner and Fernández fast-tracked the Represas Patagonia project to build two dams along the Santa Cruz River. Chastising previous administrations for their failure to invest public funds into hydropower, Fernández argued for the two dams on the grounds of sustainability, growing electricity demand, cost savings on imported oil and gas, and a return to energy self-sufficiency. Indeed, the Néstor Kirchner and Jorge Cepernic Dams would be the largest public works project implemented during the Kirchner-Fernánez administrations and a testament to the ongoing geo-economic shift of Latin America towards tighter integration with Chinese capital. Involving Argentine and Chinese corporate investment, the Represas Patagonia venture sited the two dams in the arid steppes, downriver from the Lake Argentino and Los Glaciares National Park (PNLG) drainage system. With the completion of the high-voltage electrical grid, the two dams stood to contribute to the Andean ecotourism industry and broader national consumption.

The Chilean hydropower project in Aysén faced strong resistance from different coalitions of actors. HidroAysén was sited in one of the last regions of the country where the industrialization process remained limited, with a sparse population embracing livestock farming, tourism, and conservation. Local communities and organizations had worked for more than twenty-five years to create the Aysén Life Reserve to promote sustainable tourism and wildlife conservation within a landscape represented as pristine wilderness. From 2006-2014, HidroAysén was the key site of protest around which the Patagonia Sin Represas (Patagonia Without Dams) campaign consolidated to defeat the state-corporate vision to situate dams and transmission lines alongside or inside protected areas. This anti-dam movement was part of the wider coalition of international and national NGOs and civil society groups that formed the CDP, drawing upon powerful lines of support offered by international organizations such as the Natural Resources Defense Council (Silva

2016). Due to the strong publicity surrounding the protest campaign, Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010 and 2014-2018), re-elected in 2014, withdrew state support for HidroAysén, temporarily shutting down this controversial project.

The Patagonia Sin Represas victory inspired an environmentalist coalition in Argentina to challenge Represas Patagonia, led by the Patagonian Association of Environmental Lawyers and Río Santa Cruz Sin Represas, and bringing together lawyers, activists, recreational enthusiasts, and community members. Argentine environmentalists filed a lawsuit to halt the project, arguing that there was neither a prior Environmental Impact Assessment nor a public forum for citizens to voice their opinions, as established within national environmental law. The coalition publicized scientists' analyses that the westernmost dam could raise the level of Lake Argentino and impact the glaciers flowing into the lake's fjords (Gaffoglio 2014). The potential impacts on the calving dynamics of the Perito Moreno Glacier—the most famous glacier in a park protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site—provided the key line of critique challenging a hydropower project backed by state and corporate power. In December 2016, the Argentine Supreme Court temporarily suspended the project, citing the environmental impact assessment concerns raised by the anti-dam coalition. The Santa Cruz River coalition continues to hope that the recently-elected Macri administration will terminate the project.

Hydropower has become a highly contentious resource regime that draws attention to the fraught politics over what counts as green development. Social movements have emerged on both sides of the border to create an eco-regional political front against hydroelectric dams promoted by state and corporate actors, challenging the green value ascribed to hydropower.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that a regional territorial imaginary has increasingly spurred the shift towards green development in Southern Andean Patagonia. This imaginary has built upon the geopolitical history of the borderland, the Argentine and Chilean governments eventually embracing conservation and tourism as the primary way to colonize the region and secure territorial sovereignty. Beginning in the 1990s, a regional territorial imaginary began to crystallize with the growing import of tourism, the outdoor industry, and environmentalism. These transnational regimes of representational value created distinct but mutually reinforcing images of Patagonia that circulated in the global public sphere. These transnational regimes helped consolidate a growing commitment to eco-regionalism: the earmarking of Southern Andean Patagonia as a region specializing in green development based on different types of natural capital such as ecotourism markets, carbon markets, and green energy.

Contributing to scholarship on global geographies of nature, this article has shown how neoliberal processes of conservation and extraction are conjoined, embedded within, and facilitated by the regional territorial imaginary. Conceptualizing extraction and conservation as two sides of the same neoliberal coin, our analysis has scrutinized the differential impacts of the imaginary on land conservation, forestry, and hydropower. Conservation has become a core feature of green development, displaying a hegemonic consensus that unites state, corporate, and civil society actors on both sides of the border.

Commercial forestry has retained its image as extractive, but increasingly corporate actors have begun to capitalize on carbon market opportunities as part of the ongoing process of commodity extraction. Hydropower is a contested domain in which states and corporations have advanced the discourse of green energy as a way to justify the building of dams on the Baker, Pascua, and Santa Cruz Rivers. However, environmentalist coalitions have challenged this discourse, arguing against these projects as damaging to river ecologies and the regional image of pristine wilderness. Attending to these three distinct resource regimes demonstrates how the articulation between conservation and extraction is both conjunctive and disjunctive. Green development is agonistically forged through the political struggles to link or delink conservation and extraction within particular resources regimes—all of which are attuned to the imaginative territorial framing of Southern Andean Patagonia as an eco-region. We suggest that the concept of the regional territorial imaginary may prove useful to other researchers beyond Patagonia seeking to understand the relationship between different forms of accumulation based in natural resource management. Our effort to bring together multiple researchers studying related processes within the same region offers a useful model for how this analysis can be conducted.

Regional territorial imaginaries are in a constant state of construction throughout Latin America as distinct spaces achieve unique types of representational value through their integration into global capital networks. These imaginaries are built upon the concrete histories of spaces and the state territorializing schemes that have prepared them for particular types of specialization. There is a process of condensation (Laclau 2007) that occurs, as regional images are endowed with multiple meanings dependent upon variable actors and their struggles to define the contours of development. In the case of Southern Andean Patagonia, the process of condensation is an ongoing struggle between state and non-state actors to define the hegemonic front surrounding green development. This open-ended struggle will likely continue to reshape the master image of Patagonia and affect the sociocultural worlds of Southern Andean communities.

Notes

[1] Southern Andean Patagonia includes the Chilean regions of Aysén and Magallanes, as well as the southern half of Los Lagos. It also includes the western portions of the Argentine provinces of Chubut, Santa Cruz, and Tierra del Fuego. Beginning at Pumalín Park in the north, Southern Andean Patagonia extends to the southern tip of Tierra del Fuego.

[2] The authors conducted field research in a variety of locations across Southern Andean Patagonia, including El Chaltén, El Calafate, Villa O'Higgins, Caleta Tortel, Chile Chico, Cochrane, Coyhaique, Futaleufú, Tierra del Fuego, and Navarino Island. As this research was conducted at different times using a variety of approaches by our various authors we have omitted detailed discussion of it here. For specifics on individual authors' research methods please refer to their previous publications.

[3] See "PNLG Tourism Statistics," Parque Nacional Los Glaciares Intendancy, El Calafate, Argentina. These figures include both the southern and northern sectors of the park.

[4] There are no hydropower projects further south of Aysén in the Magallanes Region, as it is not

considered feasible to install dams there. The main source of energy in Magallanes (which also has a separate transmission system and is not connected to the rest of the country) is natural gas.

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