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Deconstructing and Reconstructing Guidebook Ideologies: The Influence of Travel Guidebooks and the Media on Nature Tourism Projects in Costa Rica and Tanzania

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Deconstructing and Reconstructing Guidebook Ideologies: The Influence of Travel Guidebooks
and the Media on Nature Tourism Projects in Costa Rica and Tanzania

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
Sarah Wallock

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
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Prologue: Guidebooks, Globalization, Nature Tourism

When preparing to spend the semester abroad on a multi-country program in Vietnam, Morocco and Bolivia my sophomore year, I immediately googled the destinations to learn more about them. Each search brought up vividly colorful images of each country's most beautiful natural landscapes; like the incredible limestone islands of Ha Long Bay, Vietnam, the camels and rolling dunes in the Sahara Desert in Morocco and the mystical mirror-like salt flats in Bolivia. One of the most common and exciting parts of traveling is immersing yourself in landscapes completely unique from those with which you are familiar. Before I was to spend the next few months studying and traveling through each country, I examined a variety of travel guidebooks and trip reviews online. I was curious to see what the guidebooks and tourists said about each country and why the primary sites of interest they identified were chosen. During my semester abroad, I noticed two trends from reading travel guidebooks and online forums that I have continued to observe in my other travels.

The first trend I observed was that the sites where guidebooks and the media were directing tourists had become incredibly popular, while other locations within those countries were not heavily visited. This means that travel guidebooks and the media significantly influence the popularity of destinations. Many tourists arrive in a foreign country and follow a prescriptive plan, seeing the "best" sights and staying at the most comfortable hotels, while rarely exploring beyond those bounds. Because of this predetermined pattern, I began wondering about what the criteria were for a place flourish as a tourist site. Moreover, I realized that the popularity of tourism sites greatly affects infrastructure, socio-economic development and environmental spaces I wanted to look further into these outcomes. While on one hand, I was examining the relationship between guidebooks and destinations that results in physical change;

on the other, I became interested in the social changes taking place. For instance, how tourists' perceptions of places influenced the places' identities.

As referenced above, the second trend I observed was that the identity of a tourism destination is constructed not only by the local stakeholders, but by tourists as well. All semester my peers were disillusioned and surprised in each country when places were not how they envisioned them. I found their frequent pontifications on this subject intriguing and telling. As our perceptions of destinations shifted and we shared those observations with one another, other travelers, local communities and our families, we were participating in the reconstruction of each place's identity. Our ideas of places were constantly changing and we were deconstructing our prejudices. Having realized that destinations featured in travel guidebooks were incredibly popular and that tourists were helping reconstruct places' identities, I knew I wanted to further investigate these patterns. While I was able to witness these trends firsthand, I began to research how they took shape on a global scale.

More people travel internationally now than ever before. In 2016, 66.9 million U.S. citizens traveled outside the country, according to the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office (Wood 2017). Additionally, on average, more than 8 million people fly a day, according to the International Air Transport Association. Due to the globalization of travel, particular cultures have been modified. For instance, in many places local communities have sacrificed some of their traditional lifestyles to accommodate tourists' needs. The tourist industry sets expectations and replicates experiences in cities and countries across the world by establishing homogeneous "spaces," such as standard hotel rooms at the Hyatt, Wyndham, or Best Western, or fast food restaurants like McDonald's, Starbucks or Kentucky Fried Chicken. These homogeneous spaces afford the same experiences whether they are in Marrakech, Los Angeles or Tokyo, and ensure

comfort, safety and predictability for their patrons. The activities of these safe tourist trips range from sightseeing to hiking to visiting museums, usually surrounded by large numbers of other tourists.

During my semester abroad, I participated in a diversity of tourist experiences. One week, we would stay in the most popular district of a major city surrounded by English speakers, modern comforts and chain fast food restaurants. The next, we would stay in rural neighborhoods, surrounded by local populations who spoke no English and we would be without the modern amenities we were accustomed to. The experiences that have most stood out to me from my travels were those where I experienced the more intimate parts of each country, like when I stayed in homestays and areas with little tourist infrastructure or development. The times where I stayed in standard hotels, constantly surrounded by other tourists and familiar homogeneous spaces, I felt detached from my surroundings or as if I was traveling in a bubble.

My feelings about the homogenization of global travel resonate with a larger trend that anthropologist Jennie Germann Molz describes in her analysis of the rise of alternative tourism. “The desire to connect in deeper ways with local people and places,” she asserts, “reflects a mounting dissatisfaction among primarily middle-class tourists who are tired of ‘plastic rooms’ (Steylaerts 2011), McDisneyized experiences (Ritzer 1997), and the serial reproduction of culture (Richards 2006)” (Molz 2013). Molz’s quote emphasizes many of the exact frustrations my peers voiced throughout the semester. Following my semester abroad, the theme of detachment between tourists and local communities continued to linger in my mind. Alternative tourism, Molz claims, is a response to this disconnect.

I have always found alternative tourism intriguing. A particular variety of alternative tourism I have always been interested in is nature tourism. Growing up, I spent my summers in

Yosemite National Park and my weekends hiking and volunteering locally in Los Padres National Forest in California. I loved spending time in these parks because there was a physical component (hiking or manual labor), a community component (time with family and friends), and an adventurous component (expansive acres of diverse natural land). When I spent one-month doing sustainable farming in Ecuador on a summer program in high school, my experience in international nature tourism uncovered an even more complex and fascinating range of topics than my experiences had in the United States. Both my international experience in Ecuador and time spent recreating outdoors propelled me to pursue my passion for environmental studies at Bard. Upon becoming immersed in the literature I read at Bard in my EUS classes, I developed a particular interest in the ways in which the public and private sector approached environmental issues.

Two passages found in these course readings particularly stood out and still do two years later. One is from Paige West's *Conservation is Our Government Now* (2006), about Americans' conservation attempts in Papua New Guinea, and the other is from Peter Brosius' "Green Dots, Pink Hearts," about environmental politics in the Malaysian rainforest (1999). Both passages highlight the importance of examining environmental issues from a variety of perspectives before presenting solutions. West's passage paints a vivid image of a young hopeful Peace Corps volunteer who has never left the country and strives for the "imagined glamour of saving the world" (2006: 16). He arrives from Brooklyn, doe-eyed to his post in remote Papua New Guinea. After trying unsuccessfully to intervene in an extremely violent village fight and struggling to adjust to a vastly different lifestyle, the Peace Corps worker leaves his position early feeling hopeless, mirroring the trend of a number of Peace Corps volunteers internationally.

Brosius' passage describes a 10 year-old boy from Britain who writes to the Prime Minister of Malaysia. The boy urges the Prime Minister to ban logging in Malaysia so that the tropical rainforest will be sustained because he aspires to study rainforest species when he is older. Prime Minister Dr. Mahatir Mohamed replies, "The timber industry helps hundreds of thousands of poor people in Malaysia. Are they supposed to remain poor because you want to study tropical animals? If you don't want us to cut our forests, tell your father to tell the rich countries like Britain to pay more for the timber they buy from us" (1999: 41).

Although the rhetoric of these two passages is comedic and ironic, they underscore the endlessly competing desires of international stakeholders reflected in environmental discourse. The cultural differences between local communities and international stakeholders become so strikingly palpable through each vignette. The Peace Corps volunteer and the 10 year-old boy both feel an innate desire to preserve the natural environment, and attempt to do, what they have been taught is, "the right thing." Yet they are both from historically privileged groups, which usually fail to see the implications of their choices, especially in the context of environmental movements. "Saving the Earth" may seem like the obvious solution, but there are usually complex histories in natural spaces.

Like the Peace Corps volunteer and the 10 year-old boy, western tourists represent a privileged group. The presence of tourists in a community has a profound impact on its space, resources and culture and creates a fundamental power imbalance because its residents are expected to put the tourists' needs before their own. After reading and writing about these inequities in my courses, while I was studying abroad, I made an effort to ask local leaders about the effects of tourism on development and resource distribution in nature tourism sites and ask tourists about how their preconceptions about destinations may have affected their experiences.

Ultimately, tourists' perceptions of communities influenced how communities presented themselves to the tourists; therefore discussions taking place in the social realm corresponded to developments taking place in the physical realm. I decided to apply the insights I developed during my semester abroad concerning the influence of travel guidebooks and the media on the construction of destinations, to nature tourism sites. My senior project is a result of this innovative approach. Next, I will elaborate on how I will analyze these trends.

Chapter One: Identifying Patterns in Tourism Practices and Environmental Projects

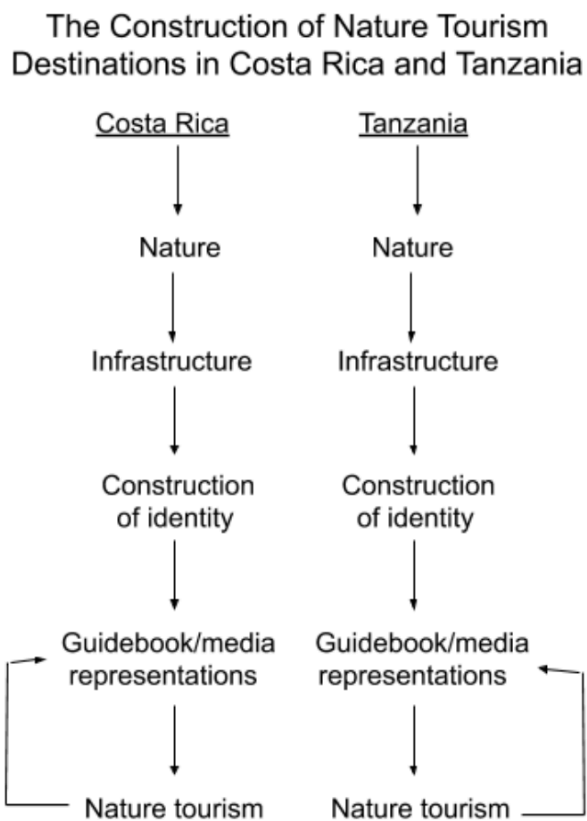
In Chapter One, I will outline the framework I will use throughout my project and introduce the idea that nature tourism destinations are co-constructed. In Chapter Two, I will introduce the pre-existing scholarly literature about travel guidebooks and explain theories about the influence of travel guidebooks on tourists and destinations. In Chapter Three, I will examine how nature tourism destinations are depicted in *Fodor's*, *Frommer's* and *Lonely Planet* and the influence of guidebook ideologies on tourists and destinations. Lastly, I will speculate on the implications of my research and new questions for further research.

In this SPROJ, I have identified a pattern of co-construction between tourists and various actors (such as the state, the tourism industry, and local service workers) that results in the creation of nature tourism destinations. My comparative analysis draws upon two case studies, Costa Rica and Tanzania, and demonstrates how, as a result of this interactive process, natural sites become tourist destinations. Not only does the theory of co-construction consider the material constraints of particular locales, it also incorporates the greater social perceptions of places and how those contribute to their meaning. Consequently, it reveals the way in which social perceptions of nature tourism sites impact physical local development and environmental conservation efforts.

Places exist in physical reality due to their tangible qualities like nature and infrastructure. Places also exist in social reality on account of how their identities are constructed and how guidebooks represent them. A place's identity is co-constructed by the tourist industry and prospective tourists, then further reproduced and represented in guidebooks and the media. As tourists visit a place, their own perceptions, analyses, and critiques eventually shape

contemporary guidebooks and media, thereby creating a feedback loop that shapes its identity as a travel site (Figure 1). Below, Figure 1 is the pattern I will examine throughout the SPROJ.

Figure 1: The Construction of Nature Tourism Destinations



As shown above, for tourism development to occur, a place must have a sought-after natural environment. Next, the place must establish infrastructure that includes roads, lodging and transportation systems. After developing and supporting the necessary infrastructure, the place’s identity can be constructed from historic imagery associated with that region. The state, local authorities or multinational stakeholders carry out the initial construction in order to attract tourists. Next, the tourist industry and prospective tourists co-produce representations of the place’s identity. After a place’s identity is co-produced, also known as co-constructed, this identity is further reproduced and represented in guidebooks and the media. Finally, tourists visit

a place and their perceptions, analyses and critiques eventually shape contemporary guidebooks and media, creating a feedback loop. Throughout this project I will investigate how nature tourism is constructed in Costa Rica and Tanzania. In addition to the role of tourists and actors, I am interested in the influence of guidebook ideologies and social media. Guidebook ideologies are peoples' cultural perceptions of a place that they develop after having read travel guidebooks. I have chosen to analyze the Monteverde Cloud Forest in Costa Rica and Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania and compare the descriptions of them that appear in *Lonely Planet*, *Fodor's*, and *Frommer's* travel guidebooks.

Lonely Planet first appeared in the 1960s when world-class researchers began visiting destinations around the world to help British couple Maureen and Tony Wheeler create their series of travel guidebooks. *Lonely Planet* is aimed at backpackers and low-cost travelers. It places an emphasis on off the beaten track locations and has documented 95% of the world (*Lonely Planet*). After American Arthur Frommer created a guidebook for American soldiers in Europe called "Europe on \$5 a Day," he founded Frommer's in 1957 (Leo 2009). *Frommer's* is focused on presenting "candid and reliable information" for budget travelers (*Frommer's*). The guidebook is aimed at an American audience. *Fodor's* was founded when Hungarian, Eugene Fodor, wrote a guidebook in 1936 with information about European culture and people, including practical advice on such matters as how much to tip. *Fodor's* focuses on providing information about local people and cultures, from local perspectives (*Fodor's*). The guidebook provides fewer options than the others but it only includes the best sites. Rather than analyzing in broad strokes the tourism imaginaries that are most characteristic of Costa Rica and Tanzania, I am focusing on an analysis of the specific images associated with one popular site in each place.

The construction of nature tourism destinations is influenced by historical imaginings of places. A crucial part of co-construction, and the constant reconstruction of destinations, is the influence of travel guidebooks and blogs. Scholars have long noted that guidebooks create and reaffirm tourism imaginaries and ideologies, which construct what certain foreign places or people will be like (Salazar 2011; Gilbert 1999). Usually, these romanticized notions of places that the guidebooks describe only tell a portion of the story. Although guidebook writers and bloggers are not thinking first and foremost about their influence on local development, the guidebooks and posts influence where tourists stay, eat, use guide services, and spend time and shape socially produced imaginings of a place. Conversely, although development specialists and conservationists are not thinking directly about how their work influences tourism and travel guidebooks, the local designations they assign and restorations they perform influence where guidebooks instruct tourists to visit- usually forming a well-known tourist circuit. These are instances of co-construction.

Communications and marketing are crucial components in creating successful nature tourism projects. The degree of accuracy in descriptions and images of culture and people found in guidebooks and marketing materials associated with a place is important. These representations are especially significant and influence where tourists decide to travel, how they interact with locals, and subsequently, where their money goes (where economic development, at least for some, occurs). In addition analyzing traditional print guidebooks, I will also examine travel blogs due to their popularity and accessibility. In contrast with the presumed objective qualities of popular travel guidebooks, travel blogs are increasingly popular for the opposite reason: their subjectivity. What do these blogs and guidebooks guide tourists to do and consume? How do guidebooks and blogs shape guidebook ideologies and tourism imaginaries? What are

guidebook ideologies and tourism imaginaries? Although Costa Rica's and Tanzania's tourism industries were established at different times, the marketing of tourist destinations and the selection of tourists circuits fits the same pattern in each case, as shown in Figure 1.

My research questions include: How do nature tourism sites become tourist destinations? How do actors and tourists work together to co-construct destinations? How do guidebook ideologies and tourism imaginaries reinforce the expectations of tourists and how do these expectations shape economic development and environmental conservation in nature tourism projects? Additionally, how do travel guidebooks and blogs structure the tourist industry and, therefore, contribute to economic and environmental decision-making?

Traditional Parameters for Environmental Projects

As the stories about the Peace Corps worker in Papua New Guinea and the Prime Minister of Malaysia suggest, some of the trends I noticed from conservation as development projects have intersecting themes with ecotourism projects. For instance, usually Western aid agencies or multinational conservation organizations facilitate the introduction of conservation as development projects, which reinforce a power divide and knowledge imbalance (West 2006). Drawing from conservation as development literature, nature tourism literature and from participant observation from nature tourism projects, I created a table to compare the outcomes of effective and ineffective project management tactics (Table 1). Table 1 includes a combination of my participant observation and the academic literature around nature tourism projects. I chose to focus on the idea of nature tourism because it is a broader concept, while ecotourism is a more

limited concept. Ecotourism does not necessarily connote travel to natural spaces because it is a more niche variety of travel.¹

Table 1: Project Management

Conservation as Development Project: <i>combining rural social development and biodiversity conservation goals (Alpert 1996)</i>	Tourism to Natural Areas: <i>responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people (Newsome et al. 2002)</i>
Outcomes, Managed Effectively: Increased social development, natural resource management, creation or management of natural protected area	Outcomes, Managed Effectively: Cross-cultural exchange, economic empowerment, creation or management of natural protected area
Outcomes, Managed Ineffectively: No increase socioeconomic development, degradation of natural resources, land disputes, too much stakeholder power	Outcomes, Managed Ineffectively: Exploitative interactions/travel, degradation of natural resources, too much stakeholder power, concentrated development

If managed effectively, conservation as development and nature tourism projects each have the potential to result in positive environmental, social and economic change (West 2006; Alpert 1996). If transparent initiatives are carried out with input from local stakeholders, then there is a high likelihood for positive socioeconomic development and cross-cultural interactions to take place (Alpert 1996). Yet if managed ineffectively, each of them can be environmental degrading, socially and economically exploitative and entirely un-reciprocal (Honey 2008).

Through environmental studies, I began to discover that initiatives do not always benefit marginalized communities or jeopardized environments, even if they claim to achieve both of these goals. Unfortunately, some of the time one is shortchanged at the expense of the other

¹ For instance, in conservation-expert David Newsome et al.'s book, *Natural Area Tourism* (1951), the authors concluded that ecotourism is too niche a term to confine their study, so they deliberately studied natural areas. Other relevant types of tourism include: wildlife tourism, geotourism and adventure tourism and their purpose of study is to determine impacts of tourism in natural areas.

² ICT is a state-venture started in 1930, incentivized the building of tourist infrastructure and provided tax

(West 2006). Besides the central actors, such as conservationists, tourism industry experts and development specialists, tourists greatly influence whether or not a project is successful.

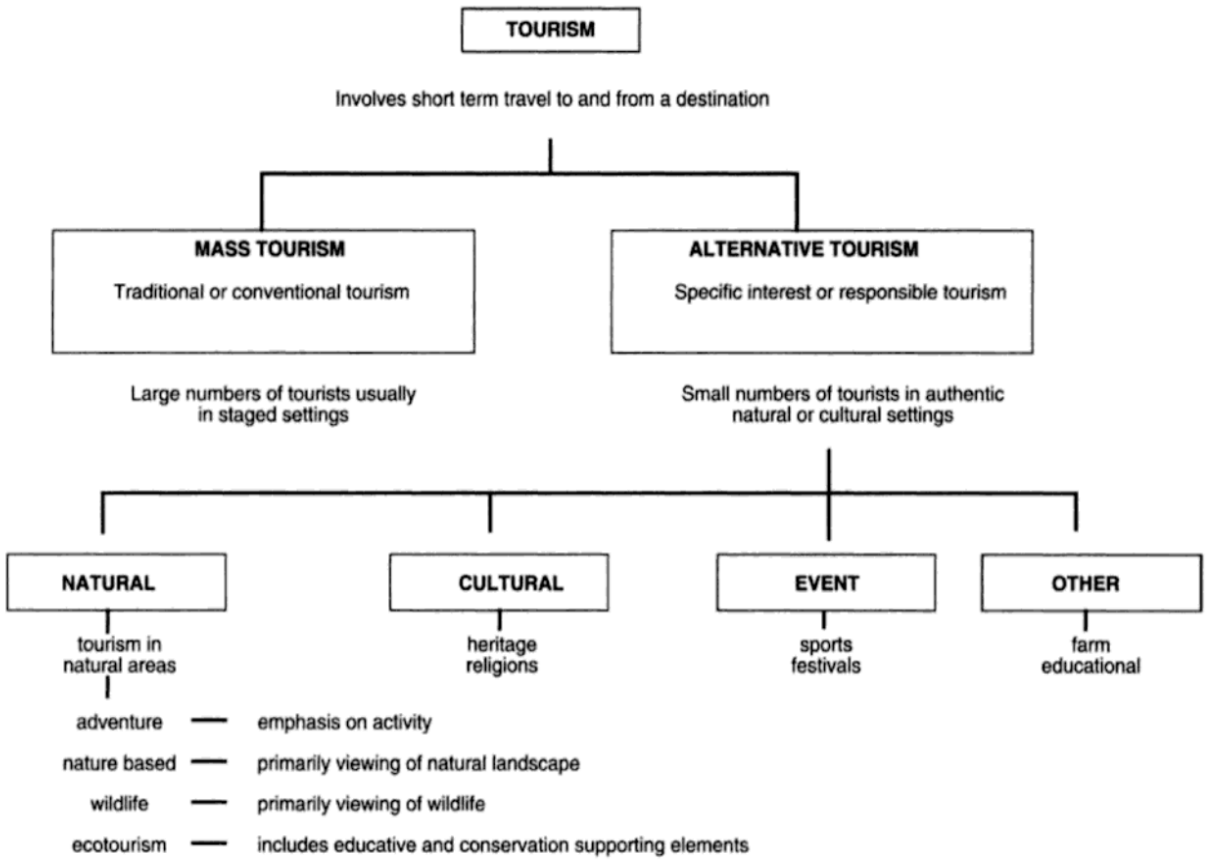
From a practical standpoint, nature tourism projects are continually being evaluated in regards to on their effectiveness in preserving environments and promoting economic development (Alpert 1996). This analysis is carried out through a variety of means such as collecting data on the inclusion of local people, analyzing the amount of money and knowledge invested by multinational stakeholders and government officials, tracking the amount of natural area conserved, or tracking the diversity of species that may be found in a particular locale. Yet I did not want to write solely about the role of nature tourism through the lens of conservation and development literature because scholars have extrapolated on the benefits and drawbacks of tourism on conservation projects before (Brosius 1999; Charnley 2005; West 2006). By working at the nexus of these literatures, I am able trace the co-construction of tourism around conservation destinations and introduce an analysis of travel guidebooks.

Defining Nature Tourism

Alternative tourism is becoming increasingly popular as a way for tourists to deviate from the mass tourism experience. As noted in the prologue, alternative tourism encompasses a diverse range of experiences, like heritage tourism or disaster tourism, and it is a testament to the rising popularity of niche experiences. There are a variety of types of tourism centered in nature, such as ecotourism, sustainable tourism, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism and nature tourism, to name a few (Figure 2). According the Oxford English Dictionary, the term ecotourism was first employed in 1973. In this SPROJ, I use the term “nature tourism,” because of its breadth, which includes different types of nature tourism such as ecotourism and wildlife tourism. It encompasses as well anything from rustic to luxurious accommodations and experiences. Nature

tourism most frequently occurs in designated conservation areas, national parks or protected areas, but can also occur in undesignated natural spaces (Newsome et al. 2002).

Figure 2: Newsome et. al.'s Tourism Diagram



Because this is a relatively new literature, the terms are fluid and there is not one single definition for any one of them. I will spend some time defining how nature tourism, ecotourism, sustainable tourism, adventure tourism and wildlife tourism are currently understood. Nature tourism is defined as responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people (Newsome et al. 2002: 13). The National Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people (Honey 2008). This definition of ecotourism is identical to Newsome's definition of nature tourism. Different sources each have different

definitions. In contrast with its definition above, nature tourism is defined by Fletcher as the viewing of nature through mild exertion like walking, hiking or biking (Fletcher 2014). In contrast to the above definition of ecotourism that treats it as identical to nature tourism, Kurt Kutay, the director of Traveler's Conservation Trust, contends that "real ecotourism is more than just travel to appreciate nature. It includes minimization of environmental and cultural consequences, contributions to conservation and community projects in developing countries, and environmental education and political consciousness-raising" (Honey 2008). Each of these definitions emphasize that ecotourism is both based in a natural setting and has a degree of social responsibility associated with it, while nature tourism has to do with simply being in nature.

Just as ecotourism and nature tourism focus on the importance of social responsibility toward the environment and local inhabitants, sustainable tourism expands on these criteria and considers their future implications. According to the United Nations Sustainable Development goals, sustainable tourism is tourism that leads to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems ("Sustainable Tourism"). In contrast with most of the definitions examined so far, adventure and wildlife tourism have a more interactive or physical component to them. The Adventure Travel Trade Association defines adventure tourism as a tourist activity that includes a physical activity, a cultural exchange, or activities in nature. Wildlife tourism is observing local animals and flora in their natural habitats (Fletcher 2014).

In this SPROJ, I will focus primarily on nature tourism in classified natural areas. According to the guidelines set forth by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Protected Area Management Categories, there are six categories of natural areas, from most strict

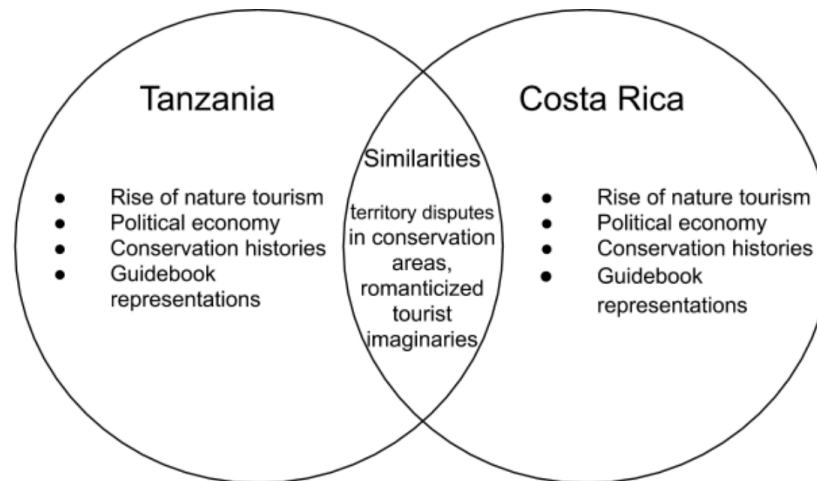
to least strict requirements: Strict Nature Reserve, Wilderness Area, National Park, Natural Monument or Feature, Protected Landscape/Seascape, Habitat/Species Management Area and Protected Area with Sustainable use of Natural Resources (“Protected Area Categories”). I will be focusing mainly on nature tourism within Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve and Ngorongoro Conservation Area. The Cloud Forest most aligns with the definition of a protected landscape because the reserve has an explicit natural conservation plan, but also accommodates a range of for-profit activities. Ngorongoro most aligns with the definition of a protected area with sustainable use of natural resources because the conservation area conserves ecosystems and habitats with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems.

Framing Case Analysis

In this section, I will describe how I chose each case and how I will analyze them throughout my SPROJ. Since the 1980’s, Costa Rica has been an international ecotourism success story, so it was an obvious choice. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council in 2016, the total contribution of Travel and Tourism sector to Costa Rica’s GDP was \$7 billion, 13.4% of the GDP. The Travel and Tourism sector directly supported 110,000 jobs, 5.2% of total employment (“Travel Guard Update 2013”). Not only does tourism contribute to Costa Rica’s economy but it supports the preservation of natural spaces across the country. The value that Costa Rica places on the environment is reflected in its budgetary support for environmental preservation. As one of the few countries in the world that does not have a military, it invests funds that would have gone to defense into environmental preservation instead.

In addition to Costa Rica, I wanted to examine a case that had great potential to become a nature tourism success story. My selection of Tanzania was influenced by Susan Charnley’s work on Maasai safari drivers in Ngorongoro Conservation Area and their relationships with the

government and tourist industry (Charnley 2005). Upon reading further about Tanzania's struggles in post-colonial Eastern Africa and its expansive natural environments and national parks, I felt that this case complemented Costa Rica's nicely because of their differing histories and similarly popular nature tourism destinations. Travel and Tourism employed around 1 million people in Tanzania in 2013, 11% of Tanzania's labor force ("Tanzania Tourist Arrivals..."). Travel and Tourism accounted for 17.5% of Tanzania's GDP in 2016. Noting their expansive natural spaces and the prominence of tourism in each country, ecotourism specialist and author of *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development*, Martha Honey, compares and analyzes each country in her book. Having lived in each country, she is able to provide a comparative and holistic account of the environmental histories. Figure 3 is meant to illustrate how I plan to compare the unique and shared qualities of Tanzania and Costa Rica. In each case, I will present evidence relating to its historical background, the rise of nature tourism, the nature of its political economy and how specific sites are represented in guidebooks. The similarities between Costa Rica and Tanzania include their ongoing territory disputes around conservation areas and tourists' tendency to romanticize these places.

Figure 3: Case Comparison

I use a comparative case analysis to emphasize the similarities and differences between the effects of guidebook ideologies in Tanzania and Costa Rica. My primary sources are guidebooks, media, and government statements on National Parks. My secondary sources are scholarly literature that analyzes guidebook ideologies and nature tourism projects. In addition, I will bring statistics about nature tourism and the tourism industry into my discussion, as primary materials, to substantiate my claims regarding the recent rise of both industries. I will examine the changing amount of land areas devoted to conservation over time, the ownership and the economic divisions between groups, most notably between local informal landholders and international stakeholders/the government. Figure 4 depicts the intersections of the three main subjects of my project: tourists, local communities and the environment. The Venn diagram provides the intersections of each group and how they relate to one another.

Figure 4: Tourists, Local Communities, and the Environment

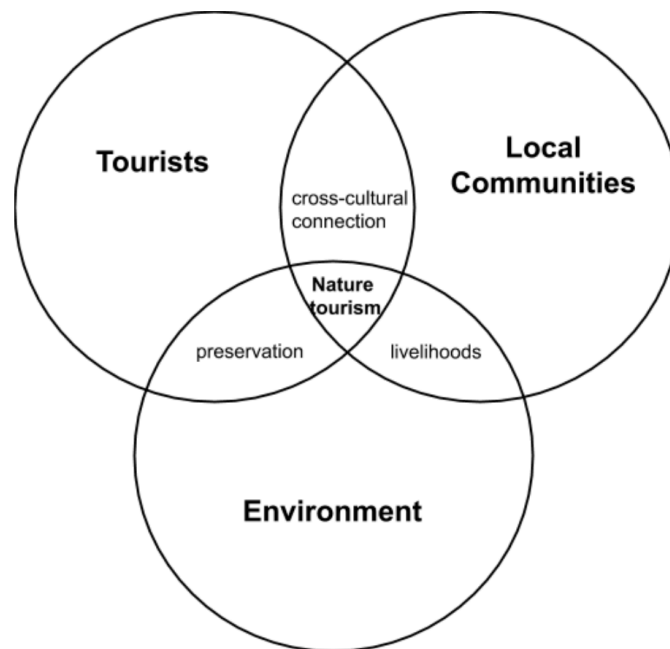


Figure 4 illustrates that at the intersection of the environment and local communities lies the necessity of livelihoods. At the intersection of local communities and tourists is the desire for cross-cultural connection. And at the intersection of tourists and the environment is the desire for preservation. Where local communities, the environment and tourists converge is through nature tourism efforts. Throughout my thesis, I will refer to these three subjects and their interactions continually. Now, I will examine how guidebooks influence tourists, local communities and the environment and I will begin by giving a brief overview on the history of travel guidebooks.

Chapter Two: Tourism Imaginaries, Guidebook Ideologies and the Rise of Tourism Destinations

In the following chapter, I discuss how nature tourism destinations are co-constructed. In this chapter, I will introduce the pre-existing scholarly literature about travel guidebooks and explain theories about the influence of travel guidebooks on tourists and destinations.

Dating back to the 1st century CE, the periplus, an itinerary of ports containing landmarks along various coastlines, was the inspiration for what are now travel guidebooks (Kish 1978). In the medieval Arab world, guidebooks were used for alchemists, magicians and treasure hunters to find artifacts (El Daly 2004). Although the first travelogues have their origins in medieval China, modern travel guidebooks emerged in the 1830's in Britain, the United States and Germany. Karl Baedeker of *Baedeker Guides* became so popular as a travel aid, that *baedekering* became an English-language term for the purpose of traveling in a country to write a travel guide or travelogue about it.

Before World War II, there was a distinction between European and American perspectives in guidebooks. During the war, in the 1940's, soldiers would write travel guides for their peers. This became a popular practice and not only other soldiers were interested in these guidebooks, but regular people. Following World War II, especially in the 1960's, there was a convergence between the European and American perspectives in guidebooks and there was a marked increase in international travel. Many Americans, in particular, traveled to Europe. Early guidebooks had somewhat practical and limited beginnings: first, for geographical navigation, next, for wealthy travelers, and more recently, for soldiers; contemporarily, modern guidebooks unintentionally have become an incredibly popular phenomenon. In Chapter Three, I will examine nature tourism as depicted in *Fodor's*, *Frommer's* and *Lonely Planet*, which are some of the most successful and widely read guidebooks and were created in the post-WWII period.

Originally, guidebooks were used primarily by a relatively small subset of upper middle class and wealthy travelers, now, modern guidebooks have developed into a cultural motif as travel has become obtainable for a larger demographic.

Travel guidebooks have become increasingly popular as international travel has become more accessible and prevalent. Despite society's rising dependence on media resources, the NPD Market Research Group gathered data in 2017 that suggests that readers are still purchasing travel guidebooks in the digital age. For instance, \$124 million was spent in the USA on travel guides last year (Stroller 2018). The unit sales of print travel guidebooks grew 2 percent and guidebooks had an overall compound growth rate of 1 percent from 2014-2016 ("Year-to-Date Sales of Travel Guidebooks..."). An industry analyst for NPD books, a branch of NPD Market Research Group, Kristen McLean, provides her insight in an article on why the sales for travel guidebooks are increasing ("Year-To-Date Sales of Travel Books..."). "Likely," she explains, "because [the guidebooks] share a certain sense of romance, aspiration, and adventure without being politically or historically charged in any way at the current time." This presumed objectivity of information regarding culture and places, in addition to the practical nature of guidebooks, helps solidify the case for sales and consumption.

As traditional print guidebooks present a uniform approach to travel, travel blogs are increasingly popular for their subjectivity. There are no shortage of highly successful travel bloggers from diverse countries and backgrounds that cater to individuals, couples, women, African-American travelers, and families, along with other groups. The information travel blogs present is palpable because it is framed through a subjective, intimate and almost anthropological lens. Rather than claiming objectivity, it is the norm for bloggers to include self-reflection and examine their prejudices and subjectivities in their writing.

Known as *Nomadic Matt*, Matt Kepnes, an “entrepreneur who quit his job at 25 to travel the world,” is now making \$750,000 a year, running his travel blog based on budget travel, writing guidebooks and facilitating group trips (Ginsberg 2017). There is some irony in the fact that Matt makes three-quarters of a million dollars a year marketing budget travel. He has 95,000 followers on Instagram and has been featured on CNN, BBC, NYT, and Huffington Post. Matt’s story is not an anomaly. In the age of the digital nomad, careers like his are becoming increasingly common. *The Blonde Abroad* is a travel blog, created by Kiersten Rich, focused on international travel as a woman, with one million followers. Drew Binsky makes daily travel videos and has 1.7 million social media followers and a total of 400 million video views. Within the range of sources I have noted, from print guidebooks and travel blogs, there are common ways of advertising destinations that result in tourism imaginaries and guidebook ideologies. Next, I will unpack these terms and elaborate on their significance.

What Are Guidebook Ideologies and Tourism Imaginaries?

Tourism imaginaries are widely acknowledged descriptions of people or places. They contain a combination of imagination and reality. Westerners subconsciously subscribe to the hegemonic “seductive” yet “restrictive” narratives of societies from the pages of widely circulated travel guidebooks (Salazar 2011). For example, anthropologist Julien Mercille “shows the remarkable homogeneity of Shangri-La imaginaries in a movie (“Seven Years in Tibet”), a guidebook (*Lonely Planet*), and a magazine (*National Geographic*). One master image of Tibet seems to circulate by the various representations of it” (Salazar 2011; Mercille 2005). Noel Salazar introduces the concept of “tourism imaginaries” as socially transmitted representational assemblages that shape people’s personal imaginings of the world (Salazar 2011; Crang 2006; Bergmeister 2015). Tourism imaginaries can be about other people, like the nineteenth-century

European imaginings of African people as cannibals; or about other places, like the British colonial idea of the tropics as disease-ridden, extremely hot and dangerous (Adams 2004). One tourism imaginary about Southeast Asian landscapes even maintains that they are, “wrapped in forests, edged in golden sands, crowned by volcanoes, studded with ruins of lost civilisations” (*Lonely Planet* 2018).

Guidebook ideologies are a more specific variety of tourism imaginaries. Guidebook ideologies are peoples’ cultural perceptions of a place that they develop after reading guidebooks. For example, Bergmeister examines a common guidebook ideology about Southeast Asia and deconstructs *Lonely Planet’s* description. He explains the Western tourist seeks “pre-modern pre-industrial authenticity,” while many communities seek practical and modern development (Bergmeister 2015). He deduces that the tourists positively view century-old manifestations of the culture as authentic, while they negatively view recent socioeconomic development and urbanization as inauthentic (Bergmeister 2015). Rather than seeing something for what it is, tourists continually exoticize it. By adding these social meanings, tourists, “the unsung armies of semiotics,” reinforce guidebook ideologies (Culler 1988). Guidebook ideologies themselves are the product of widely acknowledged signs.

Given the popularity of guidebooks, both in print and online, it’s important to examine how tourists’ ideas of places and their expectations are created; especially, because these social realities influence physical reality. Tourists look to signs to reaffirm cultural practices. Signs are things that convey meaning (Culler 1988). To describe the importance of the social significance of signs in tourism, I will examine Barthes’ example of a fur coat as a sign. The practical use of a fur coat is to keep one warm from the cold, yet the meanings associated with and social significance of a fur coat could range from a Victorian-era fashion statement to a luxury good to

a controversial symbol of animal rights abuses. These are all signified connotations of a fur coat. The objects' social significance is continuously being influenced by social trends and reproduced. Literary theorist, Jonathan Culler explains that tourists are constantly searching for signs:

All over the world the unsung armies of semiotics, the tourists, are fanning out in search of signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behavior, exemplary Oriental scenes, typical American thruways, traditional English pubs and; deaf to the natives' explanations that thruways just are the most efficient way to get from one place to another, or simply that pubs are just convenient places to meet your friends and have a drink, or that gondolas are just a natural way to get around in a city full of canals, tourists persist in regarding these objects and practices as cultural signs (Culler 1988: 155).

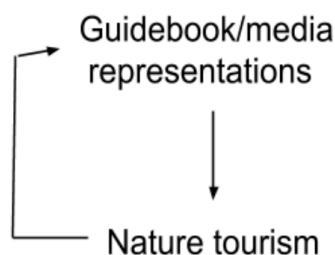
Therefore, as a fur coat's use is to keep one warm from the cold and a gondola is meant to maneuver in the canals, rather than their practical meanings, the meanings tourists' assign to things have greater social significance. Culler initially emphasizes the tourists' search for signs and exoticization of cultures in their social construction of "exemplary Oriental scenes." Tourists continually regard objects as cultural signs. Over a hundred years ago, original imperial guidebooks contributed to tourists' exoticization of signs.

Culler suggests that tourists engage in an exoticization and allurement with other cultures, which Gilbert attributes to the imperial qualities of original travel guidebooks from London in the 1930's (Gilbert 1999). Wealthy Londoners wrote these guidebooks for wealthy tourists from British colonies, with the purpose of maintaining London's position as a world power and the center of an empire. The guidebook's portrayal of London as a world power helps to maintain the city's position of power. This case exemplifies how guidebooks and media representations can be a political act. Tourists help to construct their experience through conceptually consuming a tourism imaginary and physically purchasing products crafted by the locals and stakeholders. Therein, the tourists co-produce the product through the process of consumption (Salazar 2011). Tourists contribute to the act of co-constructing destinations. Now

that I have given a brief historical overview, I will examine how tourist expectations contribute to tourism sites.

By reading a guidebook prior to arrival, tourists develop a set of expectations for their experience. After, they visit a place they perform a more substantive analysis to confirm or deny what they've read: “‘It’s not as big as it looked in the picture’ or ‘It’s more impressive than I imagined” (Culler 1988: 160). Then the tourists return home, validate or discard certain preconceptions and the cycle begins again. When tourists’ expectations are or are not met, tourist’s/customer’s levels of satisfaction are influenced and this contributes to the adaptation of future guidebook ideologies. This is what I call a satisfaction feedback loop. Below, I have included the bottom section of Figure 1, to further exemplify this point (Figure 1a).

Figure 1a: The Construction of Nature Tourism Destinations



The Escape from Mass Tourism

Not only can tourism imaginaries shape tourists’ expectations, but tourists can deconstruct imaginaries. Modern travel bloggers, as well as backpackers, are a part of groups that characteristically manipulate the meanings of tourism imaginaries and use their travel experiences to investigate their personal imaginings. If tourists normalize themselves and their cultures, it is easier to exoticize the other. In contrast, if they refrain from this categorization and use of binaries, they are able to form relationships and may be able to experience a place more genuinely. Therefore, tourism imaginaries are shaped and manipulated through the tourists’

interactions in the destinations and their self-examination. For example, here are a number of travel blog articles that highlight the confrontation of guidebook ideologies and prejudices:

- “Iran is NOT What You Think” and “North Korea is Not What I Expected and Here’s Why,” *Drew Binsky*. July 3, 2018.
- “Best Places in South of France You Never Thought to Visit,” *Melissa Giroux (A Broken Backpack)*. July 1, 2018.
- “Why You Shouldn’t Overlook the American South,” *Matt Kepnes (Nomadic Matt)*. February 18, 2019.

These articles illustrate one of the tendencies of travel blogging: a fixation on confronting, investigating and trying to account for cultural difference. The titles of these articles bring a number of questions to mind: What were some of the images and cultural ideals associated with Iran, North Korea, France and the American South, and what shaped those images? Each of these travel bloggers learned something that their guidebooks did not prepare them for. Their desire to share their individual experiences is juxtaposed to the universal imaginaries from the guidebook. Therefore, the guidebook ideology and tourism imaginaries to which they originally subscribed, must be re-contemplated. In turn, this re-construction affects the material constraints of tourism in each country. If a destination has a tourism imaginary with positive connotations, there will be an increase in tourism, which has a social and physical impact. If a destination has a tourism imaginary with negative connotations, there will be a decrease of tourism, which also has a social and physical impact.

The content of travel guidebooks and blogs directly affects the spatial dynamics of tourism. Tourists seek authenticity by roaming beyond “tourist” places (Muzaini 2006). For example, backpackers are known for creating and seeking a counterculture set apart from mass tourism by traveling independently and having a desire to engage with locals. Similar to

backpackers, certain print guidebooks and most travel bloggers emphasize the best “off the beaten track” locales. Eventually, the backpackers’ methods of localization also become homogenized, which results in creation of an entirely new tourist infrastructure. By trying so advertently to eat or stay or spend time “off the beaten track,” they inadvertently create new and popular path. Eventually, the same frustrations backpackers initially had about the tourist bubble and commodification of experience become bothersome again due to the new destination they have helped to create.

How Influencers Impact Tourism Imaginaries

Here, I will substantiate and document the process by which trend of how the tourism industry manipulates guidebook ideologies. Travel icons like Anthony Bourdain and airlines like Icelandair have popularized previously non-touristy places. There is a clear relationship between travel influencers and sought-out travel destinations. First, guidebooks aid the influencers by familiarizing them with local accommodations, transportation, food and attractions. And after their travels, influencers in-turn aid the guidebooks regarding what to promote to the general public. Once travelers pick up the guidebooks, new tourist attractions exponentially grow, as I will demonstrate next.

Anthony Bourdain, world-renowned chef and travel personality, had a reputation for uncovering off-the-beaten-track restaurants. For instance, possibly one of the most famous Bourdain-inspired success stories was X’ian Famous Foods in Flushing, Queens. After Bourdain publicized his visit, the Wang family was able to comfortably open twelve additional X’ian Famous Foods locations and went from “living in one room in Flushing to living the American dream” (Dai 2018). X’ian Famous Foods’s wild success and subsequent tourist interest can be compared to Icelandair’s #MyStopover campaign. The campaign prompted travelers to book

stopover flights to Iceland for cross-Atlantic travels, with the option of staying in local accommodation and seeing tourism attractions. Iceland had around 300,000 international visitors in 2010, and as many as 2 million visitors in 2017 (“Tourism in Iceland Figures”) after the campaign was underway. Although the scheme has existed since the 1960’s, in 2014, the introduction of the hashtag and social media campaign assured its success. Both X’ian and Icelandair’s economic growth and tourism success have been documented across major news outlets and culture magazines such as *Condé Nast*, *The Infatuation*, *Thrillist*, and *The Guardian*, among others. These are two prime examples of how social reality effects physical reality.

As Anthony Bourdain and Icelandair explicitly influence travelers’ choices, works of media like movies or articles, implicitly influence travelers itinerary decisions. For instance, following the Disney movie, *Coco*, Oaxaca, Mexico was full of visitors for the Day of the Dead celebration. *Coco* premiered in October 2017 and it is not a coincidence that exactly one year later *Lonely Planet* published a piece on tourism to Mexico titled: “Where to explore the real-life inspiration behind Disney’s *Coco*.” Mexico’s tourism revenue had a 7.2% increase from 2017-2018 and Mexico was ranked the 6th most visited destination in the world in 2018 (Christoff 2018). Oaxaca appeared third on *National Geographic*’s list of “Places You Need to Visit in 2018.” Among one of the other places selected is Ruaha National Park in Tanzania, directly south of the popular Northern circuit. This points precisely to my inquiry into the trend of media outlets and travel influencers guiding their followers to discover “off the beaten track” locales, which then become popularized.

National Geographic’s 2019 list includes some non-traditional tourism destinations like Macedonia and Oman, and includes some more predictable places like Toronto, Canada and Oakland, California. Between the various examples listed above and many others, there is an

increasing amount of tourism information available through the media, and usually the most popular sources inform prospective travelers. This flow of information has the capacity to direct travelers to more diverse locations. Guidebook ideologies are reproduced, manipulated and fed through the dissemination of media by travel influencers, magazines and companies. To this sentiment, the tourism industry is one of the main players in the presentation of guidebook ideologies. How has the tourism industry shaped the stories of Costa Rica and Tanzania? How have tourists helped to co-construct these nature tourism destinations? In Chapter Three, I will address these questions.

Chapter Three: The Co-construction of Nature Tourism Destinations

Throughout history, people have glorified and romanticized nature. From famous periods like the Westward expansion in the U.S. to popular and historic phrases like “mother nature” and “garden of Eden,” people tend to assign positive connotations to nature and the natural. For instance, the colonial and postcolonial narratives that depict the African plains as bountiful and expansive are a familiar trope to many. From the *Lion King* (1994) to Taylor Swift’s “Wildest Dreams” music video (2015), filmmakers, artists and storytellers, among others, reaffirm these depictions of landscapes devoid of people, instead with a focus on wildlife and scenery. These representations of Africa and nature have received much contestation from scholars for promoting the tourist gaze and having racist elements to them (Urry 1990; Bruner 2001).

The tourist gaze takes place when tourists encounter objects or things that are unordinary. Tourists perform the tourist gaze when seeing: a unique object, a particular sign (Culler 1981), unfamiliar objects, and familiar ways of life taken up by unfamiliar people. Tourism scholar, John Urry uses Culler’s “The Semiotics of Tourism” to situate his analysis of the tourist gaze (Urry 1990; Culler 1981). “Tourism,” Urry explains, “results from a basic binary division between ordinary/everyday and the extraordinary” (12). Representations of destinations, people and activities in guidebooks, as well as the media, could promote the tourist gaze by exoticizing the subject matter.

Particularly, the *Lion King* and “Wildest Dreams” contribute to the co-construction of tourism sites. The *Lion King* is one of the highest grossing animated films of in history and features an array of animals in East Africa, yet has been criticized for its emphasis on the wildlife and landscapes of Africa, and its absence of African people; similarly, the other Disney films “Tarzan” (1999) and “Madagascar” (2005) are also devoid of Africans and focus on

animals. *Lion King* illustrates the colonial trope about Africa's "gardens of Eden," Bruner points out. More specifically, Bruner brings up the appropriation of the Kenyan Swahili political song, that many people know from the *Lion King*, "Hakuna Matata." The song was sung after the war in Uganda in the 1970's to say that Kenya is safe to return to (Bruner 2001: 893). In the 1980's, the song became associated with tourism. Bruner concludes:

"Hakuna Matata" has been widely interpreted in American popular culture as expressions of "Africanness" and "blackness," and then has been re-presented to American tourists by Africans, in Africa. What is not new is that transnational influences are at work, that a song or an aspect of culture flows around the globe as ethnographers are familiar with these processes. Nor is it new that a global image of African tribesmen is enacted for foreign tourists (893).

As Bruner has described, *The Lion King* reaffirms some of the performative qualities of tourism to Africa and may contribute to the exoticization of Africans and African culture. Bruner recognizes the presence of Africans who work in service occupations and as entertainers in many tourism establishments. He acknowledges that these are the least desirable and lowest paid jobs. In relation to this SPROJ, the tourists, tourist industry, local stakeholders and media contribute to the co-construction of African tourism. The media creates expectations, the tourists adhere to and promote those expectations and the industry and local stakeholders work to satisfy them. Similarly, Taylor Swift's "Wildest Dreams" has influenced tourist expectations and imaginaries.

Image 1: Screenshot of Disney's *Lion King*



Photo: *Lion King* 1994: <https://movieweb.com/lion-king-movie-2019...>

Image 2: Screenshot of Taylor Swift's "Wildest Dreams"



Photo: Taylor Swift/"Wildest Dreams" 2015

Like aspects of the *Lion King*, Taylor Swift's "Wildest Dreams" "has a major race problem" according to Nico Lang, reporter from the *Daily Dot* (Lang 2015). Swift's music video depicts herself, as a 1920's movie star who falls in love with her co-star while shooting a movie in an African landscape. Some vivid images from the piece, include Swift in her characteristic red lipstick and her dress billowing in the wind or in khaki-colored safari fashion, standing romantically and singing beside elephants, a lion, horses, and a giraffe. Kelly Lawyer for *USA Today*, describes that some critics believe the video is "romanticizing white colonialism and using Africa for a backdrop for a story about white people." Lang writes, "the video wants to have its old-school Hollywood romance but ends up eating some old-school Hollywood racism, too." The director of Taylor Swift's music video, Joseph Kahn, claims it is a period piece, and is not racist or colonialist. Although Swift's video portrays a fictional story, it reaffirms consumer tourism imaginaries about the vast and wild African plains. Because of Swift's fame, she could have used her "Wildest Dreams" video as a platform to challenge the stereotypical racist portrayals of Africa. The reactions to the *Lion King* and "Wildest Dreams" exemplify the influence that media has on consumers. Works like these reaffirm tourism imaginaries about Africa as a primarily a nature sanctuary. Next, I will examine how guidebooks and the media have a similar effect on consumers.

Although the *Lion King* and "Wildest Dreams," were not intended for promotional purposes, as staples of popular culture, they are important influences on tourist perceptions of Africa. The effect of media on consumers can be explicit like through tourism marketing articles in *National Geographic*, or in-explicit like through movies like "Coco" or music in popular culture like "Hakuna Matata." Therefore, explicit and inexplicit references to a site both contribute to the co-construction of nature tourism destinations. Not only does tourism marketing

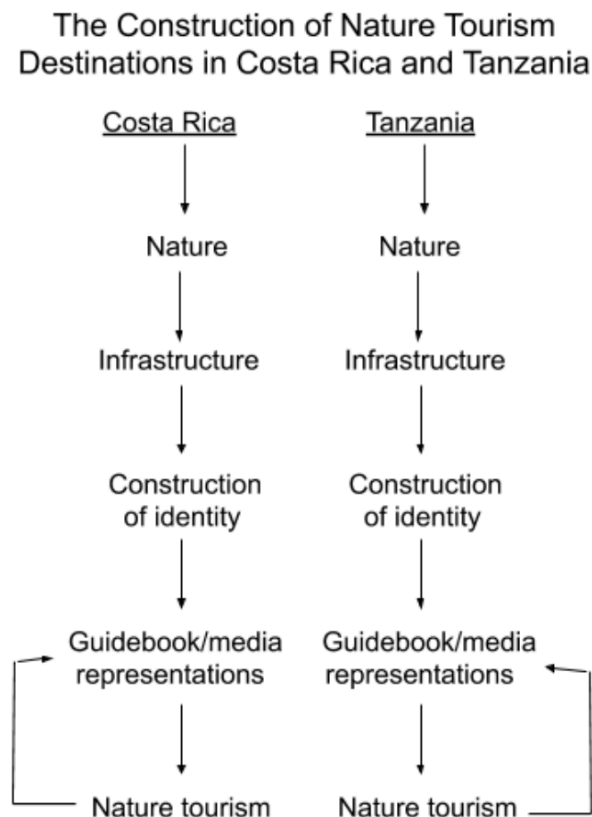
affect tourists, Bruner acknowledges, but it impacts scholars' studies: "Tourism scholarship thus aligns itself with tourism marketing, in that scholars tend to work within the frame of the commercial versions of their sites" (881). Bruner attests that tourist marketing influences scholars and they cannot fully escape their tourist gaze. The tourist gaze must be acknowledged and incorporated into their studies. Therefore, the literature and media targeted at tourists also influences scholars.

In addition to these other forms of media, depictions of destinations in travel guidebooks greatly affect tourists' expectations and on-the-ground interactions with locals. The progressive information in guidebooks and comments and social media reflect tourist satisfaction, disillusionment and what local interactions took place. These depictions of destinations both in travel guidebooks and on social media impact local economic development. Particularly guidebooks influence what places to visit, stay, eat and explore. Furthermore, if travel guidebooks provide an orientalist or colonialist account of sites, or if they provide historical and unbiased views of sites, these representations will affect the site's image and the role of the tourist. Yet in an age of constant feedback through instant communication and endless perspectives, travel guidebooks are not the only resource influencing tourists' perceptions of a destination.

In particular, consumer reviews from other tourists play a strong role in influencing how tourists make decisions and form perceptions/expectations of the destination. Platforms like TripAdvisor and Yelp, which that contain user-generated content, enable people, now, more than ever, to research everything about a site, written by other tourists. User-generated content platforms are built on a review culture; these platforms are characteristic of the moral economy of alternative tourism (Molz 2013). The moral economy essentially constitutes "how to be good"

within the framework of alternative tourism practices. Molz pays attention to the “way normative ideas about how tourists should or should not travel, what they should or should not consume, and how they should or should not interact with others are attached to alternative tourism and social networking technologies” (212). In review culture, tourists write reviews about tourist services, rate each other’s reviews, and gain points based off of their activity and credibility. Other potential travelers have access to this information and presumably it helps to inform their travel plans and preconceptions. This feedback loop helps to constantly redefine pre-existing beliefs about destinations. It is common practice for restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions to gain profit and popularity from ranking highly on these platforms. Here is the pattern of co-construction that takes place as exemplified earlier in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Construction of Nature Tourism Destinations



I have chosen to analyze one nature tourism site from Costa Rica and one from Tanzania and compare the entries from each guidebook. This way, rather than analyzing broad strokes about the tourism imaginaries about the entire country, I can do a specific analysis of the images associated with one popular site. I have included parts of the descriptions about Costa Rica's Monteverde Cloud Forest and Tanzania's Ngorongoro Conservation Area from *Lonely Planet*, *Fodor's*, and *Frommer's*. The descriptions that I found to be the most vivid I have highlighted in bold in the tables in the following sections (Table 4 and 5). I will provide a historical overview and then analyze the influence of guidebook ideologies on Costa Rica; then I will do the same for Tanzania. After, I will compare and contrast the cases.

How Costa Rica's National Park System Informed its Nature Tourism Industry

From the high levels of biodiversity to the foundations of a thriving domestic tourism industry in the 1960's, Costa Rica had the necessary characteristics to flourish as a nature tourism destination. Originally, the industry was developed by locals, for locals. These efforts created infrastructure in the form of roads and hotels and formed the basis of what is now Costa Rica's \$1.92-billion-a-year tourism industry ("Costa Rica registró..."). Costa Rica was able to develop a local tourism base in large part because of its economy and political system. The state has been a stable presence in Central America. Even following World War II and the Costa Rican Civil War in 1948, Costa Rica was able to make quick reparations to their economy. The country holds 6% of the world's biodiversity in just .035% of Earth's surface area ("Embassy of Costa Rica"). Costa Rica has 27 national parks and protected areas account for 25% of the country's land area. The country is divided into 11 different conservation areas. Each have a manager that carries out environmental protection and community services initiatives. The bureaucratization of these natural spaces is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Map of Costa Rica



Photo: "Map of Costa Rica," *Lonely Planet*

In the early 1970's, Costa Rica's national agenda began to favor the conservation of natural spaces. In some of the first recognized natural spaces, the government bought out local landholders, rather than evicting them. Costa Ricans slowly began to leave their properties, which was a more peaceful process than the forced evictions I will describe in the case of Tanzania. The Costa Rican government viewed the poor communities living in and around national parks as a threat to the existence of the parks. Therefore, the government made laws to ban logging and deforestation due to the environmental degradation they cause. After the creation of the first national parks, many of them had major infrastructure flaws and inadequate funding. Campsites and trails were made available, but there were no guides or tourist accommodations. Costa Rica's preservation initiatives were happening faster than they could afford.

While environmentally, much of the land was being preserved in the 1970's, economically, Costa Rica followed the neoliberal growth trend, supporting free-market capitalism, like many other developing nations. In the private sector, the introduction of companies such as: Bridgestone, Baxter Medical Devices, Intel, P&G, HP and IBM provided jobs and economic stability in the country in the late 20th century. In the public sector, the investment from the United States and the World Bank, IMF, and USAID contributed massively to Costa Rica's overall growth and the growth of the tourism industry. During the 1980's, international tourism accelerated in Costa Rica and domestic tourism shrank (Honey 2008: 162). At the same time the IMF, USAID and World Bank were pushing for growth in the private sector, they forced Costa Rica to cut funding for national parks and the Costa Rica Tourism Institute (ICT).²

Just as international tourism to Costa Rica was increasing, President Oscar Arias Sanchez won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987, which put Costa Rica at the front of the world stage. This confirmed its presence as a safe country and prompted international visitors to consider and chose Costa Rica as an appealing vacation destination. In 1987, the Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency (CINDE), a USAID program, fostered an initiative to bring in overseas investment. CINDE promoted foreign direct investment throughout the country in a variety of industries such as high-tech sectors, manufacturing and food processing ("Investment Opportunities Costa Rica"). CINDE's approach is deemed highly successful; it was ranked the number 1 institution for foreign direct investment in the world by the United Nations. As shown below, around the 1990's, tourism was accelerating in Costa Rica (Honey 2008; Table 2).

² ICT is a state-venture started in 1930, incentivized the building of tourist infrastructure and provided tax breaks to attract foreign investment in the 1990's (Honey 2008).

Table 2: Costa Rica's Tourism Growth

Table 5.1.

Costa Rica's Tourism Growth

Year	1976	1982	1986	1990	1995	2000	2005
Arrivals (thousands)	299	372	261	435	792	1,088	1,659
Gross receipts (millions \$)	57	131	133	275	718	1,229	1,570
% of foreign exchange						21	22

Source : ICT, "Anuario estadístico", 1998, 2000, 2005.

Usually wealthy foreign investors take advantage of foreign direct investment and locals are intentionally excluded from participating because there are barriers to entry such as costs and regulations. This is relevant in relation to tourism because now 80% of Costa Rica's coastline has been purchased by American, Canadian, Taiwanese and Japanese investors (Honey 2008). Although foreign direct investment may be helpful to Costa Rica's economic growth, there has been a strong effort to stop relying on foreign money and establishing local sustainable businesses, especially in the tourism industry. In most cases, foreigners have built hotels and infrastructure on coastal property that is in high-demand.

In the 1980's and 1990's there were massive changes to infrastructure to accommodate the rise of ecotourism. The first groups of ecotourists were biologists coming to study the natural environment, but the ICT ran a prominent tourism campaign and the nature tourists followed shortly after. The average hotel or bed and breakfast in Costa Rica has 16 rooms; meaning small-scale tourism prevails over widespread hotel chains and villas. Eco-lodges rely on the national park system and are usually situated right beside them. Costa Rica is an interesting case because the ecotourism accommodations range from luxurious to rustic. Currently, visitors are demanding more luxurious accommodations. For example, Hotel Punta Islita is an example of a luxury resort that does not align with the all-inclusive foreigner owned model. It hires 85% of staff locally and has a commitment to environmental conservation and local development. In just

two years, between 2004-2006, the hotel invested \$857,000 into the community through creating local business. Costa Rica's history and local activism efforts are briefly alluded to in the guidebook ideologies about Monteverde.

Guidebook Ideologies about Monteverde

As noted in Chapter One, Costa Rica is marketed as a safe destination with something for all types of travelers. Here I will expand on how guidebooks and the media are creating clear expectations of what destinations will be like and look like. Sometimes tourists become disappointed because they had a preconceived image of a destination but they saw and experienced something different. Both *Fodor's* and *Frommer's* describe Costa Rica as one of the "hottest" travel destinations in the world. *Lonely Planet* has an anecdote on the description of Northwest Costa Rica's regional page and the final sentence is "What did you come to Costa Rica for? Here it is..." From dichotomizing activities and verbs like: *lounge* on beaches and *ride* waves to *hike* volcanoes and *soak* in hot springs, *Lonely Planet* promotes that Costa Rica has something for any type of tourist.

All of the guidebooks acknowledge the popularity of Monteverde Cloud Forest. Native Americans have lived and farmed in Monteverde since 3000 BC (Nalini 1999). In the 1950's, in an effort to flee being drafted for the Korean War a group of Quakers from Fairhope, Alabama settled in Monteverde ("Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve"). In 1972, the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve was established and now it covers approximately 35,000 acres. "There are over 100 species of mammals, 400 species of birds, and 1,200 species of amphibians and reptiles. It's one of the few remaining habitats that support all six species of the cat family — jaguars, ocelots, pumas, oncillas, margays, and jaguarundis." Monteverde's population is now between 250-750 residents with around 50 Quakers. The neighboring town, Santa Elena has a larger

population of around 6,500 and the Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve is around 800 acres and is managed by the local community. From the description as a “premier destination for everyone from budget backpackers to well-heeled retirees” (*Lonely Planet*), to “one of the world’s first and finest ecotourism destinations” (*Frommer’s*), to the emphasis on tourist demand through “new hotels and a shopping center” (*Fodor’s*), it is clear that Monteverde is a well-known vacation spot.

Table 4: Monteverde’s Descriptions in Guidebooks

Guidebook	Costa Rica’s Monteverde Cloud Forest Description
<p><i>Lonely Planet</i> Monteverde and Santa Elena</p>	<p>Strung between two lovingly preserved cloud forests, this slim corridor of civilization consists of the Tico village of Santa Elena and the Quaker settlement of Monteverde, each with an eponymous cloud forest reserve. The cloud forests are premier destinations for everyone from budget backpackers to well-heeled retirees. On a good day, the Monteverde area is a place where you can be inspired about the possibility of a world in which organic farming and alternative energy sources are the norm; on a bad day, it can feel like Disneyland in Birkenstocks. Take heart in the fact that the local community continues to fight the good fight to maintain the fragile balance between nature and commerce.</p>
<p><i>Fodor’s</i> Monteverde Cloud Forest and Santa Elena</p>	<p>Monteverde is a rain forest, but you won't be in the tropics—rather in the cool, gray, misty world of the cloud forest. Almost 900 species of epiphytes, including 450 orchids, thrive here; most tree trunks are covered with mosses, bromeliads, ferns, and other plants. Monteverde spans the Continental Divide, extending from about 4,920 feet on the Pacific slope and 4,430 feet on the Atlantic slope up to the highest peaks of the Tilarán Mountains. These days, Monteverde looks quite a bit different than it did when the first wave of Quakers arrived. New hotels have sprouted up everywhere, traffic grips the center of town, and there's a small shopping center outside of town on the way to the mountain.</p>
<p><i>Frommer’s</i> Things to do in Monteverde</p>	<p>Monteverde, which translates to “Green Mountain,” is one of the world’s first and finest ecotourism destinations. The marvelous, mist-shrouded Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve and the extensive network of nearby private reserves are rich and rewarding. Bird-watchers flock here to spot the myth-inspiring resplendent quetzal, and scientists come to study the bountiful biodiversity. On top of all that, Monteverde is arguably the best place in Costa Rica for extreme adventure (rivaled perhaps by Arenal). It boasts a zipline where you can fly facedown like Superman for almost a mile, and the only bungee-jumping left in Costa Rica.</p>

This guidebook ideologies about Monteverde favor the natural qualities of the region by including descriptions of: “organic farming and alternative energy sources” (*Lonely Planet*), “900 species of epiphytes, 450 orchids, mosses, bromeliads, ferns, and other plants” (*Fodor’s*) and the “myth-inspiring resplendent quetzal... and bountiful biodiversity” (*Frommer’s*). Due to the richness of biodiversity, “bird-watchers flock” there and scientists come to study (*Frommer’s*). In addition, all three guidebooks focus on the expansive quality of the cloud forest through descriptions like: “spans,” “extends,” and “extensive.”

Although Monteverde has become a more popular destination, “it takes a little effort to get [there]” (*Fodor’s*) and the main road to the reserve remains partially unpaved. A blogger explains how to get to the reserve: “The last 12 miles are not paved, are steep and hilly and have big potholes. These routes are very windy and curvy, but offer spectacular views” (“Monteverde, Costa Rica Visitor’s Guide”: January 2019). Although the area has been built up, Monteverde Cloud Forest still has an off the beaten track quality to it: literally and figuratively. Along with the perceptions of unspoilt nature, there is a coupled perception that somewhat-traditional local culture accompanies unspoilt nature. *Lonely Planet* establishes Monteverde as a “slim corridor of civilization.” The word civilization is meant to denote antiquity and culture. Merriam-Webster defines civilization as the culture characteristic of a particular time or place. The dictionary entry proves that the use of “civilization” is meant to denote something more exceptional than a typical town or village.

The guidebooks mention the popularization of tourism in Costa Rica in the 21st century. Rather than primarily domestic travelers staying at guest houses and boutique hotels, now “traffic grips the center of town...and a glut of rented ATVs disrupt Monteverde’s legendary peace” (*Fodor’s*) as international tourists stay at various hotels. Monteverde now has a “crowded

season” and “looks quite a bit different than it did when the first wave of Quakers arrived” (*Fodor’s*). *Lonely Planet* describes these changes through the humorous description: “On a bad day, [Monteverde] can feel like Disneyland in Birkenstocks.” In reference to Molz’s analysis of the moral economy in alternative tourism practices, both “Disneyland” and “Birkenstocks” are associated with “bad” tourism in this instance. In contrast to “bad” tourism mentioned above, *Lonely Planet* explicitly associates “organic farming and alternative energy sources” with “good” tourism. Therefore, the guidebooks confirm that tourists affiliate natural spaces with “good tourism” or meaningful experiences in relation to Molz’s moral economy of alternative tourism (Molz 2013). The increase of tourists throughout the country and the “creation of the national image of a natural paradise” enabled many businesses to thrive from claiming to be “environmentally sustainable,” when in practice, they were not (Jones 2017). From these guidebook descriptions, it is apparent that Monteverde and its attractions are marketed for travelers primarily concerned with visiting natural sites.

After unpacking the vocabulary and themes from the guidebooks, I went to TripAdvisor to see how tourists described their experiences in Monteverde. How did the guidebooks’ and media’s descriptions of Monteverde influence tourists’ expectations and experiences? On TripAdvisor I selected one positive review ranking the cloud forest 5 out of 5 stars, one negative ranking it 1 star, and one impartial review ranking it 3 stars.

TripAdvisor Reviews of Monteverde



Mogeltoft
Copenhagen,
Denmark

📄1013 👍433

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 Reviewed December 21, 2018

Even without clouds the Cloud Forest is a must-do

The Monteverde Cloud Forest is a beautiful spot for a 3 hour morning walk. You don't need special equipment, just a pair of good shoes and a bottle of water. And your camera, of course.

There are 2 ways of doing the forest. With or without a guide.

You can easily walk on your own, just pay 20 dollar at the entrance. The paths are well maintained and well signed. Easypeasy. On your way you will see magnificent trees and nature and probably you'll detect a couple of colourful birds, maybe a squirrel, a big butterfly or three - we did.

With a guide you will - without any doubt - get to see more birds and insects and learn more about the trees and flowers. Downside is that you have to walk very slowly in a group, stopping all the time, listening to trivia that you can easily live without. Also, the price is almost doubled compared to walking alone.

We didn't see any clouds or big animals, but we enjoyed every bit of the walk just the same. Monteverde Cloud Forest is a must-do visiting the area.

[Show less](#)

Date of experience: December 2018



[Ask Mogeltoft about Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve](#)

👍 1 Thank Mogeltoft

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC.



TravelAdventureGurus
Bethesda, Maryland

📄269 👍130

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 Reviewed December 29, 2018

Only worth it if cloudy

So for the mystical feel of walking through clouds you actually have to have clouds- I imagined this like an enchanted forest covered in fog. It wasn't as it was a sunny day. Entrance is \$22, parking is free app. 1km meters below the entrance but they provide free shuttle up and down from parking lot. Guide booked through the hotel was \$20. Maybe if I hadn't taken the Nocturnal Walk in the Wildlife Refuge the night before I would be impressed by this- but I feel like I learned much more from our night walk guide than from this one- many things I learned the night before and noticed during the Cloud Forest hike our guide didn't mention it. Unless you are really into naturalism and biology, one or two guided tours per vacation suffice. This was my third one and definitely least impressive. Would not go back there unless it was a very cloudy and foggy day.

[Show less](#)

Date of experience: December 2018

[Ask TravelAdventureGurus about Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve](#)

👍 Thank TravelAdventureGurus

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC.



Eric L

6 7



Reviewed May 25, 2016 via mobile

Tourist trap

A word of advice to my fellow backpacker type travelers: avoid this one. I was really disappointed in this place. First of all, the entry fee is \$20 per person!!! You can get a 7 day pass into Yosemite National park for the same price, for an entire vehicle. Second of all, it's really busy. The common comparison to Disneyland is not too far from the truth. As well, the trail system is really not very good at all. You can hike the whole thing in a few hours. If you look up the term "tourist trap" in the dictionary, this place would be it's definition.

[Show less](#)

Date of experience: May 2016

[Ask Eric L about Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve](#)

5 Thank Eric L

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC.

Photos: Screenshots of *TripAdvisor*: April 2019

These three tourists had three different experiences at the same tourism site that they posted about. Mogeltoft emphasizes the ease visiting the reserve, the well-maintained paths, the magnificent trees and nature and the colorful birds. He points out that his group did not see clouds, but this did not interfere with his 5-star rating. TravelAdventureGurus claims the mystical feel that was advertised about the cloud forest was lost, due to the lack of clouds. This combined with the unimpressive guided tour, resulted in their 3-star rating. Eric L identifies as a backpacker and was disappointed by the cost and busyness of the attraction. He even included the common comparison of Monteverde to Disneyland, as mentioned in *Lonely Planet*. This relates to my earlier point about how backpackers seek off the beaten track locales. Eric L concluded by claiming Monteverde is the definition of a tourist trap and gave it a 1-star rating. Much of the time and as exemplified by these reviews, tourists are using the same vocabulary from the guidebooks. This shows a correlation between the identities the guidebooks advertise and tourists' expectations.

First, tourists are directed to sites because of their favorable perspectives presented in guidebooks. Next, tourists check trip reviews, which leave them with a mixed impression of a place. Ultimately, their visit changes their perception of the place, yet again. All of these responses contribute to the continuous construction of the place. Their reactions may contribute to the future re-branding, development and preservation initiatives of the reserve. This is another description of the satisfaction feedback loop that I defined in Chapter Two. The tourist responses are very similar in the case of Tanzania; but first I will provide a brief historical overview of its tourism industry and national parks.

Tanzania: Game Tourism to Nature Tourism and the Invisible Histories of the Maasai

Tanzania's tourism industry was initially based in game tourism for colonial authorities and foreign visitors. Historically Tanzania, known as Tanganyika at the time, and other nations in Eastern and Southern Africa were popular tourist destinations for hunting wildlife due to their abundant game reserves. Colonialism is interwoven throughout the story of how Tanzania became a nature tourism destination. In the late 19th century, before it became a colony of Britain, Tanganyika was a part of German East Africa. European aristocracy hunted an abundance of big game animals, yet when the first international conservation treaty was signed in 1900, Tanganyika shifted its focus to conservation and nature tourism (Honey 2008: 223). In 1947, Tanganyika became a United Nations trust territory, under British control. The country was highly diverse, unequal and poor at the time. During the mid-late 20th century, Tanganyika became independent from British rule, attempted and then abandoned a socialist government, and suffered from major political unrest with conflicts in Uganda and Kenya. Today, 38% of the country is dedicated to conservation. In 2017, the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to the GDP was \$2.1 billion ("Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Tanzania 2017").

Map of Tanzania



Photo: "Map of Tanzania," *Lonely Planet*

In addition to providing a historical overview of Tanzania's national parks and nature tourism sites, I want to focus on the invisible histories of those who live there. There are invisible histories of marginalized indigenous groups, which shaped the environmental conservation movements in Ngorongoro. These histories are invisible because they are not acknowledged in the favorable perspectives offered in guidebooks and local monuments. National parks and their invisible histories are not exclusive to Tanzania. For example, the discrimination against, displacement of, and disenfranchisement of Native Americans shaped the creation of Yosemite National Park in California. Not only do invisible histories exist in this case, but in many nature tourism projects internationally.

The invisible histories of indigenous African tribes, particularly the Maasai, are crucial to understanding the history of nature tourism initiatives in Tanzania. Serengeti National Park became the first national park in east Africa in 1951. Before this, colonial governments ban Africans from residing in these areas and harshly labeled them as poachers, because as a cultural

practice, they shot meat for their livelihoods. Prior to the Serengeti's designation as a National Park, colonial governments regularly enforced regulations on Africans and land areas. By establishing a label, a boundary for the park and criteria for other national parks, colonial regulations persisted and simply took another form. Africans were ineligible to acquire hunting licenses and colonial governments did not allow them to own rifles. The National Park Ordinance excluded the Maasai from the western Serengeti in 1959.³ Therefore, they were unable to graze their cattle and pushed onto a smaller swath of land, causing them to go hungry. Over time, this eviction has taken various forms through violence, weapons and the use of fire.

In the 1960's, racism and discrimination occurred throughout Tanganyika, particularly in the creation of national parks. Three years after Tanganyika's independence in 1961, the state acquired Zanzibar and was renamed Tanzania. From 1961 onwards, there were conscious efforts to unite 120 ethnic groups into single party socialist system. Despite these efforts, pastoralists groups, like the Maasai, were still being marginalized. In 1975, the Maasai were forcibly evicted from Ngorongoro Crater; this is an area to the southeast of the Serengeti and the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. Farming was banned in the crater. Four years later, Ngorongoro was separated into its own designated conservation area where pastoralists were allowed. Although they could not read or write, they were coerced into signing the agreement with their British rulers (Honey 2008). The government banned the teaching of the Maasai language in schools and the Maasai still face intense discrimination and is subject to land disputes. While the Maasai were discriminated against, the land of Ngorongoro Conservation Area was prioritized for tourism purposes. In the broader political landscape, in 1977, the

³ I will clarify some definitions of natural spaces according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. A national park, like the Serengeti, is a park in use for conservation purposes. Often it is a reserve of natural, semi-natural, or developed land that a sovereign state declares or owns as a symbol of national pride. Protected areas or conservation areas, like Ngorongoro, are locations which receive protection because of their recognized natural, ecological or cultural values ("Protected Area Categories").

borders between Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda closed due to political unrest. In one of Tanzania's attempts for less political turmoil, the government eventually transitioned to a multiparty system in the 1990's, which was suited much better for the pastoralists (Honey 2008).

Another example of the importance of international investment is the introduction of luxury accommodations. Tanzania's tourism industry depended on international funds. The allowance of foreign investment in Tanzania spurred extensive development in the 1990's. Investors from Britain, France and the World Bank were fixated on the introduction of luxury lodges and developing infrastructure and roads to support these tourist endeavors. The French Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development the World Bank IFC and Great Britain's Commonwealth Development Corporation invested \$33 million in three luxury lodges and a tented camp in the Serengeti, Ngorongoro and Lake Manyara. There is a huge contrast between the socioeconomic status of the luxury tourists and surrounding tribes. Ngorongoro earns \$10 million a year from gate fees alone. The Ngorongoro Pastoral Council, established in 1994, 35 years following the park's establishment, earns \$500,000 for community development a year. \$500,000 is 5% of just the revenue from gate fees in Ngorongoro Conservation Area. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area authorities monitor the Maasai. Therefore, the Maasai are no longer allowed to cultivate and farm local food and they are unable to develop their own tourism enterprises. As shown in Table 3, around the turn of 1990's, tourism started rapidly increasing in Tanzania (Honey 2008; Table 3).

Table 3: Tanzania's Tourism Growth

	1969	1972	1976	1979	1985	1989	1992	1995	1997	2000	2002	2004
Arrivals (in thousands)	51	63	167	78	59	138	202	295	359	502	575	582
Gross receipts (in millions of dollars)	—	20	95	—	14	60	120	259	392	739	730	746

Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism of Tanzania, Tourism Division; I.G. Shivji, ed., *Tourism and Socialist Development* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1975), 95; Estrom Maryogo, "Tourism in National Development," in *Karibu Tanzania: A Decade of TTC's Service to Tourists* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Tourist Corporation, 1983), 107. *Note:* Figures are unavailable where there are blanks.

Tanzania received major financial gains from the introduction of the luxury accommodations Singita Lodges and tour operator Journeys By Design (*Singita; Journeys By Design*). Located directly above the Northwest corner of the Serengeti is Grumeti Game Reserve. Grumeti was established as a government labeled "game reserve" in 1993. A game reserve is a large land area where animals live safely for conservation purposes or are hunted in a controlled way for sport ("Wildlife Reserve"). While Grumeti became a game reserve in 1993, at the same time, the first luxury lodge of a now 12 lodge series called Singita Lodges, opened in South Africa. The idea was that Singita Lodge would practice low-impact luxury tourism and empower local communities. In 1999, Paul Tudor Jones, Wall Street hedge fund owner and philanthropist, had the idea to market accommodations, transportation and experiences in one package as luxury safari tours called Journeys by Design.

In 2002, Tudor funded the Grumeti Community and Wildlife Conservation Fund, which was to provide schools, clinics and clean drinking water to Tanzanians. The Grumeti Community and Wildlife Conservation Fund aims to support biodiversity and local communities through national and international stakeholders through "financially sustainable, environmentally and

culturally responsible, and politically acceptable” methods (“Grumeti Fund”). At this stage the Grumeti Fund had ownership of these 350,000 acres of Tanzania. In 2006, Tudor partnered with the South Africa luxury eco-lodge company Singita, mentioned above. Singita took over the ownership to “enhance low impact, luxury tourism at the request of the concessionaire.” Now, there are 12 Singita Lodges across the continent. Journeys by Design operates in 18 of 54 African countries. The ownership of Tanzania’s Grumeti Game Reserve essentially went from the local community, to the government, to the Grumeti Fund, to the Singita Lodge. None of these transitions was under the guidance or permission of the original local landholders. This could also be interpreted as a nonconsensual eviction.

These efforts by tourism groups are questionable. Locals are still excluded from land due to the relocation of Robanda village and excluded from economic benefits because of the monopoly on tourism. In 2005, Robanda village brought a legal suit against Grumeti Reserves for interference and intimidation. There has been a massive pattern throughout time of evicting native people from their land to develop it for tourist uses. There is poor compensation given to these groups and no consistent and honest way to quantify the environmental benefits of land areas (biodiversity, access to resources, etc.). In addition to Grumeti Game Reserves, Frankfurt Zoological Society is has not acted in the interest of local people, as they are claiming to. Many of these external stakeholders support ideas for helping wildlife flourish rather than people. Similar to Tanzania’s history of preservation of natural spaces and marginalization of local communities, Costa Rica’s history shares some resemblance.

The Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) is the government agency responsible for the management of Tanzania's national parks.⁴ State actors, like TANAPA, help to shape how tourism is constructed, for instance, Tanzania's national identity. Tanzania is marketed across platforms as a natural biological and geographical wonder, but rarely is there inclusion of indigenous groups and their invisible histories. TANAPA specifically does not accurately document these invisible histories or promote them. Recently, TANAPA mandated to promote domestic tourism, unlike their traditional focus on wealthy Western tourists ("Tanzania National Parks"). Economically, tourism is benefiting Tanzania's economy and preserving natural spaces. For instance, Travel and Tourism employed around 1 million people in 2013 in Tanzania, 11% of Tanzania's labor force ("Tanzania Tourist Arrivals..."). In 2016, Travel and Tourism accounted for 17.5% of Tanzania's GDP. Although the country's wealth may be increasing, there are not a significant percentage of funds being diverted to social development. It would benefit the country to fund and carryout more social development projects. Additionally, the Maasai and other pastoralist groups should be given leadership roles in tourism projects. Now, I will discuss how guidebook ideologies present Tanzania's history and the motivations for contemporary tourism.

Guidebook Ideologies about Ngorongoro

To many people, Africa is synonymous with wildlife, beauty and diverse landscapes. Due to the glorification and romanticization of nature in Africa, this neocolonial trope is present in travel guidebooks. Therefore, the national parks and nature preserves in Tanzania are more

⁴ TANAPA has a sect devoted to Community Conservation Services, which comprise of local development projects in communities surrounding the parks. 7.5% of the revenue from each national park goes to the surrounding community. Overall, these efforts have been deemed successful, yet communities do not receive land and resources, which is what they actually need, not monetary compensation. The resources are non-renewable and have mostly been depleted.

central in the guidebooks, while contrastingly the cities and urban centers are only briefly described. Although Dar es Salaam and the Serengeti are both parts of Tanzania and equally as African, the projected image of Africa is the Serengeti. Does this guidebook ideology of Africa as antiquated and all-natural inhibit Africa's ability to develop?

By the 1970's, the rise of ecotourism meant that many tourists were now more concerned with visiting and enjoying natural spaces, rather than participating in game hunting, like they had done before (Liechty 2017). Additionally, the Tanzanian government has a history of displacing pastoralist groups around the natural spaces and stripping them of their land rights and livelihoods. *Frommer's* is the only guidebook out of the three that includes any description of the people that live in Ngorongoro while *Fodor's* uses comparisons to other renowned natural sites and *Lonely Planet* focuses on the nostalgia for the past associated with the place. *Frommer's* says: "what makes the Ngorongoro Conservation Area so unique is that it is a refuge for both animal and man." *Frommer's* does include "man," but animal is listed before it. The way in which "man" is secondary to "animal" in *Frommer's* description parallels how "man" was secondary to "animal" in most game and conservation legislation in the 20th century.

Table 5: Ngorongoro's Descriptions in Guidebooks

Guidebook	Tanzania's Ngorongoro Conservation Area Description
<i>Lonely Planet</i> Ngorongoro Crater	Ngorongoro is one of the true wonders of Africa, a lost world of wildlife and singular beauty in the near-perfect crater of a long-extinct volcano. This is one of the most extraordinary places in northern Tanzania and should on no account be missed.
<i>Fodor's</i> Ngorongoro Crater	Ngorongoro Crater ranks right up there among Africa's must-visit wildlife destinations : Serengeti, Masai Mara, Etosha, Kruger Park, and the Okavango Delta. One of only three UNESCO World Heritage sites in Tanzania (together with the Serengeti and the Selous Game Reserve), the Crater is often called the Eighth Wonder of the World .
<i>Frommer's</i>	Designated as a "multiple land use area," the Ngorongoro Conservation Area

Things to do in Ngorongoro Conservation Area	stretches from the precipitous barrier that is the Great Rift Valley wall, encompassing a high-altitude plateau of dramatic volcanic highlands and craters before gently descending to the contiguous plains of the Serengeti in the west. It is a vast and untouched region, much of it appearing harsh and barren , yet what makes the Ngorongoro Conservation Area so unique is that it is a refuge for both animal and man.
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Some of the common themes in the guidebooks' descriptions of Ngorongoro include emphasizing the area's natural qualities, romanticizing the landscape and including a sentimentality for the past. Ngorongoro Crater was an active volcano that collapsed on itself 2-3 million years ago. *Lonely Planet* describes the "near-perfect crater," which has a nostalgic connotation that signifies some sort of discovery and the stopping of time. *Lonely Planet* equates the description "near-perfect" with the natural and geological qualities of the crater. *Fodor's* includes that the "crater is often called the Eighth Wonder of the World." The "long-extinct volcano" (*Lonely Planet*) and "dramatic volcanic highlands and craters" (*Frommer's*) signify an ancient and catastrophic time where geological plates were moving and the Earth was forming. And now, there is a danger and excitement associated with volcanoes and adventure tourism.

Fodor's states that Ngorongoro, one of Africa's "must-visit" wildlife sites is one of only three UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Tanzania. This immediately stood out to me because Tanzania has a wealth of valuable historical and cultural sites, so if the only three selected were nature preserves, this would reaffirm the tourism imaginaries of Africa as only containing expansive natural land. Yet according to the UNESCO Tanzania website, *Fodor's* information is outdated. In addition to the three listed, Kilimanjaro, the Stone Town of Zanzibar, the Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and the Kondoa Rock-Art sites are also World Heritage Sites ("United Republic of Tanzania").

In *Lonely Planet's* description of Ngorongoro, there is a fixation on nostalgia as depicted through the descriptions of "lost wonders" and the "long-extinct volcano." These imaginings are

somewhat reminiscent of early explorers making novel discoveries and their subsequent colonial occupations. Similarly, in *Frommer's*, there is a comparable depiction in the “vast and untouched” region. What does untouched mean in this context? Does it mean preserved? Does it mean it is not affected by globalization? The idea of a “harsh and barren refuge” revisits the theme of reminiscence for an earlier time, maybe a more beautiful time, which is associated with values of conservation and wildlife tourism. The colonial imaginings present in *Lonely Planet* and *Frommer's* briefs of Ngorongoro are similar to how scientists and explorers ventured into the interiors of countries to record species for Linnaeus’ classification of systemized natural histories (Pratt 1992). European knowledge-making, such as the creation of natural histories, is based in Western beliefs, although there is a need for local knowledge for plant usage, categorizations and cultural purposes.

I went to TripAdvisor to see how tourists responded to the guidebooks’ and media’s perceptions of Ngorongoro. On TripAdvisor I selected one positive review, one negative and one impartial review.

TripAdvisor Reviews of Ngorongoro



Applefee
Estonia

387 155



Reviewed December 2, 2018 via mobile

Absolute paradise

We were told before our trip that Ngorongoro can easily be seen as the animal paradise. After having been I wholeheartedly agree. If Tarangire is elephant heaven and Serengeti is wild, rugged and vast, Ngorongoro is peaceful, fulsome and absolutely beautiful. This must be what happiness looks like.

If you’re really lucky, you get to see rhinos... but you’ll definitely see many lions, hyenas and jackals, also elephants, wildebeests, zebras, antilopes and gazelles. Warthogs! Hippos. Crown cranes. You’ll see rugged beauty, wonderful landscapes and timeless wonders. You’ll fall in love with the place and you’ll want to come back.

[Show less](#)

Date of experience: December 2018

[See all 3 reviews by Applefee for Ngorongoro Conservation Area](#)

[Ask Applefee about Ngorongoro Crater](#)

Thank Applefee

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC.



yogayogi
Peripatetic
member

114 136

Reviewed November 7, 2018

OK if you've not seen really great parks (eg Masai Mara, Samburu)

Over-hyped and over-rated.

Whilst the crater is a spectacular geological feature, the wildlife does not compare with "real" parks. "Rough Guide" suggests 25,000 animals.

Really? I'd say one-tenth of that.

More important, as there are few roads, almost all the animals will be hundred(s) of yards from the closest point your vehicle can reach. Unlike in better laid out parks. Even with a 120 times zoom on a monopod photographs were disappointing. And it's very expensive. Save your time & cash for better places & photo the crater whilst flying over it (eg on route to Serengeti)

[Show less](#)

Date of experience: November 2018



cosigin
connecticut

35 31

Reviewed November 24, 2016 via mobile

Very disappointing NOT AS ADVERTISED

Just came back from nogorogoro. Very disappointed. Very small number of animal on such a large area. Saw small heard of zebra wilder beast and buffalo. Everywhere they advertise tens of thousands of animals.

In serengeti you can see the real thing so many animals. Big cats

Save the park entry fee on nogorogoro and fly to serengeti MUCH MUCH BETTER

[Show less](#)

Date of experience: November 2016

Photos: Screenshots of *TripAdvisor*: April 2019

Applefee uses the terms: "wild, rugged, vast, and timeless" to describe African landscapes. Interestingly, these are the same terms applied to Ngorongoro in guidebooks. Their safari experience with diverse animal sightings, wonderful landscapes and beauty resulted in the 5-star rating. Yogayogi directly quotes a guidebook in their review and is disappointed with the amount of animals they were prepared to encounter. The overhyped and overrated destination is not as worth it as other parks, which results in a 3-star rating. Cosigin was disappointed with

their experience and especially distraught with the inaccurate advertising in relation to the number of animals in the park and size of the park. Cosigin assigns Ngorongoro a 1-star rating and directs tourists to the Serengeti instead. Through these reviews it is evident that people take guidebooks and the media very seriously. Again, this is another example of the satisfaction feedback loop taking place. Next, I will examine briefly and compare how the tourism industry has developed and the influence of guidebook ideologies in Costa Rica and Tanzania.

Case Comparison

Costa Rica and Tanzania each have high levels of biodiversity and thriving tourism infrastructures, but there are interesting differences across the two cases. Costa Rica's story is about how domestic tourism lead to the country's economic stability, while Tanzania's story is about how the tourism industry lead to an increase in economic growth and foreign investment. I created a timeline to compare the various political and economic contexts of Costa Rica and Tanzania that provide the foundations for their respective tourism industries (Table 4).

Table 4: Economic Development in Costa and Tanzania 1950-2000

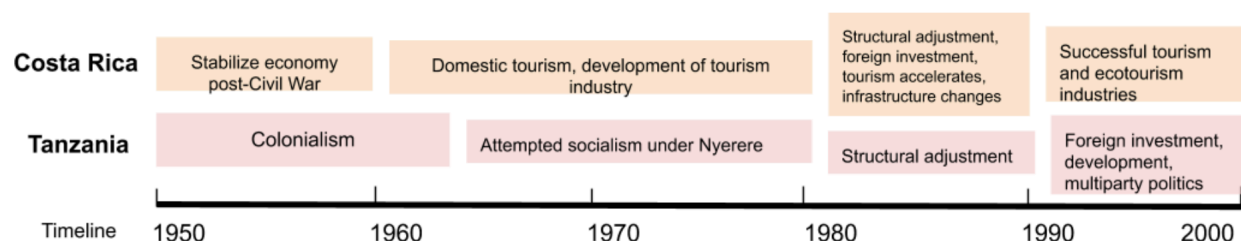


Table 4 shows that while Tanzania was a colony of Britain, Costa Rica was attempting to stabilize their economy. Eventually, at the same time that Tanzania was enduring a period of instability during Nyerere's attempts at socialism, Costa Rica was revitalizing their economy and developing a domestic tourism industry. Both countries endured structural adjustment programs

and foreign investment initiatives. Eventually and in their own time, each became international tourism destinations.

These histories provide the rationale of why each state co-constructs tourism sites. In addition to the desire to conserve biodiversity for environmental reasons, conserving the spaces for nature tourism was an economic driver in each case. Although from conservation and economic perspectives each country has allocated conservation areas and projects and stable funding, each have traces of unequal and invisible histories. In certain instances, the governments and institutions favor environmental conservation at the expense of local communities. In the reviews of each site tourists directly reference guidebooks and this confirms that there is a large correlation between guidebook ideologies and tourist experiences.

In relation to the guidebook ideologies and tourism imaginaries of each country's sites, each reference and value ecological diversity, modern comforts and local knowledge. Bergmeister states that tourists' associate authenticity with undeveloped areas; this suggests that tourists value the idea of "nature" and of the environment "untouched by man" in nature tourism projects. Because tourists hold these values, the government and international conservation agencies favor environmental and wildlife conservation in their decision-making processes. Guidebook ideologies are shaped by tourists' desire for exploring the natural. This discussion is especially relevant in relation to the lack of emphasis on local communities' histories and cultures in guidebooks' descriptions of Monteverde and Ngorongoro. Although the tourism industries in Costa Rica and Tanzania began with different foundational histories, the industries reflect this collaboration of marketing between the media, the state, guidebooks and tourists themselves.

Conclusion: Influencing How Nature Tourism Projects are Created and Marketed

When determining how to examine the impacts of nature tourism, I realized that there was a gap in the existing literatures on tourism and conservation. The lack of interactions between scholars and absence of interdisciplinary work inspired my contribution to take shape. Tourism scholarship analyzes intercultural exchange and economic trends, like Tourism scholar Noel Salazar's theory of tourism imaginaries (Salazar 2011). Conservation as development scholarship analyzes how preserving natural areas can provide socioeconomic gains for communities, like Anthropologist Susan Charnley's analysis of community-based nature tourism projects in Ngorongoro (Charnley 2005). Rarely, have the impacts of both been examined alongside one another. Ecotourism scholarship does acknowledge this intersection of nature and tourism, but it is currently too amorphous a category of literature and too unstandardized a variety of tourism to result in any uniform conclusions. The scholarship of Martha Honey, an Ecotourism specialist, did help with the historical aspects and greatly influence my project. Yet, my SPROJ is different from the existing scholarship because it considers not only the physical effects of nature tourism, but also the greater sociological and sociocultural understandings of places and their influence. These conceptual ideas have a great possibility of changing how nature tourism projects are created, marketed and sustained.

In this SPROJ, I have analyzed how guidebook ideologies impact the social and physical dimensions of nature tourism projects. I began by examining how nature tourism projects are co-constructed by tourists, locals and stakeholders. Then I discussed how guidebooks, travel literature and the media promote tourism imaginaries that impact tourists' perceptions of destinations: like that Monteverde is a "marvelous, mist-shrouded" Cloud Reserve (*Frommer's*) and Ngorongoro is a "must-visit wildlife destination" (*Fodor's*). Next, I explored the social and physical effects of co-construction and tourism imaginaries. Examples of social impacts range

from deconstructing the universal images tourists associate with each place to confronting stereotypes that they had previously associated with the region. Examples of physical impacts range from infrastructure development to environmental degradation. Ultimately, I investigated a case comparison featuring the social and physical impacts of guidebook ideologies featuring Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Costa Rica and Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania. Over the course of the project, I was able to answer a number of questions about the relationships between the media, tourism and local impacts. Then I was able to formulate new and refined questions for future research.

There is a high potential for further research for my SPROJ, especially because the pattern I have identified takes place internationally so there are a plethora of possible cases. The pattern of co-construction of nature tourism destinations represents a global pattern of tourism and marketing. For further research, I am interested in examining the pattern of co-construction in the places I've visited and studied in: Vietnam, Morocco, Bolivia and Ecuador. This way, I would be able to incorporate my first impressions of the places, impressions from my time there and my reflections from afterwards. Although this proposed study may include a more in-depth inquiry, another study could be done on destinations that I or another researcher have not traveled to, like my original SPROJ as I have not been to Costa Rica nor Tanzania. In addition to adding further case comparisons, a component of my SPROJ that could be expanded upon is the study of social media responses to travel. Social media presents a new and significant field of study for Anthropologists among other scholarly communities. Within this realm, I hope to further investigate the feedback loop between tourist expectations and their actual experiences and how that influences marketing (as documented in my pattern of co-construction).

On a global scale, this study is significant because the pattern of co-construction can be modified for other international nature tourism cases. For instance, nature tourism sites throughout Vietnam follow the pattern of co-construction. Many coastal cities particularly, like Hoi An and Hue, have distinct guidebook ideologies associated with them that have led to their popularity as tourist sites and the subsequent social and physical impacts. Additionally, aspects of this study are applicable generally to the prevailing trends in the mass tourism industry.

On a national scale in Costa Rica and Tanzania, government actors, national investors, conservationists and national park employees could use the information from my project to adjust their nature tourism practices based on the analysis of travel guidebooks and social media. In addition, the various actors could help to change the content in guidebooks and media representations to promote favorable outcomes for their purposes. For example, conservationists could rewrite guidebooks that favor the natural qualities of the area and promote that tourists stay farther away from the conservation areas in approved sustainable lodging. This way, they could anticipate for the desired physical and social effects of tourism.

On a regional scale, my findings are significant for local communities that may wish to expose their invisible histories and reform travel guidebooks and content in the media to reflect that. In addition, my findings allow tourists to gain awareness of the complexities of subscribing to guidebooks and media resources and they may now seek further cultural and historical education prior to traveling. Consequently, this could create more positive on-the-ground interactions between tourists and locals and result in more sustainable, respectable tourism and positive interactions.

Although I have presented that some instances guidebook ideologies and tourism imaginaries may pay no attention to invisible histories, there are some guidebooks that do. These

serve as beacons of hope for the future of sites like Monteverde and Ngorongoro. Moving forward with the proper tools, historically marginalized groups could create activist guides like *A People's Guide to LA*, which “reappropriate the tourist guide genre as a vehicle for scholars, activists, students and the general public to engage with everyday landscapes as sites of active and activist history” (Cheng 2012). If tourists are supplied with the history, education and travel advice they need through travel guidebooks, then they can decide for themselves which tourism agencies or local sources to trust and where their money goes. Hopefully, next time you travel, you'll take another look at your travel guidebook.

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Appendix

Description: Selected diagrams from the project

Figure 1: The Construction of Nature Tourism Destinations

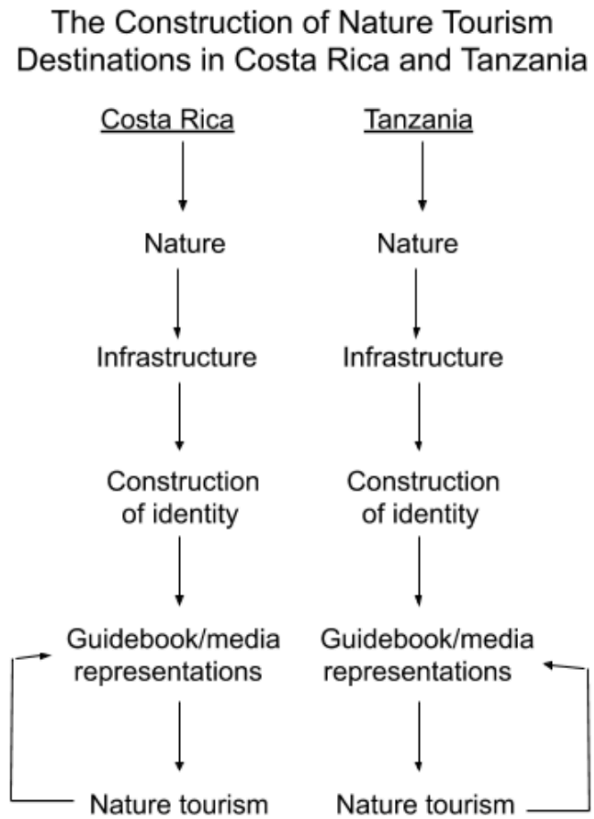


Figure 1a: The Construction of Nature Tourism Destinations

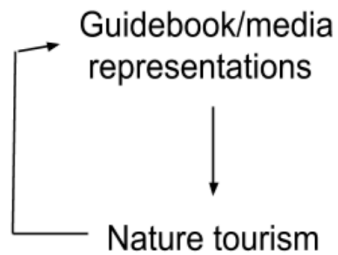


Table 1: Project Management

Conservation as Development Project: <i>combining rural social development and biodiversity conservation goals (Alpert 1996)</i>	Tourism to Natural Areas: <i>responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people (Newsome et al. 2002)</i>
Outcomes, Managed Effectively: Increased social development, natural resource management, creation or management of natural protected area	Outcomes, Managed Effectively: Cross-cultural exchange, economic empowerment, creation or management of natural protected area
Outcomes, Managed Ineffectively: No increase socioeconomic development, degradation of natural resources, land disputes, too much stakeholder power	Outcomes, Managed Ineffectively: Exploitative interactions/travel, degradation of natural resources, too much stakeholder power, concentrated development

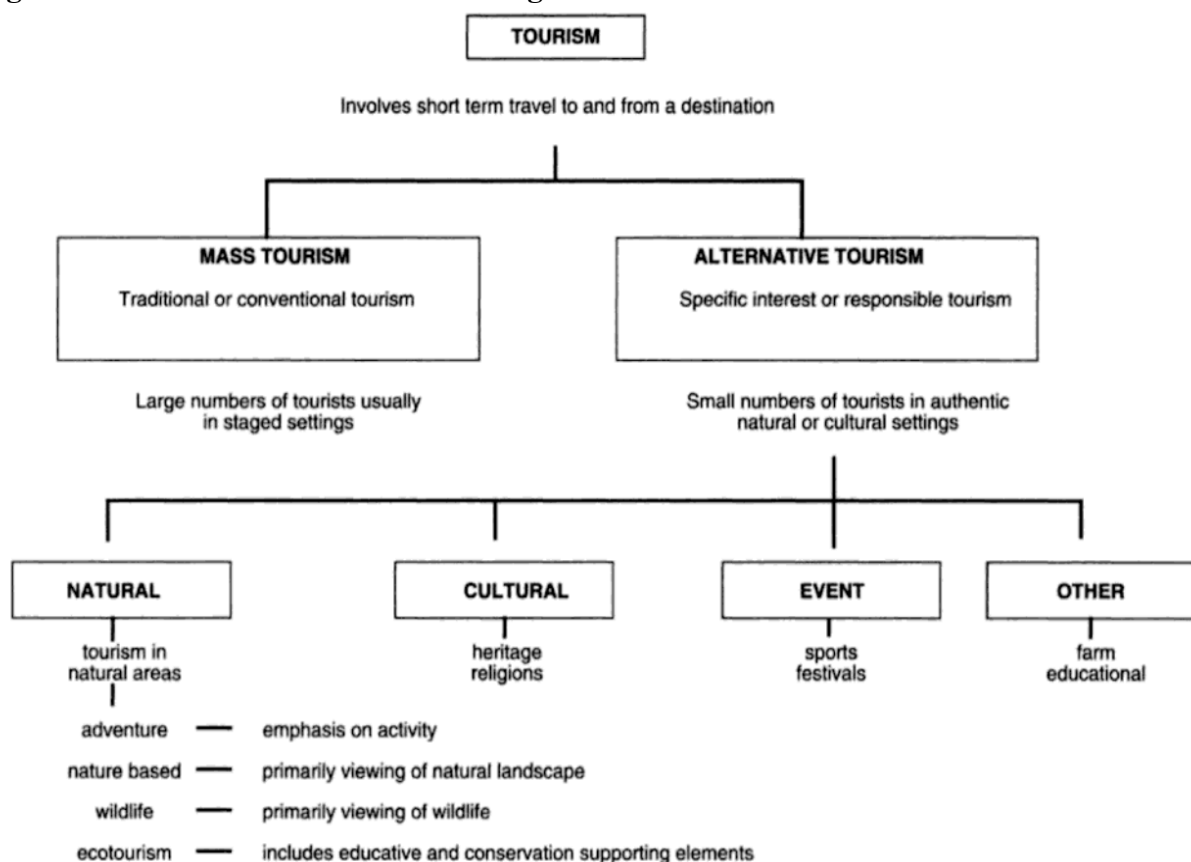
Figure 2: Newsome et. al.'s Tourism Diagram

Figure 3: Case Comparison

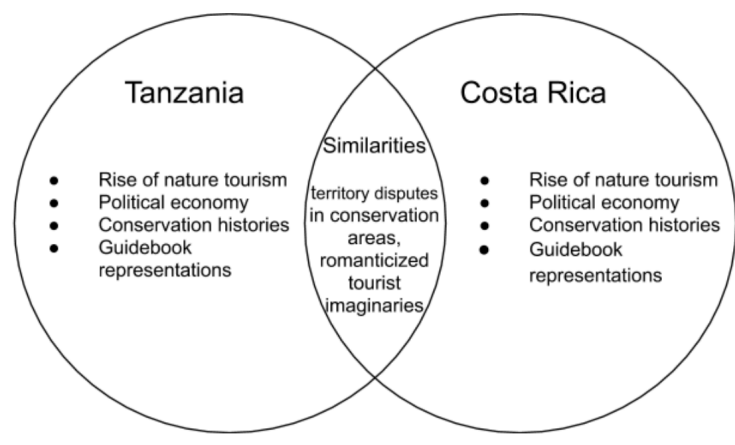


Figure 4: Tourists, Local Communities, and the Environment

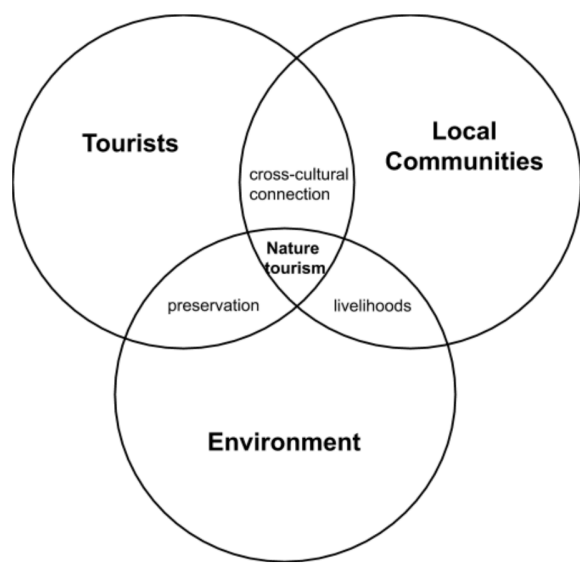


Table 4: Economic Development in Costa and Tanzania 1950-2000

