

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Costa Rica's Sustainable Tourism Policy

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Costa Rica has long been considered a world leader in sustainable tourism and ecotourism. With global tourism expected to increase rapidly in the coming years, domestic policy is needed to mitigate and regulate the enormous ramifications tourism and travel can have on the nature environment and local communities. This paper seeks to evaluate Costa Rica's sustainable tourism policies and relevant environmental governance systems, questioning the ecological and socio-economic effectiveness of the country's overall sustainable tourism policy using an eco-holistic analysis. The aim of this paper is to expand the awareness of tourism's impact on the natural environment and local communities and display the four key elements that policy-makers must consider while forming effective environmental and sustainable policy. Using Costa Rica as a case study demonstrates that, even in a country considered one of the world's leaders in sustainable and ecotourism, the policy and programs put in place are inadequate.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The transportation revolution in the 19th century and the emergence of the information and technology age in the late 20th century has increased connectivity and mobility across the world. A result of this new paradigm is an enormous increase in travel and tourism. In 1950 there were an estimated 50 million international tourists. By 2012, this number jumped to around 1 billion. International tourist arrivals worldwide are expected to increase by 3.3 per cent per year and reach an estimated 1.8 billion by 2030. Travel to emerging destinations is expected to increase at double the pace of already developed destinations (UNWTO, Tourism Towards 2030). The financial benefits that result from the tourism sector are clear. Tourism and travel contributed an estimated 1.97 trillion dollars to the global gross domestic product in 2012 (Edgell & Swanson, 2013). The financial contribution to the global economy that is created by tourism and travel can be perceived by neo-classical economists and liberal institutions as a powerful economic tool for developing countries. To continue growing the industry and prepare for the increase in travel demand, undeveloped natural lands and untouched local communities are beginning to experience an increase in tourism development. Developing countries that are looking for a way to increase economic development may recruit large and powerful multinational corporations (MNCs) in the tourism and travel industry to invest in their country. This can lead to national governments becoming too dependent on, and influenced by MNCs (Reisinger, p.7, 2009). MNCs are thus given the ability to exploit low-cost local labor and other resources. All-inclusive travel packages that bring western tourists to remote and exotic destinations in developing countries can cause the reshaping

of cultural practices and natural landscapes (Salazar, p.17, 2012). Furthermore, new developments may raise real estate values surrounding the destination, creating asymmetries within the local housing market (Edgell & Swanson, p.8, 2013). Along with socio-cultural effects and economic inequalities, environmental degradation and over consumption of limited resources are another negative outcome of the growing tourism industry. The overuse of fragile ecosystems and the environmental costs of air and ground transportation are common issues that occur worldwide. Recently, there has been a growing awareness of these issues due to the increase in environmental and global economic events being covered by mainstream media outlets.

Presently, non-governmental organizations, landowners, individual tourists, consumer groups, local communities and other relevant actors have begun to put pressure on the entire tourism and travel industry to improve their practices and mitigate any negative impacts they may cause. The pressure put on by stakeholders has created a growing global awareness of the negative impacts tourism and travel have on local communities and the environment. Today, the industry appears to be in the midst of a dynamic paradigm shift, from an industry exclusively focused on financial gains and economic growth to an industry promoting and marketing their awareness of social and environmental issues.

Tourism policy makers and planners have acknowledged the need for a more sustainable tourism industry. The term sustainable tourism has emerged as a normative response to the demand and pressures put forth by stakeholders to create a more transparent, responsible tourism and travel industry. In a global context, sustainable tourism can be defined as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future

economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). The Center For Sustainable Tourism at East Carolina University created a working definition of the term, stating, “sustainable tourism contributes to a balanced and healthy economy by generating tourism-related jobs, revenues, and other taxes while protecting and enhancing the destination's social, cultural, historical, natural, and built resources for the enjoyment and well-being of both residents and visitors” (Center For Sustainable Tourism, 2011). A popular sustainable tourism “product” is referred to as ecotourism. The International Ecotourism Society (IES) defines ecotourism as “"responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (IES website, 1990).

The complexities of tourism and travel create difficult circumstances when attempting to implement a framework for sustainability at a global or national level that connects directly to specific local problems. The tourism and travel industry is a distinct industry unlike any other due to its reliance on transnational sub-sectors such as international transportation, food and beverage, real estate, international financial transactions and entertainment among others. The fusion of these sectors creates what is known as the tourism and travel industry. Salazar (2012) suggests, “Tourism is much more than a mere economic activity; it is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, present in virtually every corner of the world and affecting people in multiple ways” (p.17). Likewise, Duran (2013) defines tourism as “a sector of economic activity that is defined as groups of units of production in different industries (tourism industries) that provide the consumer goods and services to meet demand generated by visitors” (p.11).

In its essence, tourism is a global industry with constant interactions and exchange across borders. In response to the travel and tourism industry's intricate nature, there have been many attempts to form multilateral tourism agreements and international institutions that have the ability to put pressure on national policy-makers as well as promote and develop sustainable tourism governance systems. Governance can be defined as “a guidance process that is institutionally and technically structured, that is, based on principles, norms, procedures and practices to collectively decide about common goals for coexistence and about how to coordinate and cooperate for the achievement of decided objectives” (Duran, 2013, p.9). Due to the intense debates, little consensus and unclear formal definition of a governance system, the concepts of governance, regime and institutions will be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is made up of 154 member states, 7 associate members and around 400 affiliate members. It includes representatives from governments, industry associations, academics and private companies. The UNWTO's mission is to promote economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability throughout the global tourism industry (UNWTO website). The UNWTO provides, policy recommendations and implementation plans, definitions, directives, research, education, facilitation, crisis guidelines and worldwide economic partnerships (Edgell & Swanson, p.40 2013). Thus, many view it as the most recognizable and leading international institution for tourism and travel (Edgell & Swanson, p.39 2013).

Unfortunately, there seems to be a lack of interest or motivation by some industry leaders to employ a top down industry wide sustainable policy. This is evident, for

example, in the cruise industry (a sub-sector of the tourism industry) where air pollution, waste waters, hazardous waste, eco-toxic metal and emissions from antifouling coating are all emitted into the natural environment by cruise ships (Caric, 2011). Cruise Market Watch, a market research and analytics company that forecasts cruise industry trends estimated that, 2014 would be the beginning of historic growth in the cruise industry, with six new ships being added. They also predict that in 2014, there will be a 3 percent increase in passengers from 2013, increasing to 21.6 million passengers and 24.1 million passengers by 2018 (Cruise Market Watch, 2014). Even with cruise tourism growing at a rapid pace, there is increasing demand for sustainable tourism practices among tourists (Tierney, Hunt & Latkova, 2011). This has lead to the emergence of sustainable tourism policies and plans typically on the local, or national and even at the regional and global level (Battaglia, Daddi & Rizzi, 2012; Mapes, 2009; Salazar, 2012).

The need for sustainable tourism governance that is effective in implementing environmental regulations and promoting responsible practices and behaviors can help minimize ecological impacts, conserve cultural heritage and improve local communities. However, power-relation issues and embedded liberalism within institutions and a lack of environmental and ecological motivation, may create barriers and problems when attempting to implement effective sustainable tourism policy at the national and local level. Powerful institutions that are politically and economically motivated with a disconnected awareness of local community needs may ignore or make it extremely difficult for environmental and social policy to be implemented (Kütting, 2010). Moreover, traditional regime analysis within the discipline of International Relations (IR) has been the primary knowledge source for evaluating environmental regime

effectiveness. This research consistently focuses on the behaviors within the governance systems or institutions and may draw distorted conclusions about effectiveness failing to evaluate or even mention ecological effectiveness of the regime.

Costa Rica has been used as a case study to investigate and explore the ecological effectiveness of national sustainable tourism policy and governance. Ever since the economic benefits of tourism were realized in the mid 1980's, Costa Rica has been branded by many as one of the most sustainable tourism destinations in the world (Honey, 1999; Munoz, 2002; McLaren, 2003). But is this true? Meletis and Campbell (2009) found that tourism in Costa Rica created a multitude of environmental injustices and negative impacts. The authors focused their research on the renowned ecotourism destination, Tortuguero in Costa Rica. They observed a substantial solid waste crisis within Tortuguero's local community. This included, overflowing local waste receptacles, garbage being burned and dumped on the beaches. Honey (1999) explored the increase of foreign developers building beachfront property in Jacó, Costa Rica and found that the boom in real estate has increased property values, which have created social divisions between the local community and wealthy real estate companies. Given these findings, this paper asks; are sustainable tourism policies and governance systems in Costa Rica effective means for mitigating ecological impacts, increasing environmental protection and creating an equitable community? A critical approach to environmental regime analysis that explores the question without the constraints put forth by traditional regime analysis may be able to offer crucial insight. Furthermore, this research also questions the motivation to implement effective environmental and socio-economic policies within a neo-liberal bureaucratic structure that is economically reliant

on tourism.

The first section of this analysis will present a historical background of Costa Rica, creating a better understanding of the global connections and societal organization that have shaped Costa Rica through the years. The historical background will also bring to light Costa Rica's connection to international financial institutions and how they have played a role in the growth of Costa Rica's tourism industry. Next, the analysis will integrate Kütting's (2000) four determinants for understanding ecological effectiveness into Costa Rica's national sustainable tourism policy framework and argue that Costa Rica's policy regarding tourism is not effective for long-term sustainability. Further, an exploration into Costa Rica's broader environmental policy is also needed as a consequence of the booming ecotourism industry. It will be argued that, in order for environmental effectiveness to become a primary concern of, the national government, civil society and business community, Costa Rica must form institutions solely for environmental protection and sustainable tourism, separate from bureaucracy and political and economic interests. This will need to happen if the country wants to stay competitive in the ecotourism industry and sustain its natural environment.

More specifically, this paper will highlight important institutions, legislation and regulatory systems that have a role in the national tourism industry. The Costa Rican Tourism Board and their Certificate for Sustainable Tourism will be introduced, along with an explanation and the role of the National System of Conservation Areas in the domestic tourism industry. The four determinants, economic structure, time, science and regulatory structure will be juxtaposed with these policies and governance structures and will be analyzed.

Global actors including multinational hotel chains, global civil society and other international organizations also influence Costa Rica's tourism industry. This paper will bring to light the influence that multinational hotel chains and other international organizations have had on Costa Rica. Multinational corporations and other large hotel chains have gone to great lengths within Costa Rica to market themselves as sustainable and "green". The paper will argue that the financial capital of multinational hotel and resort corporations create a perception that these companies are more sustainable and "environmentally friendly" than others. Moreover, sustainable regulation requires a large investment in new technology, infrastructure and resources that small and medium sized companies may not be able to afford. This can have detrimental effects on the local economy, communities and the environment. The increased cost may lead to small and medium sized tourism businesses either closing down or getting taken over by larger global enterprises and creating a singular "mass tourism" industry.

The following section will review literature, on the evolution of sustainable tourism and its emergence resulting from the movement towards sustainable development. Next, literature and ideas put forth by scholars regarding evaluating and assessing the implementation of tourism and environmental policy at the global, national and sub-national level will be reviewed.

The evolution of traditional regime analysis and the theoretical perspectives from the International Relations discipline will be looked into including the standard tools for evaluating the effectiveness of environmental regimes. Lastly, the critical method for analyzing regimes, using an eco-holistic approach will be discussed.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the role of a domestic regime or governance structure for the purpose of implementing policy and supporting sustainable tourism practices on the national and subnational level. The aim of the study is to fill the gap that exists in the literature pertaining to the analysis of sustainable tourism policy and its ecological effectiveness. More specifically, the present study uses a critical approach to analyzing sustainable tourism policy, focusing on Costa Rica and the government's role in creating sustainable tourism policy, management and governance. Observing the behaviors and transformation that have occurred within governance systems and policy implementation is not enough to determine the ecological effectiveness of sustainable tourism policy. By re-conceptualizing and reevaluating the role of the natural environment, investigating the historical origins of environmental problems due to tourism and integrating the concepts of consumption and equity into the analysis, a clearer understanding that focuses on the actual ecological effectiveness of sustainable tourism policy emerges.

The literature review was constructed incrementally, deciphering different elements of sustainable tourism, environmental regimes and governance and the traditional and critical approaches for analysis. A convergence of these topics forms a holistic understanding of sustainable tourism, governance and regime analysis. The review starts with literature exclusively focused on the study of the historical origins of sustainable tourism, sustainable tourism policy and governance. Next, this study presents literature pertaining to the formation and conceptual theories of regimes, the

neo-institutionalist's perspective on the effectiveness of regimes and the dynamics of institutions within the constraints of regime analysis. Finally the critical approach to regime effectiveness and analysis is introduced. The academic contributions to the literature review crossed multiple disciplines, most notably, International Relations, Political Science, Business Management, Public Administration, Global Political Economy and Environmental Politics.

The following literature regarding the concepts of regimes and institutions reveal that there is no singular agreed upon definition of these terms and both are “fuzzy” concepts. Therefore, it has been used interchangeably within this review. Additionally, many regimes and institutions possess an interwoven structure or system known as governance.

Sustainable Tourism and Policy

Tourism, travel and leisure activities have been practiced for many centuries. Edgell and Swanson (2011) credit early Greek society for boasting a sustainable tourism mentality stemming from their interest in naturalism. The authors also suggest that modern travel evolved from the Middle East region during the period of antiquity (c.4000 BCE- 4th Century CE). This region included modern day, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon and Egypt. The authors give credit to the Sumerians for “revolutionizing” the ability to travel by inventing the plow, monetary exchange, writing, the wheel, and most importantly the notion of a tour guide. These inventions improved long distance trade and travel.

It is difficult to determine the exact era in which modern tourism began. In the

article, “Travel-Capitalism: The Structure of Europe and the Advent of the Tourist”, Böröcz (1992) states that, leisure migration across borders, as a normative activity (international tourism) emerged in Europe around the 19th century. Walton (2011) argues that modern packaged tourism (mass tourism) emerged in Britain during the inter-war years by Victorian travel companies, however, this is only speculation given the limited remains of historical evidence. It is clear however, that mass tourism surged after World War II. Gössling and Hall (2006) point out that post World War II, the tourism industry was perceived as strictly an economic sector that had a positive impact on national economies. Up to that point, other impacts of tourism were not widely understood.

Gössling and Hall (2006) argue that environmental impacts of tourism became a growing issue during the emergence of the green movement in the 1960's and 1970s. Although a growing number of individuals became aware of environmental impacts of tourism at this time, Gössling and Hall note that the issues being discussed were highly localized, such as beach crowding and erosion problems.

Sir George Young (1973) published a book titled *Tourism: Blessing or Blight* that questioned the carrying capacity of the entire tourism industry and argued the need to plan future tourism activities in a sustainable manner.

Furthermore, Gössling and Hall argue that broader public awareness and understanding (in Europe) of the negative impacts tourism has on the environment began in 1975 when Swiss scientist, Jost Krippendorf published *Die Landschaftsfresser* (The Landscape Eaters) which exposed the negative impacts of tourism globally and the need to plan for the future in order for tourism and travel to be sustainable. Academics such as

Müller and Lane (2003) have credited Krippendorff as one of the “founding fathers” of the concept of sustainable tourism.

Mathieson and Wall's (1982) book *Tourism: Economic, Physical and Social Impacts* explored the positive and negative economic impacts of tourism, the effects on the natural and “built” environment as well as the costs and benefits of tourism within local communities.

By the 1980's, actors within the environmental movement began to put pressure on and influence governments, politicians, scientists and other actors (Dewey, 2013). Exposing the negative impacts of industrial development and the harm caused to the natural environment helped push the United Nations to form the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1983. The commission, headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland (former prime minister of Norway), was tasked to predict future connected with global environmental developments and create recommendations for how the global society can address these issues. The commission published their findings and recommendations in a report titled *Our Common Future*. Also referred to as the Brundtland report, *Our Common Future* introduced the concept of sustainable development, suggesting ways in which economic growth and the natural environment can develop together. Four main themes in the report have been noted; safeguarding long-term ecological sustainability, satisfying basic human needs, and promoting intra and intergenerational equity (WCED, 1987; Holden, Linnerud, & Banister 2013). The report defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). The substantive argument that poverty, inequity and ecological crisis are

interdependent is a key element that is alluded to throughout the report. In other words, a probable outcome of poverty and social and economic inequity is environmental degradation, therefore all issues must be addressed together.

Chapter 12 considers institutional and legal strategies for sustainable development. It suggests that these issues are interdependent but institutions that govern and make policy for economic and environmental issues are independent. This can create conflict and little or no change for society. International cooperation between developing and developed countries is also advocated, suggesting that environmental degradation impacts all countries and that individual nations must work together to solve this problem (Dewey, 2013). Point 18 in chapter 12 states:

National boundaries have become so porous that traditional distinctions between local, national, and international issues have become blurred. Policies formerly considered to be exclusively matters of 'national concern' now have an impact on the ecological bases of other nations' development and survival. Conversely, the growing reach of some nations' policies-economic, trade, monetary, and most sectorial policies - into the 'sovereign' territory of other nations limits the affected nations' options in devising national solutions to their 'own' problems. This fast-changing context for national action has introduced new imperatives and new opportunities for international cooperation.

Critics of the WCED document such as Hueting (1990) argued that the report's suggestion that, economic growth can help solve environmental and social problems, conflict with classical economic thinking. If economic growth at the macro-level is defined by production growth (which is accepted within a classical economic framework) then logically, classical economic thinking will exclude the awareness of, and conservation of, scarce resources and the natural environment. Therefore, economic growth and environmental conservation are conflicting goals.

The urgency that was portrayed throughout this document in 1987 is undeniable.

Tourism and other sectors were urged to dramatically change their behavior. But was this document actually effective in changing the way we interact with the natural environment? In terms of ecological sustainability, Dramstad and Fjellstad (2013) argue that, although important questions about environmental degradation were brought up in *Our Common Future*, “unsustainable land use continues to occur and the science of landscape ecology has had less influence on landscape change than aimed for” (p.1039). Others such as Holden, Linnerud, and Banister in 2013 were still attempting to convince readers that governance structures are needed to utilize the world’s resources in a sustainable manner (p.69) even though this argument was already made in the 1987 report (WCED, Chapter 12, 1987).

Edgell and Swanson (2013) found that “most researchers in the tourism industry usually cite the 1987 Brundtland Report...as the beginning point for discussing sustainable tourism” (p.151). Weaver (2014) also argues that the Brundtland Report popularized the term “sustainable development” and created a platform for the growth of sustainable tourism. Authors such as Bramwell and Lane (2011) agree that “The ideas behind sustainable tourism emerged earlier, but the term became popular following the release of the Brundtland Report” (p.413).

Following the Brundtland Report, the next major global conference and report that made an impact throughout the tourism industry was in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Edgell & Swanson, 2013), also referred to as the Earth Summit. The conference produced a report titled Agenda 21. Agenda 21 was a non-binding plan of action for implementing sustainable development policy that called for cooperation at the global, national and

local levels to reduce emissions in industrialized nations and slow the increase of emissions in developing nations all while increasing economic growth (Bily, 2013).

Although the report did not address travel and tourism specifically, Edgell and Swanson (2013) present three primary themes of sustainable tourism that came from the report. The first was a need for partnerships both public and private, the second theme was the call for humans to maintain their quality of life without impacting future generations and thirdly, an emphasis on environmental sustainability. Agenda 21 as well as the conference in 1992 stimulated the tourism and travel industry to evaluate and rethink their policies in regard to sustainability. One of the main problems with Agenda 21 was the conflictual recommendation of simultaneously reducing industrial emissions while increasing economic growth, which many have argued, is not possible.

In 1996, three international institutions that represent different interests in the tourism and travel industry formed a tripartite alliance to develop Agenda 21 for the Tourism and Travel Industry which Wagner (1999) contests, was a direct result of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and Agenda 21. The three institutions were, the World Trade Organization representing mainly governments, the World Tourism and Travel Council representing tourism and travel businesses and the Earth Council, which was created after the UNCED conference in 1992. The alliance states that its main function is;

to promote awareness for the needed transition to more sustainable and equitable patterns of development, to encourage public participation in decision-making processes at all levels of government, and to build bridges of understanding and cooperation between important actors of civil society and governments worldwide.

The document provided voluntary implementation strategies for national and local public

and private entities looking for a guide to implement their own specific sustainable tourism policy. The broad recommendations which were very similar to the plan developed at the 1992 Earth Summit called on the travel and tourism industry to create economic value in natural resources, provide economic incentives for environmental enhancement, establish essential infrastructure and lead other businesses in shifting towards a sustainable strategy (Commission on Sustainable Development, 2001). Once again, these recommendations were primarily motivated by economic interest. Wagner (1999) evaluated the effectiveness of Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry and concluded that the tripartite collaboration was successful in creating a forum for cooperation and an awareness and engagement among the international community, most importantly among governments. The author also found it difficult to assess the effectiveness for successfully implementing sustainable policies. The author argues that the difficulty in assessing the effectiveness stems from the network's failure to monitor and follow-up with relevant actors. Furthermore, the network does not incorporate financing mechanisms for sustainable tourism activities. Wagner's assessment of Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism Industry made no mention of the ecological issues that the policy mechanisms may or may not be able to solve. Instead, the focus was on behavioral changes such as effective tools for monitoring and implementing policy.

Following the initial publications above, researchers in the field of tourism have recently begun to focus their efforts on tourism and its relationship with economic equality, environmental degradation and social issues.

Caric's (2011) research in the area of cruise tourism and the environment explores the environmental impact cruise tourism has on the local community in Dubrovnik,

Croatia and the Adriatic Sea. The paper argues that direct pollution related costs to the area are 6 to 7 times larger than the economic benefit of cruise tourism in the entire Croatian Adriatic Sea. The researcher also points out that there is a direct ecological threat to cruise tourism, which can be observed in the Adriatic Sea where there is an increased presence of invasive species. This research shows that cruise tourism is not only environmentally hazardous and not sustainable, but that if the cruise industry somehow shifted to more environmentally friendly practices it may result in economic benefits.

Vehbi & Doratli (2010) assessed tourism's impact on the natural and built environment's in Girne, Cyprus. In Girne, the authors state that the primary negative impacts of tourism on the natural environment include; deterioration and reduction of green fields, loss of natural landscape, loss of open space and seawater and air, noise, waste and visual pollution. The researchers conclude that both Girne's natural and built environments are endangered as a consequence of mass tourism developments. It is clear by this assessment that sustainability of this destination and long-term strategies are being ignored.

It can be argued that the negative impact the tourism industry has on local communities is also, in part, due to revenue leakage (Edgell & Swanson, 2013). This occurs when the revenue collected in one destination is moved and spent in another community. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) found that 80 percent of travelers expenses go to international airlines and hotel chains that typically are not headquartered in the tourist's destination (UNEP website). Lejárraga and Walkenhorst (2010) make note of the economic benefit of tourism, but recognize that

these benefits may be leaked out of the local community and captured internationally. Choudhury and Goswami (2013) studied leakage in the Manas National Park, a world heritage site in northern India. The researchers found that over 50 percent of revenue from tourist activities were lost to leakage.

Social implications of tourism are widespread. Even medical tourism (travel to other countries for the purpose of obtaining cheaper health services) has the potential to increase socio-economic inequality. Chen and Flood (2013) found that there is a possible correlation between medical tourism and the growth of private healthcare in low and middle-income countries. They predict that if the revenue from medical tourism is reinvested into the private healthcare sector, an asymmetrical, multi-level healthcare system may emerge. This study shows that tourism can impact, not only economic systems but a wide range of social and environmental systems as well.

These findings display the complex environmental, societal and economic impacts of tourism on a global scale. Negative impacts of tourism are transforming from a highly localized, destination specific issue to a larger global problem, as evident in the emerging research above. Yes, each individual case study explores a specific destination and the impact tourism has had on the individual environment and local community, but the negative impacts are beginning to be realized on a global level. Evidently, the negative impacts of tourism have continued to grow since the inception of the green movement in the 1960's and 1970's and the release of the Brundtland report in the 1980's. 54 years later, the tourism industry and other stakeholders continue to justify the economic benefit tourism has on individual localities, debating the validity of negative impacts and attempting to conceptualize, but not act on, new ideas on how to mitigate negative

impacts of tourism, all while neglecting to effectively manage social and environmental issue.

Consequently, tourism companies and employees are realizing the growing need to incorporate sustainable practices into their business models. Tierney (2008) found that around 69 percent of resort managers in the US and Caribbean agreed that “large numbers of clients are asking about their green practices” (as cited in Tierney, Hunt & Latkova, p.2). In an article by Natz (2008), a California hotel developer was interviewed and estimated that 15 to 20 percent of business came from tourists looking for sustainable destinations. Furthermore, a 2008 survey by the Association of Corporate Executives of travel managers in large U.S and European companies, had implemented an environmental charter into their company (Natz, 2008).

On the demand side, the studies by the World Tourism Organization have noted that tourists are beginning to avoid destinations with bad environmental reputations (Huffadine, 2000, p.7). The Association of Corporate Executives also surveyed travelers, of which 56 percent used environmental measures, provided by tourism companies, to decide what tourism company to use (Natz, 2008, p.120). At a “California Welcome Center”, Tierney, Hunt and Latkova (2011) surveyed tourists and found that almost 50 percent of respondents were willing to spend more to support “green” practices (p.14). It appears that there is a growing increase in traveler's awareness and demand for sustainable policies and therefore the travel and tourism industry as well as government policy makers must adapt to the changing demand. But does the increased awareness and demand really support and create effective solutions for the environmental and socio-economic issues at hand? Is this new shift to “green living” better than the

counterfactual?

Traditional economic thinkers may argue that adopting sustainable principles can protect and enhance a brand while minimizing risks and uncertainties (O'Neill, 2009). Hart (2005) argues that the integration of pollution prevention, product stewardship and sustainable development into a firm's strategy may create a competitive advantage for the firm. Though these arguments for implementing sustainable policies into the tourism and travel industry may seem logical, it is difficult for the entire industry to adopt sustainable policies that are effective, usually because of political and economic constraints, complexities and cross-border business dealings that are practiced. These complexities and constraints are the primary reason that it has been difficult to evaluate the ecological effectiveness of sustainable tourism policy. Sustainable tourism policy and governance is almost always perceived and developed within a political or economic framework thus leaving out the interest of the natural environment. From this perspective, it is clear that a reevaluation of sustainable tourism policy and its ecological effectiveness is needed.

Sustainable Tourism and Governance

The first World Conference on Sustainable Tourism in 1995 established a growing interest in sustainable tourism research and a growth in literature on the topic (Battaglia, Daddi & Rizzi, 2012). Evaluating governance structures and institutions effectiveness to implement policy has emerged as an important sub-field within sustainable tourism research. In addition, there is a wide variety of literature evaluating effective governance in the field of environmental policy that focuses on behavioral changes and dynamics within the institution or regime that is implementing the policy.

Exploring the effectiveness of environmental governance is an important element for evaluating sustainable tourism policy due to tourism's potential to create or increase environmental degradation especially with the rise in ecotourism.

In a publication put out by the UNWTO, Duran (2013) introduces an analytical framework for understanding governance in the tourism sector, providing evidence that shows how governance is able to support the development of tourism information systems for the benefit of tourism activities. Duran begins with a discussion pertaining to the normative, theoretical and conceptual debates about governance. Moreover, defining governance as “a guidance process that is institutionally and technically structured, that is, based on principles, norms, procedures and practices to collectively decide about common goals for coexistence and about how to coordinate and cooperate for the achievement of decided objectives” (p.9). Duran notes that the concept of governance within the tourism sector is poorly defined and confusing and this, the author argues, has created confusion as to the implication of governance within the tourism sector. However, the author argues that there are two requirements for a tourism governance system. First, a capacity for decision making and secondly, a mechanism for influencing public policy. These two requirements are not specific to tourism and travel but are also commonly associated with any type of institution, regime or governance system.

The framework constructed in this report begins with an understanding that a coexistence is necessary between public and private actors that feature two distinct dimensions. Responsibilities for tourism related activities taken by parliaments, congresses or executive branches of government (all on the same level) can be viewed as the horizontal dimension. Tourism dealings that occur on multiple levels (local,

provincial, regional etc.) are viewed as the vertical dimension.

The author proposes a definition of governance within the tourism sector for the purpose of identifying, analyzing and evaluating specific elements within a tourism governance system. The following definition of tourism governance aims to decipher aspects of tourism governance that can ensure an effective system for coordination and collaboration.

Governance is a practice of government that is measurable, that is aimed to effectively direct the tourism sectors at the different levels of government through forms of coordination, collaboration and/or cooperation (for more details see Glossary) that are efficient, transparent and subject to accountability, that help to achieve goals of collective interest shared by networks of actors involved in the sector, with the aim of developing solutions and opportunities through agreements based on the recognition of interdependencies and shared responsibilities (p. 14).

Two distinct paths emerge from tourism governance when defined in this way. The first path, “directive capacity of governments” can be understood as a governance system for travel and tourism that can promote and support mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and cooperation (p.14). These mechanisms can then create networks and alliances based on local needs and shared responsibilities. The second path of tourism governance formation is what the author terms “directive effectiveness”. This type of governance system uses the power and resources of the institution to coordinate, collaborate and cooperate.

The author then recommends tools that can be used for effective governance of the tourism sector. Public-private partnerships are one of the most important tools in tourism governance because of the “extensive and complex range of actors and agents” (p.16) that are involved in tourism activities. Although there are many different types of public-private partnerships, Duran argues that the most commonly used tool for

practicing public-private partnerships at the local level is the use of external contracts or outsourcing; “outsourcing permits greater specialization and activities that add value and the use of the technologies and the private sector’s capacity for innovation, contributing to improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration as well as the quality of its products and services” (p.16). Nevertheless, Duran expresses the need for other types of collaboration as well, including the building of relationships and cooperation between different public administration officials on multiple levels and civil society. Public administration at the subnational level, most notably local public administrations lack the resources needed to manage complex collaborative activities. This implies the need for a higher-level governance system that can support, manage and implement collaboration, cooperation and coordination activities. Duran argues that public-private collaborative activities develop by cooperation mechanisms established by public administration on multiple levels as an effort to pursue common objectives. Collaboration, he continues, not only is a mechanism for use at the local level, but this type of cooperation tool can even be established at the international level.

Another tool for tourism governance is what Duran calls “tourism observatory”. Tourism observatories are small groups of actors that provide useful information about tourism and travel used by different agents and actors. They can also be used to share knowledge with other agents and actors through forums or meetings.

Duran, next, establishes guidelines for the measurement of governance in the tourism sector. The author aims to identify indicators that may enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of tourism governance systems.

Firstly, tourism governance should occur across multiple levels of government or

be managed by an overarching institution. These governance systems should function in two distinct ways.

- 1) The system should be given the power to coordinate government and non-governmental agents and actors across territories. The responsibility of the governance system is thus, to manage the collaboration and cooperation among different actors by arranging the distribution of institutional resources.
- 2) Governance should also establish goals and agreed upon interests and equip the actors with solutions and other tools to support effective outcomes.

One method for measuring the space of tourism governance is the use of observable facts.

Duran proposes five fields that can be observed for measuring (p.19).

- 1) Legal/normative means for the exercise of public coordination, collaboration and cooperation in the sectorial and territorial structure
- 2) Legal/normative means for the formation and development of public-private collaborative and cooperative relations.
- 3) Legal-normative means of ensuring co-responsibility, transparency and accountability in public and private relations.
- 4) Exercise of public coordination, collaboration and cooperation.
- 5) Exercise of public-private collaboration and cooperation.

By observing the five fields above, the researcher can then observe the scope of government practices translated from institutional capacities.

Duran's analysis of tourism governance structures may appear to be straight forward, but when exploring specific institutions and networks that make up tourism governance, such as within Costa Rica, cooperation and coordination are not as simplistic as Duran makes them out to be. Top down bureaucratic approaches may look effective on paper but are extremely complex and difficult to decipher when studying specific systems.

O'Neill (2009) argues that there is a growing demand for non-state governance with increased collaboration between civil society and industry. She addresses the impact of non-state environmental governance globally while assessing the wide variety

of schemes in place using normative and theoretical perspectives. An example of multi-stakeholder participation in global decision-making is, the type-2 partnership for sustainable development, which was developed at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. These types of partnerships usually rely on larger groups to transfer funds to local-level partners in order to develop area specific development projects. O'Neill suggests that this type of non-state governance mechanism displays “the nimbleness or creativity not usually associated with large-scale government-led initiatives” (p.174). Other scholars such as Marina Ottaway (as cited in O'Neill, 2009) argue that type-2 forms of global non-state governance can be compared to “corporatist modes of government” (p.174) meaning that, the state, business sector and specific interest groups are able to form an “iron triangle” which may enhance power inequality. Another governance strategy can be categorized as a financial markets mechanism. It can be argued that financial firms, such as insurance and investment services, may be able to change corporate behavior through the use of ethical and socially responsible standards as a way to guide the firm’s investments. Supporters of this mechanism argue that financial firms that invest in socially responsible ways can shift global behavior while avoiding the slow political process that can arise from state led governance structures. Paterson (2001) shows that the financial market mechanism is not an effective governance structure. Using climate change as an example, Patterson argues that “insurers are unlikely to be effective as political lobbyists of governments to reduce emissions” (p.36). This can be attributed to the barriers that are produced by global political and economic decision-making.

Sustainable tourism policy can be implemented at global, regional, national and

local levels. Battaglia, Daddi and Rizzi (2012) aimed to analyze the pressure of tourism at the local level. Suggesting that existing literature pertaining to effective governance for sustainable tourism has typically dealt with individual sustainable tourism issues, the researchers present an innovative theoretical framework for sustainable tourism policy implementation that integrates all issues. The researchers wanted to know if implementation of sustainable tourism policies on a local level beginning with a comprehensive assessment of the locality with contributions from all local stakeholders was possible and if this approach was effective. They implemented their framework in five European tourist destinations in three different countries for eighteen months. First, the researcher's identified strains on local destinations by examining socio-economic issues and environmental conditions within the community. Next, they drew connections between tourism related activities and environmental impacts. Lastly, the researchers handed out a survey that provided local perceptions of tourism.

With help from local universities and other local partners and stakeholders, the researchers identified specific actions needed to be taken in each destination and constructed a "Strategic Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism".

The researchers established a framework that is applicable to different areas without specific local requirements. They argue that the project demonstrated the importance of local stakeholder involvement when developing sustainable tourism policy. However, they state that the effectiveness of the integration process may vary depending on the locality. Once again, this study neglected to focus on real ecological and socio-economic effectiveness of the framework. Instead the focus was on whether or not the framework was implemented (behavior) in the correct way.

Some have argued that the idea of effective sustainable tourism development depends on a coordinated managed approach between both public and private actors (Seminar on “Effective Governance in Tourism Destination Development”, 2011). This realization has created interest in evaluating and establishing a governance structure that can promote, manage and coordinate, projects, policy and strategies that are both competitive and sustainable.

The relationship between international recommendations for sustainability and sustainable tourism governance on the national level has best been described by Dinicia (2009) in the article “Governance for sustainable tourism: a comparison of international and Dutch visions”. The aim of the study is to examine the “political and policy dimensions of tourism sustainability”. Using The Netherlands as a case study, the author explores the alignment of international recommendations for tourism sustainability with the political ideology of the national government, which in this case, the author argues, is neo-liberalism.

Dinicia found that, the embedded ideology within the national government creates extreme difficulty in terms of encouraging sustainable tourism recommendations. The policy-makers that were tasked to create policy for sustainable tourism have not created effective governance systems but rather have created policy that is based on their “interpretations of neo-liberalism” (p.601). Finally, Dinicia recommends that with more research, it may be possible to find solutions to the conflicts that arise between political ideology and international recommendations for sustainable tourism.

Concepts and theoretical issues surrounding governance and regimes have been studied immensely, but literature regarding the ecological effectiveness of governance

structures and institutions in relation to sustainable tourism is clearly lacking. According to the findings of Borges, Eusebio and Carvalho (2014) there have been 221 academic articles mentioning tourism and governance since 1960 but only 62 academic articles published from 1960 to 2012 that mention the terms, tourism, governance, sustainable and sustainability (p.47). The authors considered 19 of these article to be relevant to the subject of sustainable tourism governance.

Ruhanen et al. (2010) constructed a list of different dimensions of governance resulting from an analysis of 53 relevant articles. The authors developed a set of seven of the most common dimensions of governance within the disciplines of political science and corporate management. The dimensions found were: accountability; transparency; involvement; structure; effectiveness; power; efficiency. These dimensions are insufficient when analyzing governance from a comprehensive perspective. All of the dimensions are elements of a constrained framework that only perceives analysis through the discipline they are studying (political science and corporate management).

Other research such as Beaumont and Dredge (2010) similarly reviewed sustainable tourism governance literature and highlighted 6 dimensions that were most common within local tourism governance systems. The 6 dimensions the authors identified included: positive cultures, constructive communication and engaged communities; transparency and accountability; vision and leadership; acceptance of diversity and the pursuit of equity and inclusiveness; developing knowledge learning and sharing expertise; clear roles and responsibilities of participants and clear operational structures and processes of the networks. (as cited in Borges, Eusebio and Carvalho, 2014, p.50).

But why is research about the ecological effectiveness of sustainable tourism omitted or forgotten when analyzing sustainable tourism regimes? To understand why this is, the following section will explore the origins of environmental regime analysis and the evolution of the theory.

Institutions and Regimes

Conceptual questions about regime formation, interstate cooperation and the importance of institutions began to emerge around the same time as the growing awareness of sustainable development, the environmental movement and tourism. In academia, the increasing number of institutions and regimes that dealt with specific social and environmental issues sparked the beginning of a paradigm shift towards research and analysis beginning with regimes formation then institutions and finally governance structures. The research focused primarily on concepts, definitions and formation of regimes and institutions [Oran Young; Stephen D. Krasner; Robert O. Keohane; Elinor Ostrom; Volker Rittberger; Peter Mayer].

By the 1990s, critics of international regimes and institutions (Strange, 1983; Mearsheimer, 1994) pushed regime theorists away from conceptual questions and explanations of regimes and towards studying the outcomes of regimes or the effectiveness and performance of regimes [Peter M. Haas; Robert O. Keohane; Oran Young; Marc A. Levy; Michael Zürn; Helmut Breitmeier].

Empirically testing effectiveness or causation and their outcomes of specific global issues proved to be difficult due to the complexities within a regime. By the early 2000s, innovative research began to explore the institutional dynamics and activities

within regimes. Currently, research into the dynamics of governance structures within an institutional setting is gaining popularity and shifting the focus of research again, emphasizing the interplay, complexities and patterns across these systems (Young, 2010).

The concept of regime has been defined by many different scholars. Stephen D. Krasner (1983) defines regimes as “a set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (p.186). A regime can therefore be viewed as a type of variable or system that can play an intermediary role in order to change an outcome or behavior, not only in a global setting but also between domestic actors. Similarly, Keohane and Nye (1977) define regimes as a “set of governing arrangements” with “networks of rules, norms, and procedures that regularize behavior and control its effects” (p.19). Haas (1980) argues that the “regime rules” are “designed to channel action and/or to foreclose action” (p.553). Bull (1997) argues that the principles of a regime “require or authorize prescribed classes of persons or groups to behave in prescribed ways” (p.54). In his book *Resource Regimes: Natural Resources and Social Institutions*, Oran Young (1982) defines resource regimes as “institutions oriented to the use of natural resources like the governing arrangements for the exploitation of hydrocarbon on the outer continental shelves, the harvesting of fish in the marine fisheries, and the extraction of hard mineral” (p.16).

Three primary perspectives of international regime significance have been established [Stephen D. Krasner]. Although these perspectives were developed within the discipline of international relations, the analysis and theories will be incorporated into a domestic framework (Costa Rica) in the following section. According to Krasner,

scholars, Oran Young, Raymond Hopkins and Donald Puchala view regimes as a basic component of the international system, when a behavior can only be sustained if a regime intervenes. Krasner calls this the Grotian perspective. Susan Strange and other scholars in the school of realism who argue that regimes are, no more than a technique for a small number of nations, interacting in anarchy, to increase or regain power, represent the critical view of regimes. The third perspective, termed “modified structural” by Krasner, views regimes as a mechanism for powerful states to increase control, but in certain circumstances, when issues or failures arise, it is possible for international regimes to play an important role in an anarchic environment.

Measuring and Evaluating Effectiveness

The methodological challenges of measuring regime effectiveness have been widely researched in the literature [Oran Young; Peter M. Haas; Robert O. Keohane; Marc A. Levy]. The research focused on the challenges and methods for measuring effectiveness by way of separating internal and external influences.

Two recommendations for attempting to measure effectiveness were suggested by Young (2011). These included, counterfactual evidence or the researchers attempt to predict the outcomes of the problem if a regime, institution or governance structure did not exist and an empirical approach to measuring effectiveness or performance. This method is created by forming an index that can track a wide range of international regimes by using indicators or variables that are common within all regimes.

The United Nations Conference on Development and the Environment and the adoption of Agenda 21 as a response to international environmental degradation

motivated a group of researchers to explore the factors that may contribute to positive outcomes of international institutions dealing with global issues as well as the determining specific sources that may impact the effectiveness of the international institution. Early research into institutional effectiveness focused primarily on the ability of institutions to create positive, effective outcomes for the problem the institution was attempting to mitigate as well as the amount of resources used to build capacity at the national level. International institution that have the ability of transferring resources, knowledge and skills to governments not capable of building national capacity was thought to be a strong predictor of effective institutions [Peter M. Haas; Robert O. Keohane; Marc A. Levy; Edward L Miles; Arild Underdal; Steinar Andresen; Jørgen Wettestad; Jon Birger Skjaereth; Elaine M Carlin]. The argument that performance and effectiveness of a regime is solely based on the effectiveness of cooperation, interaction and behavioral issues, omits other key variables that may also play a role in measuring and analyzing effectiveness. The traditional International Relations regime analysis above, fails to measure or mention the achievements or failures of the institution's primary objectives. The purpose and primary objective of a regime is the most important measurement of regime effectiveness.

The development of transnational environmental agreements has motivated researchers to shift from analyzing regimes towards analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of governance systems. This may have been partially due to the fact that natural environment must be regulated in order to sustain the natural environment. This new understanding started with the Brundtland Commission, and later reaffirmed at the 1992 Earth Summit and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The Political Economy and Sustainable Tourism

The literature focusing on effective sustainable tourism governance from a political economy perspective centers on institutional factors that may increase or decrease effectiveness. Factors such as, the openness to change, application of power, amount of resources, specificity of rules, and the ability to coordinate and cooperate with all relevant stakeholders, have been argued as primary variables in measuring effective sustainable tourism systems [Bill Bramwell; Bernard Lane; Steven Bernstein; Stephen Wearing; John Neil].

Difficulty arises in tourism governance, firstly due to the fact that tourism has interests in multiple policy domains. Although integrating sustainable tourism policy into larger scope economic, social and environmental policies on the national level may be a logical solution, this approach will require policy-makers that may not be knowledgeable in sustainable tourism to create policy. Coordination and cooperation is a key element in effective sustainable tourism governance. This creates another concern regarding effective governance. When a large mix of stakeholders in different public and private sectors converge to create a governance system, conflict may arise from contrasting interests or different priorities.

Due to the holistic nature of the tourism industry, researchers in the discipline of political economy argue that governments and other public authorities should coordinate efforts in policy regarding sustainable tourism at both the national and local level. The nation-state not only can act as a coordinator but also may be able to create incentives for firms practicing sustainable tourism or enforce regulations on destinations. This is most

evident in Costa Rica's sustainable tourism incentive program that will be discussed later. Tourism incentives have sparked growth but can also cause conflicting goals when interacting with environmental policy efforts (Wearing & Neal, 2009; Bramwell, 2011; Bramwell & Lane, 2011).

The holistic and relational view of social relations assumes that society as a whole is made up of different parts and that political governance is directly connected to economic and social issues. In other words, when brought together, different aspects of social relations create an organizational structure for society. The perspective of political economy assumes that the nation-state prioritizes economic activity that produces wealth, providing revenue for the state and its citizens. If this theoretical is correct, the economic growth credited to tourism would supersede the environmental and socio-cultural concerns. This perspective also assumes that states may give priority to environmental concerns or protect certain ecology but only if the state predicts that capital accumulation will arise from this action.

The obstacles of forming effective sustainable tourism governance systems are largely due to the collective nature of the tourism sector. When policy is formed, in other domains, the policymakers may not take into account the impact it may have on tourism.

Environmental norms and acceptance of norms has transformed since the 1960's and 1970's. The close relationship of environmental norms and neo-liberal economic policy has formed a new perspective pertaining to environmental awareness. These norms are based on the idea of "liberal environmentalism" (Bernstein, 2002; Zelli, Gupta, & van Asselt, H, 2013). Theoretical perspectives relating to liberal environmentalism argue that the interaction of neo-liberal economic norms and global environmental

activities has created a liberal environmentalist trajectory within global environmental institutions and governance structures. Bernstein (2002) suggests that, institutions that have emerged due to global environmental problems carry with them, underlying values and goals that have been shaped by neo-liberal decisions and policies.

Institutional Dynamics

In the institutional dynamics literature, it is argued that modern societies have been experiencing a transformation of governing mechanisms and dynamics in global institutions [Kees Van Kersbergen ; Frans Van Waarden; Oran Young]. Forms and structures of administrative duties and management styles are changing at a rapid pace. The style and dynamics of social governance has also seen a major shift in terms of decision-making and implementation methods. These changes are having major impacts on the “governability, accountability, responsiveness and legitimacy” (Van Kersbergen & Van Waarden, 2004, p.143) of social organizations in general.

Policy designed to solve specific social problems are regularly perceived differently by different actors and thus may cause conflict. Resulting from this understanding has been much interest within the disciplines of international relations, public administration and business management to determine the complexities and strategies involved in managing governance networks, but the growing interest in this analysis is strictly behavioral in nature. Instead, a comprehensive analysis must be pursued in order to remove the barriers formed by specific disciplines.

The suggestions in the institutional dynamics literature, regarding cross-institutional and cross-boundary policy initiatives, as a way to effectively solve

environmental problems, does not go beyond these suggestions and fails to explain how cooperation can effectively mitigate or manage the environment issue at hand.

Business Management Insight

A growing amount of literature concerning governance, institutions and regimes has developed recently in the discipline of business management [Jorge Rivera; Jon Birger Skjærseth; Michael E. Porter; Claas van der Linde].

Unlike other disciplines, the business literature explores the impact and influence international institutions have on corporations and possible responses corporations will have to the regulations or standards put forth by these institutions. Skjærseth (2013) argues that regulatory pressures are one of the most important elements to corporate strategy, but the way in which corporations respond to these pressures differ. Rivera (2004) evaluated the influences of regulatory measures and stakeholder pressures on corporate environmental behavior in Costa Rica. Rivera found that foreign owned and MNC subsidiaries in Costa Rica are not significantly correlated with superior environmental performance.

Other perspectives emerging from the business literature suggest that, environmental standards and regulations that are properly designed, may actually lower costs, drive innovative activity, increase competitiveness and most importantly improve environmental impact.

The business management literature has suggested solutions to environmental problems through developing new strategies and advocating growth. This perspective views the environment through a trajectory of unlimited growth and fails to acknowledge

the environmental harm that unlimited growth and high consumption may cause. These assumptions, which are at the core of business literature, will perpetually coincide with environmental sustainability, no matter how “green” a product is, or the amount of compliance the firm has achieved.

While regimes, institutions and governance structures are assumed to be formed with the goal of mitigating or managing a specific issue at a global, regional, national or local level, literature concerning the evaluation of ecological effectiveness is less evident.

Unlike an international environmental regime, which focuses on one specific area of the environment (i.e. Kyoto Protocol), a domestic sustainable tourism system must focus on a wide range of issues. Therefore sustainable tourism governance is highly complex and must be analyzed using a critical approach that can genuinely and thoroughly evaluate effective sustainable tourism regimes and policy. As evident in this review so far, research within regime analysis is constrained to behavioral performance, the political economy perspective is centered on political and economic issues and the business literature fails to take into account, issues concerning consumption and unlimited economic growth.

The Critical Approach to Environmental Regime Effectiveness

Kütting (1995; 2000; 2004; 2014) has developed a critical theory for the analysis of environmental regimes and questions the true value of how the traditional insitutionalist school analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of a regime. The theory underlying the critical approach for analyzing environmental regime analysis argues that environmental problems analyzed using the classical regime theory approach do not take

into account critical aspects of nature when measuring the effectiveness of the regime and must be re-conceptualized to draw a more accurate conclusion.

Adams and Kütting (1995) first explained this approach by questioning the usefulness and effectiveness of “green technology”. The authors state the need for environmental issues to be addressed using a multidisciplinary approach rather than viewing environmental issues from a singular perspective. A multidisciplinary approach is a response to the rapid shift in social-relations worldwide. Networks and alliances are beginning to overrun hierarchical structures and thus research must adapt to this shift as well. Instead of concluding their research by suggesting a need for more networks, alliances and cooperation, the researchers argue that ecological rhythms and environmental processes, a complex interconnected system, is in direct conflict with technology that is developed in a Newtonian mechanistic process. The mechanistic process is based on the principles of decontextualization, isolation, fragmentation, reversible motion, abstract time and space, predictability, and objectivity. These principles are all elements within the foundation for technological development and innovation. On the other hand, the organic, environmental process of nature is based on, embedded contextualization, networked interconnectedness, irreversible change and contingency. The conflict occurs when technological products interact with the natural environment, embedding a technology into a time and space that does not fit, which can permanently damage the environment (waste, pollution etc.).

A Newtonian mechanistic approach to environmental problems is not likely to bring about effective solutions and action to the issue at hand. Instead, the authors argue that a reconceptualization of the environment and industrial life is needed in order to

create effective solutions to environmental problems.

It is argued that International Relations approaches to studying environmental regime effectiveness are limited in terms of methodology. By focusing on the behavioral elements of regime formation and viewing completed environmental agreements as an endpoint to effectiveness, traditional regime analysis becomes extremely constrained as a method of evaluating environmental effectiveness (Kütting, 2000).

Restructuring regime analysis in a way that can bring the actual environmental issue into the forefront of evaluation is key to an effective approach. Evaluating environmental regime effectiveness must exceed analyzing solely, the relationship and behaviors of actors within environmental agreements. If a framework or environmental policy is to be considered effective, it must meet the needs and interests of nature and environment, without prioritizing economic or political interests. The analysis must first focus on the environmental issue. Kütting's strategy for analyzing specific environmental problems includes three dimensions: The structural foundation, the environmental issue and social origins of the problem.

Kütting also suggests that understanding environmental effectiveness is based on four key concepts. First, the economic structure of the society needs to be understood. This includes power-relations issues and the role of production and costs within environmental policy-making. Second, the concept of time must be considered within regime analysis. Time frames for solving environmental issues may demonstrate how important the issue has been perceived. Furthermore, time also needs to be considered, not only in terms of clocks and western calendars but also in terms of ecological and social rhythms and the interaction between the two. Third, scientific knowledge plays an

important role in making objective conclusions such as cause and effect relationships within the natural environment. Policy is thus influenced not only by social, political and economic elements, but scientific knowledge as well. Lastly, the regulatory structure of the environmental framework or policy must be investigated. This is a concept that traditional regime theorists focus on when determining effectiveness. The regulatory structure involves bureaucratic decision-making, principles, procedures and rules that govern the organization, regime or agreement.

In western society, attitudes towards time evolved during the industrial revolution into a mechanical time framework. For example, in a society that is dependent on farming and agriculture, time is viewed as rhythms that are dependent on nature and the physical environment. Consequently, the increase in mass production increased societal dependence on rhythms of machines that relied on set amount of hours it takes to produce a specific numbers of products (Kütting, 2001, p.346). The rise of globalization and economic interdependence has created dependence on mechanical time in places that previously relied on environmental rhythms. Consumers of agricultural products now have become dependent upon products and crops in places far away, creating a need for mechanical rhythms in these far away places. These two dimensions of time perspectives can be thought of as first, cyclical time or the reproduction of the passed and linear time which can be viewed as a process with a means to an end (Young, 1988 as cited in Kütting, 2001).

The issue of time directly relates to IR theory in that time is a primary aspect of social understanding. When attempting to measure the effectiveness of solutions to environmental problems, analysis must occur within an environmental framework that

does not conflict with, (mechanical time) but rather, is in agreement with, the natural time cycle.

A critical approach to institutional analysis emerging from the critical theory was thus developed. This approach can create a more accurate depiction of the effectiveness of environmental institutions, organizations or governance. When the conventional approach to regime analysis is employed, political, economic and environmental issues become interconnected and unified, typically ignoring the environmental issues and focusing primarily on economic, political and organizational factors. Furthermore, a structural or systemic analysis of the regime creates a framework that puts constraints on the evaluation of the regime.

Regime analysis typically focuses on cooperation, power and influence of the regime itself leaving out inquiry into external relations. These perceptions create environmental agreements and frameworks that are often constrained to what is “politically feasible, but do not address what is environmentally necessary” (p.34). The author argues that an “eco-holistic approach” to analyzing environmental effectiveness of an institution or governance structure is needed because governance literature omits key elements from outside disciplines. The term eco-holistic is a concept that merges the holistic approach with the ecocentric approach of analysis. The holistic approach incorporates social, political and economic factors into the analysis, while ecocentric approaches incorporate ecological aspects of analysis. Because the holistic approach typically omits environmental analysis, this type of analysis transcends these two methods of analysis and creates an approach that analyzes, political, economic, social and environmental factors. Analyzing the environment separately, helps develop a better

understanding of the “structural origins of environmental degradation” and bring about better solutions for policy makers to effectively deal with environmental issues.

When policy-makers develop frameworks for dealing with environmental issues, Kütting argues that they must incorporate three distinct elements (or pillars) in order to mitigate or manage the environmental problem. The three pillars are, “the historical dimensions of environment and society relations, the concept of consumption, and the concept of equity”.

This article demonstrates the need for a more robust, multidisciplinary approach to analyzing environmental policy and governance that has not been a major focus within neoliberal-institutionalist regime analysis. In order for social and ecological dimensions to play into diplomatic and political frameworks for environmental solutions, there is a need for a historical understanding of the environmental issues, a greater degree of understanding within environment-society relations as well as discussing the concepts of equity and consumption. Analyzing environmental policy with this critical approach, disrupts the existing frameworks of regime analysis by digging deeper into the “root causes” (p.44) of the environmental problem and has the ability to help create frameworks and policies that deal directly with these issues.

Literature and research focused on regime analysis and the study and identification of problems within global environmental politics has increased exponentially in recent years. Although these achievements are of great importance, environmental degradation is still increasing. Even with a plethora of research on global environmental issues in the area of, international relations, political science and political economy, there is still a lack of research into effective policy coordination and solutions

that can substantially mitigate environmental degradation.

In order to reform policy and create effective solutions, Kütting argues that ecological effectiveness must be viewed with equal or more importance as political and economic aspects when analyzing environmental regimes.

The rapid increase of global tourism, combined with empirical evidence of environmental degradation due to tourism, has resulted in an urgent reevaluation of sustainable tourism governance using the critical approach put forth by Kütting, emphasizing ecological effectiveness. With few, if any significant efforts in this area thus far, it is the intention of this paper to fill the gap of research in the analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of sustainable tourism governance systems on the national level.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction:

This chapter presents the methodology used to evaluate and analyze the effectiveness of sustainable tourism governance and policy in Costa Rica. The chapter begins with an explanation of qualitative approaches to research and the rationale for using such an approach. Next, the case-study method is presented and explained. Finally, the steps taken in the collection and analysis of the research are established along with the research procedure and the limitations of the study.

Qualitative Research:

The present research used a qualitative approach that utilized direct observations, document examination and theoretical perspectives. Combining these elements can increase the understanding and reason for why policy, regulatory systems and governance develop the way they do. These approaches can also support arguments for why policy-makers and government officials make certain choices or elicit specific behaviors within a social context. The researcher chose a qualitative approach for analysis due to the fact that a qualitative approach is not based on strict guidelines or computational rules and thus opens up the analysis for a much more adaptable and creative perspective that can delve deeper into questions about “why something is the way it is” which is difficult using a quantitative method (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Critics view qualitative methods as being a “non-scientific and inferior approach to studying social life” (Phillimore and Gooson, 2004, p.4). What critics of this type of methodology fail to recognize is the rapid pace of knowledge creation, changing paradigms and behaviors in a

social settings. This is possibly due to advancements of new technology as well as increased globalization. The drawback of a quantified method is the over generalized objective conclusions that they may draw from a singular moment in time. Universal phenomena based on quantified data cannot compete in a rapidly changing global and social environment. Instead, qualitative methods using context specific techniques and creative strategies are beginning to emerge. Jamal and Hollinshead (2001) argue that “in order to move towards more interpretive, qualitative tourism research, it is necessary to depart from more static, quantitative and positivist knowledge bases to more dynamic, experiential and reflexive approaches” (p.17). Furthermore, Belsky (2004) argues that qualitative research is effective when attempting to understand political dimensions and tensions within tourism.

Case-Study:

To analyze sustainable tourism policy and regimes, the researcher employed a case-study method. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), a case-study allows an in-depth exploration into a context specific phenomenon. Using a variety of perspectives, theories and tools to study and analyze a case helps to form a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the phenomenon. More specifically, the present research utilizes a case study approach that draws on a single case and explores the influence and pressures that global actors have on the nation-state. (in this context the Costa Rica's national government).

Data Collection:

The idea for the present study began to develop after a recent visit by the

researcher to Costa Rica. Although Costa Rica is a country that has been labeled a pioneer in sustainable travel and ecotourism in modern times (Honey, 1999), the researcher observed an enormous amount of pollution, increase in cruise ship traffic as well as a majority of wild animals beginning to emerge in the confines of new development projects which were once their home. Although sustainable tourism is promoted as a type of tourism that has a low-impact on the environment and improves society and the economy for future generations to enjoy, the majority of research that attempts to analyze the effectiveness of sustainable policy, environmental regimes and institutions tend to omit the ecological impact and focus on internal behavioral dynamics within the institution or the political and economic aspects of effectiveness.

The data for this study was collected using multiple channels. The study began with direct observations in Costa Rica's Puntarenas province and Manuel Antonio National Park, a resource that supported the analysis. Objective historical data was then collected from government sources and books written by experts in the field of tourism, policy, sustainability, environmental politics, and economics among other disciplines. The historical data collected specifically related to Costa Rica's historical ecological conservation practices, tourism governance formation, legal frameworks and annual tourism statistics.

In order to analyze sustainable tourism's effectiveness within Costa Rica, a clear understanding of Costa Rica's economic and regulatory structures were needed. Primary sources for the data collection included, legislative documents, the Certificate for Sustainable Tourism website, Costa Rican Tourism Board website and the National System of Conservation Areas website, all which provided information about

organizational structures, institutional policies and legal frameworks. Data from the World Bank, World Tourism Organization, National Chamber of Tourism and Costa Rica's Ministry of Environment and Energy website were also collected. Secondary sources included, legal briefs and opinions, media sources, books pertaining to economic, conservation and tourism policies in Costa Rica and theoretical perspectives in the field of environmental regime analysis.

Procedure:

The research began by gathering literature about traditional theoretical perspectives and approaches to analyzing regimes and institutions. Next, historical data regarding Costa Rica's, tourism industry, political evolution, economic development and institutions was gathered and examined. The documents and literature collected were then integrated into a eco-holistic analytical framework based on a critical theory for the understanding of environmental effectiveness. The process, created by Dr. Gabriella Kütting, is based on four determinants for understanding environmental effectiveness. The four determinants, economic structure, time, scientific knowledge and regulatory structure were compared and related to Costa Rica's current systems in place for regulating and dealing with issues regarding sustainable tourism, environmental conservation and economic development. The researcher concluded by interpreting the outcomes of the comparison between the determinants of environmental effectiveness and Costa Rica's policy.

Limitations:

Certain limitations appeared in the present research. Most notably, the research

was limited in time and resources. The resources that were used were constrained to information available from limited sources in Costa Rica, research databases, libraries and the Internet. The researcher did not have time during the research process to travel to Costa Rica and interview, observe and study environmental, societal and economic issues but did utilize direct observation prior to the research. Although direct observations are helpful for overcoming the inconsistencies between what people may say about certain situations (expert opinions) and what it is actually like on the ground, the researcher only had limited observations and relied heavily on expert opinions and data collected by others. In addition, many of the documents were translated from Spanish. Although the researcher was able to translate the majority of words, legal documents may be, interpreted, understood or perceived differently especially within different cultural contexts.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS

Introduction:

This chapter presents a critical analysis of Costa Rica's sustainable tourism and environmental policies within the context of regime effectiveness. It will also examine the connection between domestic environmental and sustainable tourism policy and the global political economy. The analysis will support the argument of this paper that the ecological and environmental effectiveness of Costa Rica's environmental and sustainable tourism regimes and policies are not as effective as the narratives put forth by government agencies and other tourism actors. Furthermore, the environmental ineffectiveness of these policies will be related to the global political economy and the international institutions that began to put policies and programs in place during the 1980's when a majority of Latin American countries were going through debt crises.

It is not the intention of this paper to single out Costa Rica as the only nation with ineffective environmental policies regarding tourism, but rather Costa Rica serves as a case study that can help inform the reader of the realities within sustainable tourism policy. Costa Rica has been chosen based on their reputation as a leader in the sustainable tourism and eco-tourism industry.

This section will use the critical approach to regime analysis to determine policy effectiveness. The analysis will start with historical background regarding Costa Rica's political evolution, general economic and fiscal policy, environmental conservation efforts and sustainable tourism development through the years. Costa Rica will be evaluated using the four key concepts of understanding environmental effectiveness. The

first section will present Costa Rica's economic structure and social organization and how it relates to the environment and tourism. Second, the concept of time and rhythmicity will be explained within the context of Costa Rica and explore the role of temporal frameworks in policy making. Next, the role of science in environmental and sustainable tourism policy creation will be explored. Lastly, the regulatory structures concerning environmental conservation and sustainable tourism within Costa Rica will be evaluated with specific emphasis on the Certificate of Sustainable Tourism program managed by the Costa Rican Tourism Board (Instituto Costarricense de Turismo). These four key concepts for understanding environmental effectiveness will in turn, display the conflicts between true ecological and environmental effectiveness and the reality of Costa Rica's policies.

Within this section, Kütting's three pillars that are necessary for effective environmental policy will be incorporated into the analysis and juxtaposed with Costa Rica's environmental and sustainable tourism policy formation. The three pillars are, the historical origins of environment-society relations, the concept of consumption, and the concept of equity. It will be argued that Costa Rica's economic make-up has created an environment that makes it difficult or near impossible to form policy that takes into account the three pillars.

Throughout this section, the global political economy will be examined in relation to Costa Rica's policy. More specifically, the focus will be on the impact of structural adjustment programs and policies due to the large amount of Costa Rica's involvement with international lenders and foreign direct investments. Global economic institutions and investments help to explain the complexities and difficulties of creating effective

environmental and sustainable tourism policy on a domestic level.

In order for Costa Rica to truly be a country perceived as a leader in sustainable and eco-tourism, the country must be capable of mitigating environmental degradation and reversing the negative impact that tourism can have on the environment and society. Although this must happen on a global scale, a first step must include re-conceptualizing and reforming national policy in a way that includes the three pillars mentioned above combined with a reconstructed environmental and sustainable tourism policy taking into account Kütting's four key concepts.

Historical Background of Costa Rica

With a population of 4,755,234, The Republic of Costa Rica is situated in Central America between Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south. The country sits between the Caribbean Sea on the east coast and the Pacific Ocean on the west coast. The climate is considered tropical and subtropical but is considerably cooler in the mountains regions. The country has two distinct seasons, the dry season from December to April and the rainy season from May to November. Costa Rica possess four volcanoes of which two remain active. According to the CIA World Fact Book, the most prominent environmental issues concerning Costa Rica include, deforestation and land use changes, soil erosion, coastal marine pollution, fisheries protection, solid waste management and air pollution.

Human societies in Costa Rica are thought to date back to more than 10,000 years although the land is thought to have been populated only by small clusters of individuals, with no evidence pointing to larger civilization settlements (Political Overview, 2008).

In fact, there has only been one piece of evidence discovered from ancient civilization within the borders of Costa Rica. This site, in Guayabo, is thought to date back to around 1000 B.C.E.

During the colonial era, when Europeans were exploring the “New World”, Christopher Columbus arrived in Costa Rica in 1502, on his fourth journey to the Americas. On this expedition, he is thought to have found only a small group of around 20,000 indigenous people, living in small tribes. Each tribe had distinctive traditions and culture. In 1522 Costa Rica encountered a mass migration of Europeans and established a military governor representing the Spanish crown. It has been pointed out that hostilities of the indigenous people towards the Europeans created difficult circumstances for Spain to effectively control and colonize the land.

The name Costa Rica or “Rich Coast” was given to the colony by the Europeans who observed a vast amount of gold jewelry and pennants worn by the indigenous people. Christopher Columbus among others thought that this meant that the land had extreme potential for wealth exploitation. Little did the Spanish explorers know that this gold did not come from Costa Rica but instead was traded and brought from other places. Consequently, agriculture became the main export commodity of the land. With only a small number of indigenous people in Costa Rica, and even fewer willing to work the fields due to hostilities, Europe paid little attention to the colony. According to “Costa Rica Country Review”, this played a main role in the development of Costa Rica's self-sufficiency and independent oriented society.

Costa Rica declared independence in 1821 from Spain and in 1899 held their first democratic elections. Through the years Costa Rica has enjoyed a relatively stable

democracy with the exception of two events, a dictatorship in 1917 to 1919 and an uprising that evolved into a civil war in 1948. The civil war toppled the existing government at the time and sparked the creation of a new constitution that eliminated the military in 1953. Since then, Costa Rica has sustained a democracy that has not seen any violent conflicts.

Costa Rica is considered a democratic republic with a system of checks and balances. The country inherited a Spanish like civil law system after independence. Executive power is entrusted in the president, which is the primary source of power within the country. Under the president there are two vice presidents and a 15 member cabinet. Both the president and the legislative branch (made up of a 57 member assembly) are elected every 4 years.

Costa Rica's adaptable constitutional framework has allowed for a multitude of changes in modern times. For example, in 1969 a constitutional amendment was passed that limited the president and the president's deputies to one four year term.

In terms of election enforcement, an independent tribunal, selected by the Supreme Court of Justice (Supreme Electoral Tribunal) is tasked with overseeing the electoral process. The judicial branch of the Costa Rica is made up of 22 judges chosen by the Legislative Assembly every 8 years.

The government also has in place a mechanism for autonomous oversight of government activities, which is lead by the Comptroller General of the Republic, the Procurator General off the Public and the Ombudsman.

Within Costa Rica there are seven provinces and 81 cantons (districts). Until 1988, when abolished, each province was appointed a governor by the Costa Rican

president (La Nacion). There are no legislative body for each individual province. This has created difficulty for localized issues to be effectively dealt with.

State agencies operate relatively independent of the national government. The agencies include, telecommunications, electric power, national banks, insurance and social security.

Costa Rica has enjoyed relatively strong economic growth in recent decades. After the Constitution of the Republic of Costa Rica was formally introduced in the late 1940's, Costa Rica's economic output consisted primarily of coffee and banana exports. By the 1960's the Costa Rican economy diversified and began to export "non-traditional agricultural products, light manufactures, and even sophisticated computer goods" (Wilson, 2009, p.55). The shift from agriculture to non-traditional products impacted the labor market immensely. In recent years, the labor market has seen a dramatic diversification in occupation type, where as in 1950, 63 percent of the labor force was employed in the agriculture sector, in 2000 only 20 percent of the labor force was still involved in that sector. This may be a result of the open economic policies of the national government that were in place from the early 1960's to 1994 when the country had 66.4 percent of its GDP coming from exports and imports.

Even with this shift, the traditional agricultural exports are viewed as the foundation of the Costa Rican economy. This includes, not only bananas and coffee, but sugar and beef as well. Goods and services play an important role in Costa Rica's export economy, such as microchips (manufactured in Costa Rica) and other technology products and services. The country's main channel of foreign currency is fostered by its high reliance on tourism. Outside investors view Costa Rica as a place for sound

investments due to the countries political stability. In spite of this perspective, the overview of Costa Rica's economy published by CIA World Fact Book warns that “high levels of bureaucracy, legal uncertainty due to overlapping and at times conflicting responsibilities between agencies, difficulty of enforcing contracts, and weak investor protection” (The World Fact Book, Costa Rica, 2014) remain an issue in Costa Rica.

Open trade and liberal economic principles have become the foundation of Costa Rica's economic and fiscal policy, creating deeply interconnected global economic networks. International Monetary Fund and World Bank lending policies are generally accepted in Costa Rica. While the United States and the European Union have consistently been Costa Rica's largest trading partners, the government has become involved in a number of regional trade agreements (RTA) and other types of free trade agreements (FTA). Costa Rica joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1990 (known as GATT until 1995). The WTO is an international organization in which member states negotiate disputes and create trade agreements. One of the main principles of the WTO is market liberalism, which is an economic perspective that argues that, open, international trade without tariffs or other duties will increase the world's living standard (Oatley, 2012). In 2007, Costa Rica agreed to become a member of another liberal trade agreement called the Dominican Republic-Central American Free-Trade Agreement (Country Intelligence, 2012).

Costa Rica is home to an immense amount of plant and other wildlife. The biodiversity of such a small country is astonishing. In 1999 Costa Rica was thought to have more than 850 species of birds, 220 species of reptiles, 160 species of amphibians, 280 species of mammals, 130 species of freshwater fish, 9,000 species of vascular plants

and more than 10,000 insect species (Boza as cited in Evans, 1999, p.2). These statistics are very impressive for a country that is around the size of West Virginia (The CIA Fact book, 2014) and has more plant and animal species “than that of the United States and Canada combined” (Evans, 1999, p.2).

Costa Rica is known as a country with an acute awareness of their ecological environment (Evans, 1999). The debate that has emerged about the development of Costa Rica's conservation practices has produced a wide range of theories and hypothesis about when the country's awareness of conservation practices began. Some scholars argue that environmentally responsible strategies had begun prior to Spanish colonization with land cultivation practices. Others suggest that farmers from Spain, during the colonial period, may have brought an awareness of land conservation to Costa Rica. Researchers with a modern perspective argue that conservation practices and ecological awareness has only developed recently, in last two centuries (Evans, 1999, p.xi). Ballar-Rafael (1981 as cited in Cambel, 2002) suggests that environmental awareness and environmental policy has only emerged as a result of a large amount of international environmental agreements Costa Rica is signed on to and does not relate to any cultural values or citizen's environmental attitudes.

According to the anthropologist Luis Tenorio, along with other researchers, the population of pre-Columbian Costa Rica was “sustainable to its tropical environment” (p.5). In other words, it seems that the natives to the land were aware of the impact that over population can have on a natural environment, especially in such a delicate tropical environment like Costa Rica. Once the Europeans arrived and became aware of the harsh tropical environment that resulted in poor farming and agricultural conditions, Costa Rica

became isolated and an unpopular region within the Spanish empire. Spain's weak association with the colony, along with the small number of European settlers that attempted to cultivate land in Costa Rica, may have resulted in limited negative environmental impacts to the land relative to other colonies.

In the early 1830's it was discovered that, due to the abundance of volcanoes in Costa Rica (total of four), the quintessential mixture of volcanic rock, soil and climate created excellent conditions for growing coffee. The economic boom in coffee production is what Carriere (1991) describes as Costa Rica's "first wave of deforestation" (p.188). The next agricultural upsurge in Costa Rica was the development of the banana industry. Although there was an international demand for bananas, the rapid growth and production of cultivating bananas impacted the environment severely. As more and more banana plantations were being developed, more and more forests were being destroyed. Evans (1999) argues that the environmental degradation due to the rise of banana cultivation increased ecological awareness and conservation efforts among Costa Ricans. Pressure put on the government for environmental reforms, mainly by biologists, forest managers and other environmentalists began in the 1960's. It was finally realized in 1977 by the government when they responded by passing the National Parks Law. This law created an institution tasked to conserve Costa Rica's biological diversity. This institution was called the National Park System. The National Park System implemented policy that banned production and commercial activities within government designated parks, poaching of plants and animals, cattle grazing and other natural resource extraction activities (Herrera-Rodriguez, 2013). These new regulations came with backlash from many different stakeholders. The law was criticized by, indigenous groups and peasant

farmers that would be pushed off of their land if the government considered it crucial to the conservation of Costa Rica's biosphere, political officials who did not view the new legislation as necessary, and by land owners in the agricultural business who thought it would decrease growth potential. As the years went on, as with most drastic reforms, the complaints began to dissipate.

Today, the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) is the institution that Costa Rica's complex National park system falls under. The division of MINAE that manages the conservation efforts is the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC). The areas are subjugated into three types. Type 1 areas are said to be the most strictly protected. These include, national parks, biological reserves, national monuments, natural reserves and wildlife. Type 2 areas are only partially protected, including forest reserves and other protected zones. The strictness of protection depends on the degree of use, for example, limited logging, or limited tourism development. Type 3 areas include indigenous and cultural environments, or “indigenous reserves”.

The Growth of Tourism:

The global tourism industry experienced a rapid increase of “mass tourism” beginning in the mid 1970's with a boom in cruise ship tourism and high rise beach resorts. The rapid growth in the global tourism sector created an abundance of negative social and environmental impacts worldwide. Environmental destruction and pollution increased as well as increases in prostitution, crime, gambling, drugs and an increased amount of sexually transmitted diseases (Honey, 1999). In response to these problems, a movement emerged calling for a shift towards responsible tourism specifically in places

such as Thailand where child prostitution was rampant. The growing awareness of these problems, combined with the growing environmental movement worldwide created a substantial recognition of these problems throughout Latin America. These movements sparked further research and exploration into the consequences of mass tourism and in the late 1970's a biologist based in Costa Rica, Gerardo Budowski, wrote an article exposing the conflict that occurs between tourism and conservation efforts and suggested solutions as to how tourism may be able to play a role in increasing or supporting conservation efforts.

Prior to the tourism boom in Costa Rica that was experienced in the 1980's, the tourism industry in Costa Rica was, to a great extent, controlled by local communities and domestic investors, serving almost exclusively domestic and regional travelers. Between the 1970's and the 1990s, the amount of foreigners traveling to Costa Rica doubled. More specifically, in 1985 an estimated 250,000 tourists visited Costa Rica. By 2000 it is estimated that Costa Rica received between 1 to 2 million tourists (Herrera-Rodriguez, 2013; Honey, 2009) and 60 percent of foreign tourists surveyed at the airport reported that they were motivated to travel to Costa Rica because of its reputation for ecotourism activities and conservation practices (Honey, 2009). By the mid 1980's the Costa Rican government created new legislation that would provide incentives for foreign investors willing to invest in tourism activities. This program became managed under an organization called the Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT). In 1992, the US Adventure Travel Society named Costa Rica as the number one ecotourism destination in the world. Paradoxically, it has been estimated that by the 1990's, 80 percent of beachfront hotels and other tourism properties were controlled by outside investors

(Honey, 1999). Around 1997 there began to be a growing awareness among Costa Rican's and others, outside the country, that the “eco” label was becoming illegitimate (a practice called greenwashing). As a consequence of this increased awareness, the Ministry of Tourism and the ICT created a government sponsored certification program for sustainable tourism that would put more stringent and rigorous regulations on hotels if they wanted to be considered sustainable. The primary backer of this program was Eduardo Lizano, a high level official within the ICT. In early 2000 international hotel chains began to dominate the Costa Rican hotel market. Costa Rica's ecotourism and environmentally friendly reputation encouraged the international hotel chains to market themselves as “ecofriendly” and some developers even went as far as marketing their developments as “green luxury” resorts (Honey, 1999).

It is true that Costa Rica has developed a reputation and societal awareness of environmental and social issues and is attempting, in some fashion, to regulate negative impacts of tourism. Some may argue that their attempt, even if not effective, has created jobs and raised the living standards of Costa Rican citizens. But these types of perspectives, especially from tourists themselves, create lack of motivation for increasing pressure on governments to improve policy that can effectively mitigate negative environmental impacts and create effective conservation strategies. Labeling tourism as green or sustainable may cause tourists to become content with the practices of the destination and assume that the tourism industry has taken responsibility. This may result in narratives of tourists such as, “well, at least they are trying to help the environment and improve the local community”. The intentions of sustainable tourism and ecotourism are, to this day, being driven by neoliberal economic principles focusing on capital

accumulation primarily, and dealing with environment or socio-cultural issues only when convenient or when these issues can create a competitive advantage. Although Costa Rica has been labeled as a “green destination”, structural adjustment and other economic policy changes beginning in the 1980's have opened up Costa Rica's economy in a way that will only degrade the environment and increase inequality if effective policy is not implemented. The following section will delve deeper into the development of Costa Rica's economic structure and social organization and how this relates to effective environmental and sustainable tourism policy.

Economic Structures, Tourism and the Environment

In 1821, Central America was acquired by Mexico, as a result of Mexico's independence from Spain. In 1823 Costa Rica broke away from Mexico and together with Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua formed the Central American Federal Republic (CAF). The CAF was filled with bureaucratic inefficiencies and power relation's issues. This was likely due to a large amount of political elites from different localities that were all interested in power. While many of the powerful players in the region were fighting over who got what, Costa Rica, to an extent, was uninterested in the power struggle and focused more on nation building. The Costa Rican people were less interested in power and economic interest and put more emphasis on democratic values. For example, following the creation of the Central American Federal Republic, Costa Rica formed a “Pact of Harmony” which required government officials to live in four different parts of the country every year. Miller (2012) notes that this helped create a sense of equality between government officials. The “Pact of Harmony” is thought to be

the reason as to why Costa Rican presidents, still today, do not live in government housing but instead live in their own residence within the capital of San Jose (Miller, 2012, p. 42). The view that Costa Rica was different from the other countries that made up the CAF, in terms of peace and stability, isolated them from many CAF political activities and finally in 1839, the CAF collapsed resulting in Costa Rica's sovereignty.

The industrial revolution in Europe beginning in the 18th century, sparked a demand for coffee in Europe, which perceived the beverage as a stimulant that could enhance workers abilities and thus do their jobs more efficiently. The combination of European demand for coffee and Central America's ability to produce the bean, increased coffee cultivation throughout Central America but more importantly within Costa Rica. Coffee became a crucial export that created a “major source of foreign exchange” (Miller, 2012, p.43). Coffee became the primary export product, taking over bananas and other beans and fueling Costa Rica's economic growth. At this point, Costa Rica was relying on a export-driven economic model, relying heavily on coffee. The increase in economic growth within the country also brought to light certain social issues, most notably inequality. The coffee that was being exported was being produced by a small number of companies owned by Costa Rica's elite. Many of the owners of the coffee companies can be traced back to the Spanish Conquistadors and other European settlers. Throughout the nineteenth century, the coffee elite had a “heavy hand” in Costa Rican politics and elections, influencing policy favorable to the coffee industry.

The Great Depression in the 1930's impacted the Costa Rican economy immensely, due to the decrease in international demand for coffee. The economic decline triggered political and economic unrest throughout Central America, causing

many coffee workers to join “Marxist-oriented political movements” (Miller, 2012, p.46). This unrest in Costa Rica, eventually evolved into a civil war in 1948. Some have argued that the response to Costa Rica's civil war is the primary reason why Costa Rica is perceived as a country so distinct from other countries in the region. Following the Costa Rican Civil War, Costa Rica drafted a constitution in 1949 that abolished their military, resulting in an increased citizen participation in national elections. The constitution also limited presidential powers and increased transparency and fairness in the electoral process.

By the 1950's Costa Rica's economy re-emerged stronger after a downturn from the economic impact of the Great Depression and World War II. During the 1960's Costa Rica's GDP grew 27 percent while the 1970's witnessed a 31 percent increase in GDP (Booth, 1999). The primary economic policies that were put into place for the increased economic growth were based on policies such as import substitution industrialization (ISI), protectionism, government involvement in the economy and a wide variety of social programs.

Influence of International Institutions:

Costa Rica's post-war economic policy was not an isolated strategy. Import substitution industrialization strategies, specifically, were being advocated and implemented throughout Latin America as a response to the lessons learned during the Great Depression. The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) had heavy influence in Costa Rica's economic policy making. The ECLA is a United Nations agency made up of 44 member states that supports economic

development throughout its member states by giving policy advice. At the beginning of economic reform in Costa Rica (starting in the 1960's), the ECLA “suggested” that countries created an inward focused economic model for growth. In other words, instead of depending on exports for economic growth, a model with high volatility, the ECLA and the import substitution industrialization model suggested forming national industries, creating growth within the country and in return had potential to export the products produced internally. A full fledged ISI economic model came with resistance from the coffee elite in Costa Rica, because it would limit the exporting practices, coffee so heavily relied on. This resistance may have been a factor in the creation of the Central American Common Market (CACM). This market protected Costa Rica's coffee industry by allowing coffee to be exported to a smaller controlled market that would not be as volatile as the international market.

Economic problems again emerged in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Prices of Costa Rican exports began to decrease rapidly due to declining terms of trade (relative price of exports in terms of imports) while prices of imported oil began to increase rapidly. This created a heavy burden on the Costa Rican economy and once again, the nation fell deep into an economic crisis.

Instead of decreasing services and restructuring economic and fiscal policy, the Costa Rican government decided to borrow money from international lenders so that the lives of the growing middle-class population and their lifestyle that came with it, would not be interfered with. According to Booth (1999), from 1981 to 1987, Costa Rica's external debt exceeded 100 percent of it's own GDP. The growing debt caused a devaluation of the national currency (colón), which created even higher prices for

imports, especially oil, a commodity that was needed to sustain the domestic economy. This downhill spiral resulted in the ending of import substitution industrialization as an economic growth model. By the middle part of the 1980's, it was obvious that Costa Rica was in need of urgent economic reforms.

With overarching debt and an economic crisis at hand, Costa Rica began to look outward for help, especially from foreign aid institutions. The foreign aid came primarily from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These loans (with strings attached) and aid packages, put an immense amount of pressure on the Costa Rican government to put in place neoliberal economic reforms that would open up trade and privatize services, creating a “Laissez-faire” type economy. The neoliberal economic policy reforms were lead by the USAID, the IMF and the World Bank, all of which suggested strategies and ideas for new sources of exports that would promote income generation. USAID focused their efforts on strategies to open up markets for foreign direct investment (FDI) that would spark economic development. Likewise, the IMF and the World Bank put in place, structural adjustment programs that would help Costa Rica's economy grow by diversifying the economy such as introducing the Costa Rican economy to non-traditional export products. One element of the structural adjustment program included creating tax incentives for business that exported products such as textiles, flowers, fish and pineapples (Clark, 2000 as cited in Miller, 2012). Following the lead of the external lenders, Costa Rica decided to create their own tax exemption laws. In 1985, Costa Rica passed a law (Law of Incentives for Tourism Development) that produced tax incentives for the emerging tourism industry. The law provided exemptions of taxes on imports,

local taxes, and exemption of income taxes to investors in the hotel, transportation, travel agency and restaurant businesses. The law also was the first time the government acknowledged tourism as an industry of public usefulness (Instituto Costarricense de Turismo, Law No. 6990, Article 1). It is obvious, from the acknowledgement made by the national government by creating a law, that the tourism industry in Costa Rica emerged out of a necessity to diversify and spur growth in the national economy. This is evident in Article 2 of the law:

The present law has the purpose of establishing an accelerated and rational development process of the Costa Rican tourist activity, reason to establish the incentives and benefits to be granted as stimulus for the realization of important programs and projects for such activities. (Instituto Costarricense de Turismo, Law No.6990).

The passing of the Law of Incentives for Tourism Development, clearly exemplifies the structural foundation of Costa Rica's sustainable tourism industry. The new economic policies created rapid expansion of tourism throughout Costa Rica beginning in the 1980's. The structural adjustment plans created by international and outside donors with capitalistic and neoliberal tendencies, along with the new tourism development law, insured foreign investor's sovereignty when faced with national regulations and standards. Outside organizations continued to use power and pressure that would result in unregulated development. An example was observed by Evans (1999) in his book, *The Green Republic: A Conservation History of Costa Rica*. Evans' discusses the debate that ensued in the late 1980's within the Costa Rican tourism community that revolved around accessibility to new and current tourism destinations within Costa Rica. Developers argued that new and improved roadways would create an influx of tourists resulting in an

economic benefit for society. Furthermore, the tourists themselves were complaining about bumpy roads and long drives. The environmentalists and conservationists argued that tourism had already created stress on the natural environment, and the carrying capacity of many destinations was already over its estimated limit. New roads or improving old roads would only increase the ecological stresses put on by tourism. In 1988 the Costa Rica-American Chamber of Commerce invited Jeb Bush (son of the 41st President George H. W. Bush and brother of the 43rd President George W. Bush) to advise the Chamber on how best to lobby USAID to give out more tourism loans for Costa Rica tourism development. Bush suggested that the loans should be used to build new direct roads that would decrease the length it took for the tourists to get to their resort (Evans, 1999, p.235).

The argument that neoliberal economic policy plays an important role in stimulating growth, creating wealth and domestic jobs thus increasing the standard of living, may be true. Conflicts arise when institutions or governments attempt to create environmental and sustainable tourism policy that is effective in conserving the environment, reversing environmental damage and mitigating environmental degradation. The globalization of Costa Rica's economy that ensued from Costa Rica's debt crisis has placed Costa Rica within a highly interconnected global economic network. Increased global connections can create an unworkable environment when attempting to implement environmental regulations on the national level (Kütting, 2010, p.41). This is caused by economic partners that may have business operations set up outside of the host country and may not need to abide by national standards.

The public consensus and government narrative that has repeatedly labeled Costa

Rica as “eco-friendly”, “green”, a leader in sustainable-tourism, a promoter of sustainability or “a world leader in conservation” (Miller, 2012, p.8) is questionable and can be debated as to the actuality of this designation. The aim of this paper is not to evaluate the legitimacy of the Costa Rican tourism industry's marketing practices, but instead, it is the aim of this paper to analyze and come to an understanding as to why Costa Rica's policies in the sustainable and eco-tourism industry have not been environmentally effective.

The outside pressures beginning in the 1980's with structural adjustment reforms promoted by international lenders created a shift in environmental-society relations within Costa Rica. Some of Costa Rica's most important advocates for environmental protection shifted their position on environmental conservation. In 1982, the head of the National Parks System, Alvaro Ugade was quoted in the Tico Times (a Costa Rican English language newspaper) as saying, “I will not resort to tourism as a way to maintain parks. Management of the ecosystem in parks in perpetuity is the Park Service's main goal” (as cited in Evans, 1999). By 1992 it seemed that his view completely changed when he told the author Sterling Evans that his primary role as National Park System director was to “convince the legislature that national parks were a great help to the economy” (Miller, p.224).

It is clear that Costa Rica's economic structure has evolved over time from a relatively small scale agricultural exporting economy to a full-fledged capitalist society with underlying neoliberal principles. The restructuring of the economy in the 1980's has resulted in neoliberal economic policy with strategies such as deregulation, increased open markets and foreign direct investment at the forefront of the government's policy

agenda. This article is not focused on the debate between neoliberal economic policy versus other economic schools of thought or whether neoliberal economic policy actually meets the goals it promises to reach. Instead this paper has accepted the fact that Costa Rica is based on neoliberal economic policy and argues that there are direct conflicts between environmental conservation and sustainable tourism policy and an economic structure built on a foundation of neoliberal economic principles. This argument implies that only when certain reforms to environmental and tourism policy's are made, Costa Rica will be able to implement environmentally effective policy.

The Neoliberal Economic Framework:

The massive amount of money borrowed by the Costa Rican government during the debt crisis in the 1980's allowed international lenders to have the upper hand in setting national economic policy. The economic structure of the country began to focus more on neoliberal economic strategies for growth such as deregulation, privatization of social services and government spending cuts (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberal economic policy is based on neoclassical economic thinking, which assumes every individual, acts “rationally”. Furthermore, the theoretical underpinning of neoliberal thought argues that, free and open markets will sustain natural resources due to the price mechanism so that scarce natural resources will be priced higher, decreasing demand and thus conserving the resource (Rees, 2001). The ineffective use of market-based solutions to conserve the natural environment along with increased global awareness of the conflict between the natural environment and society, has facilitated an global economic shift from publicly advocating for neoliberal economic policy to a new policy strategy that is known as

“sustainable development”. As William E. Rees (2001) argues:

Virtually all “official” international agencies and national governments share a comprehensive vision of global “sustainable development” centered on unlimited economic expansion and fueled by more liberalized trade. At the heart of this expansionist vision (also called the “dominant economic paradigm”) is the belief that human welfare can be all but equated with ever-increasing material well-being (income growth).

Rees' definition of sustainable development, an economic policy focused on unlimited growth, supports the argument that effective, environmental or sustainable tourism policy is not made to fit in a neoliberal economic framework. If the causes of environmental degradation, such as pollution or deforestation, are results of infinite growth within a limited environment (development), then sustainable development is just an attempt to slowdown the inevitable without fixing the problem. Therefore, economic growth, whether it is “sustainable” or not is irrelevant. The concept of sustainable development clearly is an attempt to solve a problem by slowing down the cause of the problem without seeking a solution to reverse or stop it indefinitely. Sustainable development and consequently, sustainable tourism , are concepts that attempt to solve environmental problems within a neoliberal economic framework, which will never work.

Sustainable Tourism Policy from an Economic Structures Perspective:

The economic make up of Costa Rica has evolved drastically since the 1980's. Identifying historical paradigm shifts in Costa Rica's economic policy is the first determinant when attempting to understanding how environmentally effective sustainable tourism and its policies are on the National level. Becoming aware of the economic

organization of Costa Rica can not only help evaluate the social organization of a society (in this case, Costa Rican society) but as Kütting (2000) states “It also determines the way the environment is perceived by society” (p.38).

Classical economic thinking to which modern day economic policy is based, turns out to be in direct conflict with all types of environmental concerns. On the most basic level, classical economic theory disregards the reality that natural resources are limited and ignores other ecological concerns.

With this in mind, Costa Rica's shift towards liberalization has created a linear society based on production and consumption. The perception of sustainable tourism as a way to conserve the environment and eco-tourism as a way to create equity and mitigate environmental degradation has created the commodification of the natural environment, pulling ecological resources and nature back into the neoliberal marketplace. The economic organization of Costa Rica has been slowly shifting towards economy policy guided by liberal ideologies of policy-makers that ignore environmental concerns.

Recent events have made this point clear. For example, this year, according to the *Tico Times* (August, 26th, 2014), Costa Rica's current president, Luis Guillermo Solís reorganized the executive branch in a way that would place the tourism sector under the Economy Ministry. The Economy Ministry is now tasked with governing, industry, trade and increasing tourism activities. The reorganization of Solís' cabinet is just one example that reflects Costa Rica's economic and societal organization.

Costa Rica's long history of conservation efforts and awareness of its immense biodiversity has influenced national commitment to sustainability and environmentally responsible development. This commitment is only problematic because of the way in

which national environmental policy has been constructed. Viewing policy-making through the lens of neoliberal economic principles provides some explanation as to why this paper is arguing that environmental policy in Costa Rica is not effective. Identifying the economic structure and the social organization of a society helps to better understand why economic growth is the primary concern of policy-makers while environmental concerns are placed in the peripheral.

Time, Tourism and Policy Effectiveness

This section focuses on the concepts of time and temporal frameworks. Time is highly contextual and difficult to define, but needs to be addressed. The two specific concepts of time that will be discussed can be thought of as, social time, a framework that the organization of society is constructed within and ecological time, a concept of time that Kütting (2010) suggests “is not a social construct but a complicated natural mechanism that has to be conceptualized and harmonized with social time”(p.41). These two perceptions of time are conflictual concepts, which will be explained. Policy formation is dominated by social time, which fails to consider the necessities of the natural environment in a ecological time framework (Kütting, 2010). Integrating ecological time into this analysis will give rise to the fundamental necessities that need to be addressed within the sustainable tourism policy-making community.

The issues of natural and mechanical rhythms are another conceptual element of time that is important for the evaluation of environmental effectiveness. Although these concepts are not typically taken into account in the analysis of environmental politics (Kütting, 2000), they are of vital importance to understanding not only why

environmental policy may not be ecologically effective but it can also bring about ideas for solutions to gaps in the policy.

The two types of rhythms that are relevant to the environmental effectiveness of sustainable tourism in Costa Rica (natural and social) can be thought of as linear and cyclical. Linear, mechanistic rhythms, a Newtonian concept, is a production based time concept that is rooted in time in terms of clocks, schedules and calendars. Parts within a mechanistic system are isolated, discarded and easily replaced. The mechanical time concept assumes that products begin in the production phase, next, are consumed and finally discarded (thrown away or replacing). Time, in this sense, pays no consideration to the environment because natural (or organic) rhythms do not fit into the framework.

Natural, ecological rhythms can not be understood in terms of schedules, clocks or mechanical time, but can be viewed as a cyclical, flowing system that is highly interconnected and complex. Conceptualizing time in this sense raises awareness of the fragile nature of the ecological system but also, disregards the mechanical, social concept of time.

These two highly conflictual concepts of time do not fit together and may be a reason why policy and social structures ignore temporal issues in frameworks. Sustainable tourism policy is based on the mechanistic concept of time, which can be highly destructive to the environment, disrupting natural rhythms with production and consumption patterns. If policy was formed with respect to the ecological view of time, it may be possible to relieve some of the stress on the natural environment caused by tourism.

Along with policy-makers, many social scientists that analyze environmental

issues perceive time as a tool used for social organization such as clock and calendar time (Kütting, 2010, p.41). Kütting (2000) points out that social science analysis must step outside of the constraints of uniform time:

Time is not just a measurement according to which we plan our schedules, be it short-term, long-term, day-to-day, life, social, historical, etc., but can be institutional or social, cyclical or linear, perceived or measured, according to the focus of analysis. Time in its various forms is such an important issue because of the irreversibility of environmental degradation and also because it dominates every society and individual's life as all organization is ultimately based on temporal issues (p.41).

Kütting's statement displays the potential for a deeper understanding of environmental effectiveness, one that brings the concept of ecological time into the analysis. Social analysis of environmental issues are typically placed into a framework that separates nature from society. Thus, the analysis of environmental and ecological issues are dominated by a concept of time that is socially constructed. The concept of time from an ecological perspective has many implications for policy-makers whom can construct policy that better fits into a framework that accounts for ecological time.

Ecological rhythms and time cannot be the sole focus of analyzing environmental effectiveness. Social frameworks of time are extremely relevant. Environmental degradation and “clock” time are very much related. Many of the earth’s resources and biodiversity are relying on agreements, policy, or other strategies to mitigate or stop degradation and increase conservation. Time frames for the creation of policy or negotiating environmental agreements are what the natural environment is relying on for survival. Policy negotiations with long term time limits or no time limits at all can create an immense amount of pressure on the environment if the environmental issue is time

sensitive. Therefore, to understand the effectiveness of environmental policy, time sensitivity is a crucial issue.

For example, the Certificate of Sustainable Tourism (CST), a system for rating tourism operators, transportation and accommodation businesses in Costa Rica, judges the businesses based on a list of criteria pertaining to sustainable practices and rates the businesses on a 1-5 scale (5 being “the most sustainable”). The CST, managed by the Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT), is an open system with no time constraints. In order to make environmental degradation a priority and bring urgency to the forefront of policy, a time frame must be incorporated into the system. Allowing any tourism company at any time to get certified is not taking into account and does not reflect the necessities of the natural environment.

Actions or pursuits within a social organization can impact natural and ecological rhythms and cycles (Kütting, 2010, p.42). The disruptions caused by the societal construction of time are decidedly relevant to tourism and travel. From a classical economic perspective, sustainable tourism, or eco-tourism, supply the tourists (consumers) by commodifying the natural environment and selling it as a product. As season's change and ecological cycles persist, social time patterns also persist simultaneously but are not consistent with ecological rhythms. Peak tourism season is an example of a social construction of time that impacts and can disrupt ecological time. Tourism destinations that are at their carrying capacity or even higher can put tremendous pressure on natural environment as well as the local community. For example, during increased tourism season, policies must be put in place to manage the influx of tourists in an equitable way by providing tools and mechanisms to relieve, not only environmental

pressures, but pressures put on local communities as a result of increased tourism. An example is the issue of solid-waste disposal in Tortuguero, Costa Rica. Although Tortuguero is considered a “renowned ecotourism destination”, Cambell and Meletis (2009), observed that outside of the “ecotourism” sections of the destination, in the local community, garbage was “overflowing from local waste receptacles, and being burned and dumped around the village and on the beach”(p.742). If time becomes a more important factor in policy making, by reconceptualizing the concept of time, mechanisms and tools can be put in place to help predict, mitigate and manage environmental harms due to increased tourism.

The conflict that occurs between social time and ecological time is a clear determinant of understanding environmental effectiveness. Ignoring time as a factor in analysis and policy making is not only detrimental to the environment itself, but is also a crucial factor that the entire tourism industry must understand. When commodifying nature and selling it as a product, such as eco-tourism, an awareness of ecological rhythms are necessary if the tourism industry is planning on sustaining their delicate product in the long-run.

Scientific Knowledge and Policy Development

Science plays a key role in the development of environmental policy, conservation efforts and tourism planning. The knowledge that is gained by scientific studies for environmental and conservation policy makers can appear as objective information that is useful for forming regulations, mechanisms and tools for environmental conservation. Science, in western society, is usually perceived as a rational and logical set of laws,

when applied to everyday life. However, exploring the connection between scientific knowledge and policy creation brings scientific knowledge into a sphere that is inadequate for effective environmental policy making.

Scientific knowledge in policy tends to be hierarchical, and research areas are decided by certain high-level actors that are ill equipped for truly understanding the ecosystem and scientific research. There is also a potential to leave out opinions of other key stakeholders such as the local community. When policy-makers attempt to use science for policy creation, the research is typically carried out by a professional research group hired by the government institution. Even if the research carried out appears to be agreed on by all relevant stakeholders, a conflict still arises. Scientific research teams may use certain methods such as separating the environmental problem from the entire ecosystem (a highly interconnected system), studying it in isolation and thus producing results that do not fit, when attempting to incorporate the findings back into the ecosystem setting (Kütting, 2000). Policy-makers can thus, choose one environmental issue to study in a controlled environment, taking it out of the ecosystem, and produce results that society perceives as scientific fact which is then unquestionable. The typical conflict that arises when scientific knowledge is used in policy-making tends to appear when the interests of the policy-makers and elites work with the professional science community and determine what scientific knowledge is needed for the policy based off interest.

George Holmes (2011) supports the argument that scientific knowledge and research should not automatically be assumed as unquestionable fact, but instead the research and scientific knowledge needs also to be analyzed through a comprehensive

approach that takes into account, political, economic and ecological influence and implications that the research is based on. Holmes (2011) argues that science and knowledge generate the justifications and rationalization that support (in his case conservation) the environmental policy and efforts. As international environmental organizations become more interconnected and become more powerful globally, the knowledge and science being produced is heavily shaped by, what Holmes calls the “conservation elites”. Similar to Kütting's explanation of science in environmental policy making, Holmes makes a clear distinction between scientific research and policy that has the potential of creating unsuitable circumstances for policy makers to incorporate the scientific knowledge acquired into the policy. Furthermore, Holmes discusses the research methods used by the natural and social science community for use in policy formation, stating that scientific research for policy typically utilizes “simplistic narratives, using a few well-known case studies to demonstrate apparently universal truths” (Adams and Hulme 2001; Hutton, Adams, and Mumrombedzi, 2005 as cited in Holmes, 2011, p.10).

Scientific Knowledge in Conservation and Tourism:

The rapid growth of tourism in Costa Rica has put a great deal of stress on environmental conservation efforts, which were once such an integral element of the domestic tourism industry.

Scientific research and knowledge has long played a role in shaping the views of Costa Rican society and policy. Evans (1999) argues that the global scientific community began to study Costa Rica's biodiversity as early as the mid 1800's due in part

to two major events. The international demand for coffee and the possibility of a canal being developed in Central America. The coffee trade resulted in railroad systems that would not only transport coffee from the valley to the ocean for export, but also the building of the railroad system exposed parts of Costa Rica never seen by westerners. Further, the development of Costa Rica's coffee trade increased the amount of foreigners living and visiting Costa Rica. Many European scientists were among the foreigners that immigrated to Costa Rica possibly because of “sociopolitical repression and scientific stagnation in their home countries” (Evans, 1999, p.17).

The development of the Panama Canal prompted a wave of environmental scientist relocation to the region in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This was mainly for the assessment of land for possible canal construction, but many became so captivated by the biodiversity in the region (especially Costa Rica) that they stayed and did independent research (Evans, 1999).

Conservation policy had been a well known strength of the Costa Rican government from the beginning of the twentieth century until the debt crisis in the 1980's. The formation of the National Parks System along with the Forestry Law of 1969, a law that protected certain regions from deforestation, are two major achievements of the conservation effort made by the government in recent history. These two accomplishments may have been assumed by some, to have been influenced solely by scientific knowledge and research. But accepting the scientific knowledge alone would ignore the socio-economic and political forces underpinning conservation policy.

Pressured by various scientists and environmentalists in addition to a sustained amount of government revenue, primarily from the coffee and banana industry, the

national government decided to create a mechanism for conserving Costa Rica's forests. The 1969 Forestry Law granted the Costa Rican president the power to designate certain lands as national parks and protected areas. Evans (1999) suggests that, “this executive decree would be a proviso tainted with political undertones during some administrations” (p.73). This example shows the importance of evaluating effectiveness using a multidisciplinary, eco-holistic approach in order to critically analyze the role of scientific knowledge in policy-making, which would not be explored in a single subject area using a traditional analysis.

Identifying key political interests also allows for a more comprehensive environmental evaluation. Shortly after the Forestry Law was passed in 1969, the President of Costa Rica Daniel Oduber took interest in conserving the environment and growing the national park system, but his interest in conservation was not a result of scientific research. Instead, “President Oduber's interest in national parks stemmed largely from his belief that the parks could be an economic boon for tourism” (Evans, 1999, p.95). In this case, conservation policy was not influenced by ecological interests or even pressure from the scientific community, but instead, economic interests seems to have played the key role.

As the years went on and structural adjustment strategies began to influence different domains within Costa Rican society, funding for conservation and environmental programs were the first to be cut. Large international environmental and conservation organizations began to take charge of conservation efforts, privatizing lands and taking control of coordination and management. With the cutbacks in conservation funding, the Costa Rican government could now focus on economic growth.

Scientific studies can also influence economic growth. In the late 1980's a team from both the Universidad de Costa Rica and the U.S. Geological Survey found they're to be a large gold deposit on the Osa Peninsula (in southwestern Costa Rica). This study was done prior to the International Gold Conference in San José, Costa Rica, a conference designed to attract investors who were looking to exploit natural resources (Evans, 1999).

Science can play an important role in policy development but only when used as a means to truly represent the interests of the environment. The only way to know if scientific knowledge is influencing policy-makers or if policy-makers are influencing scientific research is to step outside of the constraints of standard policy analysis and explore underlying interests and motivations that create the policy.

Tourism the Environment and Regulatory Structures

The traditional regime theory approach to evaluating effectiveness typically analyzes the behaviors and interplay, regulatory structures and cooperation between actors attempting to solve a specific problem. Although this analysis has been a result of international environmental institutions and agreements, this section will evaluate Costa Rica's environmental and sustainable tourism structures and policies using traditional regime analysis by describing the different mechanisms and legal structures that are in place within Costa Rica that attempt to govern aspects of tourism, conservation and the environment. The historical origin of the regulatory structures will be presented along with attributes of the structures and finally the consequences and outcomes of the structures will be discussed.

The next part of this section will argue that institutional approaches for measuring effectiveness omit key environmental issues and thus is not a desirable way to analyze environmental policy. Instead, institutional analysis should be used as part of a comprehensive set of tools when evaluating environmental effectiveness.

Costa Rican Tourism Board (Instituto Costarricense de Turismo):

In 1955, legislation passed to form The Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT) as the governing body for tourism within Costa Rica. The ICT became an autonomous state institution, responsible for its own budget. The main goal of the institution was to increase tourism activities by promoting construction and maintenance of attractions and tourism recreation along with the monitoring of private tourism activities and conserving the country's natural attractions (Raventos 2006). The law also declared ICT the institution responsible for managing conservation efforts around the country's volcanoes and declaring these areas National Parks (Asamblea Legislativa, 1955, as cited in Raventos, 2006). In 1960, a law was passed that would make tourism an industry the government considered a public utility. By the mid 1980's, Costa Rica was in the middle of a debt crisis and was looking for ways to increase economic growth. The Tourism Development Incentive Law was approved in 1985, granting tariffs and tax exemptions for investments in the tourism industry. It was the ICT that was primarily responsible for managing the tax incentives. The ICT created a mechanism for determining tax exemptions through a rating tool used for tourism facilities based on “quality of the facilities relative to international standards” (Raventos, 2006, p.376). The ICT rated the tourism facility on a scale from one to five, which determined the amount of exemption.

In the early 1990's Costa Rica experienced a mass tourism construction boom and many became concerned with the environmental degradation it was causing (van Noorloos, 2012). In response to the concern, in 1997, the ICT launched a certification program called the Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST), which will be discussed in the following section (Honey, 2003).

Currently, the ICT is spread out across the country with eight regional offices and is tasked with tourism development, attraction and assessment of investors, developing quality and competitiveness systems and marketing, among other activities. The mission of ICT is to:

Promote a wholesome tourism development, with the purpose of improving Costa Ricans' quality of life, by maintaining a balance between the economic and social boundaries, environmental protection, culture, and facilities (ICT website).

Furthermore, in 2002 the ICT shifted policy, incorporating sustainable development in their long-term framework. The ICT has listed nine institutional policies for guiding national tourism development on their website. These policies relate to sustainability, mitigating social degradation, generating economic benefits and protecting the environment.

The two main functions of the ICT are to promote and increase tourism activities within Costa Rica and regulate the tourism industry so that business and other tourism related activities are “done in a sustainable way”. This includes managing the Certificate of Sustainable Tourism program. It would be extremely difficult to conclude that the ICT is effective if viewing the institution from an ecological or environmental perspective. Here is why. The problem lies in the two main functions of the ICT. As a promoter for

Costa Rica as a destination, the ICT is tasked with “strengthening Costa Rica's positioning as a destination” by using its well known status as an ecotourism hub and environmentally friendly country (Inman et al, 2002, p.90). The end goal is to increase the amount of foreign tourists who visit Costa Rica along with attempting to increase daily tourist expenses, or in other words, expanding tourists' consumption patterns. The promotional arm of the ICT is therefore purely a mechanism tasked with either directly or indirectly increasing economic growth. At the same time, the ICT functions as regulatory system for domestic tourism development, and has stated that the institution is guided by sustainable tourism policy that effectively protects against social degradation, protecting the environment and supporting local culture and values (ICT Institutional policies, 2014). Similar to the dilemma between sustainable development and neoliberal economic policy, the ICT can not truly be an environmentally effective regulatory structure if it is not fully committed to conserving and regulating nature. As in most institutions, when policy decisions are being made with both economic and environmental interests on the line, economic interests typically outweigh environmental issues and in an institution only half committed to sustainable issues, it would be very difficult for the ICT to become an environmentally effective institution. Analyzing institutions based on a perspective of ecological or environmental effectiveness is not only a way to expose conflicts within institutions and examine ineffective mechanisms, but it can also be a way to change and create effective solutions. In the case of the ICT, a suggestion for a solution may be as simple as breaking up the ICT into two autonomous organizations. One that focuses on regulating the tourism industry in an environmentally and sustainable way without interests and pressures impacting decision making and

separately a tourism promotion organization. This solution may then solve the problem of economic interests undermining regulatory and environmental issues. Nonetheless, this paper will next, explore the ICT's role in the Certificate of Sustainable Tourism (CST) system and analyze the CST from an environmental effectiveness perspective.

Certificate for Sustainable Tourism:

The Certification for Sustainable Tourism program (CST) is an “incentive-based environmental policy instrument” (Rivera, 2004, p.7) that was created in 1998 by executive decree. According to the CST website, the CST is “a program that seeks to categorize and certify each tourism company according to the degree to which its operations comply to a model of sustainability” (CST website). The program is voluntary, free and open to hotels, lodges, cabins, tour operators and travel agencies. The program is governed and managed by the ICT in partnership with the National Accreditation Committee. The committee is tasked with accepting and rejecting applications for accreditation. It is made up of representatives from ICT, Universidad de Costa Rica, INCAE (Central American Institute of Business Management), International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Ministry of the Environment and Energy, National Training Institute (INA) and CANATUR (national chamber of tourism). CST is funded jointly by the Ministry of Tourism and the Costa Rica Tourism Board. The criteria for evaluating the sustainability of a tourism firm consists of a questionnaire separated into four fundamental aspects of sustainable tourism. The physical-biological parameters, infrastructure and services, external client, and socio-economic environment.

The process for certification begins with an initial consultation from a third-party

auditor hired by the ICT, whom explains guidelines, rules etc. The auditor then returns in one to two months with a list of 100 to 200 (depending on the type of tourism business) yes/no questions. Each of the questions are ranked on a scale from one to three depending on the importance of the question (three being most important) and a formula for calculating the final score is executed. After the auditor has completed the questionnaire, a list of recommendations is given to the tourism firm with 15 days to implement or change observed problems or conflicts. When the changes are made, the auditor will submit the evaluation for review to the National Accreditation Committee. If the committee deems the business sustainable, the firm will be provided a sustainability level on a scale from 0 to 5 with 5 being the most sustainable. (Honey, 2003b, CST website).

Although the CST has become a model framework for countries worldwide, it has come with many problems, difficulties and critics. Bendell and Font (2004) argue that certification has only been sought after by a small percentage of the domestic tourism industry even with growth in the awareness of the CST. LePree (2009) argues that “several structural inadequacies” present an ineffective system, though the author does point out that “the program serves as a valid starting point for certification” (p. 57).

LePree (2009) is correct in that the CST is a reasonable system to begin building a more effective certification program, but three main problems with the CST system exist when viewed from a eco-holistic perspective.

Though any tourism company can apply to the certification program for free, regardless of amount of employees, hotel rooms or revenue, the CST program has created a competitive advantage for large, multinational tourism companies. As stated earlier,

the CST evaluator sends the tourism company a list of unsustainable practices, explains ways to reverse the trends and increase their level of sustainability. Many of the recommendations put forth by the evaluator are time consuming and expensive. The tourism company typically would need a full time employee specifically for sustainable certification efforts. The highest levels of sustainability also usually requires the implementation of water, recycling and energy management programs that only corporations with a large amount of capital can afford (Arnall, 2013). This is evident in the level 5 sustainable hotel database on the CST website, the highest sustainable level. The database is filled with large hotel chains and resorts, typical of the “mass tourism” phenomenon. Examples include, the Holiday Inn, Hotel Indigo, Crowne Plaza, La Quinta and Wyndham resorts, all of whom have achieved level 5 sustainability.

Second, the CST does not account for or acknowledge the importance of empowering local communities or encouraging the formation of a strong civil society (LePree, 2009). As mentioned earlier, without strong, constant enforcement of the CST by regional and local government, mass tourism projects will disregard the community and the natural environment. This has been observed by Weinberg et. al. (as cited in LePree, 2009) where as, the inability for a strong government in the region of Puntarenas created a system that allowed hotels and restaurants to dispose of their trash wherever they wanted thus destroying local communities (Lepree, 2009, p.68). The bureaucratic makeup of the CST system, along with the confusion and “conflicting responsibilities between agencies” (CIA World fact Book, 2014) has made it difficult to determine the actual impact the CST is having on the Costa Rican environment.

Third, the CST does not take into account the transnational ecological impact of

tourism. In other words, it would be difficult or impossible for the CST program to measure and make recommendations for airline emissions, cruise impacts and motor vehicle travel. This problem exposes the need for a global solution. The fact that the emissions from an international flight that spreads across multiple countries for a tourist to get to Costa Rica and stay in a hotel that has negatively impacted a local community creates global-local linkages that many policy-makers do not address when forming policy.

Conservation: Legislation and Methods of Governance:

Environmental conservation in Costa Rica may not necessarily directly connect to the global tourism industry, but is needed for regulating Costa Rica's ecotourism industry. Although conservation governance may not directly address the connection between conservation and tourism, the connection between environmental conservation and tourism is usually indirect and implied (Kütting, 2010, p.16).

Prior to 1969, Costa Rica was beginning to suffer an immense amount of environmental degradation and deforestation due exponential growth in the beef export industry, an industry that was constantly expanding pastures for cattle grazing.

McFarland, Morales and Barborak (1984) describe the situation as such:

Costa Rica was rapidly approaching the condition of a runaway train on a steep and curvy downhill grade, with no brakes and no engineer at the controls. The country had begun to irreversibly damage and destroy the very base for long-term sustained development, and was on the brink of even far worse future change (p.592).

By the late 1960's, the Ministry of Agriculture, finally realizing the problem, selected a committee to evaluate the issues at hand, and outline a bill that would allow the national

government to regulate and limit deforestation (Evans, 1999). The multi-disciplinary committee was headed by Alvaro Rojas Espinoz, a conservationist whom helped pass earlier environmental laws. Members of the committee from the government included representatives from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, The Electricity Institute, the Institute of Land and Colonization and the National Committee for the Conservation of Natural Resources. Evans (1999) suggests that the National Committee for the Conservation of Natural Resources, although a government agency, was heavily influenced by hunting and fishing organizations. Representing the private sector were members from the Agriculture and Stock-growers Association and the Wood Industries Association. The committee also consulted with international forestry specialists to draft legislation. The legislation called for the defense, conservation and development of the countries forest resources.

In order for the Legislative assembly to agree on passing such a strict law, Guillermo Yglesias, the Minister of Agriculture, emphasized the economic benefits of passing such a law. In a testimony, Yglesias is quoted as saying that the law would “assure the best exploitation of the forests for the benefit of a more dynamic economic development of the agricultural sector” (as cited in Evans, 1999). International experts testified that regulation is needed for economic issues such as the increased wood and paper demand that would come with an influx in population in the coming years.

The Costa Rican Tourism Council (the ICT prior to changing the name to the Costa Rican Tourism Board) had their own issues with the proposed law. The council was worried that if the law passed, land that was controlled by the Council for tourism purposes may be taken away and managed by the national government. At the time of

the proposed law, the Costa Rican Tourism Council director, Richard Castro argued that the law in the mid 1950's that created the tourism council entrusted the his institution with determining what land was necessary for tourism and conservation.

Still, the law was passed unanimously in 1960. The law was referred to as the Ley Forestal or Forestry Law of 1969. The primary focus of the law was the establishment of a regulatory structure that would protect certain areas from forestry and agricultural development. The law also helped to establish the General Forestry Directorate, an agency that would regulate the timber industry.

Notwithstanding, 10 years after the law was passed, Cost Rica encountered a 29 percent increase in deforestation (Leonard, 1987 as cited in Evans, 1999). Debates about why the law was ineffectiveness have been thoroughly discussed within the literature. Some have pointed to the absence of long-term planning by the Cost Rican government, others have drawn attention to the shortage of funds resulting in a lack of enforcement (Luis Fournier; Carloyn Hall in Evans, 1999). After numerous warnings about the increased amount of deforestation in 1970's, the Reforestation Law was passed in 1977. The law helped the government establish tax incentives and technological services for private reforestation efforts. Since the 1970's, laws and regulatory structures have changed and evolved and been reorganized due to political maneuvering along with the government's strong amount of legislative adaptability. Currently, the entire conservation effort is governed under the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC) a part of the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC):

The agency tasked with conservation efforts within Costa Rica is called, Sistema Nacional de Areas de Conservation (SINAC) or, in English, National System of Conservation Areas. SINAC was formed in 1998 when the Biodiversity Law was passed, merging the National Park Service, the Forestry Department and Wildlife Service into one decentralized, governance structure under the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE). SINAC functions as the legal authority, management coordinator and institutional governance structure for all matter relating to forestry, wildlife, protected areas and the protection and use of water systems. SINAC manages public lands separated into 11 areas throughout the country. The institution also is tasked with policy-making, planning and implementation processes with the goal of sustainable natural resource management (SINAC, 2014). Their mission is to establish an integrated management system with civil society to conserve and sustain wildlife, forest resources and water systems for current and future generations.

On the institutional level, the highest authority of SINAC is called the National Conservation Areas Council (CONAC). The is made up of 25 individuals representing each of the 11 conservation areas and sub-areas. The institution states their commitment to conserving biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources. Further, they suggest that all relevant stakeholders are needed to participate in any environmental effort. In terms of implementation mechanisms, the institution advocates for strong leadership, use of technology, teamwork, dialogue, participation, innovation and continuous improvements to the environment, in all of their projects.

Examples of specific mechanisms within SINAC include, a law enforcement arm, enabling SINAC to enter private property for environmental inspections. SINAC is also

responsible for measuring forest cover within Costa Rica, monitoring and controlling deforestation, and mapping forest cover among other duties.

SINAC also works with and is funded by a multitude of international actors and organizations including but not limited to, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation.

Similar to the governance mechanisms for tourism, Costa Rica's conservation governance system is highly complex and interconnected. The conservation efforts in terms of policy implementation and tactical mechanisms for conservation are unclear and have not been analyzed within a traditional institutional framework. There seems to be a need to simplify the governance system with clear cut tasks and organizational clarity in order to not only develop a better understanding of the institutions but also to evaluate the effectiveness using the traditional approach of regime analysis.

CHAPTER5: CONCLUSION

The present research set out to explore the concept of environmental effectiveness within a domestic sustainable tourism policy framework using a critical approach to regime analysis. Kütting's four determinants for understanding environmental effectiveness have been juxtaposed with different policy and governance mechanisms within Costa Rica in order to identify asymmetries and ineffective policy making efforts that have the potential to result in detrimental environmental harm if not dealt with promptly. The research has also sought to expose the reasons and motivation for ineffective policy making in the sustainable tourism sector and the harm that some types of tourism can have on local communities and the natural environment, even in a country considered “one of the birthplaces of ecotourism” (Nehring, 2013). The traditional theoretical literature on the subject of analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of regimes and institutions lacked a multidisciplinary insight, instead viewing the institution from a single discipline, most notably International Relations. The traditional regime analysis literature was inconclusive on several important factors for determining environmental or ecological effectiveness. Without the support of a multi-disciplinary approach, the evaluation of environmental regime effectiveness from the International Relations perspective, focus attention on political, economic, and behavioral determinants and leave out important analysis from an environmental perspective. Furthermore, literature regarding sustainable tourism policy on the domestic level lacked insight into the environmental effectiveness of the policy and mechanisms.

The researcher began with a systematic exploration of Costa Rica's political,

economic and environmental historical background. Next, Costa Rica's environmental and sustainable tourism policy mechanisms and institutions were incorporated into a critical regime analysis framework. The researcher then synthesized the findings and determined the effectiveness of sustainable tourism policy and institutional mechanisms within Costa Rica. The main findings of the research questions are summarized below.

1. Are sustainable tourism policies and institutional mechanisms on the domestic level an effective means for mitigating ecological impacts, increasing environmental protection and creating an equitable community?

Although Costa Rica is aware of the detrimental impact tourism can have on the natural environment, Costa Rica's economic structure is not compatible with the needs of the environment. Additionally, Costa Rica's domestic policy has been heavily influenced by international institutions and agreements that have constrained their ability to effectively manage low-impact tourism.

2. What roadblocks and motivations arise when sustainable tourism policy is being created?

Political considerations, complex institutional structures and outside influences have made the implementation of specific mechanisms and regulation of sustainable tourism policy extremely difficult.

3. How can the four determinants of understanding environmental effectiveness assist in finding solutions for ineffective sustainable tourism policy?

The four determinants of understanding environmental effectiveness can greatly assist in the development of truly effective policy. If policy-makers recognize and integrate the loopholes that arise when taking the four determinants into account, policy has the potential to become environmentally effective. Reassessing and reconceptualizing current policy using the four determinants can also result in effective policy implementation.

The theoretical implications of these findings differ from the traditional regime analysis perspective and other types of tourism policy evaluation. The International Relations framework for evaluating regime effectiveness primarily focus on behavioral shifts such as cooperative behavior, changes within the dynamics of the institution, or signing an agreement. It is however, noted from the critical argument put forth by Kütting, that the traditional analysis framework constrains the evaluation of

environmental effectiveness. The present research has analyzed policy on the domestic level using this critical approach. It has therefore shown that it is possible for frameworks developed to analyze global environmental issues can also offer helpful insight into domestic environmental and sustainable tourism policy.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research on the topic can determine unsuccessful policy within countries' tourism sector. In order to develop policy regarding sustainable tourism and the environment on the global level, more case studies at the domestic level using the critical approach to regime analysis are needed. This can allow for assessment of ineffective domestic policy and also raise awareness of ineffective patterns transnationally. An abundance of case-studies can become a foundation for the development of a global sustainable tourism agreement or regulatory structure that can effectively mitigate the negative impacts of tourism worldwide.

Regardless of the reports and literature that have often commended Costa Rica's tourism industry for leading the way in sustainable and ecotourism, environmental considerations within Costa Rica's environmental and sustainable tourism policy have not been fully developed, instead, political and economic interests rise to the top of the agenda while issues regarding the natural environment is forgotten. This research has shown that using a eco-holistic approach to evaluate sustainable tourism and environmental policy at the domestic level may eventually provide global environmental benefits.

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Curriculum Vitae

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