# The results of ecotourism policies in protected areas in Brazil and Canada

Os resultados das políticas públicas de ecoturismo em Unidades de Conservação no Brasil e no Canadá

Los resultados de las políticas públicas de ecoturismo en áreas protegidas en Brasil y Canadá

**Fabrício Scarpeta Matheus**[1]
**Sidnei Raimundo**[2]

**Abstract**: Purpose of topic: Policies and definitions of ecotourism address, basically, three aspects: environmental conservation, environmental awareness of visitors, and involvement of local communities. From that approach, the objective of this study is to analyze the results of public policies for public use development in protected areas. Methodology and approach: Through case study methodology we analyzed two protected areas, Alto Ribeira Tourist State Park (PETAR), located in the State of Sao Paulo, in Brazil, and Strathcona Provincial Park, situated in the province of British Columbia, Canada. The multiple case study was based on two sources of evidence, the identified public policies documents, and interviews with the various stakeholders: government, local community, and visitors. The analysis of documents and interviews was performed through content analysis. The public policies were discussed within the conceptual and legal frameworks for protected areas and public use in both countries. Among the key findings, we observe that public policies focus on more permissive activities, as in the Canadian case, or on its restriction, like in Brazil, is not the most significant aspect for the conservation of the environment. Originality of the document: The outsourcing policy, already adopted by British Columbia and beginning to be implemented in São Paulo, has impacted more directly the three analyzed aspects.

**Keywords:** Policy. Protected area. Public use. Ecotourism.

**Resumo:** Propósito do tema: As políticas e definições sobre ecoturismo abordam basicamente três aspectos: a conservação do meio ambiente, a conscientização ambiental dos visitantes e o envolvimento da comunidade local. A partir desse enfoque, como objetivo analisou-se os resultados das políticas públicas para o desenvolvimento do uso público em Unidades de Conservação. Metodologia e abordagem: A análise foi realizada em duas áreas protegidas, o Parque Estadual Turístico Alto do Ribeira (PETAR), localizado no Estado de São Paulo, no

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[1] University of Northern British Columbia, Natural Resources and Environmental Studies Program. 3333 University Way, Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9, Canada. Ideas formulation; designing of the theoretical references; data gathering and preparation and work's preparation.

[2] School of Arts, Sciences and Humanities of the University of São Paulo (EACH-USP), São Paulo, SP, Brazil. Guidance of the theoretic-methodological references, writing and work critical review.

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Brasil, e o Strathcona Provincial Park, situado na província de British Columbia, no Canadá. O estudo de casos múltiplos se utilizou de duas fontes de evidências, os documentos das políticas públicas identificadas e as entrevistas com os atores envolvidos: poder público, comunidade local e visitantes. A análise dos documentos e das entrevistas foi realizada por meio da técnica de análise de conteúdo. Tais políticas públicas foram discutidas à luz de bases conceituais sobre áreas protegidas e uso público, bem como sobre os atos normativos sobre uso público em Unidade de Conservação nos dois países. Entre os principais resultados, destaca-se que o foco das políticas públicas em atividades mais permissivas, no caso canadense, ou na restrição de atividades, no caso brasileiro, não é preponderante para a conservação do meio ambiente. Originalidade do documento:  A política de terceirizações, adotada em British Columbia e que começa a ser implantada em São Paulo, tem impactado de forma mais direta os três aspectos analisados.

**Palavras-chave:** Política pública. Unidade de Conservação. Uso público. Ecoturismo

*Resumen: Propósito del tema: Las políticas y definiciones de ecoturismo abordan básicamente tres aspectos: la conservación del medio ambiente, la concienciación ambiental de los visitantes y la participación de la comunidad local. A partir de ese enfoque, como objetivo se analizaron los resultados de las políticas públicas para el desarrollo del uso público en áreas protegidas. Metodología y enfoque: El análisis se realizó en dos áreas protegidas, el Parque Estatal de Turismo de Alto Ribeira (PETAR), ubicado en el Estado de São Paulo, en Brasil, y Strathcona Provincial Park, situado en la provincia de British Columbia, en Canadá. El estudio de caso múltiple se utilizó de dos fuentes de evidencia, los documentos de las políticas públicas identificadas, y las entrevistas con los diferentes actores: gobierno, comunidad local y visitantes. El análisis de los documentos y de las entrevistas se realizó mediante la técnica de análisis de contenido. Estas políticas públicas se discutieron a la luz de bases conceptuales sobre áreas protegidas y el uso público, así como sobre los actos normativos acerca del uso público en las áreas protegidas en ambos países. Entre los principales resultados, se destaca que el enfoque de las políticas públicas en las actividades más permisivas, en el caso de Canadá, o en la restricción de las actividades, en Brasil, no es lo más significativo para la conservación del medio ambiente. Originalidad del documento: La política de subcontratación, adoptada en British Columbia y que empieza a desplegarse en São Paulo, ha impactado de manera más directa los tres aspectos analizados.*

**Palabras clave:** Políticas públicas. Áreas protegidas. Uso público. Ecoturismo.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been one of the main reasons for creating protected areas around the world, since the implementation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 in the United States (USA), recognized as the first modern Protected Area (PA) in the world (Runte, 2010). American legislators were looking for alternatives for the economic development of areas considered worthless lands in the western part of the country, and tourism activities were suggested as the best option. Since then, goals for protected areas have been changing, also including issues related to biodiversity protection, answering the demands of local communities and the conservation of ecosystems (Watson et al., 2014). Economic development and tourism, however, have never stopped being priorities.

Canada has created its first National Park (NP) in 1885, Banff National Park, also located in the west of the country. Canadian protected areas followed the same model and are oriented towards leisure and recreation. However, the balance between recreation and conservation varies, according to the level of government responsible for the PA management. As stated in one of the policies of the Province of British Columbia,

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"while municipal parks serve as local recreation spots, and national parks place preservation foremost, provincial parks strike a balance between the two" (Ministry of Lands and Parks, 1991, p. 17).

While in Brazil, the first national park was created only in 1937, the Itatiaia NP. Different from the North American model, generally Brazilian protected areas had a stronger focus on environmental conservation, with a management model more oriented to the control of activities performed inside PAs. The development of leisure and recreation activities and tourism promotion in these areas only started to be developed in the 1980s (Matheus & Raimundo, 2016).

Data on visitation in the system of protected areas in Brazil and Canada also suggest this difference in the focus. According to Parks Canada (2017), agency responsible for managing the Canadian national parks, the federal protected areas received more than 23 million leisure visitors during the 2015/2016 season. BC Parks (2014a), an institution responsible for the management of protected areas in the Province of British Columbia, highlights that 60% of its inhabitants use a park every year.

Whilst Brazilian federal protected areas, also in 2016, received 8.3 million visitors, which represented a growth of 13.6% in relation to 2014. Such growth is related to federal and state public policies, which have been promoting ecotourism as a tool for the conservation of natural heritage and for creating jobs and income for the communities

around protected areas. However, Canto-Silva and da Silva (2017) point out that only 33.42% of the parks are open to visitation. The highest percentage of parks open to visitation is observed among those administered at the federal (40.07%) or municipal (44.55%) levels, as well as among those located in the Caatinga (40.00%) or in the Atlantic Rainforest (38.91%) biomes.

Given that this article aims to describe and analyze the public policies for visitation, comparing the tools used in Canada and Brazil and the outcomes for environmental conservation in the Protected Areas, visitors' environmental awareness, and the involvement of local communities. Through case study methodology, we analyzed two protected areas, the Alto Ribeira Tourist State Park (PETAR- *Parque Estadual Turístico Alto do Ribeira*) in the State of São Paulo, in Brazil, and the Strathcona Provincial Park, in the Province of British Columbia, Canada. The reason for choosing these protected areas for the case study was their representativeness regarding each country's protected areas system. It is also important to highlight that both areas studied belong to the same protection category, that is Category II (Parks), of IUCN[3], and are under regional administration (State in Brazil and Provincial in Canada).

Lastly, it is important to highlight that the aim was not to do compare the models, underlining which one is best, but to emphasize the positive and negative points of each one given their contexts and the lessons to be learned from acquired experiences. Direct

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[3] International Union for Conservation of Nature, which divides the management categories of protected areas into six: Ia. Strict Nature Reserve, Ib. Wilderness Area; II. National Park; II. Natural Monument or Feature; IV. Habitat/Species Management Area; V. Protected Landscape/Seascape; VI. Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources.

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comparison is impaired, considering the differences between the two countries, their economies, cultures, educational systems, and even legal systems.

## 2   PROTECTED AREAS

Protected areas, or conservation units as they are mostly known for in Brazil, are one of the main strategies for environmental conservation adopted internationally (Dudley, 2008; Watson et al., 2014). According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), protected areas are:

> A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated, and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values (Dudley, 2008, p. 8).

In order to include the different kinds of existing protected areas and their different aims and types of use, the IUCN also established six different categories for protected areas. Each one of them has specific definitions and characteristics, which vary from those with more restricted use (categories Ia and Ib) up to the ones that admit direct use of its resources (category VI).

The planet's oldest protected area still operating is the National Park Bogd Khan Uul, created in Mongolia in 1778 (Olmos cited in Jordão, 2011). However, as mentioned by many authors, Yellowstone National Park, established in 1873 in the United States, can be considered a landmark of modern protected areas in the world (Diegues, 1994; IUCN, 2004). In its creation, the area was planned as "a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the

people" (IUCN, 2004, p. 10).

Shortly before, in 1864, the North American Congress granted part of what is today the Yosemite National Park to the State of California for public use, haven, and recreation (IUCN, 2004). Schama (1996) considers the creation of Yosemite as a search for a sanctuary, a Garden of Eden, which would be the antidote for the poisons of industrial society. The author recalls the descriptions by John Muir and the paintings by Thomas Moran that represent the place as the sacred park in the American West, which helped to shape this protection concept of what was thought to be untouched nature. Diegues (1994) also mentions the importance of romantic authors of the 19th century in the valuation of wild nature as the lost paradise and, consequently, in the creation of a model for uninhabited protected areas, which accept people only as temporary visitors.

Following the USA model, Canada transformed a region of the Rockies into the Banff National Park, in 1885 (Canada, 2011). Brazil created its first national park only in 1937, the Itatiaia National Park, in the Mantiqueira Mountains, border between the States of Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais (Urban, 1998).

The aims of protected areas have been evolving since then and, according to Runte (2010), incorporated concepts of protection of biodiversity and ecosystems. Thus, this development expanded from the so called iconic attractions, as the Yosemite Valley or the Iguaçu Falls, with the sole objective of recreation, to the maintenance of biodiversity, scientific research, fauna and flora preservation, maintenance of cultural values,

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sustainable use of resources, among other goals (Oliveira, 2008). However, the definition still bears values from the 19th century, mainly regarding the exclusion or permanence of residents within these areas.

In Brazil, protected areas are governed by the Federal Law No. 9,985/2000, which establishes the National System of Nature Conservation Units (SNUC). The aim of this law was to consolidate all normative acts concerning the protected areas that already existed in Brazil, as well as modernizing the management and operation of the country's protected areas (São Paulo, 2009).

With the SNUC, it was possible to standardize the concepts for protected areas in Brazil, which is understood as

> a territorial space and its environmental resources, including the jurisdictional waters, with relevant natural characteristics, legally instituted by the Public Power, with conservation objectives and defined limits, under special administration regime, to which adequate protection guarantees are applied (Brazil, 2000).

Protected areas are divided into two big groups in the national system: Integral Protection Areas, whose goal is to preserve nature, admitting only indirect use of its natural resources, except for cases provided by Law; and the Sustainable Use Areas, which aim to match nature conservation with the sustainable use of part of its natural resources. Some of these categories are similar to the ones suggested by IUCN, as National Parks and Natural Monuments. Others, as the Sustainable Development Reserves and the Extractive Activity Reserves, can be understood as variation of the IUCN category VI, Managed Resource Protected Area.

The SNUC coordination is undertaken by the Ministry of Environment (MMA), through the executive bodies, the Chico Mendes Institute of Biodiversity (ICMBio) and the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA). In 2016, according to the research by the World Database of Protected Areas, Brazil had 2,190 PAs among all government levels, which represents a protection of 28.94% of the total national land territory (UNEP-WCMC 2016).

Likewise, in the State of São Paulo, the State Forest System– SIEFLOR was instituted by the State Decree No. 51.453/2006. The State System comprises about 140 PAs, since the first protected areas created by the State, as the current State Park Alberto Loefgren, former Forest Garden (*Horto Florestal*), created in 1896, up to the State Park Nascentes do Paranapanema, created in 2012. With the implementation of SIEFLOR, the Foundation for the Conservation and Forestry Production (FF) started to manage the main state PAs categories, being responsible for managing 94 areas, including PETAR, the object of study of this work.

Meanwhile, Canada has a system of Protected Areas almost as old as that of the United States, having created the first national park in 1885. Besides that, Canada was the first country to create a specific agency for managing its national parks and other categories of protected areas, the Parks Canada, founded in 1911, under the name of Dominion Parks Service (Canada, 2011).

Canada recognizes and adopts the definition and model of protected areas proposed by IUCN, despite having some specific categories. In that country, the   federal pro-

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tected areas are managed in an integrated manner by three distinct bodies, namely (Environment Canada, 2013): a) Environment Canada, responsible for managing the National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries; b) Fisheries and Oceans Canada, which manages the Marine Protected Areas, among other actions for the improvement of marine ecosystems; and c) Parks Canada, the institution responsible for managing the National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas.

Each one of these bodies has integrated systems of managing the protected areas under their responsibility, called Network of Protected Areas, whose goals are to plan, implement, and manage these areas in a systemic and more efficient way.

Canada has a total of 7,642 protected areas in 2016, according to data from UNEP-WCMC (2016). Although this number is much higher than the Brazilian one, it represents only 9.69% of the country's territory, against almost 30% in Brazil.

Just as Brazil, Canada also has protected areas in other government levels. However, given the classification of the country's political subdivisions, they are called Provincial Protected Areas. The Strathcona Provincial Park, the object of study of this work, located in the Province of British Columbia, is administered by BC Parks. BC Parks is the institution responsible for the creation, management, and conservation of the system of Ecological Reserves, Provincial Parks, and Recreation Areas located in the Province of British Columbia. This system is constituted by more than 1,000 protected areas belonging to the different aforementioned

areas, which represents 14.4% of the province's territory (BC Parks, 2014b).

We highlight below the public policies related to visitation (public use) inside these areas.

## 3 PUBLIC POLICIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC USE IN PROTECTED AREAS

There is a wide discussion about the public policies theme. Souza (2006) highlights the main points raised in the literature:

> public policy involves many actors and decision levels, although it is not materialized through governments, and not necessarily restricted to formal participants, since informal ones are also important; the public policy is comprehensive and not restricted to laws and rules; and public policy is an intentional action, with objectives and goals to be achieved (p.36).

In a direct and simple way, in this article, public policy is understood as government actions for the management of specific issues, in this case, the government actions for developing public use in protected areas. These actions are formalized and materialized by normative acts, programs, and projects implemented by the State.

Likewise, the public use in protected areas can be understood in many ways, depending on the type of public addressed: tourists, local community, researchers, schools, etc. In Brazil, public use policies have a strong focus on tourism activities, i.e., oriented towards the leisure of people that do not usually use the PA. Generally, the policies use the term ecotourism to identify the kind of activity they intend to regulate (Matheus

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& Raimundo, 2015). The ecotourism definition adopted in Brazil and used by a great share of policies for public use in PAs is shown in the document "Guidelines for a national ecotourism policy" (*Diretrizes para uma política nacional de ecoturismo*):

> a segment of tourism activity that uses, in a sustainable manner, the natural and cultural heritage, promotes its conservation and aims to raise environmental awareness through environmental interpretation, promoting the well-being of the population (Brazil, 1994, p. 19).

This definition is very similar to that of the World Tourism Organization and other international organizations, and it has three main components: environmental conservation; visitors' environmental awareness; and involvement of local community (São Paulo, 2010a). Table 1, systematizes the public policies on public use adopted in Brazil, indicating its main regulations directly affecting the park chosen to serve as case study: PETAR.

Besides the federal and state norms, PETAR has its own tools that regulate the public use activities inside it. Although the park has been one of the firsts to be created in the State of São Paulo, in 1958, its main normative documents were drawn up only in recent years, such as the Management Plan and the Risks and Contingency for Emergencies Management Plan, finished in 2010, as well as the Plans for Speleological Management, in 2012. PETAR also has an Advisory Committee, created in 2001 and regulated, currently, by the Forestry Foundation Decree No. 313/2013.

Regarding Canada, it should be highlighted that Parks Canada has many normative acts that regulate public use and other activities related to protected areas under its administration. Among the main federal regulations, the ones that stand out are: Parks Canada Agency Act; Canada National Parks Act; and National Parks and Regulations.

However, unlike in Brazil, protected areas established by the Canadian provinces are not subjected to federal normative acts, being obliged to follow only the provincial legislation.

The identified normative acts that establish the public policy for developing public use in Parks of the Province of British Columbia are shown in Table 2.

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**Table 1**- Public policies for public use that concern PETAR

| Normative Act | Objective |
|---|---|
| State Decree No. 25.341/1986 | Establishes norms that define and characterize the National Parks. |
| SMA Resolution No. 32/1998 | Regulates public visitation and registry of guides, agencies, operators, and environmental instructors, for ecotourism and environment education in the State conservation units. |
| Federal Law No. 9.985/2000 | Institutes the National System of Nature Conservation Units – SNUC – establishes criteria and norms for the creation, implementation, and management of conservation units. |
| Federal Decree No. 4.340/2002 | Regulates Articles. 22, 24, 25, 26,27, 29, 30, 33, 36, 41, 42, 47, 48 and 55 of the Law No. 9.985, of 18 July 2000, as well as the arts. 15, 17, 18 and 20, regarding the councils of conservation units. |
| SMA Resolution No. 59/2008 | Regulates the administrative procedures of management and inspection of public use in Conservation Units of Integral Protection of the São Paulo State System of Forests – SIEFLOR. |
| SMA Resolution No. 61/2008 | Creates the Advisory Board of Ecotourism of the Secretary of Environment of the State of São Paulo, as a tool for helping in the implementation of action for developing ecotourism in the State. |
| Normative Decree F.F. No. 73/2009 | Establishes the guide for designing the Emergency Plan of Public Use for the Conservation Units with consolidated activities of public visitation. |
| SMA Resolution No. 32/2010 | Classifies the infractions and environmental administrative sanctions for penalties application, in the scope of the State System of Environmental Quality Administration, Protection, Control and Development of Environment and Adequate Use of Natural Resources – SEAQUA. |
| State Decree No. 57.401/2011 | Implements the Program of Partnerships for Conservation Units instituted by the State of São Paulo and that are under the administration of the Foundation for the Conservation and Forestry Production of the State of São Paulo and correlated provisions. |
| Normative Decree F.F. No. 152/2011 | Establishes the guide for designing the Plan of Risks and Contingency Management for the Conservation Units of integral protection of the State System of Forests of the State of São Paulo. |
| Normative Decree F.F. No.153/2011 | Establishes the regulation for rafting activity for the companies that operate this service, independent rafters and users, according to the ABNT rules NBR 15:370 and 15:285. |
| Normative Decree F.F. No. 182/2013 | Regulates the public visitation hours in the conservation units under the management of the Forestry Foundation. |
| Normative Decree F.F. No. 183/2013 | Establishes the criteria for bicycle use inside the conservation units under the management of the Forestry Foundation. |
| Normative Decree F.F. No. 191/2013 | Establishes procedures for charge and price of tickets, services and use of the facilities and equipment installed in the Units administered by the Forestry Foundation, not for profit, in order to contribute to the maintenance and conservation of the Units. |

**Source:** Adapted from Matheus & Raimundo (2015)

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**Table 2** - Public policies for public use that concern the British Columbia Parks

| Normative Act | Objective |
|---|---|
| Protected Areas of British Columbia Act | Presents all categories of protected areas administered by BC Parks, as well as its definitions. |
| Park Act | General norms for the protected areas categories Parks, Conservancies and Recreation Areas are established by this act. |
| Park, Conservancy and Recreation Area Regulations | Deals with a great variety of elements, from use permits, through waste management to the park-guards' duties. |
| Striking the Balance | Internal document that establishes one of the principles that guides all management of protected areas in the province, the search for balance between recreation and conservation. |
| BC Parks Program Plan 2007-2012 | Transposes the strategies of the British Columbia government for protected areas to a document that guides BC Parks' actions. |

**Source:** The authors

Like PETAR, the Strathcona Provincial Park has its own management tools, besides the provincial ones. The main is the management plan, designed in 1993, having been reviewed twice since then, in 2001 and 2010. The park also has an Advisory Committee, named Strathcona Park and Strathcona-Westmin Public Advisory Committee (SPPAC), whose purpose is to give advice on the management and operation of both PAs.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

The research used a multiple case study, since in this way it is possible to compare the results obtained and be more accurate (Yin, 2010). Both cases chosen for the development of the study, as mentioned, were: the Alto Ribeira State Tourist Park (PETAR), one of the most representative areas of the Forest State System of the State of São Paulo (SIEFLOR), in Brazil; and the Strathcona Provincial Park, in the Province of British Columbia, chosen to exemplify the Canadian protected areas model, with a great amount of activities and products offered and the oldest park in the system in that province.

Based on the content analysis technique (Bardin, 2012), which uses objective and quantitative indicators for the analysis of texts (Richardson, 1999), "registry units" connected to aim of this article were established, i.e., to analyze the public policies for developing public use in PAs. Such unit of analysis was composed by three basic elements that create this kind of public policy and that are related to the concept ecotourism: a) environmental conservation; b) involvement of local communities; and c) visitors' environmental awareness.

The evidence sources used for data gathering were the public policies documents, highlighted in Item 3, and interviews. The use of two sources was chosen given the fact that the case study has an "ability to deal with a full variety of evidence - documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations" (Yin, 2010, p.19). The purpose was to mix qualitative and quantitative evidences, in which, generally, quantitative information would serve to verify, support, and validate qualitative data.

The analysis of the sources of evidence (content analysis) was developed with the help of the NVivo software version 10.

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Corpus and interviews data were organized using this software, particularly the development of phases of coding, establishment of listing rules, and categorizing. The corpus was comprised of all the identified documents related to the public use policy in protected areas, according to the rule of completeness (Bardin, 2012).

The aim of the interviews was to understand and measure the involvement of the local community in the protected areas, the level of environmental awareness of the visitors, and the state of conservation of environment, from the respondents' perspective. The interviews were chosen for being one of the most important research sources for case studies, since they enable to know the perception of the participants directly involved in the selected cases (Yin, 2010).

We conducted two types of interview: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative research was applied by a semi-structured data gathering tool, designed based on the results found in the analysis of document content. The semi-structured interview was chosen because it allows the respondent "to discuss the proposed theme, without being attached to the formulated question" (Minayo, 2010, p. 261). A total of 19 interviews were done, including to representatives of the institutions responsible for managing the PAs, non-governmental organizations, local government, and members of communities.

As for the quantitative research, it was performed through a structured information gathering tool (form). The survey was conducted among the visitors of PETAR and Strathcona Provincial Park. The sample was defined by saturation, i.e., when the data obtained can be considered redundant or repetitive, not being significant to keep on gathering data (Fontanella et al., 2008).

Given that it is not possible to measure how many interviews are necessary to achieve saturation, field research was planned according to what is proposed by Guest et al. (2006), who suggest that the results can be considered repetitive after the realization of 12 interviews. Those results are also confirmed by Thiry-Cherques (2009). Thus, 12 interviews were done in each Park, in a total of 24 visitors. We remind that the saturation sample was chosen since it was not intended to expand the obtained results to the universe dealt with, but to get to know the visitors' opinions and perceptions about the analyzed units.

## 5   RESULTS OF PUBLIC POLICIES

From the results obtained in the content analysis of public policies, it was possible to note remarkable differences in the actions developed in the State of São Paulo and in the Province of British Columbia. One of the most striking characteristics that echoes in all decision-making processes about the protected areas in the Canadian province concerns the double focus of BC Parks' policy, which strives for conservation just as for recreation. As established in the Striking the Balance policy, "parks are set aside for recreational use… but also for conservation. They have a role in both attracting tourists… and in preserving wilderness" (Ministry of Lands and Parks, 1991, p. 7).

Another feature identified regarding the management of protected areas in BC is the low amount of existing normative acts,

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specially related to public use. Such fact was also a conclusion of the audit made by the Province at the Ministry of Environment, including BC Parks (British Columbia 2010b). In addition, these management tools are outdated. Except for the BC Parks Program Plan 2007-2012, the other legal landmarks were drawn up more than 20 years ago.

However, one of the main aspects of the actions developed by the British Columbia government is not shown by the analysis of its normative acts. This aspect is the outsourcing of public use and recreation service at the Parks. As Eagles et al. (2010, p.1246) point out, since 1989, the BC government has shifted from the "National Park Management Model" to the "Public and For-Profit Combination Model". The National Park Model can be understood as the one in which land property, investments, maintenance, and management are the responsibility of the government, financed mainly by taxes. While the Public and For-Profit Combination Model is the one in which the state body that manages the PAs uses private companies to promote recreation and tourism services, usually justified by efficiency (Eagles, 2009).

Therefore, since 1989, recreation and tourism services offered in the province's protected areas, mostly related to accommodation, are operated by private companies, called Park Facility Operators, through contracts established by British Columbia regions. The companies are responsible for maintaining, operating, and managing these services, as well as for public support, tax collection and, in some cases, by environmental interpretation programs and user information (Eagles et al., 2010).

Initially, this new model had positive results, at least in quantitative terms, for the BC protected areas system, enabling an increase from about 400 protected areas and 20 million visitors in 1990 to 800 protected areas and 25 million visitors in the beginning of the 2000s (British Columbia, 2001). The number of protected areas keeps on growing, with more recent data from BC Parks pointing out that the province achieved 1,029 PAs in 2015. On the other hand, the number of visitors had a decrease in the end of the 2000s and remained stable since then, around 21 million, despite the increasing number of Parks (BC Parks, 2016). However, besides the numbers, the new model also had a significant impact on the three units of analysis of this research, which are shown in the next items.

Unlike the BC parks, the public use policies in the State of São Paulo are more focused on environmental conservation. Even when they address visitation, the documents cite mainly environmental education and interpretation activities. Besides that, most of the norms, especially the Normative Decree by the Forestry Foundation, aim to control public use activities inside the areas, as rafting and bicycle rides. The PAs also establish this control of public use activities, by their own normative tools, such as the emergency plans for visitation in PETAR caves. Regarding PETAR, Lobo (2015) points out a series of negative impacts that create harmful consequences to cave tourism. However, according to this author, the negative impacts should not be considered as obstacles for tourism in the caves. For him, knowing such impacts is the key to address the issues that allow the

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sustainability of tourist caves.

Public policies also use the term ecotourism to talk about public use in protected areas, instead of recreation or leisure. In this sense, the policies make clear that the PAs aim is to answer the public use demands of tourists and hikers, usually coming from big urban centers, and not from local communities (Matheus & Raimundo, 2015). This aspect will be further discussed on the item about local community involvement.

Just as happened in BC in the end of the 1980s, outsourcing is growing more significant in the State of São Paulo. Two normative acts point out the government's intention of increasing the presence of private enterprise in the management of protected areas, especially through the offer of public services: the State Decree No. 57,401/11, which establishes the Partnership Program for Conservation Units; and the State Law No. 16,260, of 06/29/2016, which proposes the paid use concession, for up to 30 years, of 25 state protected areas. The Partnership Program has few legal novelties for contract handling between private enterprise and public power, regulated by the Federal Law No. 8,666/93. However, this law presents a more aggressive outsourcing proposal, by proposing the increase in the deadline for paid use concession from 5 to 30 years, aiming to attract private partnerships for building, maintaining, and operating public use facilities, as already highlighted by Matheus and Raimundo (2015).

These norms generally include articles that establish goals for ensuring the participation of local communities in PAs concessions and partnerships, as well as the crea-

tion of jobs and income. However, these goals are contrary to what is established in the Federal Law No. 8,666/93, which sets the conditions equity among the companies located in Brazilian territory when concluding contracts with public power.

As mentioned above, public use in Brazilian protected areas grew more significant in the last years, when ecotourism started to be seen as a conservation strategy. Such observation is also confirmed by the analysis of the dates of the legal landmarks shown here. Most of the identified normative acts were edited after SNUC's approval, in 2000, given that a significant share of the São Paulo state policies was formalized after SIEFLOR's institution, in 2006.

The content analysis of the identified documents enabled a quantitative evaluation of public policies that regulate both analyzed cases. However, only quantitative analysis is not enough to confirm the focus and aims of public policies. Thus, from the next items on, the three units of analysis chosen will be shown, added by qualitative information.

**5.1 Environmental Conservation**

The first unit of analysis to be presented is the one perceived as the focus of current public policies in the State of São Paulo, environmental conservation.

Although there is no program for continuous monitoring of the Protected Areas' environmental quality or of the impacts caused on protected areas, the general view of the respondents is that the conservation of the environment has improved at PETAR. All actors questioned in the qualitative sur-

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veys, as well as the visitors in the opinion survey, assessed this aspect positively.

On the other hand, this focus on environmental conservation can be considered restrictive to the development of activities that would be aligned to the protected area's goals. A respondent from a speleology organization considers that the new cave visitation norms are excessively restrictive and could compromise tourism around the park. According to him, such restrictions can hinder the involvement of the local community, specially of those people inserted in the production chain of tourism, besides not following what is established in other legal landmarks, as the SMA Resolution No. 59/2008, Article 2, I, the compatibilization of public use with the protection of natural resources and ecological processes inserted in protected areas.

Besides the positive results for conservation, it is not possible to affirm that such improvement is a direct consequence of government's actions. A respondent from a local tourism company declares that the impact reduction at PETAR is caused by a natural process of society awareness, and not due to a direct action of the park management.

The management plan of the park (São Paulo, 2010b) shows data that prove that inspection activities carried out by the Park's management and by environmental police have reduced in the last years, as well as the number of seizure of hunting and fishing equipment and of palm hearts extracted within the PA. An example of that is the decrease in the number of kilometers ridden in inspection actions, which dropped from almost 100,000 kilometers in 1998 to 455 in 2009.

As in Brazil, the Canadian park does not have a system for monitoring the impacts or the conservation of the environments protected by it. However, in general the local actors interviewed declared that the negative impacts at the Strathcona Provincial Park have grown in the last years. Bonfire remains and traces of snowmobiles can be found in prohibited areas, besides impacts on the visitation structures, consequence of the intensive use in other park areas. According to the respondents from non-governmental organizations the increase in impacts are a result of lack of inspection.

The employees of BC Parks also mention that the lack of resources, human and financial, is one of the main reasons for the decrease in the quality of environmental conservation and maintenance of public use structures. The number of employees of the institution dropped significantly in the last years, as well as its budget. Out of the total number of employees, only 12 are park-guards, responsible for inspecting more the 1,000 protected areas distributed around the province. During summer, the institutions hires 87 temporary park-guards to help in the high-season activities (BC Parks, 2013).

The interview with employees involved in the Park's management summarizes the challenges of administrating a protected area that needs to balance recreational activities with natural heritage conservation. According to them, recreation will affect the conservation values. Nevertheless, they defend the importance of having the protected areas opened to visitation, since when the public is excluded, the support to the Parks drops.

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It is important to highlight that the assessment of the results of policies for environmental conservation is compromised, given that both PA systems do not have monitoring tools. According to McCool (1996), periodic and systematic monitoring is essential for the planning, exactly because it enables the formal registry of changes in natural resources through time and because it does not depend on informal perceptions of those involved with protected areas.

However, it is possible to realize that the state of conservation of environment in the Canadian Park is below the expectations of respondents and that the negative impacts caused by the public have increased in the last years. The consulted documents and studies, as the report of the audit done in the British Columbia Ministry of Environment (British Columbia 2010b), confirm this fact. It is also clear that the increase in negative impacts is more related to the lack of inspection, a consequence of the reduction of human and financial resources, than to the kind of public use. Even though, the impacts are limited to bonfire remains and use of motorized equipment in protected areas, which can be considered minor impacts, given the high number of visitors and the low amount of park-guards for inspection, an average of one employee for each 100 PAs.

For its part, the environment protected by the São Paulo PA is in a good state of conservation, according to the respondents' perception. However, the effects of outsourcing policies are already appearing, as showed previously, having a great reduction in inspection actions, which can under-mine the conservation values in a near future. Public use activities were not mentioned in any context as a pressure vector on conservation, on the contrary, control seems to be excessive and, more than contributing to conservation, it limits the economic options for the local community, as well as the development of environmental interpretation through recreation.

## 5.2 Local community involvement

The involvement of local communities is the unit of analysis that is less present in the public policies documents. Besides, it is important to emphasize the difference in interpreting this theme between both countries. In Brazil, the public policies as well as the interviewed actors mention the importance of involving local communities in the economic opportunities created by the park, mainly related to ecotourism. Thus, involvement is understood as the creation of jobs and income for the communities that live in the regions where the park is inserted. On the other hand, in Canada, involvement is generally understood as the leisure and recreation opportunities offered to the populations living close to protected areas. That is, parks have an important role on policies as a strategy for increasing the quality of life of local inhabitants.

These notions reflect the socio-economic and cultural realities of each country, which are portrayed in their public policies. In Canada, provincial parks are places used usually by the population residing around it. Data from the interview with the Strathcona

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Wilderness Institute, responsible for the service at the Park's visitor center, show that 45% of the people who have been in these places in 2012 lived around the PA and other 30% were residents in Vancouver Island, the same macro-region in which the PA is inserted. As for PETAR, it is used mostly by tourists who, according to the Park's registries, comprise 95% of its visitors (São Paulo, 2014a).

Both systems of protected areas establish many ways of local population involvement, regarding the creation of jobs and income just as the increase in quality of life, besides the participation in the management of the areas. However, the focus of each place studied is clear. Thus, this analysis unit will be assessed under these three perspectives: creation of jobs and income; increase in quality of life; and participation in management, presented below.

In the case of the São Paulo Park, the most affected communities are those residing in the municipalities where the PA is inserted, Apiaí and Iporanga. Santana and Ouro Grosso centers are located inside the Serra neighborhood, in Iporanga. Another neighborhood that has a strong connection to the Park is Betari, located along the road that access the mentioned centers. According to what was pointed out by almost all respondents, two neighborhoods depend directly on tourism activities promoted by PETAR.

Another element that confirms the importance of tourism for the region is the number of environmental instructors registered by PETAR. According to the interview done with PA employees, the registry of environmental instructors able to perform ser-

vices within the park has more than 300 people registered. Such data confirm the importance of environmental instruction as one of the main job opportunities in the locations around the park.

Other direct actions for creating job and income for local communities are the outsourcing of the cafeteria and handicraft store, build in 2010. At the opening of the new visitor center, it was announced an authorization of use for managing these spaces for the *Associação dos Pequenos Produtores Rurais do Bairro Garcias* (Association of the small farmers of the Garcia neighborhood) and for the *Associação dos Artesãos de Apiaí – Custódia de Jesus da Cruz* (Association of the Artisans of Apiaí), both located in the municipality of Apiaí (São Paulo, 2013). However, this kind of initiatives are hindered by the Federal Law No. 8.666/93, previously mentioned, which guarantees equal conditions to all people and companies interested in signing contracts with the government. Thus, the FF opted for launching a bidding for these spaces, as declared by the Park's employees, given that the same spaces were closed in 2014.

This conflict between environmental regulations and the Law No. 8,666/93 regarding the possibilities for the concession of public areas creates unreal expectations in the traditional populations, who see economic opportunities in the PAs. An example of this is the Article 10 of the Resolution No. SMA 59/2008, which institutes that public use activities in PAs could be developed by local traditional communities according to what is instituted in the management plan and other legal disposition that deal with the matter

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(São Paulo, 2008). The wording of the Article establishes this conflict, given that the legal dispositions that deal with the matter do not allow the service concession to traditional communities.

Concerning the Strathcona Provincial Park, the public policies do not focus on the creation of jobs and income for the communities around it. Nevertheless, the Park does create economic benefits for the area through, mainly, exploring recreation activities within itself.

A study on the economic impacts of the Canadian Parks (Canadian Parks Council, 2011), involving the provincial institution, points out that for each CA$[4] 1 invested by BC Parks in the protected areas, CA$ 8.42 are spent by the visitors in the region in services and products such as accommodation, food, transportation etc. The same study points out that, in 2009, public resources for supporting the BC protected areas and visitor spending created 4,336 job opportunities in the province, 80% of them resulting from the tourists' spending. Due to the multiplier effect of tourism, still according to the same study, more 1,000 jobs were created in other places in the country.

Although the park is an important attraction for tourists and hikers in the region, few commercial and professional business that work directly with the PA were identified in the neighboring cities. According to the interview done with Campbell River Visitor Center, there are no tourist guides working inside the protected area and few accommodation establishments in the region use the park to attract customers or have authorization to explore tracks and other ecotourism activities within it.

The second aspect to be assessed, in this unit of analysis, is the impact of protected areas on the quality of life of local communities. Given the broadness of the quality of life theme and given the object of this work, the analyses were restricted to the issues concerning public use.

As discussed, public policies in São Paulo barely mention recreation opportunities, be it for local population or for tourists, always focusing on environmental conservation and education. The only formal governmental action identified for promoting the use of PAs by the neighboring populations was free entrance, established by the Normative Decree FF No. 191/2013, Article 10, XI. However, interviewed PETAR employees alleged that such policy did not result in an increase in local visitors in the PA.

According to the representatives of municipal governments and tourism companies, the restriction in the PA visitation rules was responsible for reducing the participation of local community in the park. The requirement of having environmental instructors guiding and the prohibition of doing barbecues and drinking alcoholic beverages within the PETAR stopped them from going to the PA. Added to it is the access difficulty due to the poor conditions on the roads and the lack of public transportation options.

On its part, the Canadian government

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[4] In August 2017, an American Dollar (U$) was equivalent to 1.2524 Canadian Dollars (CA$). The informed data of CA$ 8.42 is equivalent to U$ 6.72.

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has been developing more actions to promote the use of protected areas by the local inhabitants. Besides, outdoor activities and visits to the protected areas are part of the local culture, in which 60% of citizens visit Parks frequently. The surveyed Strathcona Park visitors mentioned that they used the Park to do routine activities, such as walking their dogs or running, showing a different kind of use from what happens in Brazil. That is, the quantitative research suggests the park has a great importance for the quality of life of the people who live in the area, because it offers recreation opportunities in a preserved environment.

The last aspect analyzed regarding the involvement of local community concerns the participation in the management of the PA. On both protected areas systems, the Advisory Committee is the main means of participation for the civil society in the management of the parks, with significant differences between them.

In Brazil, federal legislation requires the creation of an Advisory Committee in all PAs, with equal representation between public bodies and civil society, including representatives of the neighboring population and traditional population. Equality is a means of trying to achieve balance in the Committee, however, equal numbers of government and civil society representatives is not a guarantee per se of equal conditions (Mussi, 2007). Usually, Committee activities are part of the working hours of public employees, who have more access to data and information and have logistical support, as transportation and funding assistance. While most of civil society representatives do not have any support regarding these aspects.

PETAR's Advisory Committee meets every two months since its creation in 2008, and it discusses many issues related to the park's management (São Paulo, 2010b). According to FF employees, this tool is very efficient and it enables community participation. However, among the civil society respondents belonging to the Advisory Committee, the first perception is that they do not participate on PETAR's management, only on the Committee. They criticized the fact that the Committee is only advisory and that, in some cases, the decisions are made in the FF head office, without the participation of the local actors involved. Besides the Advisory Committee, it is important to highlight the participation of civil society in the designing of the park management tools.

According to the registry in the management plan (São Paulo, 2010b), more than 30 days of meetings and workshops were done with the participation of 595 people in its design. Concerning the Speleological Management Plans (São Paulo, 2012), 10 meetings for participative planning happened, besides the creation of a website and newsletters to release the preliminary results of the surveys. It is observed a concern by the Plan implementers in involving, somehow, civil society in the design of the tools that directly affect the area. The same concern was not observed regarding the designing of the normative acts that were assessed here, which are mostly designed in the FF head office, aiming to be applicable to all PAs under its administration.

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The realization of meetings and the release of the results of these plans show a greater commitment to the disclosure of performed actions. Transparency, as established by Graham et al. (2003), is a component of accountability, one of the five principles of good governance of protected areas. However, such transparency, is not applicable to the other actions performed by FF, being limited only to the management plans. There is no systematic information about PAs management, which show information on the protected areas' budget, the income from entrance fees and the selling of forest products, the number of employees, among other issues. Only sparse publications on specific projects are available, most of times only depicting the positive actions developed (São Paulo, 2013).

The Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee, on the other hand, has a regulation and operation different from the Brazilian Advisory Committees. It has a lower number of members, chosen by their personal competence, and not as representative of interest groups. The meetings take place three of four times per year and deal with many issues related to PA management.

Strathcona Park is the only British Columbia protected area to have a formalized Committee, with its own regulation and defined members. In the opinion of the interviewed BC Parks employees, the Committee's existence is beneficial because it enables the dialogue with all interested people, but its operationalization occupies many of the already scarce human resources of the institution. While the opinion of the respondents that are members of NGOs acting on the area is that, although the Committee is formalized, it is not efficient, because the government actions do not respect the decisions made by the forum, as it happened in the case of the authorization given to a local resort for horseback riding activities.

All respondents agree, however, that the designing of the management plan had a great participation of society. Park employees declared that this is a great example of an effectively engaging process, from the community point of view, which took almost 10 years to be concluded. The representatives of the Friends of Strathcona agree to this statement and said that the first two reviews of the management plan kept this participatory policy. But, according to them, the last alteration, done in 2010, did not have adequate participation.

Regarding transparency, BC Parks publishes, since 2009, an annual report containing the main data on the management of protected areas and on the institution, as budget, revenue, number of emitted authorizations, number of visitors, among others. According to McCutcheon (2009, p. 83) the publication of the first report "represented a marked level of transparency and accountability to citizens regarding the use of tax dollars".

Transparency, as mentioned above, is directly related to the principle of good governance. However, Eagles (2009) shows that the public and for-profit combination model, adopted in British Columbia, is among the worse assessed regarding the good governance criteria. In this sense, it is observed that the change in the management model affected negatively the involvement of local

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community. The respondents' perception about the lack of voice of the Advisory Committee and the users' relationship only with the employees of outsourced companies contribute to this conclusion. The Strathcona Provincial Park seems to take on an important role only concerning the recreation opportunities for the neighboring residents.

At PETAR, as happened in the last analysis unit, the respondents' perception is positive concerning the local community involvement. The Committee, despite being only advisory, works and the tourism activity promoted by the protected area is one of the main job and income creators in the municipalities of the region. However, rigid rules of visitation limit the park's potential of creating economic benefits and contribute for the local community not taking ownership over the space as a leisure option. Besides, the change in the management model that is beginning to be adopted in the State can lead to the same conflicts found in Canada.

### 5.3 Visitors' environmental awareness

Public visitation in the Brazilian and Canadian PAs have striking differences in many aspects. The focus on environmental awareness, however, may be the most visible one regarding public policies. In the State of São Paulo, the analysis of normative acts shows that the public use is accepted inside protected areas since it does not compromise its conservation. Still, the activities must occur in the context of environmental interpretation, and not merely leisure activities.

Currently, the main strategy for raising visitors' environmental awareness is the guiding, as pointed out by the interviewed actors and by the users themselves in the survey. Besides that, the park has a visitor center, interpretation signs along the tracks, flyers, and information on minimum impact practices at the FF website.

Although there are many tools to raise visitors' environmental awareness, there is no environmental education program established by the park. Even the currently available tools have weaknesses, identified in the interviews and field visits. The visitor center remains closed due to the lack of human resources to supervise the place. Besides, there is no follow-up of the quality of services performed by environmental instructors, despite them being the main contact between the park and the users.

Still, the respondents' perception is that the level of environmental awareness of visitors has grown. Yet, some have highlighted that this is a result of a general educational process, especially by people that are interested in protected areas, and not a result of FF's direct actions, since there is no program established regarding this issue.

Aiming to identify the level of environmental awareness of visitors and how can the visits to protected areas change this awareness, a survey was done. We verified, on field, that most respondents were visiting PETAR for the first time and, as aforementioned, none of them lived in the area around the park. The survey also confirmed the importance of the environmental instructor as an educational actor, since almost all people surveyed said that the knowledge acquired during visitation was given by the instructors. Regarding the acquired knowledge, the most

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frequent answers referred to the caves, their formation processes, and speleothems. The survey showed that the visitors who look for PETAR declare having a good level of environmental awareness. However, such awareness was not transformed into concrete actions, revealing that the attitude dimension still needs to be developed.

Canadian public policies, especially in the Province of British Columbia, also aim to implement environmental interpretation programs in the PAs. However, the planning for the development of environmental education and interpretation actions is also done within the context of leisure and recreation. This can be verified in the Program Plan 2007-2012, in the chapter on the visitors' experience, which aims to meet their demands for "greater opportunities for education during leisure time and adventure sport activities" (BC Parks, 2008a, p. 17).

Contradictorily, more recent policies, especially the Program Plan 2007-2012, are the ones that mostly emphasize the importance of environmental interpretation actions as a conservation strategy. However, within a management model that is focused on outsourcing and budget reduction, the funds for the interpretation programs were cut off. Currently, these services are performed at the Strathcona Park by a voluntary group, the Strathcona Wilderness Institute. Despite that, Park employees recall that the fact that BC Parks works for offering recreation opportunities in a preserved natural area is also a strategy to increase users' environmental awareness.

The survey done with Strathcona Provincial Park visitors had similar results to the ones observed at PETAR, with some significant differences. Unlike in PETAR, the respondents at Strathcona Park were mostly residents of the area around the PA. It is possible to note that the activities performed inside the park have a direct relation to the learning process arising from said visit. The users who were used to practice daily activities declared not having learned nothing new during visitation, while the ones who walked along the tracks, swam, or camped mentioned to have learned about local fauna and flora. This learning process happened through the interpretation signaling placed along the park. It is also clear that a narrow variety of environmental education tools, limited to signaling, limits the visitors' learning process.

In comparison, the survey conducted at the Strathcona Provincial Park shows that the level of environmental awareness of the Canadian respondents can be considered higher than that of the Brazilian public, namely regarding the attitude dimension. Another marker for the environmental awareness of the Canadian Park visitors is the small negative impact of visitation, despite the complete lack of inspection. However, the performed survey is not enough to identify if this result is caused by public policies for protected areas or if it reflects the culture or education level of the Canadian society.

Once again, it is highlighted that the management model adopted by BC Parks has been affecting the environmental awareness actions negatively, just as happened in the previous units of analysis. In this case, the consequences are even more significative, causing the withdrawal of official environ-

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mental interpretation programs and the complete dependence on the third sector for the availability of this service. Similarly, at PETAR there are also no interpretation programs, added to the fact that the recent works built to fund these actions are not being used. The public policies' focus on environmental education is not reverted into practical actions for raising visitors' awareness and the park counts on the environmental instructors for developing this service, without control or direction from the FF.

## 6    CONCLUDING REMARKS

The public policies for the development of ecotourism in PAs in both countries reflect the realities in which they are inserted, particularly concerning economic development and social inequality. The approach of involving local communities is a good example of that, being concerned with increasing recreation opportunities for the inhabitants of the regions where the protected areas are established, in the case of the Canadian province, and with developing a job and income creation strategy in the State of São Paulo, focusing on ecotourism and not on the visitation of local residents.

The analysis suggests that in the Canadian case, the focus of the public use policies on more permissive activities did not have a greater negative impact on the environment, which is more related to the lack of inspection. While the excessive restriction of public use activities, as observed in the São Paulo State PAs, does not guarantee a better nature conservation and, moreover, it limits the benefits the activity can create, in the involvement of local community, by the offer of recreation opportunities, just as in raising the visitors' environmental awareness.

The study shows that the outsourcing policy observed in British Columbia is the responsible for the greater impact. The shift in the management model, from National Parks to the public and for-profit combination model, enabled, at first, the development of the protected areas' system, especially regarding the growth in the number of PAs. However, due to the 2008 economic crisis, this increase in the number of PAs and the drawback in private investments became a problem to be managed by the public power. A result of this is the drop in the quality of the aspects analyzed in this study due to the lack of human and financial resources.

Brazil, and particularly the State of São Paulo, aims to take a similar path to that of the British Columbia government. Since the institution of SIEFLOR, in 2006, we can observe a rapid modification of the PA management vision in the State, being the focus on conservation giving space to market-based strategies. Nonetheless, this model that already revealed itself as inadequate in British Columbia, despite the province having favorable economic conditions and a substantial number of visitors to attract private investment, can lead to negative consequences if reproduced in São Paulo, where the scenario is less favorable. Outsourcing policies can reduce the already rare opportunities of economic development for local communities and the leisure options; compromise environmental awareness opportunities for having a business model focused on profit; and, due to that, increase the negative impacts on the environment.

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The concession of public services can be a good alternative for some cases, particularly in the activities related to public use in Protected Areas, such as accommodation, food, and equipment rental. However, it is only one of many options, and not always the best solution for all situations. Still, if this strategy is admitted, the institutions responsible for the management of protected areas need to find means of ensuring that the local populations are effectively involved, and not only designing regulations that cannot be put into practice.

Finally, it is concluded that the public use in Brazilian Protected Areas is still underdeveloped. The current number of visitors in national protected areas is reduced, taking as reference the North American parks. However, the country has a great potential for growth, due to the natural and cultural attractions protected by the PAs. In order to revert this process into an effective appropriation of these areas by the population, at the same time its goals are achieved, it is necessary for public policies to contribute concretely to the development of ecotourism in its three aspects: environmental conservation, raising visitors' awareness, and the involvement of local community.

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*Information on the authors:*

**Fabrício Scarpeta Matheus**

Fabrício has a Bachelor Degree in Tourism from the University of São Paulo (2003), is specialized in Environmental Management by the SENAC University Center and holds a Master's Degree in Sciences from the Program of Social Change and Political Participation from the University of São Paulo (USP). He has experience in ecotourism management and regulation of Protected Areas and had developed programs and projects by the Forestry Foundation, as the Program Trilhas de São Paulo and the Program of Volunteering in Protected Areas. He was also responsible for the Visitation Management Nucleus for Ecotourism of the Project of Ecotourism Development in the Atlantic Rainforest, developed by the Secretariat for the Environment of the State of São Paulo, through a loan contract with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and participated in the designing of many projects of touristic activity planning and management by the *T4 Consultoria em Turismo*, among them is the Tourism Management Plan for Ilhabela, the Tourism Development Plan for Paraty and the External Assessment of the Program *Olá Turista* (Hello, Tourist). He has also worked as a researcher of the Institute of Economic Research Foundation – FIPE in projects such as the Study of economic and social impacts of the FIFA Confederations Cup. He has acted in the WWF-Brazil, as a conservation analyst, where he was responsible for the Project of Conservation of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in the Iguaçu Park Trinational Corridor. He is currently a PhD student in the Program of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia, in Canada. Email: matheus@unbc.ca.

**Sidnei Raimundo**

Associate Professor at the School of Arts, Sciences and Humanities, University of São Paulo (EACH-USP). He has a Bachelor's Degree in Geography from the University of São Paulo (USP), a Masters in Geography (Physical Geography) from the University of São Paulo, a PhD in Geography (in the field of environmental analysis and territorial dynamics) from the Campinas State University – UNICAMP – and a Post-Doctorate from the University of Girona, Spain, in coastal management focusing on the use and occupation of the coast in tourism and leisure activities and equipment. He worked for 15 years at the São Paulo Forestry Institute, managing parks, ecological stations, and other protected areas. He has taught for more than 10 years in private Higher Education Institutions. Since 2006, he is a Professor at EACH-USP, where he is also an advisor in the post-graduate programs in "Social Change and Political Participation" and in "Tourism". He is the leader of the research group "Territorialities,

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Public Policies and Conflict in Conservation of Heritage", registered at CNPq. He has experience in managing protected and other green spaces, developing management plans, and planning and managing the social and environmental impact of leisure and tourism. He develops his research theme on protected area management, spatial analysis, geography of leisure and tourism, natural resource management, ecotourism, and the impacts of leisure and tourism. Email: sraimundo@usp.br.

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