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On the trails of conservation: the creation of the Serra do Conduru State Park, Bahia, from 1993 to 2006

Nas trilhas da conservação: a criação do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, Bahia, de 1993 a 2006

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Abstract

This case study examines the creation of the Serra do Conduru State Park (PESC) from the perspective of Environmental History, aiming to understand how various actors sought to overcome the conflicts, contradictions, and controversies surrounding the Park, from its decree to its implementation. It also seeks to explore the changes and continuities brought about by this conservation unit in the territory between 1993 and 2006. The park was part of a broader context of territorial management projects in southern Bahia, based on notions of sustainable development and tourism promotion through the creation of Environmental Protection Areas (APAs). As related projects, the Park and the APA Costa de Itacaré - Serra Grande fostered interactions between humans and non-humans, altering conservation dynamics and associated lives. For this study, sources included APA newsletters published between 1999 and 2004, minutes from the APA and PESC Management Council meetings between 1999 and 2006, the PESC Creation and APA Implementation Project, as well as interviews with residents, environmentalists, and managers of both conservation units. Amid conflicts, negotiations, and alliances, the Park reorganized human communities in the territory and their relationships with other forms of life, promoted the maintenance and regeneration of key forest remnants, and contributed to the conservation of Atlantic Forest biodiversity. This article is the result of research conducted with funding from CAPES.
Keywords: parks; conservation; animal agencies; socio-environmental conflicts.

Resumo

O estudo de caso aqui apresentado aborda a criação do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru (PESC), através da perspectiva da História Ambiental, a fim de compreender os modos como diversos atores buscaram superar os

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conflitos, contradições e controvérsias que atravessaram o Parque, desde o seu decreto até a implementação. Também buscamos compreender as mudanças e permanências provocadas por essa unidade de conservação no território entre os anos de 1993 a 2006. O parque estava inserido num contexto mais amplo de projetos de gestão territorial na região sul da Bahia, baseados em noções de desenvolvimento sustentável e fomento ao turismo através da criação de Áreas de Proteção Ambiental (APAs). Sendo projetos correlatos, o Parque e a APA Costa de Itacaré - Serra Grande provocaram interações entre humanos e não humanos, modificando as dinâmicas da conservação e vidas associadas. Para este estudo, utilizamos como fontes os Jornais da APA publicados entre 1999 e 2004, Atas de reuniões dos Conselhos Gestores da APA e do PESC entre 1999 e 2006, Projeto de Criação do PESC e Implementação da APA, entrevistas com moradores, ambientalistas e gestores das duas UCs. Entre conflitos, negociações e alianças, o Parque provocou a reorganização de comunidades humanas no território e suas relações com outras formas de vida, promoveu a manutenção e regeneração de importantes remanescentes florestais e contribuiu para a conservação da biodiversidade na Mata Atlântica.
Este artigo é fruto de pesquisa realizada com financiamento da CAPES.
Palavras-chave: parques; conservação; agências animais; conflitos socioambientais.

Introduction

The Atlantic Forest is one of the most biodiverse and threatened ecosystems on the planet and, therefore, has raised intense debates about the possibility of combining biodiversity preservation and socioeconomic development. In this context, different conservation initiatives have been implemented over the last few decades, many of which have had direct impacts on the territory and its inhabitants. The Serra do Conduru State Park (PESC) was created on February 21, 1997, by State Decree No. 6,227, with an estimated area of 7,000 hectares. It was later expanded to 9,275 hectares by Decree No. 8,702 of November 4, 2003. Located in the southern region of Bahia, PESC is a particularly interesting case to study how environmental conservation initiatives affect territories with specific social dynamics that combine forestry and family farming.

This research falls within the field of Environmental History, an approach that seeks to understand the historical interactions between human societies and the natural world. We sought to investigate the case of PESC to address the conflicts, contradictions and alliances in the process of creating

and implementing it between 1993 and 2006. The main aim of this article is to analyze the interactions between various actors in the process of creating and implementing PESC, causing a socio-environmental reconfiguration in the region. Among the actors participating in the process, environmental managers, non-governmental organizations and local residents stand out. In addition, the study highlights the role of biodiversity – understood as the set of species and their interactions – in the configuration of territorial dynamics. To guiding questions of this research were: how did the different agents involved seek to resolve conflicts and overcome controversies during the implementation of the park? What were the impacts of this initiative on the territory and its human and non-human communities?

To answer these questions, we developed research using a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach, inspired by the methodology of Environmental History. This is a field concerned with the impact of societies on the environment and also with the role that nature plays in historical processes. Following the notes put forward by Worster[1], we propose an analysis that articulates, in an open, dynamic and interactive way, three fundamental dimensions: "nature", society and culture. These are intertwined in the humankind's concrete experience over time, in such a way as to make a dissociated analysis impossible. If we sometimes do so, it is only as a methodological device. Even so, we must always be attentive to the interactions between economy, politics, cultural representations and the multiplicity of beings that we call "nature".

The sources analyzed were the APA Costa de Itacaré – Serra Grande Newsletters (1999-2004), minutes of meetings held by the PESC and APA Management Boards (1999-2006), the PESC Creation and APA Implementation Project, as well as interviews with residents, environmentalists and managers of conservation units. The analysis of these materials was based on theoretical references and other case studies that explored the interactions between societies and nature[2]. We sought to consider the historical and dynamic

[1] WORSTER, Donald. Para fazer história ambiental. Revista Estudos Históricos, v. 4, n. 8, p. 198-215, 1991.

[2] Some fundamental references in this study are: CABRAL, Diogo de Carvalho; BUSTAMANTE, Mônica (org.). *Metamorfoses florestais: culturas, ecologias e as transformações históricas da Mata Atlântica.* Curitiba: Prismas, 2015.; DIAS, Marcelo Henrique. *Economia, sociedade e paisagens da Capitania de Ilhéus.* Ilhéus: Editus, 2019; DIEGUES, Antonio Carlos. *O mito moderno da natureza intocada.* São Paulo: Hucitec; NUPAUB, 1996; LATOUR, Bruno. *Reagregando o social: uma introdução à Teoria do Ator-Rede.* Salvador: EDUFBA; Bauru: EDUSC, 2012; OLIVEIRA, Rogério Ribeiro de. Mata Atlântica, paleoterritórios e história ambiental. *Ambiente & Sociedade*, v. X, n. 2, p. 93-112, jul./dez. 2007; PÁDUA, José Augusto. *As bases teóricas da história ambiental.* Estud. av. 24 (68). 2010. Estudos de caso de UCs são abordados em: ALVES, Melissa L. Nas Trilhas da Conservação: Conflitos e Alianças no Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, Sul da Bahia, 1993-2006. Dissertação. Mestrado em História. UFMG. Belo Horizonte, 2023, 207 p.

character of those articulations, that is, the changes and permanence involving the park over time.

In debates on environmental conservation, there has traditionally been strong criticism of full protection models. These models are said to be based on the paradigm of "untouched nature" (Diegues, 1996)[3], that is, separated from society. This model transformation relates to proposals that recognize the human presence as an integral part of ecosystems and advocate participatory approaches that integrate local knowledge and promote environmental justice[4]. As Elinor Ostrom (1990)[5] points out, strategies based on community governance and local arrangements might be more efficient in the long term conservation, mainly in rural and biodiverse contexts. Such approaches value socioecological systems (SES) that contribute to sustainability.

In the Brazilian case, the National System of Conservation Units (SNUC), created in 2000, provides participatory management mechanisms, such as management councils, but their implementation has been marked by inequalities in access to decision-making and limitations in the effective inclusion of local communities. Studies such as those by Melo and Irving (2014)[6], emphasize that, although participatory discourse has been institutionalized, there are still numerous challenges to its implementation, such as raising awareness among regional social actors and articulating different instruments of territorial planning. In the PESC context, such tensions were expressed in the difficulties of dialogue between the management bodies and the residents, in the opacity of decisions on expropriations and in the persistence of distrust.

Among the alternatives discussed to overcome such challenges, the management model in mosaics of conservation units stands out, which proposes the articulation between different categories of UCs (full protection and sustainable use) in continuous or interdependent territories. This

[3] DIEGUES, Antônio Carlos S. *O mito moderno da natureza intocada*. Ed. Hucitec, São Paulo, 1996. When citing Diegues's (2000) critique to "the myth of untouched nature", we do not intend to delegitimize the creation of full protection conservation units. We recognize their importance in biodiversity conservation, mainly in threated ecosystems such as the Atlantic Forest. Our critique regards management models which disregard social and historical contexts and apply exclusion principles in a decontextualized way, thus generating conflicts with local populations. As addressed in the article, ways have been created by the notions of land use mosaics, ecological corridors and the SNUC participative measures.

[4] JEDYN, Adrian et al. *Conservação da natureza sob a perspectiva da gestão comunitária*. Revista Tecnologia e Sociedade, v. 17, n. 49, p. 201-218, 2021.

[5] OSTROM, Elinor. *A general framework for analyzing sustainability of social-ecological systems*. Science, v. 325, n. 5939, p. 419-422, 2009.

[6] MELO, Gustavo Mendes de; IRVING, Marta de Azevedo. M*osaicos de unidades de conservação: desafios para a gestão integrada e participativa para a conservação da natureza*. Geografias, v. 10, n. 2, p. 46–58, 2014.

approach, supported by the SNUC[7], seeks to strengthen ecological connectivity and promote collaborative environmental governance. By recognizing the diversity of interests and ways of life in the territory, mosaics represent a promising way to consolidate more democratic and sustainable conservation strategies[8].

As a result, the research revealed several transformations in the territory, caused by the PESC creation in the context of that period. At the same time, human communities were reorganized in terms of their relationship with the forest. Despite having effectively contributed to the conservation of important forest blocks and the regeneration of local fauna and flora, the park also faced significant resistance from residents, mainly due to land expropriations and restrictions on access to natural resources, since these processes involved a high level of violence. Therefore, the PESC promoted pioneering spaces for negotiation and regional participatory management, and stood out as a conservation case that enabled the continuity of a significant stretch of the Atlantic Forest.

The Atlantic Forest in Southern Bahia and its Conservation

The southern region of Bahia contains a large part of its territory covered by ecosystems encompassed by the Atlantic Forest Biome. This regional forest has historically been occupied and exploited, resulting in the fragmentation of forest remnants under intense pressure.

The existence of the Atlantic Forest in Brazil is, to a large extent, a story of destruction. Warren Dean[9] captured details of how this biome was consumed "by fire and sword" by successive economic and political waves. Even so, it is possible to visualize the composition of the Dense Ombrophilous Forest that characterizes the region with large trees, a diversity of plant and animal species, as well as associated ecosystems, such as mangroves and

[7] the mosaics of conservation units are provided for in art. 26 of the SNUC (Law 9.985/2000) and must be recognized by the Ministry of Environment (MMA), according to procedures described in Ordinance nº 482, of 14th December 2010.

[8] RESERVA DA BIOSFERA DA MATA ATLÂNTICA (RBMA). Oficina Regional de Mosaicos do Corredor Central da Mata Atlântica: Regência, ES, 13 e 14 de agosto de 2009. Linhares: RBMA, 2009. Retrieved from: <https://www.rbma.org.br/programas/docs_programas/mosaicos_corredores_ecologicos/03_06_01.pdf>. Acesso em: 19 abr. 2025.

[9] DEAN, Warren. *A ferro e fogo: a história e a devastação da Mata Atlântica brasileira.* 1ª. ed. São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 2004. 484 p.

restingas (coastal strand). These surviving sections demonstrate important conservation practices.

The development of the Atlantic Forest concept, associated with the use of the term "biomes" in Brazil, reveals a process of scientific, social and political construction that goes back a long way. However, it was only between the 1980s and 1990s, driven by the mobilization of environmental movements and the creation of organizations such as *SOS Mata Atlântica*, that the term became consolidated. With the publication of the "Action Plan for the Atlantic Forest" in 1990, and its respective legal recognition, a broad conception of the concept was adopted, encompassing various plant formations from the coast to the interior, recognized as an important environmental and cultural heritage of Brazil.[10]

In southern Bahia, the Atlantic Forest resisted major human intervention until the last decades of the 20th century, when the expansion of urban areas, agriculture and livestock farming began to fragment the forest landscape. The cocoa, which was the region's main source of income at the time, faced a crisis that was aggravated by the spread of the plague known as "witche's broom disease" (*Moniliophthora perniciosa*)[11]. Many forest areas were degraded, and farming families migrated, drastically impacting the region from the 1980s onwards. That fungus deforms the fruits, branches and leaves of cocoa trees, drastically reducing production and generating huge economic losses. This situation contributed to environmental degradation, as cocoa lands were abandoned or converted to other uses without sustainable planning, intensifying socioeconomic and environmental challenges.

Despite the crisis in cocoa farming, the *cabruca* system[12] persisted in southern Bahia, forming a mosaic territory, where cocoa agroforestry

[10] About the creation of the concept of Mata Atlântica (Atlantic Forest) and biomes, in Brasil, see: PÁDUA, José Augusto. Apresentação: uma Floresta, um país e um saber em construção. Da província ao bioma: representações da Mata Atlântica. In: *Metamorfoses florestais: culturas, ecologias e as transformações históricas da Mata Atlântica*. CABRAL e BUSTAMANTE (orgs.). Editora Prismas: Curitiba, 2015, p. 7; CASTRO, Leonardo. *Da província ao bioma: representações da Mata Atlântica*. In: Metamorfoses florestais: culturas, ecologias e as transformações históricas da Mata Atlântica. CABRAL e BUSTAMANTE (orgs.). Editora Prismas: Curitiba, 2015, p. 54-82; CABRAL, Diogo de Carvalho. *Na Presença da Floresta: Mata Atlântica e História Colonial*. Garamond/FAPERJ, Rio de Janeiro, 2014.

[11] SETENTA, Wallace; LOBÃO, Dan Érico. *Conservação Produtiva: cacau por mais 250 anos*. Itabuna, BA. 2012, 190 p.

[12] The cabruca-cocoa system, widely spread in southern Bahia, is a type of cocoa production, and the term "cabruca" is a reference to the action of "brocar" or "cabrocar" (drilling), that is, cut part of the vegetation, removing the understory, low plants and bushes, to plant cocoa, preserving higher trees, in a discontinued way surrounded by "natural" vegetation.

alternates with other land uses. Shaded cocoa, diverse plantations, small-scale livestock farming and urban areas have created a landscape that preserves part of the forest and its biodiversity. Such mosaics balance agricultural production with environmental protection, keeping the conservationist function of the *cabruca* even in the face of economic and social difficulties.

It is worth noting that, despite its importance in preventing total deforestation and maintaining the forest landscape, *cabruca* also imposes significant changes to the structure of the forest. Since it requires cutting down plants in the lower layers, the system can compromise natural regeneration and the diversity of species in the understory. While *cabruca* has contributed to preserving stretches of the Atlantic Forest, it has also caused profound changes in regional ecosystems. Studies indicate that the *cabruca* contribution to maintaining tree biodiversity can vary greatly, especially according to the management method used in the property.[13]

The southern region of Bahia underwent several land occupation processes throughout the colonial, imperial and republican periods. In 1562, with the Captaincy of São Jorge dos Ilhéus, a strip of land between the island of Boipeba and the mouth of the Rio de Contas was donated to the Jesuits, who established their residence in Camamu. The region developed settlements focused on food and sugar production, using indigenous and African labor. According to Marcelo Dias, at the beginning of the 18th century:

> [...] there was a village of friendly indigenous people and some Portuguese who were hired by the Jesuits at the site [mouth of the Rio de Contas]. [...] we found [...] letters of manumission granted in the parish of Barra do Rio de Contas from 1711 onwards, which shows that slave farming was already consolidated at that time. The finished the construction of the main church in 1722, providing the foundation for the construction of the Vila Nova de São José da Palma do Rio de Contas.[14]

Apart from the Jesuits, Capuchin friars founded villages, such as Nossa Senhora dos Remédios with the indigenous people called Gueréns[15], while other indigenous groups resisted the Portuguese occupation. The actions

[13] Cassano, C. R., Schroth, G., Faria, D., Delabie, J. H. C., & Bede, L. C. (2014). *Desafios e recomendações para a conservação da biodiversidade na região cacaueira do Sul da Bahia*. Centro de Pesquisas do Cacau, 2014.

[14] DIAS, Marcelo Henrique. *Economia, sociedade e paisagens da Capitania de Ilhéu*s. Editus : Ilhéus (Bahia), 2019, p. 172.

[15] SILVA, Ayalla Oliveira. *Ordem imperial e aldeamento indígena: Camacãns, Gueréns e Pataxós do Sul da Bahia*. Editus : UESC, Ilhéus, 2018, p. 30.

of those indigenous people contributed to the maintenance of forest cover. In the 18th century, the forests of Ilhéus were the target of royal measures to preserve timber for the Crown, but forest destruction advanced to create arable areas. As Cabral[16] explains, the Atlantic Forest integrated the colonial market more as biomass transformed by agricultural activities than as timber.

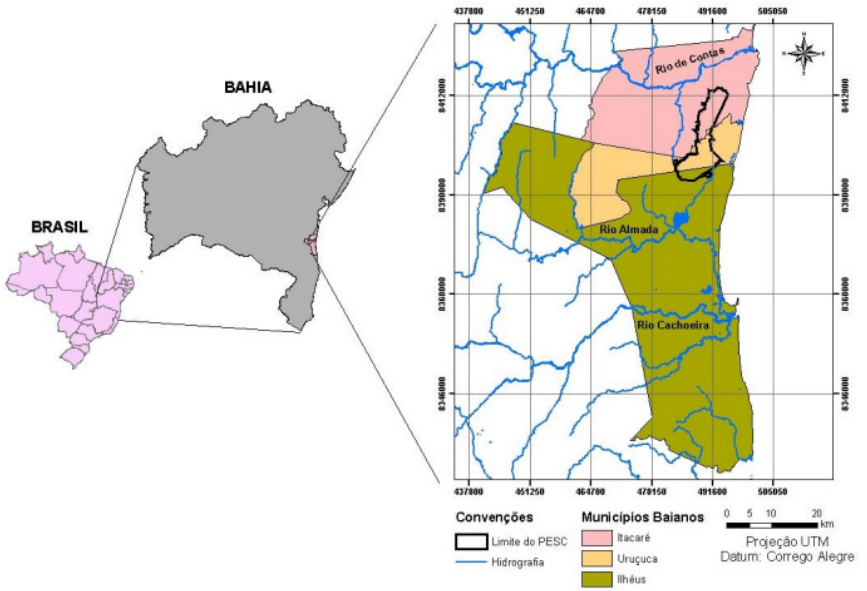
The intensification of European occupation occurred in the 19th century, with cocoa overtaking other productive activities, shaping regional identity and coronelismo. The cabruca cocoa system was developed based on the practical knowledge of farmers, over many years of attempts and observations on the best way to produce cocoa. However, in the 1980s, the cocoa crisis caused the unemployment of around 250 thousand workers,[17] bankruptcy of local companies and economic chaos.

In contrast to those effects, PESC was created in 1997, occupying an area already populated by agricultural communities, in the municipalities of Ilhéus, Itacaré and Uruçuca, where cocoa farming was significant. The location of the park can be seen on the map below.

[16] CABRAL, Diogo de Carvalho. *Na Presença da Floresta: Mata Atlântica e História Colonial*. Garamond/FAPERJ, Rio de Janeiro, 2014.

[17] MINISTÉRIO DA AGRICULTURA, PECUÁRIA E ABASTECIMENTO. COMISSÃO EXECUTIVA DO PLANO DA LAVOURA CACAUEIRA. Programa de Recuperação da Lavoura Cacaueira – 3ª e 4ª Etapas, 2009, p. 8.

Figure 1- Map of the Serra do Conduru State Park location in the municipalities of Ilhéus, Uruçuca and Itacaré. Produced by Geoprocessing Laboratory – IESB, 2004.



Source: PESC Management Plan, 2005.

Families in the park area grew cocoa and other fruit crops, mostly in agroforestry systems. In 2004, there were about 135 small farms, with low population density, family ties and strong connections to the rural and forest landscape[18].

Therefore, several traditional communities in southern Bahia, including indigenous peoples, *quilombolas* and farmers, developed sustainable management methods that allowed human occupation and forest conservation to coexist. However, with the advancement of modernization and the intensification of economic activities, these ways of life were put under pressure. Throughout the 20th century, the Atlantic Forest in southern Bahia faced a sharp decline due to crises in cocoa farming, leading to the degradation of areas previously protected by *cabruca*, which was gradually replaced by sawmills and livestock farming, a process aggravated by accelerated urbanization and industrialization[19].

[18] BAHIA, Plano de Manejo do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, 2005, p. 198.

[19] GOVERNO DA BAHIA: SECRETARIA DA CULTURA E TURISMO, SECRETARIA DE AGRICULTURA, IRRIGAÇÃO

In 1992, after the Rio-92 Summit, environmental issues gained momentum in Brazil, leading to the creation of the Ministry of the Environment and state and municipal secretariats. Environmental protection programs and sustainability projects were developed. In Bahia, this movement faced the crisis in cocoa farming in the south of the state. Tourism was one of the proposals to address the crisis in the cocoa economy, with the added bonus of being presented as a "clean" industry with low environmental impact, taking advantage of the "potential" of the beautiful northeastern beaches[20]. With this purpose in mind, the government created Environmental Protection Areas (APAs) that regulated land use without removing local communities.

The APA Costa de Itacaré - Serra Grande, created by decree nº 2.186 in 1993, covers approximately 150 km² on the Costa do Cacau, between Itacaré and Ilhéus, including Serra Grande, district of Uruçuca. To promote tourism, it was necessary to invest in infrastructure, such as accessibility, accommodation and sanitation, anticipating an increase in the flow of people. To this end, the PRODETUR/NE[21] was created, which resulted in infrastructure works such as the paving of the BA 001 highway, connecting Ilhéus and Itacaré, and crossing the APA.

This road was one of the most controversial projects in the Program. Many local residents supported the initiative, hoping for improvements in access to basic services. But environmentalists and NGOs were concerned about the negative impacts on the Atlantic Forest[22]. As a compensatory measure, the creation of the Serra do Conduru State Park was proposed, which became an important integral conservation unit in the south of Bahia [23].

E REFORMA AGRÁRIA. *Projeto de Implantação das Áreas de Proteção Ambiental de Itacaré – Serra Grande e Lagoa Encantada e Criação do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru*, 1997; IESB. *Ação das Madeireiras no Sul da Bahia: Informes e Documentos*. Verão Resumida. Novembro de 1997.

[20] AYRES, Mary Lessa Alvim; DAEMON, Ilka Gonçalves; FERNANDES, Paulo Cesar Siruffo; OLIVEIRA, Roberta Junqueira de A. *PRODETUR: infra-estrutura e seus reflexos no turismo*. Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social, Rio de Janeiro, 1999. 6 p. Retrieved from: <https://web.bndes.gov.br/bib/jspui/handle/1408/16062>. Accessed on 21/04/2023.

[21] The Tourism Development Program, whose pilot version was implemented in the northeastern region of Brazil (PRODETUR/NE), was a partnership between federal state governments in the region.

[22] The controversy and environmentalists' action regarding the road were discussed in the following interviews: ARTAZA, Oscar. Interview with the author, August 10, 2022, virtual environment (audio file and transcript kept by the author); ROCHA, Rui. Interview with the author, May 02, 2022, virtual environment (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

[23] GOVERNO DA BAHIA: SECRETARIA DA CULTURA E TURISMO, SECRETARIA DE AGRICULTURA, IRRIGAÇÃO E REFORMA AGRÁRIA. Projeto de Implantação das Áreas de Proteção Ambiental de Itacaré – Serra Grande e Lagoa Encantada e Criação do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, 1997.

Environmentalists organized in pioneering movements in the region immediately opposed the road. In an attempt to force a counterpoint to the project, the group was labeled as "anti-progress" in the eyes of the local population. Led by IESB, they prepared to face the public hearing that would announce the major project. On that occasion, they focused on environmental impact studies of the road and other research on the regional flora and fauna.

For this reason, the study carried out by the New York Botanical Garden in partnership with CEPLAC was of great importance, it documented an emblematic aspect in the history of the park. Since 1990, botanists from these institutions began collecting samples of woody species in an area located between Serra do Capitão and Serra do Conduru. In a single hectare of Atlantic Forest, the researchers found the impressive number of 458 different species of trees[24], The study generated the biodiversity index used until these days when seeking to highlight the importance of the region in the conservation of the biodiversity of rainforests worldwide. The data produced also characterize the region as having a high rate of endemism, both in relation to species from the Atlantic Forest biome in general, and those existing only in the area between the states of Bahia and Espírito Santo.

The combination of high biodiversity and endemism, associated with the threat of increasing deforestation, caught the attention of researchers and institutions, reinforcing the designation of southern Bahia as a high priority for forest conservation in national and international projects. Therefore, environmentalists outlined a new strategy with a shift in their previous position of opposition to the road. For Oscar Artaza, a member of Boto Negro at the time of the PRODETUR hearing in Itacaré,

> [...] [the] road was well sold! It was well advertised by part of the local politicians, saying that we were against it and wanted to prevent their [residents], progress, then, we realized that at that moment we... you know... We were losing that battle, and we could not lose it completely, so we decided to compromise. Then we said: "Ok, we are going to accept that, but there are conditions, you see. We will accept it with conditions."[25]

[24] More information about the project can be seen at: *Northeastern Atlantic Coastal Forest Project*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nybg.org/bsci/res/bahia/Study-si.html>. Accessed on 15/05/2023. THOMAS, Wm. Wayt; CARVALHO, André M. V.; AMORIM, André M. A.; GARRISON, Judith; ARBALÁEZ, Alba L. *Plant endemism in two forests in southern Bahia, Brazil. Biodiversity and Conservation*, 7, 1998, p. 314.

[25] ARTAZA, Oscar. Interview with the author, August 10, 2022, virtual environment (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

They created a proposal involving compensatory measures as conditions for the road construction release by environmental inspection authorities. It would be necessary to effectively implement the APA Costa de Itacaré - Serra Grande, which was still only on paper, and also create a new fully protected conservation unit that would be the state park. In other words, the environmentalists armed themselves with scientific arguments, mobilized their networks of contacts and found a conciliatory alternative to the conflict involving the road that cut through the newly created APA[26]. Therefore, what seemed like an antagonism of interests ended up as an opportunity for growth. The Institute of Socio-Environmental Studies of Southern Bahia. (IESB)[27] and the PRODETUR originated in the same context, thus strengthening each other.

Creation of the Serra do Conduru State Park and Implementation of the Costa de Itacaré – Serra Grande APA (1997-2002)

Between 1997 and 2002, the Serra do Conduru State Park was created. At the same time, the Costa de Itacaré – Serra Grande Environmental Protection Area (APA) was implemented. That period was marked by intense negotiations, conflicts and advances that laid the foundations for the conservation of the Atlantic Forest in the region. Both conservationist actions are connected to a national and global movement in the fabric of the environmental political arena of the period.

In the national context, the first natural parks in Brazil were created in the 1930s, during the government of Getúlio Vargas, with the participation of scientists from the National Museum. In 1937, the Itatiaia National Park was founded and, in 1939, the Iguaçu and Serra dos Órgãos National Parks were created[28]. Since then, the creation of conservation units varied according to favorable or unfavorable conditions.

[26] ROCHA, Rui. Interview with the author, May 02, 2022, virtual environment (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

[27] The IESB was a highly active NGO in the context of this research. It appeared in 1994 with a scientific-technical team formed by a group of researchers from the State University of Santa Cruz (UESC). Its main agenda was biodiversity studies and the proposition of conservation units to face deforestation. They also worked through institutions to stop the activity of illegal sawmills.

[28] DRUMMOND, José Augusto; FRANCO, José Luiz de Andrade; OLIVEIRA, Daniela de. *Uma análise sobre a história e a situação das unidades de conservação no Brasil*. Conservação da biodiversidade: legislação e políticas públicas / Roseli Senna Ganem (org.). Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, Edições Câmara. 2010. p. 341-385.

Criticism of the parks highlights the expulsion of resident families, disrupting local ways of life, especially in the global south, where the vast majority of diversity *hotspots*[29]. The debate about the human presence in protected areas remains open. Some scientists defend the analysis of each case, since in certain areas, relocation might be mandatory to protect extremely vulnerable species.

Models that encompass a broader perspective of territorial management, such as corridors and mosaics of conservation units, were implemented in Brazil between 1990 and 2000[30]. Even so, many conflicts persisted. Another approach suggests dialogue with residents before creating UCs, as provided for in the SNUC Law, to seek agreements that reconcile conservation and local interests. In any case, it is currently agreed that the engagement of communities in the interior or surrounding areas of UCs is crucial for the effectiveness of environmental protection.

The project to create the Serra do Conduru State Park was drawn up by environmentalists and signed by the Department of Forestry Development (DDF), linked to the Bahia State Department of Agriculture. Presented in 1997, the document produced an overview of forest conservation in the region and questioned the actors involved in the proposal – biodiversity, residents, government and the financing bank – highlighting how the creation of the park would meet the needs of all. The park was assigned the functions of conserving biodiversity, maintaining water quality, promoting ecotourism, promoting scientific research and environmental education, in line with traditional conservationist and preservationist models.

The drafters of the project defined the stakeholders and their identities in order to consolidate the park as a point of convergence of interests. However, the engagement of the local community was limited. Environmentalists described the residents as squatters and landowners dissatisfied with the quality of the soil – acidic, gravelly and unsuitable for agriculture. According to the project:

[29] "Biodiversity hotspots are areas presenting a unique biological diversity, rich in endemic species and which are highly endangered. Worldwide, 34 hotspots have been recognized, altogether these regions represent 2.3% of the earth surface and shelter 50% of all plant species and 42% of the terrestrial vertebrate species of the world". (MINISTÉRIO DO MEIO AMBIENTE, CONSERVAÇÃO INTERNACIONAL E FUNDAÇÃO SOS MATA ATLÂNTICA. O Corredor Central da Mata Atlântica: uma nova escala de conservação da biodiversidade. Brasília, 2006, p. 33).

[30] MINISTÉRIO DO MEIO AMBIENTE, O Corredor Central da Mata Atlântica, 2006.

> Great disappointment with the agricultural use of the land is observed among small and medium farmers, either due to the lack of subsidized credit or the very low soil quality. A significant number of properties are for sale or abandoned within the Park's area.[31]

This way of interpreting the interests and needs of residents in the area where the park would be installed may have disregarded possible conflicts and differences of opinion, presuming the consent of residents, even without prior consultation.

Environmentalists mobilized stakeholders through reports that mapped biodiversity and published data on endemic species, representing flora and fauna. However, the representativeness of this group to speak on their behalf was questioned by residents during the implementation of the park, generating conflicts. The project created a network of fragile connections, without the necessary consultation of the stakeholders involved. Furthermore, the network for the park is always subject to reconfigurations, since "the consensus and its alliances can be challenged." Therefore, when the Project was launched, the effective creation and implementation of PESC were still uncertain.[32]

Law 9.985, which created the SNUC, was approved in 2000 and regulated in 2002, requiring public consultation before the UCs creation. However, according to Marcelo Barreto, the Park manager, PESC had been created before that, between 1997 and 2002, without following those procedures, which contributed to the conflicts with local communities. The PESC implementation started with three technicians who were in charge of the land regularization and management. As reported by Rui Rocha:

> [...] at the very beginning, in the first couple of years, there was intensive work of land regularization, inventory of properties, and demarcation of the polygon, this was all done in... while the road was being built, *pari passu*, the park was being implemented on this foundation scale.[33]

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[31] BAHIA. Projeto de Implantação das Áreas de Proteção Ambiental de Itacaré – Serra Grande e Lagoa Encantada e Criação do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, 1997, p. 35.

[32] CALLON, Michel. *Some elements of a sociology of translation: the domestication of the scallops and the fisherman of St. Brieuc Bay*. In: LAW, John. Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge. London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1986, p. 204.

[33] ROCHA, Rui. Interview with the author, May 02, 2022, virtual environment (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

The residents were surprised by the park news, which arrived in a traumatic way. According to Ana, former resident:

> We got to know it, because there was this news: "Eh! Everybody is going to leave this place, everybody will have to leave this place, everybody is losing their land, we have to leave anyway!" The park people arrived like that, the first people working on the park implementation were quite aggressive with the residents.[34]

The ban on agriculture, hunting and fishing made it impossible for families to survive and earn an income, as they depended on the extraction of piassava palm and timber. Activities that were once common, such as the extraction of timber for construction and sale, became crimes, resulting in arrests and complaints. Residents faced great difficulties and felt wronged, reporting a scenario of "war" against the park. The possibilities of structuring the territory within the indirect use conservation unit model were still absent for residents.

The creation of integral conservation units in Brazil often generates environmental conflicts, varying according to the predominant characteristics. This is evident when considering the "myth of untouched nature"[35], recognizing that no place is completely free from human contact. "Territorial" conflicts arise in "situations in which there is an overlap of claims from different social groups, bearers of different identities and cultural logics, over the same spatial area"[36].

Such conflicts are dynamic, being reworked with new elements in the territory, and are not limited to PESC. Up to the 2000s, many environmental policies neglected the needs of resident populations, generating challenges common to parks. Thus, the relationship between parks and internal or surrounding populations is one of the most conflicting aspects in the management of these areas.

Different actions were adopted by residents and environmentalists in an attempt to reduce conflicts and ensure the implementation of regional conservation units. One of the important measures for the implementation

[34] ANA. Interview with the author, August 25, 2022, Serra Grande, Bahia (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

[35] DIEGUES, Antônio Carlos S. O mito moderno da natureza intocada. Ed. Hucitec, São Paulo, 1996.

[36] ZHOURI, Andréa & LASCHEFSKI, Klemens (org). *Conflitos Ambientais*. Texto inspirado na Introdução do livro Desenvolvimento e Conflitos Ambientais: Um Novo Campo de Investigação. In: Zhouri, A.; Laschefski, K. (org.). Desenvolvimento e conflitos ambientais. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2010, p. 7.

of the Itacaré-Serra Grande APA was the Environmental Education and Ecotourism Program (PEAE), whose actions included the APA Newsletter, with its first edition published in July 1999 and the last in 2007, totaling 41 issues[37]. Each twelve-page issue addressed themes such as the Management Plan, interviews, recipes and jokes. The tabloid format, measuring 43 x 28 cm and the extensive use of images, turned the APA newsletter into a more accessible means of communication. The editorial board included residents, environmentalists, and IESB members.

Funding was provided in three phases: initially, with resources from SUDETUR, The Ford Foundation and others; then, through advertisements; and, finally, through the National Atlantic Forest Fund (FNMA). The newsletter was distributed free of charge and sought to promote environmental education for the communities, as explained below:

> Now, as in the past, the challenge remains the same: keeping the supply of quality environmental information to men, women and children within the APA, to foster the process of formation of an authentically sustainable society.[38]

The newsletter incorporated the state's developmentalist thinking, highlighting the role of planning sustainable development, as in the Ecological Corridor Project:

> [...] also, for the first time, a project will be based on the country's geopolitical planning and a view of future that provides for the conservation of its rich and invaluable biodiversity.[39]

Despite being aligned with state policies, it encouraged community participation in the APA Management Board and in environmental activities, promoting debates and local articulations. The editorial board and contributors were not homogeneous, reflecting different perspectives in the newsletter. The publication highlighted scientific discourse and local themes, seeking to connect national and global scenarios "for the promotion of the Costa de Itacaré – Serra Grande APA and environmental conservation throughout our planet"[40].

[37] All issues of the APA newsletter analyzed in this research were found at the PESC main office and digitalized, they are kept by the author and available for research.

[38] APA Newsletter, July 2004, p. 2.

[39] APA Newsletter, Sep/2000, p. 11.

[40] Sentence printed in the technical card of each issue of the APA newsletter analyzed.

Therefore, the APA newsletter was a dynamic publication that revisited aspects of the past, diagnosed the current reality and planned the future of the region. Its main effects on the PESC implementation were the opening of paths for dialogue with local population groups, the strengthening of the image of NGOs (especially IESB) in the environmentalist panorama and the regional circulation of the notion of sustainable development. Finally, it was important in the articulation of the APA Management Council (CG), a pioneer in the state of Bahia and the driving force behind the later PESC Management Council.

The formation of the Costa de Itacaré – Serra Grande APA Management Board, created to implement the APA, also contributed to the implementation of PESC[41]. In the 1990s, participatory management models started to spread throughout Brazil[42], and management boards in environmental protection areas became an important part of the national environmental policy after the SNUC law. The first management board of the country was created in 1993 at the do Carmo APA (SP)[43], while the one at Costa de Itacaré-Serra Grande APA was the first implemented in Bahia, thus becoming a model experience for other management boards of conservation units in that state.[44]

Prior meetings between June and July 1999 with landowners in the APA introduced the ongoing actions, leveling information about the Environmental Education Program. In May 2000, the Board's first training seminar was attended by public agencies, NGOs and residents' associations. The Environmental Resources Center, a state agency of Bahia, was responsible for coordination, and the IESB was responsible for the executive secretariat. The Board became a space to address issues such as ecotourism, access to beaches, safety and garbage, in addition to conflicts related to the Park. In one meeting, Ms. Otília, a community leader from a local settlement, highlighted the problems faced by poor residents compensated by PESC, since "people are compensated and 'thrown away' in the city. She asked why they shouldn't

[41] For this research, we analyzed the minutes of the APA and PESC management boards between July 1999 and June 2006.

[42] MACEDO, José Alberto Castro; DRUMMOND, José Augusto. *Efeitos da Gestão Participativa dos Parques Estaduais da Bahia*. Raízes, v. 33, n. 1, jan-jun/2012, p. 130.

[43] FULGÊNCIO, Rodolfo Valentino. *As Mobilizações Populares na Criação da Área de Proteção Ambiental Parque e Fazenda do Carmo na Cidade de São Paulo – Brasil*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Cidades Inteligentes e Sustentáveis). UNINOVE, São Paulo, 2022, p. 45.

[44] TORRES, Leíla Muricy. *Análise do processo de implantação de conselhos gestores em áreas de proteção ambiental - o caso das APAs da Bahia*. Dissertation (Development and Environment Doctorate Program). UESC: Ilhéus, 2007, 196 p.

stay in the countryside. Because these people are farmers and only know how to work on the field."[45]

Furthermore, still regarding the APA, board members suggested the formation of a Group of Work to create the PESC Board, aligned to that of the SNUC. Therefore, the APA Board revealed the conflicts generated by the two Conservation Units, but was also a communication channel between the groups, thus promoting participatory management and dialogue. The experience gained with the APA was essential for the PESC organization and implementation.

Implementation of the Serra do Conduru State Park (2003-2006)

The Pilot Program for the Protection of Rainforests (PPG7) was created at the Houston Conference, in 1990, supported by the G7[46], to promote forest conservation in Brazil. Coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, it sought to preserve long term biodiversity by means of "ecological corridors"[47] integrating conservation units and occupied areas, thus promoting sustainable management for the maintenance of species, ecological processes and the regional economy.[48]

The Atlantic Forest Central Corridor (CCMA) includes Espírito Santo and the South of Bahia, covering 8.5 million hectares and two endemism centers: southern Bahia and Rio Doce. The justification of the relevance of that area was reinforced by studies carried out in a partnership between CEPLAC

[45] Dona Otília, Minutes of the Meeting of the APA Management Board, 30/05/2001.

[46] G7 is the name given to the periodical meeting of seven democratic countries most economically developed in the world, namely, the USA, Japan, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy and Canada. (Manual de Comunicação da Secom. Item de Glossário. Retrieved from: <https://www12.senado.leg.br/manualdecomunicacao/guia-de-economia/g7-e-g8>. Accessed on 06/11/2023).

[47] The term "ecological corridor" is used in different contexts. At SNUC, it refers to connectivity elements between fragments of ecosystems, aiming at the genic flow and fauna movement. On the other hand, the projects implemented by the MMA and IBAMA in the 2000s adopted an approach based on the idea of bioregional management proposed by Kenton Miller, which involves conservation units and areas with distinct soil use in integrated landscape management strategies (ARRUDA, Moacir Bueno; SÁ, Luís Fernando S. Nogueira de (org.). *Corredores ecológicos: uma abordagem integradora de ecossistemas no Brasil*. Brasília: IBAMA, 2003). In this sense, expressions such as "ecological corridor" and "biodiversity corridor" have been used interchangeably by different institutions. In this article, we adopted the terminology found in the sources surveyed. (MINISTÉRIO DO MEIO AMBIENTE, *O Corredor Central da Mata Atlântica*, 2006, p. 10).

[48] MINISTÉRIO DO MEIO AMBIENTE, CONSERVAÇÃO INTERNACIONAL E FUNDAÇÃO SOS MATA ATLÂNTICA. O Corredor Central da Mata Atlântica: uma nova escala de conservação da biodiversidade. Brasília, 2006, p. 10.

and NYBG[49], highlighting the high indices of endemism, biodiversity of tree species, and the importance of the *cabruca* system, which accounts for 70% of the 600 thousand hectares of cocoa cultivated in the region.[50]

The PPG7 was funded by the World Bank, manager of the Trust Fund for the Protection of Rainforests, supported by partner entities such as CEPF[51]. In southern Bahia, the Ecological Corridors Project focused on the PESC and the Costa de Itacaré-Serra Grande APA, combining factors that prioritized those areas with the influence of IESB in the arenas of debate on environmental conservation. The resources enabled the Purchase of equipment for the APA Management Plan and strengthened the APA Board, which was an essential step in the PESC implementation.[52]

According to Marcelo Barreto, Itacaré was a pioneer in the creation of participatory environmental spaces, and the park benefited from the technical staff available in the city. In addition, support actions for residents affected by PESC included basic food baskets, forest seedling projects, trails with local guides, and inclusion of residents in the Zero Hunger Program and the Agrarian Reform Plan. However, the most recurring concern of the APA Board regarding PESC involved monitoring to stop the increasing deforestation since the creation of the park.

Until 2004, the APA Board actions supported the implementation of the PESC, which in that year began to have its own management instruments. One of the first measures was the appointment of Marcelo Barreto as park manager in March 2004, who began to participate in meetings of the Group of Work to Monitor and Inspect PESC. In September 2005, the PESC Management Board took office with 19 representatives of the government and civil society, many coming from the APA Board[53].

The Ecological Corridors Project resources were used to form the Board, develop research for the Management Plan and purchase equipment,

[49] BAHIA. Projeto de Implantação das Áreas de Proteção Ambiental de Itacaré – Serra Grande e Lagoa Encantada e Criação do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, 1997, p. 31.

[50] MINISTÉRIO DA AGRICULTURA, PECUÁRIA E ABASTECIMENTO. COMISSÃO EXECUTIVA DO PLANO DA LAVOURA CACAUEIRA. Programa de Recuperação da Lavoura Cacaueira – 3ª e 4ª Etapas, 2009, p. 8.

[51] The CEPF was a Partnership Fund for Critical Ecosystems in the Atlantic Forest Central Corridor formed by the alliance of the International Conservation NGO, the World Bank, the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the MacArthur Foundation and the government of Japan.

[52] TORRES, Leíla Muricy. *Análise do processo de implantação de conselhos gestores em áreas de proteção ambiental - o caso das APAs da Bahia*. Dissertation (Development and Environment Doctorate Program). UESC: Ilhéus, 2007, 196 p.

[53] TORRES, *Análise do processo de implantação de conselhos gestores em áreas de proteção ambiental*, 2007, p. 68.

in addition to monitor and train managers, guards and residents. In 2006, two groups of work were created within the Board: one for monitoring, without squatters, to avoid risks to residents, and another for land regularization, considered essential priorities for the park's management. Despite conflicts with loggers and hunters, the manager emphasized the importance of inspection actions at that time to consolidate the unit[54].

Armed conflicts between police and loggers marked this phase, resulting in a slowdown in timber extraction. As regards land regularization, there were advances and setbacks: the Vale Negro Farm was close to being released by INCRA for resettlement, while technicians worked on surveying properties and providing legal advice. However, many squatters refused compensation because they considered the amounts insufficient to continue family farming.

The difficulties were so great that they led the board members to consider dissolving the park and including it in a strict protection zone in the Itacaré-Serra Grande APA. Despite this, the period was remembered as one of great advances, important investments and optimism. For Oscar Artaza, "that period was very interesting, because for the first time in my life I visualized that development and progress can have a basis, an environmental agenda behind it, you see?"[55]

But, the park's effective implementation, as a continuous and dynamic process, demanded greater Investments to guarantee efficient management and monitoring, thus securing its continuity.

Another important action in the implementation of conservation units in Brazil is the production of the Management Plan, which transformed the area into an open-air laboratory. According to SNUC:

> [...]a management plan is a technical document through which, based on the general objectives of a conservation unit, its zoning and the rules that should govern the use of the area and the management of natural resources are established, including the implementation of the physical structures necessary for the management of the unit.[56]

[54] BARRETO, Marcelo. Interview with the author, April 11 and 12, 2022, virtual environment (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

[55] ARTAZA, Oscar. Interview with the author, August 10, 2022, virtual environment (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

[56] BAHIA, Plano de Manejo do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, 2005.

At PESC, research for the Management Plan involved scientists from various fields and institutions, such as the State University of Santa Cruz. The survey highlighted the actions of animals, plants and other non-human agents, evidencing their role in the transformation and maintenance of the territory. The interaction between researchers and animals, such as tracking by footprints or feces, illustrates the use of the "evidential paradigm", described by Ginzburg[57], which identifies footprints as data of a reality that is not directly experienced.

The PESC fauna has proven to be crucial in the formation of the landscape and in the maintenance of forest fragments, as the following excerpt explains:

> The aforementioned sampling area (CPC) seems to represent a corridor between nearby fragments, as the composition of the species in the area, many from a forest environment, shows divergence from what would be expected for a capoeira area, for example, the piprids (Pipra rubrocapilla and Machaeropterus regulus), a tyrannid (Rhytipterna simplex) and an emberizid (Tachyphonus cristatus).[58]

By dispersing seeds, birds contribute to forest regeneration and the formation of habitats, exemplifying the co-creation of the landscape. According to Cortés Zulueta, "forms of becoming intentionally configured by the active participation of all beings that, together, rhythmically and mutually constitute the world, through which they move and vibrate as possibilities of coexistence"[59] Thus, research with PESC animals repositioned the area in the environmental scenery, reinforcing its regional relevance and its possibilities of maintenance as a full conservatin unit.

PESC was created before the SNUC Law, which made social participation in the process unnecessary. Only after its creation on paper did environmentalists and public agencies begin to engage in dialogue with residents. This fact helps to explain why the period from 1997 to 2002 was marked by legal uncertainty for residents, the risk of fines and conflicts over timber extraction, while they tried to balance family income and compliance

[57] GINZBURG, Carlo. *Sinais: Raízes de um Paradigma Indiciário*. Mitos, emblemas e sinais: morfologia e história. Companhia das Letras, São Paulo, 1989.

[58] BAHIA, Plano de Manejo do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, 2005, p. 166.

[59] VELDEN, F. V.; SILVEIRA, F. L. A. da. *Humanos e outros que humanos em paisagens multiespecíficas*. Revista Ñanduty, 9(13), 2021, p. 1–18. https://doi.org/10.30612/nty.v9i13.15540.

with environmental laws. This can be seen in the report by Pedro, 41 years old.:

> Then, I became a lumberjack, since it was the only income source, you see. [...] it was when the park started, then there was a kind of persecution. I was even legally sued, everything... I lost a donkey that we had, which helped to support the family [...]. it is hard to be a good person and all of sudden you start feeling afraid of something[60]

In this excerpt, the former dweller of the park recounts his painful transition from agriculture to logging, the ban on deforestation and the criminalization of his activities. A year after the PESC creation, he received a training opportunity and became a park ranger.

Income projects initiated by IESB, such as the Floresta Viva Project in 2001, were important, offering payment for seedling production and reforestation. However, the intermittency of these projects generated insecurity and insufficient income. Contract farmers on local farms reported difficulties in losing the autonomy of work on their land, seeing the new condition as oppressive and humiliating[61]. The territory reconfiguration resulted in social inequalities and asymmetric relationships linked to the environmental project.

The group of residents re-territorialized by the Nova Vida Settlement Project had to adapt to collective land use standards, establishing new sociocultural relationships. Antonio took part in the first initiative of the group of residents, it was the creation of an associative organization:

> In 2002 we organized ourselves through an association that already existed in a region called Tesouras, and we joined forces with the people from Tesouras and reactivated an association that had been deactivated. At the time, the name was the Association of Small Rural Producers of Tesouras. [...] and then we started to fight for our rights.[62]

[60] PEDRO. Interview with the author, August 16, 2022, Serra Grande, Bahia (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

[61] MIGUEL. Interview with the author, October 10, 2022, Serra Grande, Bahia (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

[62] ANTÔNIO. Interview with the author, September 29, 2022, PA Nova Vida, Itacaré, Bahia (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

Despite this, many residents resisted the low compensation and continued to occupy their lands within the park, hoping for better offers for land regularization.

More extreme cases involved residents who were not employed by the park nor linked to the agrarian reform, surviving in ways that were inadequate to the new territorial configuration. According to the account of Francisco, 44 years old:

> [...]Regarding the time when there was no park, it was good. [...] the work didn't stop. It wasn't with a formal contract, it wasn't all legalized, but there was work [...]. So there was work everywhere, there were a lot of people there. It was like a village, full of farmers and squatters. Today there is nothing left.[63]

In other words, there were some farms that employed people in the park area, but with the creation of the UC and the consequent closure of these activities, finding a job became more difficult. Francisco is a resident who expressed a desire to leave the area, describing life before the park as "good" for the locals, but "bad" for the forest. After the creation of the park, the relationship was reversed, with environmental improvements but losses for the residents. This reinforces the idea that full conservation units operate according to the logic of antagonism between society and nature, typical of modernity. This polarized relationship, in the end, remains disadvantageous for conservation.

When we evaluate the research carried out in the region, the responses of the residents to the creation of the park, the negotiations and resistance, we realize that there was a reduction in deforestation and significant forest maintenance inside and around the UCs, when compared to the period before and after the creation of conservation units in the area. However, there was no significant improvement in the quality of life of the local population, nor is it possible to point out any impoverishment of the surroundings associated with the park. Therefore, the local residents face the burden of preserving the forest, but the PESC effects were ambiguous and diverse if considered on a case-by-case basis.

[63] FRANCISCO. Interview with the author, November 04, 2022, Serra Grande, Bahia (audio file and transcript kept by the author).

Final Considerations

The creation of the Serra do Conduru State Park is a milestone in the conservation of the Atlantic Forest in southern Bahia, consolidating its position in the scenario of ecosystem and biodiversity preservation. This study examined challenges in the design and implementation of the park, analyzing conflicts, contradictions and territorial transformation through management strategies aimed at sustainability in the 1990s and 2000s. PESC represented the beginning of a commitment that needs to be ongoing for coexistence between humans and other species, with the need to improve conservation policies.

The process of establishing the Serra do Conduru State Park took place in three distinct stages: the formation of the Itacaré-Serra Grande APA (1993 - 1996); followed by the conception and implementation of the Park (1997 - 2002); and the first steps towards its implementation (2003 - 2006). The main point of tension involved the displacement of families living in the area that became the park, aggravated by the lack of prior dialogue and inadequate compensation. Even though the conflicts persisted for a long time, a certain stabilization was observed over the years.

Contradictions in the full protection model reflect the complex historical interactions between the forest and human communities. In certain contexts, traditional management practices, such as the selection and domestication of species for food, medicine or construction, have contributed to the maintenance or increase in local biological diversity. However, this does not mean that all human groups live in harmony with nature or that they do not cause impacts on life on the planet. Environmentalists and researchers warn of the harmful effects of the Atlantic Forest devastation by human action, while proposing alternatives such as territorial mosaics, combining conservation and sustainable use.

Recognizing the variety of practices and their effects is precisely what allows us to escape the "myth of untouched nature" applied to conservation units or human communities. The objective of this article was to analyze the relationships between societies and nature in their historical and environmental context, highlighting the commitment to diversity. Understanding these different modes is essential to making more fair, sustainable and effective conservation policies.

According to one of the environmentalists who accompanied the creation of PESC and the Itacaré-Serra Grande APA, "the greatest gain there

was a general gain in the sense of understanding that the destiny, the future of Serra Grande and the future of Itacaré, was associated with the preservation of its forest landscape, you see?" PESC exemplifies the articulation of sustainable development with local and historical context, showing that its success depends on the continuous interaction between environmental policies, human actors and biodiversity.

Therefore, the results of this research can help to design public policies that are more sensitive to local realities, especially in territories marked by conflicts over conservation. Showing that the creation of a park involves negotiations, resistance and alliances between different actors helps to understand that these processes are neither linear nor neutral. By recognizing the importance of dialogue, listening and flexibility in management, the PESC experience points to possible paths for other conservation units in similar contexts.

PESC not only protects the natural heritage of the present, but also suggests paths for a possible future of interspecific coexistence between humans and other beings in the shared territory. Even though it is not a definitive, unique or total solution to socio-environmental issues, the Park has already contributed and still has much to contribute to keeping the forest alive.

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