

## Knowledge and Subjects of Environmental Education: historicizing formative experiences at the Itatiaia National Park (1937-2020)

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### *Os conhecimentos e sujeitos da Educação Ambiental: historicizando experiências formativas no Parque Nacional de Itatiaia (1937-2020)*

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#### ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to historicize the way in which the Itatiaia National Park (PNI) has signified knowledge of Environmental Education (EE) and, simultaneously, constituted subjects that “must” educate and be environmentally educated. It was produced by the *Curriculum History Study Group*, a research collective at the Nucleus of Curriculum Studies at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (NEC/UFRJ), articulating investigations interested in operating with Curriculum History as History of the Present. The PNI was selected because it was the first space that was designated as a National Park in Brazil, creating a visitation “model” that articulates, through *alchemical* processes, the EE knowledge that is to be taught and the different subjects for whom this knowledge is intended. In dialogue with Michel Foucault and Thomas Popkewitz, we focus on the historical constitution of the visiting subjects for whom the park’s formative actions were taken. We then show how the EE knowledge produced through these actions came to be *alchemically* transformed in the midst of a logic that has historically constituted what we call “school”, in close dialogue with the processes of disciplinarization that have organized the time and space of this institution. In this process, we highlight how the boundaries between the two institutions have been “blurred”, allowing us to establish an in-between place of subjects/visitors/students amid disciplined EE knowledge.

*Keywords:* Curriculum History; Environmental Education; History of the Present; Itatiaia National Park; discursive approach.

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## RESUMO

O trabalho objetiva historicizar o modo como o Parque Nacional do Itatiaia (PNI) vem significando conhecimentos de/sobre Educação Ambiental (EA) e, simultaneamente, constituindo sujeitos que “devem” educar e ser ambientalmente educados. Ele foi produzido no *Grupo de Estudos em História do Currículo*, coletivo de pesquisa que se desenvolve no Núcleo de Estudos de Currículo da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (NEC/UFRJ), articulando investigações interessadas em operar com a História do Currículo como História do Presente. Nossa opção pelo PNI refere-se ao fato de que este foi o primeiro espaço que se constituiu como Parque Nacional no Brasil criando um ‘modelo’ de visitação que articula, por meio de *processos alquímicos*, os conhecimentos de EA a serem ensinados e os variados sujeitos a quem se destinam tais conhecimentos. Em diálogo com Michel Foucault e Thomas Popkewitz, focalizamos a constituição histórica dos sujeitos *visitantes* a quem vieram se destinando as ações formativas do Parque para, em seguida, evidenciar como os conhecimentos de EA produzidos em tais ações vieram sendo *alquimicamente* transformados em meio a uma lógica que, historicamente, veio constituindo aquilo que nomeamos ‘escolar’ em estreito diálogo com os processos de disciplinarização que vieram organizando o tempo e o espaço dessa instituição. Nesse processo, destacamos o quanto os limites entre as duas instituições vieram sendo ‘borrados’, o que permitiu instaurar um entrelugar de sujeitos/visitantes/estudantes em meio a um conhecimento de EA disciplinarizado.

*Palavras-chave:* História do Currículo; Educação Ambiental; História do Presente; Parque Nacional do Itatiaia; abordagem discursiva.

## Introduction

The aim of this article is to historicize how an informal space of education, Itatiaia National Park (PNI)<sup>1</sup>, has come to signify knowledge that over time has played a role in the games of truth that constitute Environmental Education (EE) in Brazil. We are specifically interested in perceiving the relationships formed between this historically produced knowledge and the constitution of subjects that “must” educate and be environmentally educated.

To perform this task, we produced a research file comprising the following documents/monuments: (a) legislation directly related to the Itatiaia National Park (Creation Decree) or environmental issues (Forest Codes of 1934 and 1965; Law of the National System of Nature Conservation Units); (b) Management Plans of Itatiaia National Park (RAMOS *et al.*, 1982; BARRETO *et al.*, 2014); (c) PNI Research

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<sup>1</sup> The PNI covers the municipalities of Bocaina de Minas and Itamonte, in Minas Gerais State (MG), and the municipalities of Itatiaia and Resende, in the State of Rio de Janeiro (RJ), located close to the border with the State of São Paulo (SP). It is located in the Atlantic Forest Biome in Serra da Mantiqueira (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014).

Bulletins; (d) a book entitled “Itatiaia National Park” (BARROS, 1955), written by then head of the park, Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros; (e) the Environmental Education Plan for Itatiaia National Park (APROPANI, 1989); (f) Internal reports; (g) Dissertation by the creator and coordinator of the PNI Environmental Education Center (BAUMGRATZ, 2014); (h) Articles from newspapers and magazines, especially from the time of the park’s creation, with a view to understanding which statements circulated in society at certain socio-historical moments.

It was produced by the *Curriculum History Study Group*, a research collective that operates within the Nucleus of Curriculum Studies of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (NEC/UFRJ), conducting research on Curriculum History as History of the Present. Inspired by the writings of Michel Foucault and some of his interlocutors in the field of the Curriculum (especially Thomas Popkewitz), we have produced a discursive approach to historical studies in this field (FERREIRA, 2013, 2015 and 2022; FERREIRA & SANTOS, 2017; FERREIRA & MARSICO, 2020), and we are particularly interested in the *effects of truth* that have been produced by systems of thought that allow us to reason about things in the world, ordering and classifying our practices and who we are (and can be) in that same world.

This *discursive approach*, therefore, stems from a notion of power that is not external to knowledge, does not emanate from a center and does not have an essence or nature of its own. In dialogue with Michel Foucault (1995, 1999, 2011), we assume that power does not exist outside of relationships with the knowledge that constitutes the *truths* with regard to the world and ourselves. In this respect, our proposal to address Curriculum History as History of the Present is an undertaking that attempts to denaturalize paradigmatic statements and break with continuous narratives, understanding that an *effective history* is one that suspends history itself to highlight the conditions that enable thoughts and actions in the present (POPKEWITZ, 2010). Therefore, the option for the History of the Present as an epistemic category translates an understanding of history that effectively brings the present to the way actions are taken. Thus, we resurrect in historical events problems that make us dissatisfied in the present, producing a kind of uncomfortable history. In other words, this is a way of producing knowledge with the past rather than about the past.

With regard to the PNI, our choice is related to the fact that this was the first place that constituted a national park in Brazil. It opened in 1937 (BRASIL, 1937), justified in several ways (conservationist, scientific, touristic and economic), supported in broader movements for the constitution of national parks around the world. Furthermore, in 2019, the PNI welcomed 127,432 visitors, making it the twentieth most visited Federal Conservation Unit in the country of the 137 that are monitored. Of the national parks, the PNI was the thirteenth most visited in that year (BREVES *et al.*, 2020). Thus, in addition to actively participating in the emergence of the notion of national parks in Brazil, producing, among other things, meanings of conservation and nature,

the PNI created a visitation “model” that articulates, through *alchemical processes* (POPKEWITZ, 1998), the EE knowledge that is to be taught and the various subjects for whom this knowledge is intended.

We started from the notion of the *alchemy of school subjects*, a term coined by Thomas Popkewitz (1998) to problematize how biological knowledge has been affected by discursive strands stemming from different fields of knowledge, such as the human sciences, which transform it into EE knowledge. To this author, *alchemy* has to do with a set of educational practices focused on the curricular content, teaching resources and materials and forms of assessment. These practices are perceived amidst the “scaffolding of discourses that organizes, differentiates and normalizes the actions of teaching and children” (POPKEWITZ, 1998, p. 99), which is why the author argues that the *alchemy of school subjects* is also the *alchemy* of students.

We assume here that *alchemical* processes do not occur only in school curricula, or even in university curricula. They are also produced in spaces such as the PNI, in discursive practices that focus on the qualification of the subjects who participate in them. This training, which throughout the park’s existence has focused on school students, has been embroiled in disputes over what it means to be environmentally educated. In this movement of bonding with schools, the discursive practices of the PNI have taken on the guise of “schooling”, producing knowledge that has been *alchemically* crossed by the disciplinary logic that has historically organized what is thought about modern schools and the teaching that takes place in them.

It is for this reason that, although Thomas Popkewitz (1998) coined the term *alchemy* to think of processes that constitute knowledge incorporated into school subjects, we assume the power of this notion to think about *alchemy* in other discursive spaces, as we do here with the PNI. Therefore, it is with this notion that we have organized the following sections of this article. In the first, we focus on the historical constitution of the *visiting* subjects at whom the educational actions of the park are aimed. In the second, we evidence how the EE produced through these actions operates amidst a logic that has historically constituted what we call “schooling”, in a close dialogue with the disciplinarization processes that have organized the time and space of this social institution. In this process, we highlight how the signifier “education” in the term EE came to be identified with the signifier “school”, in a movement that also historically produces the knowledge and the schooled subject of the park.

## **Producing the visiting subject of the PNI**

The PNI, as already highlighted, was the first space constituted as a national park in Brazil. In the 1970s, with legislation that organized the modes of signifying the conservation of nature in the country, national parks came to be enunciated as a kind of integrally protected Nature Conservation Unit (NCU). In this scenario, the goals

of developing “environmental education and interpretation activities for recreation in touch with nature and ecological tourism” (BRASIL, 2000, Art. 11) emerged explicitly amid actions of preservation and scientific production. Therefore, these goals already enunciated a relationship regarding the knowledge that national parks (the only NCU category with visits and public use as part of its central goal) preserve and produce with the subjects who know and visit these spaces. Such statements certainly occurred within the scope of debates that coined the term EE in the academic and educational scenario, even though before the emergence of this signifier, the notion of “educating to preserve” had already circulated in documents on natural spaces since the nineteenth century.

In this context, we show how much the production of subjectivities in the PNI is closely related to how documents signify the visitor. This term, in the aforementioned law (BRASIL, 2000), was filled, for example, with the notion that visitors go to NCUs for “tourism”. However, the notion of the target audience as a tourist had already been present in the country for longer. For example, André Rebouças, an engineer and great supporter of the creation of policies on the subject, in a monograph dated 1898 (REBOUÇAS, 1898 apud ROQUETTE-PINTO, 1933, p. 54), described such subjects as “rich travelers” who, instead of spending money in Brazil, “spend three to four months traveling around Italy”. According to him:

The daily expenditure of each of these travelers cannot be calculated as less than twenty thousand reis of our currency (1876), and in three months they never spend less than 2 contos de reis, which means that the 20,000 *touristas* (sic) spend at least forty thousand contos in Italy every year (REBOUÇAS, 1898 apud ROQUETTE-PINTO, 1933, p. 54, *emphasis in the original*).

In addition to the *tourist*, the subject of these spaces is also a person who *needs to be educated*. After all, the idea of *education* is present at different moments of the history of NCUs, especially at the PNI. Here, it is of interest for us to relate how this notion has articulately produced the knowledge and subjects of this education, which has been known as EE since the nineteen seventies. In the 1950s, for instance, during the administration of the agronomy engineer Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros, “one of the *pioneers* of Brazilian conservationism” (BRANDÃO, 2017, p. 1, *emphasis in the original*), the Flora and Fauna Museum in the PNI was opened, today known as the Visitors’ Center. Furthermore, in his book on the park, Barros (1955, p. 54) noted that this was a “venture with polyangular purposes: conservationist, scientific, educational and touristic”. The interface between education and leisure overflows at different moments in his book:

Other sequence angles of National Parks are study, educational extension and recreation. However (I repeat this aspect), the National Park is characteristically constituted in Brazil, as a center for the conservation of natural resources (a dynamic, permanent center) and, as such, it must be seen, had, taken. Only

through it will there be a guaranteed primitive place for the study of Natural Sciences; only in this way will these studies be accessible to everyone who will know about the elements contained in the flora, fauna, climate, topography, soil and preserved minerals. Only with these places, after all, will those who seek nature as travelers, dilettantes, sportsmen and women feel happy, safe from nature (BARROS, 1955, p. 7-8).

This way of viewing visitors as *tourists* was in keeping with the intentions of the Federal Government. When the park was officially organized, the government encouraged the building of hotels around Itatiaia to accommodate these people, relating tourism with stimulating the economy. Statements related to the income of tourist subjects also appeared years later, in the 1980s, in what was probably the first document that specifically focused on EE at the PNI: the *Environmental Education Plan for the Itatiaia National Park*, published by the Itatiaia Pro-park Association (APROPANI, 1989). In addition to income as a category that defines and normalizes who this *visitor* is, we can perceive a value judgment regarding the “intelligence” of these people when the document describes the park’s public as belonging to the “middle class with a better developed intellectual level. Despite the incipient nature of the statistics, it is not difficult to reach this conclusion because visitors need their own vehicle for transport and have to spend on food and even accommodation...” (APROPANI, 1989, p. 10).

The processes of signifying *visitors* also materialized in documents that were clearly intended to trace their “profile” through interviews. The *Environmental Education Plan for Itatiaia National Park* itself contains an opinion poll of 330 visitors to the park conducted between September and October 1988. With regard to identification data, the document sets out the categories that, according to its authors, were the most significant for building the aforementioned “profile”. They are: state where you live; schooling level; sex; age; nationality (APROPANI, 1989). Another document intended to outline the “profile” of the PNI visitor (through interviews conducted in 2011) is the *Management Plan*, published in 2014 (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014). In it, the number of people interviewed was not disclosed. The categories were as follows: origin of the visitor; gender; age group; schooling; visiting hours; number of visits to the PNI in their lives, etc. In this document (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014), these categories were evaluated differently in the two main sectors of the park: the Lower Part (which can be reached, with difficulty, by bus) and the Upper Part (inaccessible via public transport).

An example of how the building of this “profile” has aided the constitution of who the visitors to the PNI are is the analysis of the interviewees’ *profession* in the *Management Plan*: “while in the Lower Part there is a better distribution of different professions that do or do not require a degree, in the Upper Part there is a concentration of some professions such as engineering, medicine and the law” (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014, Note 3, p. 97). After all, when analyzing, unlike in the case of the sectors, which attractions were visited by the interviewees, the document also states *who* the public is:

In the interviews conducted in the Lower Part of the Park, there was a relatively large number of general answers, such as “visiting the Lower Part”, “visiting waterfalls” and “visiting trails”, without mentioning the names of specific attractions. (Figure 3-79)<sup>2</sup>. This is mainly due to the characteristics of the environment and the public (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014, Note 3, p. 100).

Another aspect that ought to be mentioned about the constitution of the *visiting* subjects based on their “profile” is the means of transport used to access the PNI: “the most common mode transport used to visit the park is the car, representing 88% in the Lower Part and 93% in the Upper Part” (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014, Note 3, p. 106), followed by tour buses (6% in the Lower Part and 3% in the Upper Part), van (4% and 3%, respectively) and motorcycles (both with 1%). This association between professions and means of transport *alchemically produces PNI visitors*, establishing limits that categorize and normalize who fits and, simultaneously, who is excluded from the actions used by the park to attract visitors.

In the dialogue with Thomas Popkewitz (2020), we assumed that inclusion and exclusion are not opposite phenomena, which are constituted independently. As a matter of fact, at the same time, the production of inclusion creates limits that delimit and define exclusion. In other words, the categorization of specific populations *for* inclusion is a movement that is also included in the *systems of reason* that built a rational logic of factors that produce difference, division and abjection. In this process, what the author calls a *double gesture* occurs, where, on the one hand, there is the gesture of *hope* for inclusion, based on policies, and, “related to this gesture (its double), fears are simultaneously engendered in relation to populations that threaten the hope of qualifying these types of people” (LIMA & GIL, 2016, p. 1.142).

Nevertheless, this mode of producing the visiting subject whom the actions of the PNI target was constantly shifting, agglutinating and disputing different meanings. Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros, for example, decades earlier, in addition to introducing the concept of *culture* into the environmental debate on the parks, sought to expand access to the PNI by signifying *visitors as people*. According to Júlia Brandão (2017, p. 15, *emphasis added*), to this agronomist, the area of a national park “should be studied, identified and thus structured so that it could fully achieve the objective of a national park, which would be a source of *education, popular culture, sports, live documentaries and biological research*”. Such an initiative to *popularize* the PNI and access to nature by complementing the signifier *visitor* with the term *people* can be observed in the presentation of his book:

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<sup>2</sup> The figure in question is a bar chart that represents the percentage of responses from visitors regarding the *place they visited*: Low Part general (21%); Waterfall – general (20%); Visitors’ Center (17%); Bridal Veil Waterfall (15%); Blue Lake (10%); Maromba Waterfall (7%); Trails – general (6%); Last Goodbye Lookout (3%); Three Peaks Trail (1%).

This contribution is intended to fill a gap in the activity of the Itatiaia National Park. It is not a study: it is, rather, an informative element *written for the people*. It is intended for those who want to know what the Itatiaia National Park is, where it is, what it is used for, what is in its nature. On the other hand, it is not an absolutely complete report. However, it is clear that I place in it everything that is most current and most certain, concerning knowledge of nature and the region (BARROS, 1955, p. 5, *emphasis added*).

The defense of education *for the people* goes beyond the official documents of the PNI and converges with an opinion article published in *Jornal do Commercio* (Rio de Janeiro) in 1938. In it, the anonymous author argued that children should be *educated* in close contact with nature in order to establish feelings of love and protection. In the midst of this *conservationist* discourse, the author emphasized that the main reason for the creation of “recreational and preservation parks” by the Americans was education. He claimed that:

It is unnecessary to glorify here the aim of a national park. The Americans, Japanese and Argentines have exuberantly taken to extolling their purposes: and now, our country has just shown, through its enlightened government, that it understands the right of these organizations, creating the Itatiaia National Park, welcomed with the most unequivocal evidence of contentment, not only by our scientific community, but also by those in sports and recreation, as an incentive to study our natural history and as a pretext for making excursions through virgin forests, in contact with the wild nature, where the beings that dwell therein can be freely appreciated!

Our country, although still sparsely populated and covered by immense forested areas, already feels, in the vicinity of large cities, a lack of these pleasant spaces for working people to relax. Since it is up to governments *to educate the people*, they have the primary duty to provide the means to develop this *education* in a healthy way, in their own place, instilling in children, from an early age, a thirst for knowledge, love, admiration of kingdoms of nature in all their integrity.

(...)

There can never be too many parks for recreation and preservation. An example of this is the Americans, their inventor, for *educational purposes* (A. V., 1938, p. 4, *emphasis added*).

Moreover, in the 2000s, concerns were raised over the *people* as the *visiting* public of the PNI. In the *Report on the Achievements of Itatiaia National Park in the 2000/2001/2002/2003 Quadrennial*, for example, under the management of then head of the PNI, Léo Nascimento, the *community* also became a signifier of the park, that is, the residents of the surrounding area, for whom the actions of articulating *culture*

and *art* ought to be included (NASCIMENTO, 2004). It was in this context that the Visitors' Center, enunciated as the "socio-cultural-scientific heart of the park", held exhibitions of local photographers, painters and artisans, enunciated as the target of "adaptations to its physical space to better accommodate this public" (NASCIMENTO, 2004, p. 6-7). For this group of *visitors*, therefore, identified as *people*, the initiatives of the PNI ought to provide them with a broader education, going beyond love for and preservation of nature, recognizing a lack of artistic culture.

It is along these lines, that is, the absence of what is lacking for the *people*, that the *Environmental Education Plan for Itatiaia National Park* (APROPANI, 1989) enunciates the public as a "a real inconvenience for the administration of the Park", since there is a "very poor service for the public that still lacks an educational practice regarding the use of natural areas, having to reconcile the use of areas of interest to tourists with those of permanent preservation" (APROPANI, 1989, p. 14). According to this document:

The lack of trained and qualified personnel means a lost opportunity to educate visitors better and explain the purpose of the park and the need to preserve the environment (APROPANI, 1989, p. 14).

Thus, from the disputes involved in signifying the subjects considered as visitors to the PNI, those for whom the initiatives are intended, there arose an understanding of the public as a degrading agent of nature, a "problem" that requires *inspection*. In this context, the aforementioned document highlights "the creation of groups for *monitoring users*, for the purpose of providing adequate environmental education" (APROPANI, 1989, p. 49, *emphasis added*). Along the same lines, the *Management Plan* of the day (RAMOS *et al.*, 1982) already referred to picking plants, accumulated trash, the destruction of vegetation and outbreaks of fire as events that occur due to the "lack of educational work and more thorough inspection" (RAMOS *et al.*, 1982, p. 76). Over forty years later, with a view to managing the public use of the park, the PNI created a sector responsible for this task. The 2014 *Management Plan* (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014), when discussing the main activities of this sector, refers to this concern over *inspecting* visitors:

Visits to the Itatiaia National Park are monitored by the Coordination of Public Use that was established in 2006, its main duties being to guide the flow of visitors to the NCU, *monitoring the behavior of visitors* on the trails and at the natural attractions, such as waterfalls and rivers, in addition to monitoring and controlling movement of vehicles as they enter and leave, seeking to maintain a desirable number of tourists within the PNI (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014, Note 3, p. 90, *emphasis added*).

This "monitoring of visitor behavior" resignified to a certain extent the

*conservationist* concern that subjects must love in order to protect. The *Forest Code* of 1934 already stated, for example, that the Forestry Council is responsible for the dissemination throughout the country of “*forest education* and protection of nature in general” (BRASIL, 1934, Art. 102, paragraph f, *emphasis added*). Three decades later, – that is, in the 1960s, the new *Forest Code* continued to use the term “forest education”. This use, however, became explicitly associated with the *school* space (BRASIL, 1965). Article 42 states:

Art. 42. Two years after the enactment of this Law, no authority will be able to allow the adoption of *school reading books* that do not contain texts on *forest education*, previously approved by the Federal Council of Education, after consultation with the competent forestry agency.

§ 1. It will be compulsory for *radio and television stations* to include in their programming, texts and devices showing an *interest in forests*, approved by the competent agency, with a minimum duration of five (5) minutes per week, which may or may not be spread over different days.

§ 2. On official maps and charts, public parks and forests must be clearly identified.

§ 3. The Union and States will promote the creation and development of *schools for forest education* at their various levels (BRASIL, 1965, *emphasis added*).

It is in such a scenario that EE gains strength as a discursive practice, *alchemically* organizing (POPKEWITZ, 1998) the way of thinking about “good” and “adequate” knowledge in articulation with the constitution of the *visiting* subjects who will be taught. This had been happening even before the term “Environmental Education” was coined. After all, it only emerged in the 1960s, becoming popular in the two subsequent decades. This occurrence, however, created the conditions for the emergence of the term in discursive practices that, since the creation of the PNI, have been part of the games of knowledge and power that constitute what we now call EE. The relationship with schooling, explicit and mandatory in the Forest Code of the 1960s (BRASIL, 1965), is an effect of this whole process, blurring the limits of education in formal and non-formal spaces by producing knowledge crossed by the disciplinary logic that historically came to define and categorize what we call *school*. In the next section, we delve deeper into this issue, focusing on how the PNI has produced this knowledge in relation to *school* logic.

## Subjecting EE knowledge to school logic

In the 1980s, documents related to the PNI already enunciated the terms “education” and “school” to describe the purposes of the park as a social institution. The 1982

*Management Plan* was explicit in stating that one of the expected results of the Education Subprogram's performance was the "integration of the park into the Brazilian educational context" (RAMOS et al., 1982, p. 94). The *Environmental Education Plan*, for example, described two educational sectors: one for "internal education", for the PNI's human resources to work with visitors in areas of public use; the other, for "external education", focused on "private properties that occupy its periphery, neighborhood *schools* and the region's community" (APROPANI, 1989, p. 30, *emphasis added*). These purposes, which moved towards of education and school, affected how the park has produced its educational activities. The 2000/2003 quadrennium report states that (NASCIMENTO, 2004):

The Environmental Education Center of the Itatiaia National Park has attempted to diversify its activities with the implementation of group dynamics, a puppet theater and games to better serve the visiting public, *more precisely primary and secondary schools, which frequently request monitored visits.* (...) In 2000, 28 municipalities in the state of Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais participated in the Park's Environmental Education Program, with the enrollment of 59 schools and 2,250 students. In 2001, 2,962 enrolled students were registered. In 2002, 2,789 students were served. In 2003, 4,860 students were served (NASCIMENTO, 2004, p. 5, *emphasis added*).

The Environmental Education Center (NEA) was established in 1997 and initially formed "by two female biologists, an environmental education technician and the temporary involvement of a veterinarian and several volunteers" (BAUMGRATZ, 2014, p. 144). According to the 2014 *Management Plan*, the *main goal* of this space is the "socio-environmental inclusion of teachers and students in the *school network* in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. Its main project is the Guided Visits Program, with an annual average of six thousand people served" (BARRETO et al., 2014, p. xii, *emphasis added*). Assuming that the main objective of the NEA is directly linked to schools, this document reveals a closer relationship between the Environmental Education actions produced in the PNI with school logic.

Thus, in addition to its relationship with other visitors to the Park, the existence of the NEA and its Guided Visits Program enabled educational actions to be perceived (and labeled) as EE actions. The close relationship between the NEA and the surrounding schools was so strong that, according to Baumgratz (2014, p. 144), the Dr. João Maia State School, during a guided visit to the Park in 2006, decided to organize an "Environmental Education Day that became part of the school calendar". The project ran for 10 years (2006 to 2015) and involved around 300 people (FERREIRA & LACERDA, 2018).

Another action that explains the relationship between school and the PNI was the creation of the *National Park Goes to School Project: a look at Environmental Education*

in *Curricular Transversality*, in 2012, run by the Technical Chamber of Environmental Education (CTEA), an organ of the Advisory Board of the PNI, in partnership with the Higher Education Institution partner the Dom Bosco Education Association (AEDB) and the Education Departments of Itatiaia and Resende (BAUMGRATZ, 2014). The purpose was “to promote changes in pedagogical relationships in order to build a new mentality in relation to quality of life, considering the type of coexistence that is maintained with nature and implies attitudes, values and actions” (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014, Note 3, p. 86).

Amid the disputes over meanings regarding the *knowledge* that could be labeled as EE in the educational actions of the park, Nair Baumgratz (2014), one of the creators of the NEA and coordinator of the project from its beginning in 1997 until 2010, questioned the *Emergency Action Plan for Itatiaia National Park* (IBAMA, 1994) when it stated that EE had not yet been implemented in the Park. According to this author, internal records showed that, in the early 1990s, EE activities were effectively produced. However, according to the author, the target audience for these activities was not students or visitors, but teachers from the municipal public network:

The data presented below were obtained by reviewing documents (reports, texts, leaflets, school workbooks and emails from the NEA/PNI). According to these internal records, Environmental Education (EE) at Itatiaia National Park began in 1992 and remained active until 1993, with a proposal to work through refresher courses addressing the theme of the environment and knowledge of the park, intended for elementary and high school teachers from the municipal public network (BAUMGRATZ, 2014, p. 136).

According to Baumgratz (2014), EE was reactivated with the foundation of the NEA, in 1997, above all as a result of the creation of the Guided Visits Program, with school groups and any other kind of group able to schedule activities. However, data collected by this author indicate “that the public with the highest incidence was precisely Elementary Education, especially the third and fourth cycles, corresponding to the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grades” (BAUMGRATZ, 2014, p. 137). According to the documents collected in the 2014 *Management Plan*, the Guided Visits Program had already served more than 60,000 people from the creation of the NEA to the drafting of the Plan. According to the document:

*Schools account for over 90% of the visits recorded by the NEA from 1997 to 2010. During this period, groups from different levels of education and Brazilian states were welcomed, with an average attendance of 51 schools per year. The number of groups served increased 2006, with a fall in 2007 due to fires and renovation of the Visitors’ Center. Subsequently, growth resumed, with 78 groups in 2010 (BARRETO *et al.*, 2014, Note 3, p. 86, emphasis added).*

We found that the recognition and naming of the educational actions taken by the PNI, being *alchemically* produced and signified as EE, fell mainly within the scope of this movement of creating the NEA and its Guided Visits Program, which was turning to a visitor profile associated with the school signifier. In this process, the knowledge to be transmitted was crossed by disciplinary logic, with the selection of themes traditionally present in the curricula of the Science and Biology school subjects, such as “ecology”, “fauna”, “flora” and “biogeochemical cycles”, which were associated with those more closely linked to the existence of the park, such as “environmental legislation” and the very notions of “conservation units” and “production units” (BAUMGRATZ, 2014, p. 136). After all, as previously highlighted, according to Thomas Popkewitz (1998 and 2020), alchemical processes involve the transformation of knowledge amidst a crossing of discursive strands that constitute what we should know (and not know) and who we should be (and not be) in terms of EE.

In 2000, a *Didactic Laboratory* was also created on the premises of the PNI that was specifically intended for welcoming these visitors with a view to “sharpening their interest in learning, being able to generate, intensify or multiply the relationships between knowledge” (SASSERON & CARVALHO, 2011) that, consequently, may facilitate the construction of scientific knowledge, especially in natural environments (SENICIATO & CAVASSAN, 2008)” (BAUMGRATZ, 2014, p. 142).

The disciplinary logic that has organized school time and space emerged, therefore, as the one that allowed and organized, through *alchemical* processes, the existence of EE itself as a discursive practice in the institution. To Baumgratz (2014, p. 138), for example, “environmental education has taken a leap in quality [in the PNI] by taking planned actions aimed at the target audience”. This defense of planning intended for the park’s visitors used as a benchmark a set of school practices and assumed an explicitly pedagogical role of the institution in its relationship with its visitors. It is in this respect that, to the author, “the biggest problem [facing the park] is that many visitors, including schoolchildren, go on their walks with their minds only on recreation and leisure, leaving aside the pedagogical nature (...)” (BAUMGRATZ, 2014, p. 129-130) of this type of activity and, consequently, how much it can teach us. To address this issue, the PNI should increasingly invest in training that focuses on the instructional side of the EE knowledge to be transmitted in the relationship with the *visiting* subjects from schools.

## Final considerations

As already explained, by historicizing the way in which the PNI produced knowledge that, over time, has participated in the *games of truth* that constitute EE in Brazil, we seek to highlight the relationship of this knowledge with the constitution of subjects *visiting* the Park. As a result, this analysis allowed us to problematize notions of *subject* and *knowledge* that have been produced and circulated at different historical times in

the institution, in a movement that, *alchemically*, has created the conditions for the emergence of what we now call EE. After all, by stating, in the various documents/monuments in the archive, who its audience is, the park has also informed us who *is not* or *cannot be part* of this “profile”. Likewise, by defining when it initiates (or reactivates) EE actions, the institution explains the disputes that could historically constitute this knowledge in the country, imposing limits on what *is* and what *is not* or *cannot be* considered EE.

Regarding the first stage of the analysis, we found evidence of the diverse meanings that the signifier *visitor* has had at different historical times. Committed to an epistemic stance of the Curriculum History as History of the Present, we perceived the PNI *visitor* being considered a “tourist” at different historical times, even though this meaning has changed over time. Thus, whether viewed as “rich travelers” or sometimes as “people”, these subjects were being *alchemically manufactured* as they embodied both the fear of environmental degradation, as we can see in the movements of “monitoring” and “inspection”, and the hope of conservation, by evoking awareness of nature in order to “protect” it.

In the midst of these processes of signification, we noticed that *visitors* are often enunciated, directly or indirectly, as those who *need to be educated*. Thus, in the second stage of analysis, we discussed the disputed *knowledge* in the EE practices enunciated as those responsible for training the visiting subjects in a non-formal teaching space such as the PNI. In a previous work (TOLEDO-QUIROGA; OLIVEIRA; FERREIRA, 2021), when investigating the academic production of the meanings of interdisciplinarity and disciplinary EE, we identified the establishment of the first term (interdisciplinarity) as an intrinsic characteristic of the field, which produces effects in statements on the difficulty/impossibility of executing it in a “true” and “correct” way at school, an environment marked by disciplinarization and the fragmentation of knowledge. Starting from this defense of interdisciplinarity, supposedly achievable in non-formal teaching spaces due to its characteristic outside school walls, which seems to be hegemonic in the field of EE, we took a close look at EE practices in the PNI.

In the present work, we demonstrated that over the years the processes of dispute involving the meaning of EE at the PNI (even before it was known by this name) addressed school and scholar in different ways. In our archive, especially in those documents/monuments that focus on EE, we saw mentions of the school universe, either with regard to activities for teachers in the municipal public network, or with the creation of the *National Park Goes to School* project. With regard to the NEA, we also demonstrated that its *Guided Visits Program* for the most part served the school public, which accounted for over 90% of the users of this service. In addition, we also noted the creation of a *Didactic Laboratory*, as well as the understanding that such school activities represented a “leap in quality” for the EE that emerged and was named in the park.

Finally, by using the theoretical lens of the *discursive approach*, we provided opportunities for other ways of signifying EE as a field of knowledge that has *alchemically* constituted its knowledge and subjects. In this process, we realized to what extent EE emerged as an explicit purpose of the PNI when it was given meaning in the relationship with the school public. In this shift, the knowledge to be transmitted was being *alchemically* transformed in relation to the disciplinary logic of the organization of time and space at school. After all, this approximation of the school and its subjects helped to shift the meanings of *knowledge* produced in the park and, simultaneously, those of the *visiting* public, with a “blurring” of limits between the two institutions. This allowed the establishment of an in-between place of subjects/ visitors/students amidst a disciplinarized form of EE knowledge. Thus, even though EE has been widely enunciated as an interdisciplinary field, the investigation conducted here evidenced the close relationship of the constitution of this field of knowledge with the school and its disciplinary logic, in a movement that came (and continues) to occur both in formal teaching and research systems and those such as the PNI.

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