

# Inclusion and governance in the managing Council of the Costa dos Corais Environmental Protection Area

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**Abstract:** The participation of society in the decision-making arenas is essential to achieve an effective environmental management. This paper aimed to assess the effectiveness of inclusion, as a principle of good governance, in the decision-making process of the Costa dos Corais Environmental Protected Area (EPA). To achieve it, institutional documents were analysed, interviews were conducted with managers and councillors and 375 questionnaires were applied with residents of Porto de Pedras and São Miguel dos Milagres – Alagoas. We observed an unequal representativeness and influence of the sectors within the council. The environmental non-governmental organizations/research, tourism, teaching/scientific research and the federal and state executive powers strongly influenced the decision making, while the fishing sector and the residents had moderate and weak participation. Social inclusion is essential for good governance of protected areas, but other principles such as transparency and justice need to be integrated for this to happen.

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## Introduction

The term governance began to be used in the 1980s, within the scope of public governance (BURSTYN; BURSTYN, 2012), configuring itself as a distribution of power that goes beyond the decentralization of the State and follows the path of the empowerment of society (BORGES, 2003; BURSTYN; BURSTYN, 2012). According to Graham, Amos and Plumptre (2003), environmental governance can be understood as: “Interactions between structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are made, and how citizens or interested parties speak out” (GRAHAM; AMOS; PLUMPTRE, 2003, p. 2).

In this sense, the management of Conservation Units (UCs) can be incorporated into the context of public governance. This is because these areas are examples of common public goods that need a set of good governance practices that consider the complexity of socio-environmental systems, overcome conflicts of interest on ecosystems and guarantee the legitimacy of decisions and the spaces where these decisions are made. Thus, studying the web of actors involved in decision-making in areas of public interest such as protected areas and understanding whether there is room for all sectors of society in decision-making arenas is fundamental to achieving effective environmental management and good governance. (UNDP, 1997; LOCKWOOD, 2010; BORRINI-FEYERABEND et al., 2013). Although there are several definitions and models of environmental governance, social inclusion is one of the guiding principles for recognizing social diversity and giving all actors the opportunity to participate and influence decision-making (GRAHAM et al., 2003; KOOIMAN et al., 2005; LOCKWOOD, 2010).

Participation can be defined as a process in which the public and stakeholders are involved in making decisions that affect them, either passively through consultation, or directly through engagement between the parties (REED, 2008). Although people and/or groups sometimes benefit from the results of their participation, this participation is not always possible and effective, since there are circumstances that condition the degree, level and quality of participation and influence the result of the engagement (ARNSTEIN, 1969; BORDENAVE, 1994). Reed et al. (2018) describes in their theory of participation how the factors of context, design, power and scale work differently for actors or stakeholders during decision making. In addition to these factors, human dimensions that include social, economic and cultural components also influence participation in decision-making arenas (BARRETO et al., 2020). This helps to explain why horizontal processes of participation and environmental management can lead to different results and why social participation does not always influence the decision-making process (REED et al. 2018).

In Brazil, UCs are regulated by the National System of Conservation Units (SNUC), through Federal Law 9,985 of the year 2000. The SNUC groups Brazilian UCs into 12 categories, divided into two groups of use – ‘full protection’ and ‘sustainable use’, according to creation objectives. This same legal framework establishes two main management instruments in these areas: the Management Plan - a territorial planning document that guides decisions within the UC, and; the Management Council – a decision-making space in which society participates in the decision-making process (BRASIL, 2000).

According to the SNUC, Management Councils can be consultative or deliberative (depending on the category of conservation unit) and must guarantee the social participation of the various sectors involved in the management of the UC. These are discussion arenas presided over by the UC managing body and made up of interested public and private institutions (BRASIL, 2000). However, despite Brazil having advanced since the 1990s to promote participatory democracy, through the construction and effort to establish principles, regulations and management instruments that ensure by law a greater participation of society in public management (BRASIL, 2000); BRASIL, 2006; ICMBio, 2014), in practice, there are still some issues that permeate the effective participation of society in the management of PAs. There is little effectiveness of participation in all spheres of public power and, in addition, when there are asymmetries of power, they often lead to decisions being taken in an undemocratic way and without considering the differences and complexities of the people involved (PRADO et al., 2020).

One of the first factors that contributes to the ineffective participation of society is the fact that most UCs were created through a top-down process, which excluded humans from nature conservation (LAURIOLA, 2005). Furthermore, despite efforts to develop instruments together with society (MACEDO, et al., 2013) - e.g., ICMBio's initiatives to review regulations, train managers and advisers (PRADO et al., 2020) and to create guiding documents for the construction of participatory councils (ICMBio, 2014) - there is a still lack of resources for the UCs to create Management Plans and Management Councils, and to guarantee their real functioning (COZZOLINO, 2005; VIEIRA, 2011).

The delay in the implementation of UC management instruments also results in the lack of inclusion of society from the beginning of the management process and leaves UCs at the mercy of developmental interests that do not take into account local particularities (LOUREIRO; CUNHA, 2008) and collective well-being. Furthermore, even if social participation reaches higher levels of power (ARNSTEIN, 1969), in the cases of UCs, decision making is often influenced by divergent demands from different social groups (LOUREIRO et al., 2003), which fluctuate, for example, between the conservation of biodiversity and the livelihoods of local communities – unsurprisingly, each actor hopes that the conservation unit is managed according to their priorities (RASTOGI et al., 2010).

In this sense, Environmental Protection Areas (EPA) are areas that most demand an effective space for discussion with greater representation of social actors. They are characterized by having an extensive territorial scope, since they allow private lands in their territory (BRASIL, 2000) where multiple interests may overlap and conflict with the conservation and sustainable development objectives of the UC. As they allow various uses, such as fishing, research and tourism. EPA Management Councils thus demand an intense dialogue and broad negotiation between social actors.

In this context, this research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of social inclusion, as a principle of good governance, in the management council of Costa dos Corais EPA (APACC), integrating the perspective of UC councilors and residents of the municipalities of São Miguel dos Milagres and Porto de Pedras, in Alagoas state (AL). For this, the

following research was carried out: (i) an analysis of the representativeness and intensity of participation in APA decision-making; and (ii) a survey of local knowledge about APACC and its council.

## Materials and Methods

### Study Area

The Costa dos Corais EPA is a Federal Conservation Unit for Sustainable Use, created in 1997 (BRASIL, 1997), and encompasses the marine and estuarine area of 12 municipalities on the North Coast of Alagoas and Southern Pernambuco (Figure 1A). The UC was created with the objective of: (i) ensuring the conservation of coral and sandstone reefs, with their fauna and flora (Figure 1B); (ii) maintain habitat integrity and preserve the population of the marine manatee (*Trichechus manatus manatus*) (Figure 1C); (iii) protect the mangroves in their entirety, with their fauna and flora (Figure 1D); (iv) order ecological, scientific and cultural tourism, and other economic activities compatible with environmental conservation (Figure 1E); and, (v) encourage cultural manifestations, contributing to the rescue of regional cultural diversity (Figure 1F) (ICMBio, 2013).

### The Management Council of Costa dos Corais EPA (CONAPACC)

CONAPACC is a consultative forum for discussion, negotiation, and management of the UC (ICMBio, 2011). It was created in 2011 after an environmental public civil action filed by the Federal Public Ministry of Alagoas (MPF/AL, 2009) which required ICMBio to form an APACC Management Council and the consequent elaboration of its Management Plan with its respective zoning that, until 2009, had not been implemented. Between 2011 and 2016, 35 regular and extraordinary CONAPACC meetings were held, two renewals of its composition (ICMBio, 2014, 2016), continued training and several joint decisions were taken (ICMBio, 2021). In the renewal of the Council carried out in 2016 (ICMBio, 2016), its composition consisted of 47 institutions of public and private power, distributed in 40 seats on an equal basis, which in some cases were distributed between tenure and alternate. The renewal of CONAPACC also changed the term of office of councilors from two to four years and expanded its composition from 28 seats to 40 seats, due to the increase in institutions that showed interest in participating in the council.

**Figure 1 - Map of Costa dos Corais EPA with illustrations referring to its creation objectives**



**A.** Map of the Costa dos Corais EPA. Source: Prepared by the author (2021). **B.** Coral *Montastrea cavernosa*. Photo: Pedro Pereira. **C.** Marine manatee (*Trichechus manatus manatus*). Photo: Edson Acioli. **D.** Mangrove on the Tatuamunha River. Porto de Pedras - AL. Photo: Clemente Coelho Jr. **E.** Visitation in natural pools in the municipality of Maragogi - AL. Source: ICMBio Costa dos Corais Collection. **F.** Fisherwoman showing the harvested seafood, fruit of her work, in Maragogi - AL. Photo: Natie Melo.

### Data collection and analysis

In order to achieve the objective of this research, data were collected through: (i) documentary consultation of minutes of meetings, internal regulations, management plan, motions and recommendations of the Management Council of Costa dos Corais EPA; (ii) application of questionnaires with local residents; and, (iii) semi-structured interviews with APACC's managers and nine directors. All data collections were carried out in 2016 and in the municipalities of São Miguel dos Milagres and Porto de Pedras (state of Alagoas). The two municipalities belong to the central area of APACC and the largest number of non-governmental institutions and local associations operating in the municipalities are concentrated in them. The region is also home to the Manatee project, which began in 1994 to prevent the species from becoming extinct and resulted in a manatee reintroduc-

tion program within the APA. This also created a community-based ecotourism program for observation of manatees in nature, aiming to mitigate conflicts with fishermen due to the reduction of areas suitable for fishing after the release of the mammals.

In order to understand the influence of each sector in CONAPACC, documents were analyzed and the participation of directors in 35 council meetings was evaluated, through attendance lists, insertion of agendas in discussions, and speeches during the meetings. The document analysis allowed defining the intensity level of each sector's participation within the council according to the following criteria: (a) number of sector representatives on the Council; (b) participation of sectors in board meetings through attendance, speeches and requests for agendas; (c) topics on the agenda discussed in the CONAPACC plenary session and; (d) development of Council referrals according to each sector. The intensity level was measured by counting the number of times each sector appeared in the four criteria defined above. Thus, four levels of intensity were defined: absent, weak, moderate and strong.

To survey the residents' knowledge about APACC and its council, 375 questionnaires were applied to residents of São Miguel dos Milagres/AL and Porto de Pedras/AL (Figure 1A). The sample was defined based on the number of inhabitants in the urban area of the municipalities of São Miguel dos Milagres - 2,261 inhabitants and Porto de Pedras - 4,798 inhabitants (IBGE, 2010), through the website: <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>, which aims to determine the number of people who need to be interviewed to obtain results that represent the target population with the desired degree of confidence. The sample number was calculated from a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of  $\pm 7$  and respondents were chosen at random following a cluster sampling pattern (NEWING, 2011), representing a sample of the population of urban clusters of the two cities surveyed. The interviews were carried out using the Droidsurvey application (HARVESTYOURDATA, 2021), which allowed the storage of the collected data. Subsequently, the results of the questionnaires were downloaded and organized in excel spreadsheets. Statistical analyzes of the data (absolute and relative frequencies) were conducted using the SPSS software (*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*) (IBM, 2015). The questionnaire covered questions about the individual characteristics of the interviewees (e.g., age, gender, primary occupation, level of education, etc.), knowledge of APACC and its council, and means of information about APACC.

Finally, the view of APACC councilors in relation to the participation of different sectors in the management of the UC and the efforts made to include leaders and minority groups in the governance of the UC was investigated. Nine councilors of the Costa dos Corais EPA were interviewed, selected from among those who work directly in the two cities that were the focus of the study. Although the number of interviews carried out represents a small portion of the total number of existing counselors, they helped in the discussion of the results. The interviews were conducted in 2016 and in the transcripts of speeches, the counselors interviewed were identified through codes to maintain anonymity (Table 1).

**Table 1 – List of counselors interviewed**

Sector	Period	Duration	Data collection	Code
Tourism	Aug/16	25min42s	face-to-face interview	EN1
	Aug/16	20min54s	face-to-face interview	EN2
	Sep/16	22min14s	face-to-face interview	EN3
Fishing	Nov/16	22min07s	face-to-face interview	EN4
Educa- tion	Nov/16	33min10s	face-to-face interview	EN5
ICMBio	Sep/ 16	38min02s	face-to-face interview	EN6
Muni- cipal executive	Dec/16	-	Completion of the written script and supplemented by telephone	EN7
	Dec/16	43min36s	face-to-face interview	EN8
	Dec/16	20min46s	face-to-face interview	EN9

Source: Carolina N. Souza (2016).

The interview script was prepared according to the seven principles of governance in protected areas proposed by Lockwood (2010). However, in this study, only the results related to the principles of Inclusion, Transparency and Justice are considered. The principles and criteria used in this research were: (1) Inclusion: (a) inclusion of leaders and/or vulnerable groups in the governance of the UC; (b) participation of associations and leaders in UC actions. (2) Transparency: (c) communication between the UC and its users. (3) Justice: (d) respect and attention towards different views; (e) equality in receiving the opinions of different leaders.

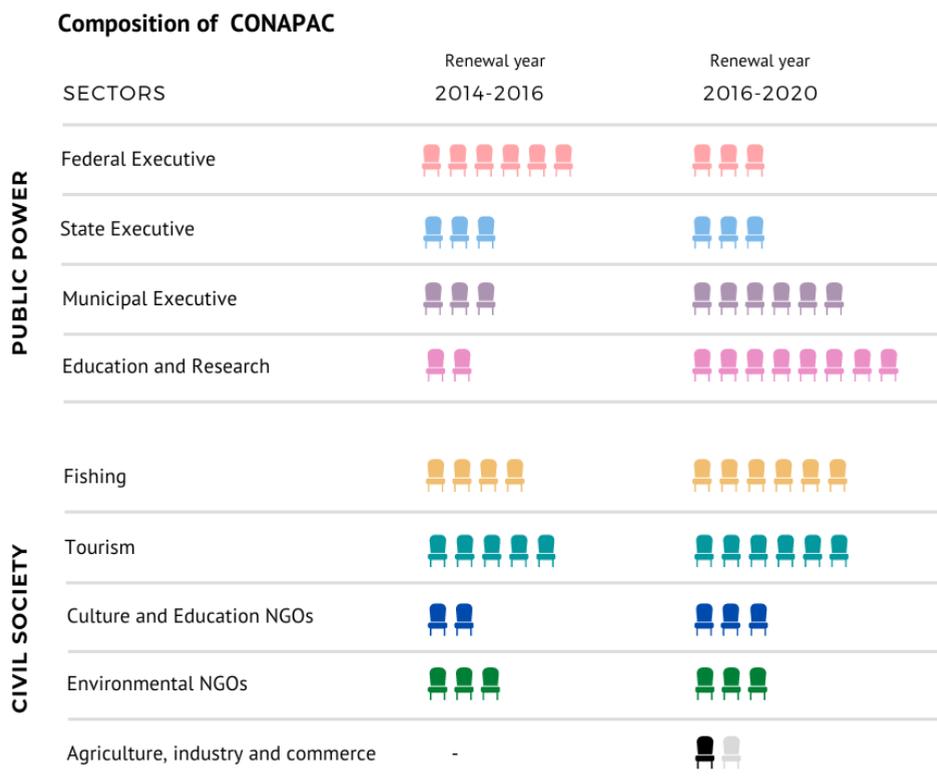
The statements of the interviewed counselors were transcribed, and their content was analyzed using a qualitative approach (MYERS, 2002). The results of the interviews helped the interpretation of the results either from the documental analysis or from the questionnaires, contributing to a better discussion based on the chosen governance principles, through data triangulation (THURMONT, 2001).

## Results and Discussion

### Representation of the society in the Managing Council of APACC

The analysis of the CONAPACC composition revealed an increase in the number of participants in the 2016 renewal (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Comparison of the composition of the sectors that make up the Management Council of Costa dos Corais EPA between 2014 and 2016



Source: Documental research (ICMBio, 2014, 2016).

Comparing the composition of CONAPACC, it was possible to notice an increase in the number of seats in practically all sectors of the council, with a noticeable increase in the teaching and research sector. Although the number of seats in the federal executive has decreased, it can be noted in the documents of the Management Council that some of the institutions that were included in this sector became part of the teaching and research sector such as Projeto Peixe-Boi/ICMBio and CEPENE/ICMBio.

When analyzing only the change in the representativeness of the sectors through

the number of councilors in CONAPACC, it can be observed that the change was positive from the point of view of social participation. This is because more institutions were included in the existing sectors, and in the sector of agriculture, industry and commerce, which until then had not been included in the structure of the Council, as one of the interviewees stated:

It is always a challenge to get the council to be representative, but I believe that in this last administration of the Council, after the effort that was made to include sectors of society that were not represented such as agriculture, industry and commerce (...), progress was made so that we can consider them representative (EN6).

From the point of view of the scope of good governance, this is interesting, as one of the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of inclusion is precisely the opportunity given by management for all sectors of society to participate in the decision-making process (LOCKWOOD, 2010). In this sense, the management of Costa dos Corais EPA guaranteed this inclusion criterion in the governance of the UC, since it did not limit the entry of any sector in the Management Council, as long as they were formalized representatives (CONAPACC, 2011). Here it is worth mentioning that according to IN 04/2009 of ICMBio, there was an advance in the inclusion of representatives not organized as legal entities in the spaces of participation. In turn, the councilors of CONAPACC decided in their internal regulations (CONAPACC, 2011, 2020) that the councilors of Costa dos Corais EPA should be representatives of civil society. This decision was influenced by the specificities of the UC, as it is extensive and with several formalized institutions. However, this restriction may not guarantee fair participation, limiting the participation of vulnerable groups that often do not participate in formalized institutions.

The entry of new institutions and councilors does not guarantee the efficiency and effectiveness of the Management Council, because although most councilors understand the purpose and role of the Council, their actions may not be integrated and materialized in the fulfillment of the conservation unit's objectives. (WWF, 2013). This finding may derive from the fact that there is disagreement about how each sector sees its role as a member. Community leaders tend to defend and represent the interests of their community in management decisions. Government organizations, on the other hand, understand that councilors must discuss and deliberate on UC development policies (WWF-Brasil, 2013).

Due to the fact that each sector acts and influences the decisions taken during the Council meetings differently, the diversity of social actors in the discussion becomes necessary to balance the defense of collective and individual interests, reduce the asymmetries of power and enable the governance of UCs (NEWIG; FRITSCH, 2009).

### **Intensity of participation in CONAPACC's decision-making**

There is a range of challenges for the Councils in the search for power to influence the management of the territories of the UCs, such as ICMBio's transparency related to the power of the councils in effective decision-making (PRADO et al. 2020), the lack of

training of managers and counselors (IRVING et al., 2009; TRIMBLE; ARAUJO; SEIXAS, 2014) and balancing the interests of the various social actors (RANIERI et al. 2011). In CONAPACC, the analysis of the intensity of participation of the institutions showed that there was an imbalance in the influence between the different sectors (Figure 3).

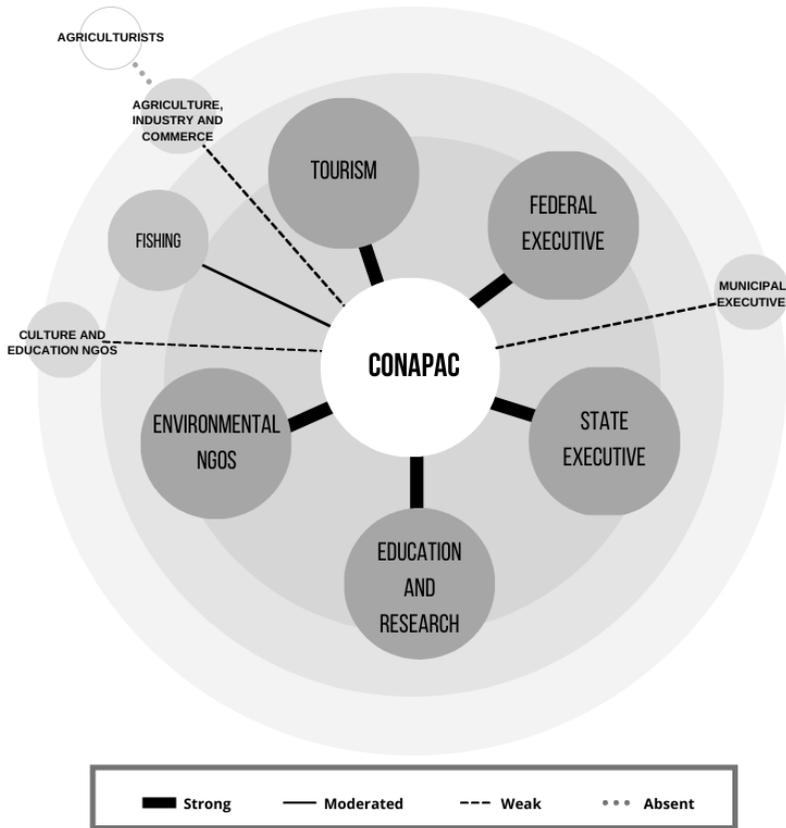


Figure 3 - Levels of intensity of influence in the decision-making of the sectors that make up the CONAPACC

Source: Documental research (2014 - 2016).

The sectors that strongly influence decision-making at CONAPACC are environmental and research Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), composed of NGOs whose main scope is environmental conservation; the scientific research sector, composed mainly of Federal Universities; the tourism sector, formed by institutions that provide different tourist services in the UC; and the federal and state executive bodies. The high intensity is mainly due to the high number of institutions that make up the scientific research sector - CONAPACC's largest sector, and then to the fact that most decisions are taken according to the point of view of these sectors (research and environmental NGOs).

The presentation of scientific data and the eloquence of language were factors identified as important for convincing and for the formation of agreements with other sectors. Such factors have already been cited by Fuks and Perissonoto (2006) as extremely influential in the analysis of power and decisions of a Management Board. However, eloquence in language and scientific data can weaken the participation of other sectors - such as fisheries, for example, being a possible obstacle in ensuring another principle of good governance in protected areas, that of environmental justice (RASTOGI et al. 2010; GRAHAM et al. 2003).

The tourism sector was also identified with a strong level of intensity within CONAPACC. The number of sector institutions present at CONAPACC, the high rate of attendance at meetings and the amount of agendas and discussions that are requested and discussed around the tourist activity are factors that intensify its relationship with the Council. Furthermore, as can be seen in the documentary analysis, even with the predominance of decisions in favor of environmental conservation, the tourism sector has a lobby, which, when contradicted, sought direct requests to the presidency of the federal environmental management body.

Finally, the federal and state executive bodies also have a strong level of influence on the Council's decisions. Despite working punctually in inspections together with ICMBio, these sectors participate in CONAPACC meetings and play a role in the elaboration of norms that directly influence the other sectors of the Council, such as, for example, the environmental licensing of projects around the Costa dos Corais EPA and assignments of use of Union lands by artisanal fishermen.

Regarding moderate levels of influence, the sector that stands out is the fishing sector. Although its number of representatives in CONAPACC is the same as that of the tourism sector, some members of this sector are not able to speak and have a small input on requesting guidelines. Some fishermen present at the Council attribute this apparent lack of power to the small number of fishing colonies present in CONAPACC and the difficulty of expressing their demands and opinions during Council meetings:

There are many people who, wherever they arrive, already know and already put things. But a person who's never been anywhere and besides everything he only knows how to sign his name, without any development. Then you look like you already think the staff is superior and you feel ashamed (EN4).

There is very little representation of fisheries on the council, it should have all colonies present on the council. Because that's the only way to get there, the fisherman becomes aware of the work. Very low participation by fishing. It gets to the point where you can't defend yourself. How are the people going to defend fishing if there is almost no one from fishing (EN4).

Social participation can reinforce existing social privileges, discouraging minorities

from having their perspectives expressed (NELSON; WRIGHT, 1995). Such fragility results in the weakening of the sector's organization in order to defend its interests within the Council (RASTOGI et al. 2010) and in view of the strong influence of the research sector and environmental NGOs in the approval of more preservationist agendas, fishermen feel embarrassed to defend their agendas; there is a tendency to exclude artisanal fishermen from decision-making in the so-called "blue economy/blue growth" (ENGEN et al. 2021; JENTOFT, 2017). In the study by Almeida (2020) carried out in the Costa dos Corais EPA, local fishermen reported their indignation at the agreement to close the fishing exclusion zone in Tamandaré - PE, claiming that they participated in the process, but that the agreement did not come out as expected.

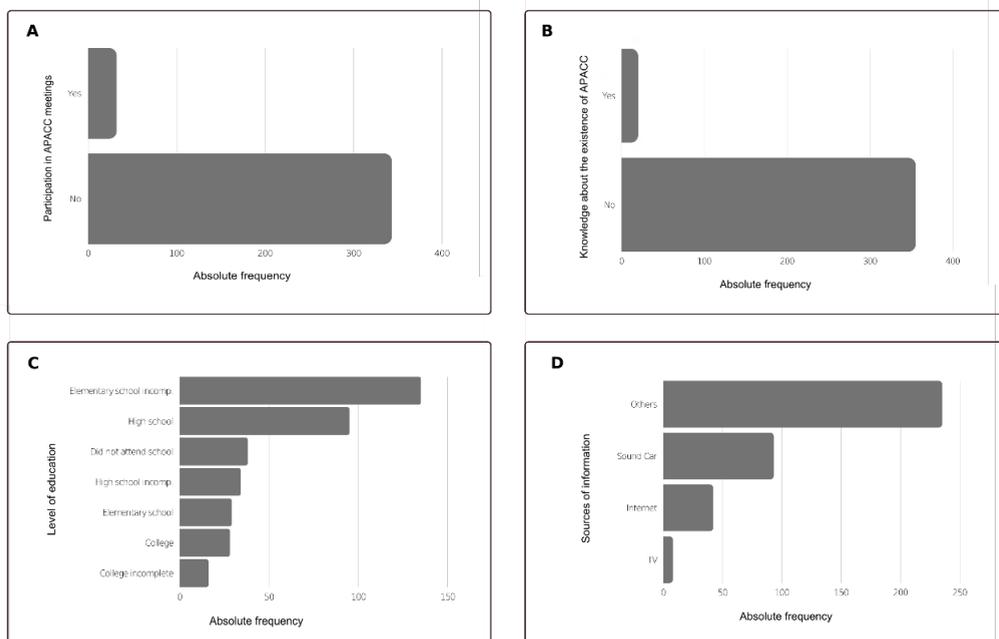
The influence on decision-making becomes weaker when the representation of the municipal executive in the Council is considered, as there is a low participation of the sector in Council meetings, despite the increase in representativeness. The non-participation of municipal bodies is a major barrier for the successful implementation of regulations and agreements in UCs (PEDROSA, 2013).

The other sectors that have a weak relationship with CONAPACC are agriculture, industry and commerce – which, due to its recent inclusion in the council, did not make agenda requests for discussion; it was also identified the absence of links with farmers and the weak representation of residents' associations in CONAPACC. In addition to the farmers, it is worth noting that the residents' associations are extremely important for the governance of the UCs, as they are channels for claims and information between the management and the residents who live in the UC's surroundings. However, these are institutions that still need to be strengthened in the Costa dos Corais EPA and deserve a say in the management of the UC, since the Management Board restricted in its bylaws only the participation of formalized institutions. The low participation of residents can also be explained by the results found from the questionnaires carried out with the residents (Figure 4).

### **Residents' knowledge about APACC and its Management Council**

If within CONAPACC the intensity of participation has shown to be uneven between sectors. Even with the increase in representation, the participation of residents in the decision-making process of CONAPACC is practically non-existent (Figure 3) 90% of the interviewed residents said they were unaware of the existence of the APACC (Figure 4B) and only 8.5% of the interviewed residents said they had already participated in a meeting promoted by the PA management (Figure 4A). This result may be linked to the difficulty in establishing effective communication between management and residents, whose knowledge is essential to address various challenges faced by management (MACEDO; MEDEIROS, 2018).

**Figure 4 - A. Participation of residents interviewed in Costa dos Corais EPA meetings. B. Knowledge of the interviewed residents about the existence of APACC. C. Level of education of the interviewed residents. D. Media used as a source of information for the interviewed residents**



Source: Direct research (2016)

However, despite efforts to publicize the UC, management valued the predominance of written language in the media, such as signs, websites, articles in electronic newspapers, etc., which do not correspond to the means of communication used by the community (Figure 4D). In this way, the management of the UC did not reach the majority of the local population, which has a low level of education (Figure 4C), a factor that is already known to influence the perception and knowledge of the community in relation to protected areas (AGARDY, 1994; BADOLA; BARTH WAL; HUSSAIN, 2012).

Another factor limiting knowledge of the local community about the Costa dos Corais EPA and its regulations was the lack of support from the municipal government in the dissemination of information about the Costa dos Corais EPA, as the counselor below explains:

I think there is still something missing. I think that municipal management, municipal representatives need to be more active, disclosing in city councils, disclosing in schools, if possible, even putting a stereo car on the street for people to understand and know (EN1).

However, this support from municipal management for dissemination in the local

community becomes limited, since communication between the managers themselves - municipal and APACC - is scarce:

There is no direct communication about the activities of the APA with the municipal management. Nor is there a constant sending of this information through contact e-mail, which should be a normal thing. Information is sought through WhatsApp groups or on the APA website. On the other hand, municipal management also presents the same difficulties in passing on information or conflicts to the APA (EN2).

Another point worth discussing, in the case of residents, is that they do not have an association so that they can discuss issues inherent to the city or the impacts of the creation of the Costa dos Corais APA on their lives. This differs from the results found by Cozzolino (2005) and Vieira (2011), where even with reduced community participation there were residents' associations integrated into the Management Council of the UC.

Even without formalization, the participation of any citizen in the meetings of the APACC Management Council is possible:

The Council meetings are open, so people can go as a listener, listen to the meetings, and understand the discussions, they can even request the floor for some counselor and the board have the power to speak, to give voice to ordinary citizens who are listeners during the meetings (EN6).

In addition to the lack of information about the meetings, the low participation in these social spaces is a result of the perception that the discussions do not lead to concrete referrals and the lack of interest in relation to the subjects that will be discussed, as explained by one of the *interviewees* “*The staff called for hold the meetings, but the staff never participated (...). In fact, people didn't believe it (...), they don't really believe it*”. (EN9)

Due to the fact that Costa dos Corais EPA is categorized as a sustainable use UC, where tourism and the sustainable extraction of its resources are allowed, it is not surprising that there are different users with different interests. These users drive their agenda in the meetings in order to influence decisions for the benefit of the sector they represent (BROAD, 2008).

In addition to economic interests, there are residents who have a strong identity and cultural bond with the place where they live. 88% of the interviewed residents prefer to live where they live compared to another city, basing this preference with stories and memories related to the sea and nature and demonstrating their affective bond and their sense of belonging to the place where they live (TUAN, 1980). In this way, municipal management and UC management can create strategies that can involve residents in the preservation of this place, demonstrating the importance of nature's contributions to the lives and well-being of residents (DIAZ et al. 2018), showing that the objectives of the UC are also aligned with environmental preservation and the cultural appreciation

of the place where they live, emphasizing the importance of knowledge and traditional knowledge of the residents (DIAZ et al 2015, 2018) and favoring their recognition within the spaces of decision-making.

In view of the low knowledge of the UC by residents, one possible strategy is to encourage associations and the strengthening of groups of residents through local projects. In addition, it is possible to develop educational programs that are based on traditional knowledge and promote local knowledge. An analysis carried out by Macedo and Medeiros (2018), of the incentives in the governance system in a protected area, highlighted that the relationship between participatory incentives and knowledge incentives are the main promoters for the cooperation and effectiveness of protected areas. Transparent and communicative action between individuals and between institutions is necessary to increase society's interest in the management of the protected area's territory and promote the inclusion of all social actors in decision-making spaces.

## Conclusions

Social inclusion is considered one of the most important principles to effectively achieve the objectives of protected areas and to ensure good governance, as it is through the participation of all sectors of society that local complexity is recognized and dialogues are established, leading to agreements between different interest groups.

In the case of APACC, although there has been an increase in the representation of each sector of society within CONAPACC, the intensity of participation of different sectors is not equitable and the voice of local residents is weak compared to other actors. Although it is known that the participation of these groups (which are often the most vulnerable in the UCs) is essential to ensure good governance of the UCs, in practice their inclusion is hampered, either because they find it difficult to form associations or because they cannot effectively express their opinions. This exposes the council to the risk of becoming a space of power where equity and social justice do not prevail.

In this sense, it is necessary to strengthen the social groups that have little or no voice in the Management Councils of protected areas. In the case of APACC, we suggest that management work towards strengthening social participation, through actions and strategies that provide opportunities for voice and action for everyone inside and outside the council.

Finally, it is necessary to look and take actions to strengthen other principles such as justice and transparency, such as modifying the language used in the media, training counselors from sectors that find it difficult to position themselves and including their agendas in the decisions of the council. It would also be beneficial to strengthen the relationship between the municipal government and the management of APACC, as inclusion and participation alone are not enough for good governance in protected areas.

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# Inclusão social e governança no Conselho gestor da Área de Proteção Ambiental Costa dos Corais

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**Resumo:** A participação da sociedade nas arenas de tomada das decisões é fundamental para alcançar uma gestão ambiental efetiva. Este trabalho buscou avaliar a efetividade da inclusão, enquanto princípio de boa governança, no Conselho gestor da Área de Proteção Ambiental (APA) Costa dos Corais. Para isso, foram analisados documentos institucionais, realizadas entrevistas com os gestores e conselheiros e aplicados 375 questionários com moradores de Porto de Pedras e São Miguel dos Milagres - Alagoas. Os resultados mostram desequilíbrio na representatividade e na influência dos setores dentro do Conselho. As Organizações não-governamentais ambientais/pesquisa, turismo, ensino/pesquisa científica e poderes executivos federal e estadual influenciaram fortemente a tomada de decisões, enquanto o setor da pesca e os moradores tiveram participação moderada e fraca. A inclusão social é essencial para a boa governança de áreas protegidas, entretanto outros princípios como a transparência e a justiça necessitam estar integrados para que ela de fato aconteça.

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**Palavras-chave:** Áreas Marinhas Protegidas; Participação Social; Tomada de decisão; Intensidade de participação; Representatividade.

# Inclusión social Y gobernanza en el Consejo de gestión del Área de Protección Ambiental Costa dos Corais

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**Resumen:** La participación de la sociedad en la toma de decisiones es esencial para lograr una gestión medioambiental eficaz. Aquí pretendemos evaluar la eficacia de la inclusión, como principio de buena gobernanza, en el Consejo de Gestión del Área de Protección Ambiental (APA) Costa dos Corais. Se analizaron documentos institucionales, se realizaron entrevistas a directivos y concejales y se aplicaron 375 cuestionarios a los habitantes de Porto de Pedras y São Miguel dos Milagres - Alagoas. Los resultados muestran un desequilibrio en la representatividad e influencia de los sectores dentro del consejo. Las organizaciones no gubernamentales medioambientales, turismo, enseñanza/investigación científica y poderes ejecutivos federal y estatal influyeron mucho en la toma de decisiones, el sector pesquero y los residentes tuvieron una participación moderada y débil. La inclusión social es esencial para la buena gobernanza de las áreas protegidas, pero es necesario integrar otros principios como la transparencia y la justicia

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