Tracking Change in the Canadian National Parks:
From One Crisis to Another

by

Karen Kalynka
B.A., Dalhousie University, 2011

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Abstract

This research assesses changes in Canada's national park system between the years 2000-2015 and places these changes within the broad social, political, and economic context in Canada, as well as within trends in international conservation policy and practice. The animating research questions include: how did Parks Canada respond in the fifteen years following the report of the 2000 Panel on Environmental Integrity? What political, economic, and cultural factors influenced Parks Canada Agency in this period? A further research question emerged from my findings: Why has it been so hard for Parks Canada to lead with ecological integrity as its first priority?

Through a political ecological lens, the research utilizes a mixed methods approach. Using semi-formal interviews with retired Parks Canada managers, I was able to establish what had changed and how these changes were interpreted by these former employees. I also interviewed environmental NGOs to gather information on how those outside the Agency viewed the changes taking place within Parks Canada. I then collected and reviewed primary Parks Canada documents to establish the main changes, including of policy, as well as budgets and expenditures.

My research found that in this period, despite efforts to shift the culture of the organization of Parks Canada to ecological integrity (EI) the Agency deepened its emphasis on visitor experience. The most recent "decade of change" in Canadian national parks policy and practice is thus reminiscent of the century-long struggle to determine whom or what parks are for and the role that Parks Canada plays in the production of Canadian identity. Although we are tempted to conclude that the decades repeat themselves like a pendulum swinging between "use" and "preservation," this analysis suggests that this decade of change is distinct from the previous decades, with the institution increasingly emphasizing its role as nation-builder and tourism provider. This research purposes that a kind of Polanyian "double movement" is playing out on a new foundational terrain characterized by neoliberal solutions for conservation, a terrain influenced by a broader, global neoliberal transformation within state institutions.

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Acknowledgements

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"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream, not only plan, but also believe."

(Anatole France)

1   Two decades of change

1.1   Introduction

In March of 2000, Shelia Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage, announced the release of the report of the Panel on Ecological Integrity (EI Panel), which she heralded as being a "blueprint for the future of Parks Canada" (as cited in Parks Canada, 2017b). The EI Panel emerged out of several years of reports all voicing concerns that the ecological integrity of national parks was increasingly threatened by commercial development (see the 1995 Revised National Parks Policy, the 1996 Banff–Bow Valley Report, the 1997 State of the Parks Report, and the 1997 Auditor General's Report).[1] The Panel's mandate was to examine Parks Canada's approach to managing ecological integrity (EI); the two-volume Panel report concluded that the ecological integrity of Canada's national parks was indeed threatened (Parks Canada, 2000).

Given this primary finding, the EI panel advised Parks Canada to use a science-based approach to ecological monitoring and to manage the national parks with ecological integrity as its first priority. They also called on the government to commit to complete Canada's network of protected areas; to build better relationships with Aboriginal peoples; and to move Parks Canada away from the language of business and adopt a language emphasizing ecological integrity and conservation. In particular, the recommendations urged Parks Canada to develop an ecological integrity outreach program that confirmed ecological integrity as the prime objective—"Use without abuse"—whereby "National parks must provide meaningful and responsible park experiences without compromising ecological integrity" (Parks Canada, 2000, p. 16). Finally, and perhaps most crucially, the report indicated that the greatest barrier to these

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[1] The Banff–Bow Valley report (1996) found grizzly bear populations in decline and concluded that Banff National Park's ecological integrity was imperiled by development. This led the Minister of Canadian Heritage to put caps on growth and was key to the establishment of the Panel on Ecological Integrity.

changes would come from within the organization itself (Parks Canada, 2000)–that is, the culture of the agency was not one of ecological integrity.

Fast forward to the fall of 2015, just a month before the federal election, and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), along with former Parks employees, some Indigenous groups, and concerned citizens, launched the 'Fight for Your Parks' campaign to "Stop commercial development in our national parks" (CPAWS, 2015a). According to a 2016 CPAWS report, thousands of Canadians have signed petitions opposing several of the highly publicized and controversial proposed development projects, most in the mountain parks and one in Cape Breton Highlands National Park (CPAWS, 2016a). For many of the organizers of this campaign, the catalyst was the proposed expansion of Lake Louise Ski Resort, as it would take land designated as a wilderness zone out of legislated protection. This proposal was viewed by environmentalists and a number of former Parks Canada managers as so outrageous that it led organizers to make national parks a campaign issue for the then upcoming federal election; several of my interviewees expressed fears that if the Conservatives were re-elected their next omnibus bill could amend the National Parks Act to make room for even more commercial development projects. This fight over development is reminiscent of the conversations happening fifteen years earlier in the EI report, as well as even earlier in the Banff–Bow Valley development debates.

On October 21, 2015, the Liberal Party of Canada won a majority government, ending nearly a decade of Conservative austerity measures that took its toll on environmental protection in Canada (Linnitt, 2015). The Liberal Party campaigned on the promise that they would support the protection of ecological integrity in national parks and confirmed that they would also "restrict...development inside the parks, and where possible...work with gateway communities outside the parks to grow their eco-tourism industries and create jobs" (Liberal Party, 2015, p. 10). A Liberal majority win was heralded as being a vote for change (Gollom, 2015). The

cancelling of the controversial Mother Canada memorial, slated to be built in Cape Breton Highlands National Park, was interpreted by one of my interviewees as being a positive and symbolic first step toward reinstating ecological integrity as a first priority in park management (Personal communication, Jane, 2016).

Further financial investment in Parks Canada followed. On March 17, 2016, Catherine McKenna, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, announced that the Liberal government was providing Banff National Park with an additional $39 million in funding to "invest in the recovery of Species at Risk and improve the ecological integrity of the forest ecosystems" (Parks Canada, 2016a). But a closer look indicates that only a fraction of those funds were slated to flow directly to restoring ecological integrity (approximately $4 million), while the bulk of the funding (approximately $34 million) was earmarked for infrastructure, largely roads and campgrounds (Parks Canada, 2016a). McKenna also announced that the government did not intend to review the site guidelines for Lake Louise Ski Resort introduced by the former Conservative government just before the election in 2015 (Derworiz, 2016a). Environmental groups, along with former Parks Canada managers, responded to this news by asking Stephen Woodley, co-chair on biodiversity and protected areas for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), to forward a letter to UNESCO denouncing this proposal on the grounds that it threatens the ecological integrity of Banff National Park, which is a World Heritage Site (Rocky Mountain Outlook, 2016a).

All these announcements left Banff residents and conservationists with serious concerns about how the park, communities, and non-human residents of Banff and Lake Louise would handle a possible doubling of visitors to the mountain parks in 2017 (which would have free admission to celebrate Canada's 150 Anniversary), when the parks are already operating at full capacity (Cheadle, 2016). For instance, Banff welcomed 3.8 million visitors in 2015, and that was a 10% increase from the previous year (Parks Canada, 2019b). This added influx of visitors, in turn,

creates the potential for increased impacts on wildlife. For example, in 2014 Banff reported "835 human-wildlife conflict occurrences—a 33 per cent increase over 2013, which was a record year" (Derworiz, 2015a).

What is interesting about these announcements and this period in Parks Canada's history is that they bring us back to the beginning, to the era of the EI report. It feels as though history is repeating itself. The EI panel was created to respond to the tension between ecological integrity and commercial development in the national parks. It was also preceded by an era of budget cuts and employee layoffs (Kopas, 2007). The EI panel's response was to call for a renewed focus on the ecological aspects of parks, and its recommendations were supposed to end the "dual mandate" debate about Parks Canada in favor of preservation. But these announcements by the new Liberal government suggest a continuing emphasis on visitor experience and visitation in national parks. And both eras – that leading to the EI report in the late 1990s, and contemporary concerns – involved conservationist movements questioning development and visitation in the national parks.

In a 2016 press release, twelve environmental groups write, "We are deeply concerned that the Government of Canada's management of our national parks has shifted dramatically in the wrong direction, putting our most treasured protected places at risk" (cited in Jasper Environmental Association, 2016). They call for "Parks Canada to refocus on nature conservation and stewardship and to reverse the relentless focus on marketing, tourism and increasing visitation with little regard to the impacts on nature" (Jasper Environmental Association, 2016.). This ongoing tension between "use" and "preservation" continued well into new millennium, despite the EI panel and subsequent government legislation – namely the 2000 Canada National Parks Act - emphasizing preservation and the need to manage the national parks with ecological integrity as the Agency's first priority.

My research wades into this recurrent tension: what happened between the EI panel's 2000 report and McKenna's 2016 announcement? Why are we having the same debate that flared up in the 1990s?

1.2   Situating the researcher and the research

The impetus for this project grew out of my own experiences working for Parks Canada as a Visitor Services Attendant, first at campgrounds and later at the Banff Visitor Centre. I started my career with Parks Canada as a seasonal employee with a three-month contract at Johnston Canyon Campground in Banff National Park. Every summer since then, I have returned to my Parks job, welcoming Canadian and international visitors to Banff National Park. I provide information and inform visitors of the rules and regulations within the Park to meet their needs and expectations to ensure both their safety and that of wildlife and the environment. My staff accommodations in the woods, which in many ways isolated and protected me from the hustle and bustle of the town of Banff, provided me with the opportunity to be present in nature. It was here that I learned to experience the physical landscape and observe wildlife with a newfound appreciation, thereby cultivating my love of wilderness. It is this attachment to place and to the national parks that has led me to pursue a master's degree in Environmental Studies.

As a Parks Canada employee, I witnessed and experienced many of the changes that I describe in this study: ecological integrity training for all employees; increased emphasis on visitor experience; and the budget cuts in 2012. I experienced them from a position on the ground, unaware of their meaning in the broader context of parks management and politics. These experiences with Parks Canada and my interest in nature conservation have led me to pursue this study on how conservation has changed in Canada over the past fifteen years. I intended to look at three groups—Parks Canada, private land trusts, and environmental NGOs—to provide a snapshot of what was changing. The more I researched the changes that occurred in Parks

Canada the more fascinated I became, and this one aspect of the research project escalated to become the basis for my master's thesis.

My position as a researcher in examining the changes that took place in Parks Canada, however, is awkward. It is awkward because as an employee with a long career with Parks Canada, I have been submerged in the culture of the agency and have participated in the changing narratives of whom and what national parks are for. As a researcher, I am critically evaluating the changes that took place within the management of Parks Canada, while acknowledging my own frontline position and trying to understand and give meaning to these changes from the bottom looking up. I attempted to bypass some of this awkwardness by primarily interviewing retired Parks employees, as I felt that this would distance me from the Agency and those I interviewed. I did not interview anyone who was or has been directly involved in my own work as a Parks Canada employee. Overall, it is my intention to report on and analyze the collected data in order to contribute to an understanding of the changes that have taken place within Parks Canada and situate them in a broader context of how conservation in Canada is changing.

1.2.1 Research questions

My Master's research project is primarily interested in what happened in between two major events outlined above - in 2000, the EI panel recommended the strengthening environmental policies and the mitigation of development in the national parks, and in 2016, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change announced extra funding for infrastructure to support visitor experience in the parks. The aim of my research is to chart what changes took place and to analyze what factors drove those changes. My research asks: How did Parks Canada respond in the fifteen years following the EI panel's report? What political, economic, and cultural factors influenced Parks Canada Agency in this period? My findings indicate that the decade following the EI panel's report actually swung closer to "use" and away from "preservation,"

leading to an additional question: Why has it been so hard for Parks Canada to lead with ecological integrity as its first priority?

This research is significant for two reasons: first, I provide a synthesis of major trends in national parks' policy since the EI Panel released its report (2000-2015); second, I explain these trends within the broader context of neoliberal conservation and examine the role that national parks play in the production of national identity and within the liberal state more broadly. My research on Parks Canada allows for a better understanding of how Canadian power relations and state logics governing conservation have changed. But it also provides insight on where conservation might be headed in the coming decade.

1.3   Methodological approach

In order to develop an analysis of these changes I evaluate my research through a political ecological lens. While the field has multiple definitions (Forsyth 2013, Robbins 2012), a political ecology sensibility to research aims to understand social and environmental changes (including dominant discourses about those changes) by situating them in their broader social, political and economic contexts. What this means for my research is that the changes in Parks Canada cannot be understood as though they take place within a vacuum, they cannot be explained by reference to proximate causes. Rather, the changes in Parks Canada are shaped by and shape structural dynamics in society, by which I mean they are inflected by and inflect the nature of the state and its legitimacy-making needs as well as broader turns towards neoliberal policies and practices in Canada (but also beyond) (see chapter 2 and 4). Political ecology insists that analyses of nature and ecology explicitly consider "relations of power" (Robbins 2011, p. 20). As Robbins states, it is an approach that "stresses not only that ecological systems are political, but that our very ideas about them are further delimited and directed through political and economic processes" (Robbins 2011, p. 20). It is an approach with a "Jekyll and Hyde persona", aiming to take a hatchet to "flawed, dangerous and politically problematic accounts" that fail to

consider structural and power-laden processes. But too, it aims to plant a seed that can grow "new socioecologies" (Robbins 2011, p. 20).

In studying the last 15 years of changes in Parks Canada, then, I remain attentive to how new narratives emerge–like the "visitor crisis" (see chapter 3) and in explanation I place them within the political-economic context of nation building and neoliberalization (see chapter 4). Rather than focus on one park, I chose to focus my attention on understanding the changes at the scale of Parks Canada Agency, with a goal of understanding broader changes in Canadian conservation.

In analysis of my results, my thesis engages the nature of conservation in Canada alongside Karl Polanyi's (1944, 2001) theorization of the contradictory role of the state: the State is both compelled to grow the economy and protect land and labor from economic development and market expansion. Polanyi's ideas of the double movement are also helpful for analyzing the nature of the pendulum swing between use and preservation. Pushing at Polanyi's notion of the double movement, I also engage with Michael M'Gonigle and Louise Takeda's (2013) claim that the State is limited in its ability to protect the environment, particularly in that the State's first and foremost goal is to grow the economy, an argument that can help explain why Parks Canada faces such difficulty in leading with ecological integrity. But the broader context also matters: the financial crisis during this period led to public belt-tightening around the globe and in Canada. And these changes in Parks Canada are a part of a larger and longer shift in economic and political power. Saskia Sassen (2006) provides my analysis with a sense of what is distinctive about this time. She argues that a global economic, political and social transformation is taking place more broadly within state institutions, alongside new organizing logics that support the advancement of globalization. I engage Sassen's ideas most fully in the conclusion to help think about the contemporary character of Parks Canada and to provide some speculation on the next 'decade of change'.

1.3.1 Methods

This research draws on interviews, analysis of government reports, a Freedom of Information request (FOI), an environmental petition, and a literature review. Government agencies helped proved statistical data to chart trends and changes to environmental policies and regulations.

In terms of interview selection, I purposefully sought individuals with a broad, system-wide view of the Parks Canada Agency. Three target groups of experts included: retired Directors, Superintendents, Managers and front-line staff of Parks Canada (eight); representatives of ENGOs and representatives from nature organization (six); and government representatives, departments, and agencies (four).[2] In order to insure confidentiality and participant autonomy were upheld, I chose to use pseudonyms to conceal the identities of the research interviewees. However, it may be possible for others to identify the sources as the size of participants is limited. Participants were made aware of this limitation in the study in writing (via a Participant Consent Form) and they participated with full knowledge that their anonymity may be compromised.

I used these interviews to synthesise a narrative of what was changing in Parks Canada. The decision to speak to retired parks employees was strategic for two reasons. First, I was looking for participants who were employed in 2000 and onward, in order to access their insights with the Agency. Second, for ethical reasons (I hold a seasonal position with Parks Canada, in Banff National Park) and out of respect for political sensitivity, I felt that current Parks employees

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[2] I used personal contacts in Banff, Alberta, and at the University of Victoria, BC, to introduce me and my research via email to former Parks employees and some environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs). I provided my contacts with a letter to give to potential participants that described my research. Only people interested in participating were contacted by me directly via email to arrange times for semi-formal interviews. Prior to the interview a consent form was sent to willing participants. Once consent forms were obtained via email or in person, thirty- to sixty-minute interviews were conducted. Other potential participants were contacted directly through environmental NGOs and government websites. A letter describing my research and requesting an interview was emailed to them. Once I had permission to contact potential participants, I provided them with a letter of consent and set up a time and place for an in-person or Skype interview. All interviews were recorded, with permission.

would be unable to talk openly about changes taking place. In addition to targeted interviews, I also used snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a technique used to locate potential participants through the process of accumulation. Each participant is asked if they know someone else, they could suggest for an interview (Babbie, 2015). I also used the Internet to contact potential participants from environmental NGOs and government websites.

Even though the number of retired Parks Canada participants who were interviewed for this research was small, their vast experience and knowledge with the Agency has provided me with high quality data. Furthermore, many of these participants have experience working with other conservation organizations. Representatives of environmental NGOs also provided a vast amount of rich data on which I could draw to provide insight on how conservation in Canada is changing. Likewise, continuing discussion with some participants kept me abreast of ongoing debates and changes, which helped me adjust and update my findings.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and read several times by the researcher. Once I became more familiar with the data, I color coded similar themes and discrepancies. I used interpretive analysis to examine, document, and group narratives, words, ideas, and arguments that described and identified the changes that took place in Parks Canada and gave meaning to these changes. Topics such as the recommendations of the Panel on Ecological Integrity, the decline in visitation, political changes impacting to funding priorities, and organizational change emerged as key themes.

To detect and map changes in policy and direction, I examined Parks Canada documents, such as annual departmental performance reports and reports on plans and priorities from 2000 to 2015. I studied the 2000 Panel on Ecological Integrity and Parks Canada's response to its recommendations to compare how values and priorities changed over time. Likewise, the 2005 and 2013 reports of the Auditor General of the Environment and Sustainable Development provided information on how Parks Canada is managing its responsibility. I catalogued reports,

press releases, and articles from environmental NGOs, all of which document political and public concerns and opinions of changes. Parks Canada reports were the most challenging to interpret, as they were packed with information but at the same time convey much of the same information year after year. To stay alert for changes in the text in dry bureaucratic documents required that I consume copious amounts of coffee while conducting multiple readings. Finally, close, careful readings of budgetary changes at Parks Canada sparked many insights for my research questions, as outlined in the next chapter.

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request was filed with Environment Canada and Parks Canada, and an Environmental Petition was submitted to the Auditor General of Canada seeking information to better understand Parks Canada's changing priorities, loss of capacity, underfunding for science, and changes in governance. All these reports and documents were used to reference claims made by those interviewed and helped me to organize themes and ideas about what changes were taking place.

1.3.2 Study limitations

As with any study, mine has limitations. My interviews, while illuminating, exclude current employees. In hindsight, the FOI request could have asked more specific questions about revenue generated from business licenses and the percentage of gross from big players like Brewster and the Ski Hills.[3] Those percentages or actual revenue numbers would indicate why partnerships with big industry have such an influence over the parks. Similarly, the environmental petitions that I sent with my supervisor who asked how many natural scientists were actually employed in national parks, regional offices, and the national office in each year from 2000 to 2015. We were interested in knowing in particular the cuts to personnel in the scientific categories (BI1, BI2, BI3, PC1, PC2, PC3, PC4, REM, and RES) as well as, separately,

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[3] Brewster Travel has been rebranded in 2017 and is now operating under the name Pursuit. Throughout this report I will refer to the company as 'Brewster'.

technical support categories (EG and GT). However, when we received the results, they did not provide information on each specific scientific category as requested; instead, all scientific categories were lumped together. Future research would benefit from tracking down how much revenue is generated from partnerships with big industry and how many science positions in each category were lost in this most recent decade.

1.4 Thesis roadmap

The thesis is organized as follows: chapter one provides an introduction to the changes that have taken place in Parks Canada between 2000 and 2015. This chapter situates this research between two book-end events, commencing with the recommendations made by the 2000 EI Panel and ending with McKenna's 2016 funding announcement to examine happened between these two events and why. Chapter one also situates the researcher and explains the research methods used.

Chapter two contextualizes my research project and places it within the existing literature on Parks Canada and within debates about neoliberalism and nation-building. It begins by historicizing the "use" versus "preservation" debate, also known as the dual mandate, and reviewing the previous decade (1900-2000) of Parks Canada, focusing on the debates that led to the founding of the EI Panel. It then introduces and reviews the literature around neoliberalism, including briefly summarizing neoliberalism in Canada and the growing literature on neoliberal conservation. Finally, I introduce literature thinking between nature, nationalism, and neoliberalism. The latter literature is important for thinking about the role that Parks play and continue to play within our larger cultural, political, and economic moment, particularly one that is avowedly neoliberal. This literature suggests that national symbols and imaginaries become more important as the state steps back its economic and social protections.

The **third chapter** focuses on charting the fifteen years that followed the release of the EI Panel's recommendations. The key finding is that despite witnessing a growth in protected areas, Parks Canada simultaneously began to water down its emphasis on ecological integrity as financial resources shifted to support and promote visitor experience. I suggest that the "visitor crisis" needs to be understood not simply as being due to declining visitation and revenue, but also as a crisis of national identity production, a threat to the very core of what government/elites consider to be "Canadian-ness" (see: Angus, 1997; Kopas, 2007; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009; Nieguth & Raney, 2017). Parks Canada has campaigned hard to make national parks and historical sites relevant to Canadians, particularly, in this decade, to youth and new Canadians. This has shifted the Agency toward promoting corporate goals such as branding, marketing, increasing revenue, and targeting visitation, and creating new park experiences to strengthen its competitive position.

The **fourth chapter** focuses on understanding why the Agency has had such difficulty foregrounding ecological integrity. The changes in Parks Canada need to be understood within the context of the neoliberalization of the state, which began in the previous decade and was intensified in this decade under the Harper government's austerity measures. Although it is tempting to make the assumption that the decades repeat themselves like a pendulum swinging between "use" and "preservation," this research argues that the visitor crisis and Parks Canada's response to it in an era of neoliberalization have made it more difficult for the pendulum to swing back toward preservation. Instead of "Parks Canada reposition[ing] itself to reflect ecological integrity as the primary objective of the organization in every facet of its operation," (Parks Canada, 2000, p. 13) as stated in the EI panel report, the agency is now firmly focused on increasing visitation and making the National Parks relevant to Canadians. This research could serve as a baseline for further research on the neoliberalization of conservation and the greater implications for how conservation in Canada is changing. It provides insight into where conservation might be headed in the coming decade.

2 Critical context and literature review

This research project follows on a large body of Parks Canada research. This chapter begins by laying out some of this research and also provides a brief history of Parks Canada, focusing especially on the dynamic between "use" and "preservation". The historical context of this scholarship is used to better understand the events that not only changed the last decade, but also influenced the contemporary dynamics of conservation in Canada. To build a frame around this use and preservation dynamic, I draw from Karl Polanyi. As noted in the previous chapter, the key purpose of this research is not only to chart what changes took place, but also to analyze what factors are driving those changes. In order to adequately situate and understand the changes in Parks Canada, I also draw on two other literatures: the scholarship on neoliberalism–particularly neoliberal conservation, as well as the scholarship on nature, conservation and nation building.

2.1 Canadian National Parks scholarship

In this section I first introduce the dual mandate debate in National Parks that of 'use' verses 'preservation'. To inform the debate, I draw upon several authors from the social sciences and political ecology that together historicize the elements of this discussion (see Dearden & Berg, 1993; Kopas, 2007; Locke, 2009; Francis, 2011; MacEachern, 2011; MacLaren, 2011).). Following this, I focus on changes that took place in the previous decade (the 1990s) that have been described by several authors as a turbulent decade in Parks Canada's history (Dearden & Dempsey, 2004; Kopas, 2007). I break down the previous decade (1990–2000) by examining organizational changes in Parks Canada, increased development debates, and the legal and policy shifts that followed the EI panel's report. The overall goal of this section is to place my research firmly within the previous scholarship on national parks.

2.1.1 Historicizing 'use' versus 'preservation': the dual mandate

Canada's first national park, Banff National Park, was established in 1885. The government quickly recognized that they could capitalize on the hot springs discovered there by creating rail tourism for a small, upper-class audience (Dearden & Berg, 1993). Luxury hotels and spas were built along the Canadian Pacific (CP) railway lines to attract visitors from the United States and Europe, providing tourists with the opportunity to experience the newly colonized Canadian wilderness (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009). These early beginnings set in motion the idea that nature should be preserved for the enjoyment of people and that it had economic value (Campbell, 2011). But at the same, the national parks were also recognized as sites for producing Canadian identity and served as instruments to unify a nation (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009). Wilderness became an important ground for the forging of a Canadian identity that was gendered, racialized, and classed: the identity created was often that of a white, bourgeois male (Francis, 2011).

In 1911, the Dominion Parks Branch of the federal government was established, the predecessor to Parks Canada. A Century of Parks Canada, 1911–2011 (2011), edited by Claire Campbell, provides an insightful set of essays into how the meaning of national parks has changed over a 100-year period. MacEachern's chapter, "M. B. Williams and the Early Years of Parks Canada," chronicles the building of a park philosophy that showcased the national parks' commercial and public values. In making the case for the expansion of parks to Parliament and the Canadian public, J. B. Harkin, the first commissioner of the parks, and M. B. Williams, promotional writer and publicity assistant, drew on arguments that national parks have economic and cultural value for the nation and therefore are worthy of public funding (MacEachern, 2011). Harkin helped drafted the National Parks Act in 1930, which states, "the parks are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment [and that] such Parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future

generations" (as cited in Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009). Even though economic development was promoted, Harkin also recognized the need to manage and preserve these national treasures (Kopas, 2007). In this way, a tension between use and preservation, the so-called 'dual mandate,' is embedded within the very origin of Parks Canada (Shultis & More, 2011).

The fulcrum between "use" and "preservation" has pivoted over time, influenced by ongoing debates over whom and what national parks are for. Dearden and Berg (1993) identify three groups influencing this fulcrum: entrepreneurs, environmentalists, and Aboriginal Peoples. Dearden and Berg argue that the reason why these groups have been able to sway decision-making within the Agency is due to Parks Canada's ambiguous legislative mandate that stipulates national parks are "to be preserved and made 'use of'" (Dearden and Berg, 1993, p. 195), a mandate that gave considerable leeway for interpretation. They argue that those with the greatest success in influencing decision-making are often those who are able to "legitimate" their cause to the public "or perhaps more importantly...politicians and bureaucrats" (Dearden and Berg, 1993). They note that entrepreneurs, from the very beginning, have had the greatest influence in swinging the pendulum toward the "use" paradigm, on account of lobbying (Dearden and Berg, 1993). Consequently, 'whom and what national parks are for' has always been a political and economic question.

Taking a different approach, Locke (2009) rejects the notion that national parks were first created for the sole purpose of tourism. He argues that "the origin and development of Canada's parks and protected areas lies not in business interests or the doctrine of commercial usefulness but rather in the interest of civil society" (Locke, 2009, p. 101). He argues that civil society (i.e., the public) is the owner of national parks, and as owners, it is civil society's responsibility to be engaged with governments, who hold national parks and protected areas in trust as a public good, ensuring they remain intact for their benefit (Locke, 2009). Kopas (2007) suggests that

this concept of public ownership was established in the 1970s and 80s, giving power to environmental groups to monitor how parks were being managed.

And it is the case that growing awareness of the importance of environmental protection in the 1960s-1970s allowed environmental groups like the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) to not only challenge entrepreneurs about the expansion of the ski hill at Lake Louise in 1971, but successfully rally public support to stop it—and win (Dearden & Berg, 1993). This growing awareness also saw the federal government place new importance on the ecology of national parks (Campbell, 2011). For example, the 1964 National Parks Policy emphasized the importance of environmental protection while acknowledging the need for parks to be used for recreational purposes (Kopas, 2007, p. 37). New parks were created under the first Trudeau government, and the 1970s saw the adoption of the national parks system plan, which meant that new parks were being created not just for their aesthetic beauty or political advantage, but for their ecological value (Campbell, 2011). The rise of environmental groups, greater public environmental awareness, and federal support led Parks Canada to state in 1979 "that 'preservation' would take precedence over use" (Dearden & Berg, 1993, p. 199). The Act was amended in 1988, designating development-free wilderness zones, outlining town and ski area boundaries, setting stronger fines for poaching, and declaring that park management plans must consider ecological integrity first in decision-making (Locke, 2009; Dearden & Berg, 1993). Legislative amendments to the 2000 National Parks Act prioritizing EI and financial federal support by the Chrétien liberal government (1993-2003) moved the preservation mandate forward, but they also fell subject to the circumstances of the time: as Canada's economy waxed and waned, so too did the stringency of environmental regulations in national parks (Dearden & Berg, 1993; Locke, 2009; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009).

Despite new legislation recognizing the importance of ecological integrity, federal budget cuts between the 1990s-2015s also placed pressure on the fulcrum toward "use." According to Van

Sickle and Eagles (1998), reflecting on the 1990s, budgetary pressures often presented Canadian Park managers with two choices: "They can terminate their operation of programs and services, or they can attempt to earn income from other sources" (Sickle and Eagles, 1998, p. 234). This financial conundrum creates the opportunity for entrepreneurs to lobby for increasing commercial development within the national parks, to the exclusion of ecological integrity concerns (Dearden & Berg, 1993).

Locke's notion of citizen ownership of parks is complicated by the settler colonial nature of Canada. That is, when one speaks of civil society, or citizens of Canada, or public goods like national parks, there is a problematic erasure of Indigenous nations and communities. Park creation was no different than the rest of the colonial project, physically expelling Indigenous People from the landscape (Francis, 2011). MacEachern (2011, p. 50), for instance, notes that early promotional material tied the national parks' history with the fur trade and European exploration, which "position[ed] the parks in the broader history of Canadian nation-building."

There has been a major shift in Parks Canada over the past thirty or so years focused on Aboriginal participation and management of protected areas, resulting from hard fought struggles by Indigenous Peoples standing their ground on blockades (such as on Lyell Island that led to Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve) and in courthouses, linked to legal affirmation of their treaty rights (Dearden & Berg, 1993; Kopas, 2007). Indeed, parks policy now allows for subsistence use within national parks (Dearden & Berg, 1993; Sandlos, 2014). Indigenous Peoples, then, are influencing the shape of national parks in a way that explodes Western dualistic notions of use and preservation, nature and culture, and extrinsic and intrinsic value. For example, tribal parks such as Tla-o-qui-aht illustrate how Indigenous spaces are being reclaimed and restructured by Indigenous stakeholders, who are planning and developing economic and conservation activities within their sovereign territory (Murray & King, 2012) but within a settler colonial framework (Carroll, 2014, p. 33).

In Canada the policy and practical questions about "whom and what parks are for" often pivot on this debate between use and preservation. The tendency toward use seems embedded in the structure of our political institutions and bureaucracies, as well as civil society reaction to such a tendency. Indeed, this pendulum swing seems to follow a pattern similar to Karl Polanyi's "double movement" (Polanyi, 1944), which is a concept describing a dialectical movement in market society toward advancing marketization and commodification, which leads to push-back from civil society to protect what he calls "fictitious commodities," especially land and labor. The double movement as conceived by Polanyi saw the state as an enabler to the market, but also as a counterbalance to ensure that society and nature was not consumed by capitalism. One can see this pushback in the 1990s, as I outline in the section below.

2.2 The previous decade of change in Parks Canada (1990–2000)

Scholars describe the decade prior to my research focus as turbulent, witnessing more changes in national parks policy than in any other (Dearden & Dempsey, 2004; Kopas, 2007). Here I outline the key changes–protected area growth, organizational changes, and in this period, as they provide crucial context for my study.

2.2.1 Protected area growth (1990-2000)

In the 1990s, provincial and federal protected areas rapidly grew in size from 2.95 percent of the land in 1989 to 6.84 percent in 2000. Parks Canada contributed to this increase, securing over 6 million hectares for the national park system. This growth in protected areas coincided with a global trend, a staggering 11.5 percent increase (from 4 million square kilometers of land in 1987, to an estimated 17.1 million square kilometers in 2000) (Dearden & Dempsey, 2004, p. 226).

Canadian growth in the 1990s is attributed to several events. First, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) Endangered Spaces Campaign (1989–2000) challenged both federal and provincial governments to create more protected areas. Second, the signing of the 1992 Tri-Council Statement of Commitment to Complete Canada's Networks of Protected Areas solidified political commitment to this challenge. And, third, in 1993 Canada signed the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), an environmental treaty, which commits signatories to conserving biodiversity, promoting sustainable use, and endorsing fair and unbiased use of genetic resources (Kopas, 2007). Despite the Canadian government heralding new commitments to create new protect areas, this decade also signaled greater concerns for the ecological integrity of protected areas, particularly in the national parks.

2.2.2 Organizational changes (1990–2000)

In 1993, Parks Canada moved from the Ministry of the Environment to the newly created Department of Canadian Heritage, which brought together national parks with cultural heritage (Kopas, 2007; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009). Kopas (2007, p. 148) hypothesizes that this merger of cultural and natural heritage steered Parks Canada more firmly towards their role in building national identity. Mortimer-Sandilands (2009) agrees that by joining ecological science and national heritage, the federal government "reinsert[ed] a federal nationalism into Canada's parks" (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009, p. 163), a point I return to in chapter four.

This entwinement of federal nationalism and parks did not spare Parks Canada from nation-wide budget cuts between 1993 and 1998 (under Jean Chrétien's liberal government), totaling $123 million (Kopas, 2007). These cuts forced Parks Canada to lay off a third of its staff and reduce programs (Van Sickle & Eagles, 1998). These budget cuts added pressure for Parks Canada to increase revenues in order to cover operational costs (Kopas, 2007).

In 1998, Parks Canada went from being an adjunct program within the Department of Canadian Heritage to becoming its own stand-alone federal agency. Parks Canada Agency is led by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who reports to a minister (today that is the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change) and is held accountable by a biannual review process involving stakeholders. As an Agency, Parks Canada may keep all the revenue that it generates, including any year-end budget surplus which, if unused, end up in federal coffers. Becoming an Agency also allowed Parks Canada to be responsible for its own human resources, budget, and administration. It also gave Parks Canada management greater control over revenue policy and, crucially, the ability to generate revenue from client services. The Parks Canada Agency, in other words, became incentivized to find and generate revenue (Kopas, 2007). The establishment of a government-appointed CEO for the Agency indicated a shift toward a more corporate, business approach to conservation (Dearden & Dempsey, 2004; Kopas, 2007). Even though the new agency became an employer, independent from the federal government, it was still required to provide management reports to the Minister, as stipulated in the Parks Canada Agency Act (1998), including operational annual reports with a 5-year corporate plan, and a 5-year human resource management report (Dearden & Dempsey, 2004). While becoming its own agency gave Parks Canada greater financial flexibility to deal with challenges associated with managing ecological integrity, the Parks Canada Agency Act does not specifically refer to ecological integrity, except in the preamble. This omission means that ecological integrity is not legally binding in this Act (Dearden & Dempsey, 2004). I return to this shift to an Agency in the final substantive chapter of the thesis (see Chapter 4)–while it is outside my particular study dates, I argue that it is a crucial change shaping the dynamics of Parks Canada.

2.2.3 The development debates (1990–2000)

The newly revised national parks policy (1993) reinforced that "protection of the environment [be viewed] as the first priority for park decision-making" (Kopas, 2007, p. 228). Yet, more than

anything else the 1990-2000 period was marked by pushback from civil society groups like CPAWS, the David Suzuki Foundation, and the Sierra Club of Canada. In Polanyi's terms, a countermovement appeared to oppose the increasing commercialization and development in National Parks, intensifying older debates and tensions about "whom and what" parks are for. Several government reports, including the 1996 Banff–Bow Valley Report, the 1997 State of the Parks Report, and the 1997 Auditor General's Report, voiced concerns about the impact of commercial development and visitation on the ecological integrity of parks (Dearden & Dempsey, 2004). These concerns led to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Hon. Sheila Copps, commissioning the Panel on Ecological Integrity (EI) in 1998. The EI panel confirmed that the ecological integrity of the parks was being threatened by overdevelopment both inside and outside the national parks (Parks Canada Agency, 2000). The Panel advised the Parks Canada Agency to use a science-based approach to ecological monitoring and to manage the parks with ecological integrity (EI) as its first priority (Parks Canada Agency, 2000). Of the 127 recommendations summarized and cited in Volume I of the report are those that recommended that:

- Parks Canada transform itself, by confirming ecological integrity as the priority [....] and as the explicit responsibility of every staff member through new training [...].

- Parks Canada significantly enhance capacity in natural and social sciences, planning and interpretation, to effectively manage for, and educate society about, ecological integrity [...].

- Parks Canada cease product marketing to increase overall use of parks and concentrate instead on social policy marketing and demarketing when appropriate.

- Parks Canada revise [...] its planning system to focus on ecological integrity as the core of strategic and operational plans.

- Parks Canada [...] [a]dopt clear policies to encourage and support the development of genuine partnerships with Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

- Parks Canada reduce the human footprint on national parks. (Parks Canada, 2000, pp. 20–21)

As noted earlier, the report indicated that the greatest barrier to change would come from within the organization itself (Parks Canada Agency, 2000, pp. 2–4).

2.2.4 Legal and policy shifts at the start of the new millennium

The concerns articulated by the EI panel (increased visitation and commercial development), budgetary changes, and newly formed Agency status all influenced subsequent legal and policy shifts. For example, the new National Parks Act (2000) states that "Maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity, through the protection of natural resources and natural processes, shall be the first priority of the Minister when considering all aspects of the management of parks" (Canada National Parks, 2000, 8 [2]). This strengthening of ecological integrity in the new Act reinforced existing legislation, strengthened law enforcement policies, and created stronger boundaries around communities such as Banff and Jasper (Kopas, 2007). It also required that wilderness areas be designated in all National Parks (Parks Canada, 2015a). The 2002 National Marine Conservation Areas Act and the 2002 Species at Risk Act (SARA) would follow, marking this past decade as a victory for environmental protection in Canada with Parks Canada leading the way. Reflecting on these changes, Dearden and Dempsey (2004) still cautioned that many challenges lay ahead, particularly concerns regarding Parks Canada's new business approach in managing the national parks and the government's advancement of neoliberal ideologies.

And indeed, as mentioned in the introduction, in 2015 civil society yet again rallied to "Stop Development in Our National Parks" (CPAWS, 2015a). In an October 2016 press release, twelve environmental groups said, "We are deeply concerned that the Government of Canada's management of our national parks has shifted dramatically in the wrong direction, putting our most treasured protected places at risk." They called for "Parks Canada to refocus on nature conservation and stewardship and to reverse the relentless focus on marketing, tourism and

increasing visitation with little regard to the impacts on nature" (quoted in Jasper Environmental Association, 2016). Indigenous Peoples are also weighing in on commercial development–use vs preservation - debates in the national parks. For example, the Kinbasket Shuswap Band has joined the 2015 Campaign to "Fight for Your Parks," saying that national parks "need to be managed for nature" (as cited in Jasper Environmental Association, 2015a). The Mikisew Cree First Nation is another example; they petitioned UNESCO in December 2014 to list Wood Buffalo National Park as a world heritage site in danger from upstream energy development, particularly waste from the Alberta oil sands (CBC News, 2014c). UNESCO investigated the park in 2016; their 2017 report found that the park was indeed being threatened and listed 17 recommendations to improve its ecological integrity. The UNESCO report discloses that "While it is clear that PCA [Parks Canada Agency] has an important role and obligation to enable visitor experiences, an excessive focus on tourism promotion and a reduced science capacity indeed appear to be incompatible with its core mandate and legal obligations" (World Heritage Centre (WHC) – International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 2017, p. 15). Tellingly, the report raised similar concerns highlighted by the EI panel in the previous decade.

Thus, the ongoing tension between "use" and "preservation" has continued into the new millennium, despite government legislation emphasizing preservation. My research asks, therefore, what happened after the report of the Panel on Ecological Integrity was released in 2000? How did we end up in what seems like the very same place?

2.2.5 Scholarship on national parks since 2000

Four key themes emerged from a range of social sciences literature focused on the post EI period in Parks Canada. Scholarship emphasized 1) protected area growth (Dearden, 2008; Woodley et al., 2012); 2) increased development concerns (Mascia & Pailler, 2011); 3) the visitor "crisis" (Jagar, Sheedy, Gertsch, Philips & Danchuk, 2006; Shultis & More, 2011; Wright & Matthews, 2015); and 4) growing attempts to manage settler colonial relationships through parks policy

and practice (Langdon et al., 2010; MacLaren, 2011; Coulthard, 2014; Sandlos, 2014; Youledis, 2016). This literature informed my research and is drawn upon throughout the following chapters. My contribution is to scope and synthesize these changes over the past 15 years, drawing from Parks documents, forensic analysis of budgets, and interviews.

2.3 Neoliberalism to neoliberal conservation

Understanding the changes since the EI panel, and in particular Parks Canada's difficulty leading with EI despite being legislated to do so - requires engagement with ongoing neoliberal-style governance that dominated Canada in the years 2000 to 2015, intensifying in the Harper era. This decade-and-a-half witnessed a continuation of neoliberal-style governance, which deepened under the global financial crisis as belts tightened around the globe and in Canada. Austerity measures implemented in the Harper decade weakened environmental protection and restructured government departments to focus on cost-recovery, accountability, and efficiency (Gutstein, 2014; Peyton & Franks, 2016). But, as will become important to my overarching argument, these measures do not mean that the Harper government did not place emphasis on the environment, particularly as a national symbol.

There are a broad range of scholars connecting changes in protected areas and conservation to broader political and economic trends, namely those that go under the umbrella term neoliberalism (Brockington, Duffy & Igoe, 2008 and 2010). In this section I introduce neoliberalism, neoliberal conservation, and literature that links these trends to how conservation is changing. My research aims to contribute not only to the literature on protected areas in Canada, but also to the literature on neoliberal environmental governance. As indicated above, the significance of national parks through the decades has changed and has been influenced by various stakeholders and rights holders. But parks have also been influenced by neoliberal-style state governance, which began in the 1980s and '90s and intensified during the Harper era (2006 to 2015).

2.3.1 Defining neoliberalism

As Collard et al (2016, p. 1) state, neoliberalism is a "continuation of much older logics and processes," with the neo indicating a reasserted emphasis on liberal principles and logics, including a focus on individual political and economic freedoms, and a state focused on securing such freedoms through economic development and expanded market opportunities. It is important to see the more recent neo in relation to a longer lineage of liberalism; Polanyi's Great Transformation (1944/2001) is helpful here, in pointing to the contradictory and problematic tendency towards a so-called self-regulating market in what he calls market society. Drawing our attention to the role of the state, he points to how movements towards economic growth and market expansion expose labor and land to exploitation and he advocates for state to focus on protecting what he calls "fictitious commodities", particularly land and labor, from the vagaries of the market.

While there are many definitions, Geoff Mann (2013, p. 148) defines neoliberalism as an "ongoing effort... to construct a regulatory regime in which the market is the principle means of governance," with more aspects of social life measured in economic terms (see also Igoe & Brockington, 2007; Glassman, 2009; Brown, 2015). Peck and Tickell (2002, p. 392) view neoliberalism as a political global project that is characterized by two distinct processes: "roll-back" and "roll-out" neoliberal policies. The 1980s marked the first phase of roll-back neoliberalism, which was heavily endorsed by the Reagan, Thatcher, and Mulroney governments. Scholars such as Heynen et al. (2007) and Peck and Tickell (2002) argue that this early period of neoliberalism emphasized financial cutbacks to the welfare state, the deregulation of government-led programs, and the scaling back of environmental protection. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the states used the second phase of "roll-out" neoliberal policies to promote deregulation, restructuring, privatization, marketization, and transformation of the political and economic systems at local, state, and international levels. In this phase, states

helped facilitate the restructuring of institutions by encouraging new forms of government intervention and governance that promoted the interests of global capitalism (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Policies shifted responsibilities previously held by the state to "local governance and partnership-based modes of policy development," which resulted in "the downloading of resources, responsibility and risks to local administrations and extra state agencies" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 390).

2.3.2 Neoliberalism in Canada

Neoliberal ideas first surfaced in Canada in the 1980s under the Mulroney Progressive Conservative Government. In these early stages Mulroney neoliberalism took the form of free trade agreements (the 1988 Free Trade Agreement followed by the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement) advancing globalization. The restructuring of the state around neoliberal policymaking gained further momentum in the 1990s and early 2000s, as the Liberal governments of Jean Chretien and Paul Martin, "brought in an era of privatization and fiscal restraint" (Gutstein, 2014, p. 14). The privatization of Crown corporations, contracting out public services and endorsing Public Private Partnerships (P3s), were promoted as ways to help reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies and administrative costs. For example, spending for government programs dramatically fell between 1990 -2003 from 17.5 percent to 11.3 percent, while government employment shrank from 21.25 percent to 17 percent (McBride and Whiteside, 2011, pp. 59-63).

Fundamental neoliberal changes to the state continued and accelerated during the Harper Conservative Government era (2006-2015). Budget cuts and austerity measures by the Harper government led to the downsizing of government institutions, increased privatization of public corporations and shrinking social programs. But, Harper also understood neoliberalism to be an ideology and the need to disseminate this philosophy among the citizenry in order to transition Canada into a market state (Gutstein, 2014).He did this by changing Canadian's ideas "about

how the government and the private sector should operate" (Gutstein, 2014, p.11), while investing in nation building projects to change how Canadian's viewed themselves, society and nature. This transitioned state institutions away from "science and regulation" towards promoting "markets and property rights" (Gutstein, 2014, p. 162), paving the way for neoliberal conservation to become more prominent.

2.3.3 Neoliberal conservation

Broadening out, there is a robust body of literature studying the links between environmental governance, including conservation, and neoliberal policies and practices (e.g., Heynen et al., 2007; Igoe & Brockington, 2007; Arsel & Büscher, 2012; Dempsey & Suarez, 2016). Neoliberal conservation emerged in the 1990s as a "hybrid of environmental governance in which states, businesses, NGOs, and communities share responsibility for conservation" (Igoe & Brockington, 2007, p. 433). Some neoliberal conservation practices emphasize that nature can only be "saved" and "conserved" through the "expansion of capitalism"–say through the creation of market-based tools like offset markets (Bücher, Sullivan, Neves, Igoe & Brockington, 2012, p. 4). Neoliberal conservation ideas, promoted by the likes of large international NGOS (e.g. The Nature Conservancy) or governments like Canada, view economic growth and environmental protections as being compatible ventures, which scholars of neoliberal conservation and political ecology, view as "deeply incompatible" (MacDonald, 2010, p. 517). Some, like Büscher et al. (2012) argue that the approach conceals capitalism's environmental contradictions - namely that capitalism relies on growth and expansion that degrade the very conditions required for human and diverse nonhuman life. Through practices like offsets, neoliberal conservation practices hit upon the idea that "environmentally destructive enterprises like mining, oil exploration, and hydroelectric dams can be mitigated by setting aside other land in compensation for the damage they create" (Büscher et al., 2012, p. 20). In practice, neoliberal

approaches to conservation encompass a wide range of mechanisms such as increased user fees, the promotion of ecotourism, and payment for ecosystem services (Büscher et al., 2012).

Apostolopoulou and Adams (2015, p. 29) push us to simultaneously consider the extractive push in the Global North known as "un-green grabbing" alongside the push toward neoliberal, market based environmental strategies, known as "green grabbing." They define green grabbing as the expansion of market-making in conservation, whereby conservation is being forced to "pay its own way" through things like carbon offsets, payment for ecosystem services (PES), visitor use fees, etc. that make nature more visible to capital accumulation. "Grabbing" here refers to the way access to resources is reduced or eliminated for local people, and/or how wealth is appropriated through these schemes–all under the guise of "green" rationales. 'Un-green grabbing,' on the other hand, involves expansion of development and extraction without any facade of it being green. Apostolopoulou and Adams (2015, p. 29) show how the governments of both Greece and the UK used the debt crisis to justify both of these processes: "the deregulation of environment regulations and the privatization of public nature." They argue that the post-economic crisis (2007-2008) era saw a rise in neoliberal conservation strategies that created new tensions facilitated by both green and un-green grabbing. Apostolopoulou and Adams (2015, p. 30) claim that "the global intensification of 'green' and 'un-green' grabbing reflects capitalism's strategic interest in both promoting and obstructing nature conservation," ultimately "leaving for 'protected natures' two choices: either to be further degraded to boost growth or to be 'saved' through their deeper inclusion as commodities visible to the market."

Apostolopoulou and Adams's 2015 article can help understand the so-called Harper decade in Canada. Stephen Harper's Conservative government passed omnibus bills that weakened environmental protection legislation that smoothed the expansion of extractive development in the country, facilitating "un-green grabbing". They also enacted budget cuts that restructured Environment Canada and Parks Canada and undermined their ability to monitor environmental

impacts (Auditor General's Report, 2013). As I will show, budget cuts starved Parks Canada Agency and pushed them to find new sources of revenue–a form of "green grabbing".

Overall, my research paid close attention to neoliberal policies and practices from 2000 to 2015, with the hope of placing this period of change in Parks Canada within the broader international shift toward neoliberal conservation. What trends toward neoliberal conservation were evident in this fifteen-year period? And what can Canada's national parks tell us about the nature of neoliberal conservation in Canada? Even though there is extensive literature on neoliberal conservation, much of the literature is largely focused on protected areas in other countries. This thesis, therefore, contributes to the debates on how neoliberal governance practices are influencing the changes witnessed specifically in Parks Canada, which began in the previous decade but continued in this decade under the Harper government.

While neoliberal governance provided crucial conceptual impetus, understanding the past fifteen years in Canadian national parks requires also thinking more about the relationship between nature, nationalism, and neoliberalism—the final conceptual plank of my research project.

2.4 Nature, nationalism, neoliberalism, and national parks

The state uses nation-building to define its territory and its people. In Canada, practices of nation-building shape values and a shared understanding of what it means to be Canadian. It is through the process of nation building that the state legitimates its own power by maintaining national myths that define our sense of belonging, while simultaneously describing and excluding those that do not belong (Jenson, 1995). Jenson (1995, p. 98) argues that "politics has involved a good deal of recognition that nations are communities which exist in 'collective memory' and that they are brought into being by the deployment of symbols." Parks Canada is

an established symbol of Canada; further, national parks provide the state with a platform and a material space to convey the nation's changing values and norms.

In "Nation-building and Canada's National Symbolic Order," Nieguth and Raney (2016, p. 1) argue in that "National symbols are particularly useful devices for shaping and articulating the nation because they act as common reference points for individual members of the community" to refer to; they also help define boundaries that reflect our beliefs about who belongs and who does not. Studying how national symbols change over time, therefore, provides an opportunity to examine and chart what nation building activities are important to state actors. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands's 2009 article, "The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity: Nature and Nation in Canada's National Parks, 1885–2000" posits that the meaning of "whom and what" parks are for changed over time. She argued that the national parks system plan developed in the 1970s emphasizes ecological preservation during a time of increased environmental awareness, but–and this is crucial - it was also a political move orchestrated by the Trudeau government to unify Canada during a period of heightened fears of Quebec separation. She said that the meaning of what and whom parks were for shifted from "parks supporting recreational experiences of national citizenship, to one of parks embodying ecological national heritage" (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009, p. 173). Mortimer-Sandilands argues that the Panel on Ecological Integrity was similarly used to reinforce this narrative that ties ecosystems to national heritage. For her, the EI panel's "emphasis on science as the primary knowledge system to guide the future of the parks" (p. 181) is problematic as it continues to obfuscate the history of gendered, racialized, classed, and deeply colonial power relations that constitute national parks. It emphasizes the "scientific rather than political terms" (p. 174) of national parks.

2.4.1 Understanding nation building in an era of neoliberalism

Cory Blad's 2011 book, *Neoliberalism and National Culture: State-building and Legitimacy in Canada and Québec*, examines the role that nation building plays in neoliberalizing states. He

argues that "the relationship between political institutions and economic systems is at the heart of nation building" (Blad, 2011, p. 211). Blad (2011) compellingly suggests that under neoliberalism the state shifts emphasis away from providing economic protection and toward providing cultural protection, which, he argues, is achieved through nation building and branding (p. 122). That is, in a time when the state is "rolling back" from important economic and citizen protective functions, national symbols and cultural hegemony become even more important to maintaining national coherence and territorial control.

Parks Canada's natural and historical sites provide venues to produce cultural protection and affirm a particular version of Canadian-ness. For example, Parks Canada's Cultural Access Pass and Learn to Camp Program provide new citizens with the chance to visit wilderness places and learn more about Canadian identity (Sullivan, 2015). In addition, national parks are a part of Canada's "brand", a site that can be used to in showcasing Canada's worth and values through images of wilderness to attract investors both at home and abroad. National parks also provide opportunities for the state to relay changes in values and norms to its citizens. For instance, the Harper government moved away from viewing Canada as peacekeepers and instead shifted the focus to honoring Canada's war efforts (Blad, 2011). Parks Canada reflected this shift in the Canadian narrative by promoting such events as the War of 1812, the National Memorial to Commemorate Canada's War Dead Wherever They May Lie, and designation of new historic sites such as the Canadian Car & Foundry site that recognizes the contribution Canadians made during World War II.

I suggest that the role that nature, especially national parks, plays in forging particular Canadian identities, imaginaries, brands, and nation-building more broadly, is an important part of understanding the last fifteen years (and more) of national parks policy. As I will explain in Chapter Four, we can understand the so-called visitor crisis in national parks as linked to a) concerns over reduced revenues in neoliberal, austere times; b) concerns over lost political will;

and c) as a crisis of national identity production, that is, the loss of a citizen rooted in wilderness, an identity forged through encounters with nature.

3 The next decade of change: "a period of consolidation and improving implementation"?

The years 1998-2000 in Parks Canada is marked with policy and legislative changes. However, at the end of the 1990s Parks Canada began to respond to the threats raised by civil society concerning increased visitation and commercial development, a continuation of older debates and tensions about who and what parks are for, culminating in the creation of the Panel on Ecological Integrity (EI). At the end of their article charting major changes in Canadian National Parks policy and practice in the 1990s, Dearden and Dempsey (2004, p. 235) ask whether the subsequent decade would be one of "consolidation and improving implementation" towards an emphasis on ecological integrity in the National Parks system. This research project studies the period just after the conclusion of the Panel on Ecological Integrity (EI) report in the year 2000 and tracks changes in Parks Canada up to the announcement made by the Honourable Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna in Banff in 2015. The question I aim to answer is: what happened? Was the next decade "a period of consolidation and improving implementation" of the recommendations of the EI report? In this chapter I catalogue major shifts and trends, organized in five themes: protected area growth and pursuit of ecological integrity; trends in protected area downgrading, downsizing, and degazettement; managing the settler colonial present; evaluating revenue and spending; and the visitor "crisis."

3.1 Protected area growth and the pursuit of ecological integrity

In this section I track the growth of protected areas and explore the politics involved in creating National Parks. I then review Parks Canada's implementation of ecological integrity and track status of endangered species in national parks.

3.1.1 Growth in protected areas

In the past decade the amount of federal and provincial protected areas[4] has steadily increased (see figure 1). From 1990 to 2000, total protected areas in Canada grew from 5.6% of the entire Canadian territory to 7.2% (1.5% over 10 years). From 2000 to 2010 they grew from 7.2% to 9.5% (2.3% over 10 years) and between 2000 to 2016 the total protected area in Canada grew from 7.2% to 10.6% (3.4% over 16 years) (Environment and Climate Change, 2016a). Parks Canada has contributed substantially to this growth. The national parks system that represents Canada's national ecoregions is now considered 77% complete with 46 national parks representing 30 natural regions, covering over 300,000 sq. km (Environment and Climate Change, 2016a, p. 26). Some of the major land acquisitions of this time include the expansion of Nahanni National Park and the creation of three new national parks (Nááts'ihch'oh, Qausuittuq, and Mealy Mountains) and the Rouge National Urban Park, Canada's first of this kind. Parks Canada's rate of establishing marine protected areas, however, is slow; it created four national MPAs representing 5 of the 29 regions (Auditor General of Canada, 2013), a major development being the Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area (Government of Canada, 2015). The newly proposed Scott Islands Protected Marine Area will bring marine protected areas up to 5% protected (Government of Canada, 2018). In addition, the Liberal government announced in 2016 that it would provide, "$42.4 million over five years, [...] to develop new National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas (NMCAs), including the Lancaster Sound National Marine Conservation Area, Nunavut and Thaidene Nene National Park, Northwest Territories" (Government of Canada, 2016, p. 161). In total, Parks Canada protects 339,740 sq. km, or 3.4% of Canada's terrestrial area, and 12,720 sq. km or 0.22% of Canada's marine area (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2016a, p. 118).

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[4] According to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2010) (CBD), a protected area (PA) is "a clearly defined geographical space recognized, dedicated, and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values" (p. 118).
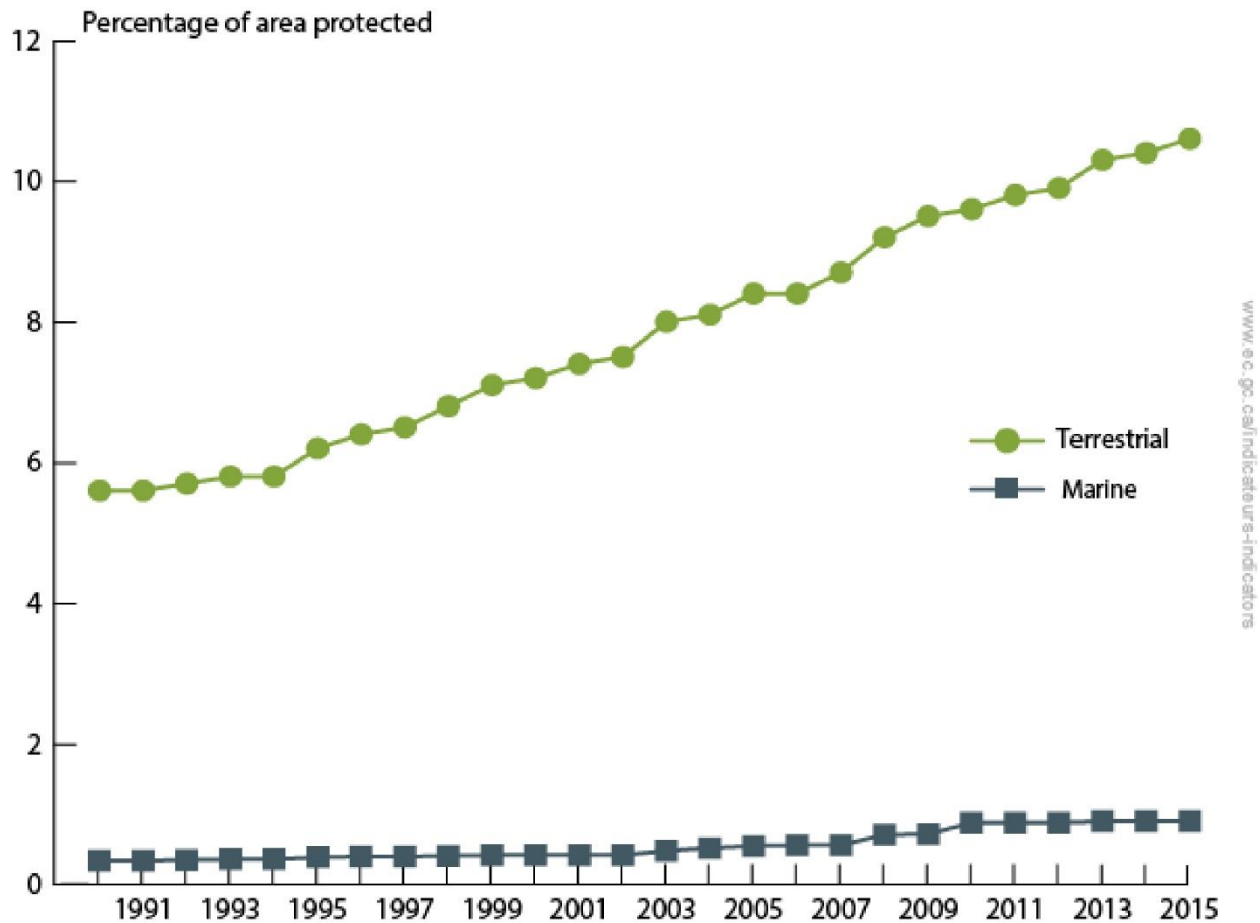
Figure 1: Percentage of protected areas in Canada (1990–2015). Source: "Data collected by the "Protected Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (2016) Conservation Areas Reporting and Tracking System (CARTS), with Quebec data used by permission. Data are current as of December 31, 2015," (Environment and Climate Change, 2017. Protected Areas in Canada. Retrieved from: https://www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=en&n=478A1D3D-1).

In 2000 the EI panel recommended that "Parks Canada negotiate park establishment agreements that give the highest priority to maintaining ecological integrity by seeking boundaries that meet ecological integrity objectives" (Parks Canada, 2000, pp. 8-9). However, some of the new protected areas are controversial precisely for their boundaries. For example, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS 2014) argues that the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park border was negotiated not for maximum conservation benefits but to

accommodate resource development. One former upper Parks Canada manager stated in an interview that the initial boundary chosen for Náátsʼihchʼoh was selected based on "recommendations made by the Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment [MERA], the government of Nunavut and Natural Resources Canada" (Personal communication, Joe, 2015) all of whom endorsed a different boundary than the one that the Ministry of Environment Canada signed off on. The negotiation for Náátsʼihchʼoh National Park border demonstrates that ecological integrity is not always the first priority when it comes to creating new protected areas in areas that have high political or economic value to the state. Alan Latourelle, who was then Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada, sums this up in a quote in a 2012 article in the Toronto Star (Campion-Smith, 2012, para. 20): "[S]triking that balance [between conservation and economic development] is a reality of how parks are developed." He acknowledges that "[i]n the end we create a park that works for conservation and ensures economic development and that's what we have done here" (Campion-Smith, 2012, para. 21).

3.1.2 Parks, politics, and resource extraction

Canada's economy is tied to mining, forestry, agriculture, oil, and gas. These industries have great influence over government policies on the environment (see Wood, Tanner, and Richardson, 2010). Resource exploitation and economic growth imperative infiltrate conservation practices, as governments seek to balance protection of one area in exchange for exploiting another (Brockington, Duffy and Igoe, 2008). As indicated above with the creation of Náátsʼihchʼoh, parks are carefully created to meet some conservation ends, but also to meet needs for economic development. The 2013 Sable Island National Park Act is also noteworthy, as its creation "allow[ed] the Canada/Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board to have superior regulatory authority within the national park" (May, 2017). That is, it prohibited oil and gas drilling on and within one nautical mile of the Island, but it allowed for low impact oil and gas

development inside the park, as well as horizontal drilling that originates from outside its boundaries (CPAWS 2013).

The newly introduced legislation permanently prohibits oil and gas drilling on the surface of Sable Island and for one nautical mile offshore; however, CPAWS is concerned that the legislation will allow low-impact oil and gas exploration inside the park, as well as horizontal drilling under the island from outside its boundaries.

The core legislated purpose of national parks is to ensure that ecological integrity is secured and maintained, but Sable Island set the precedent for viewing "resource extraction and resource activity" as being compatible with national park designation (May, 2017). Equally notable is how ecological integrity was left out of the Rouge National Urban Park Act[5] in 2015, which resulted in public backlash and the Province of Ontario deciding to withhold the transfer of provincial land for the park until ecological integrity was reaffirmed (May, 2017). In sum, despite the growth in new protected areas in this last fifteen years, such expansions must be understood in relation a shift to downgrade ecological integrity in some park designations, an issue I return to in a later section.

3.1.3 Parks Canada, the measurement of ecological integrity and the Species at Risk Act (SARA)

Following the EI panel, Parks Canada worked toward developing a scientific monitoring system with reporting processes and metrics that measure the following attributes: species loss, trophic levels, disturbance factors, production of organic matter, and nutrient cycling (Woodley, 2010). Data is collected and reported every five years to help park managers make decisions on how to improve ecological integrity prior to developing any new park management plans (Woodley,

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[5] On February 22, 2017, the new Liberal government amended the Rouge National Urban Park Act to support ecological integrity as Parks Canada's first priority. But it also made accommodation so that ecological integrity "does not prevent the carrying out of agricultural activities as provided for in this Act" (http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&DocId=8788454).

2010). Yet, as a former executive of Parks Canada explains "there has been a major sliding on our measurement of EI in National Parks, and we have gone down to report card based measurements [state of parks reports], rather than fully well documented reports with the statistics, metrics and details to back them up" (Personal communication, Joe, 2015). In addition, changes to the Parks Canada Agency Act in 2012 moved the timeline to review park management plans from every five years to every ten years (Government of Canada, 2012). According to CPAWS this compromises Parks Canada's ability to identify and address key issues inhibiting ecological integrity (CPAWS, 2016).

The status of endangered species is one specific way to measure ecological integrity in Parks. The Species at Rick Act (SARA) became law in 2002, with the purpose of preventing loss, recovering, and monitoring species that were endangered or threatened with becoming extinct (Government of Canada, 2016a). But, six years later, several environmental groups penned a report titled "Canada's Species at Risk Act: At a Snail Pace," giving the government a failing grade in protecting species at risk. The report states that it takes "between 17 and 29 months to determine whether or not to add them [species] to the list, and for some species the delays are indefinite" (David Suzuki Foundation et al., 2009, p. 2). As of 2017, there are approximately 174 species residing within the national parks system that are listed under the Species at Risk Act (Parks Canada, 2018c, p. 6). The question here is: how is Parks Canada doing in addressing species at risk in national parks and conservation areas?

Monitoring biodiversity in protected areas is deemed to be essential in determining the long-term health of ecosystems (see Woodley, 2010, Barnes et al., 2016). Monitoring not only tracks progress, but it also "serve[s] as a tool to hold park managers accountable for progress towards achieving ecological integrity," as noted by the EI panel in their 2000 report (Parks Canada, 2000, p. 6-2). A 2013 Auditor General of Canada report states that, since 2008, Parks Canada

had completed their compilation of strategies for species recovery.[6] But, the report also notes that Parks Canada only completed two action plans that provided a timeline and a step-by-step guide to recovering the listed species. The report points out that the Agency still had 30 action plans to finish (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013). This indicates that Parks Canada failed to fully support the monitoring and reporting system developed to manage ecological integrity (Green Budget Coalition, 2015). A recent Parks Canada State of Canada's Natural and Cultural Heritage Places report (2016b, p. 55) indicates that 46% of ecosystems within the national parks are in fair or poor condition; although this percentage is slightly down from 2011, it is a far cry from where Parks Canada should be.[7]

In addition, according to CPAWS (2015b), Canada failed to meet target 11 of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)[8], which asked Parties to the CBD to assess 60% of its protected areas for their effectiveness and equitable management by 2015. Target 11 not only requires signatory countries to set aside protected areas, but also that these areas be assessed on whether or not they are able to "maintain biodiversity and deliver ecosystem services" (Woodley et al., 2012). Effective conservation depends on having effective and equitable management (goal 4.2 of the CBD) in place to ensure that protected areas are monitored and maintained over time to conserve their ecological and social benefits (Woodley et al., 2012). Woodley et al. (2012, p. 31) note that the combination of inadequate funding, staff shortages, scarcity of equipment, and lack of engagement with local and Indigenous communities is creating barriers to achieving this goal. For example, an Environment Canada report titled Canadian Protected Areas: Status

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[6] According to a report by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, "recovery strategies are the key documents for stating the objectives for the recovery of the species, its critical habitat, and the actions needed to stop or reverse its decline" (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013, p. 11).

[7] Update: According to an Environment and Climate Change report (2019) of the 119 ecosystems in the national parks, 40% have been evaluated as being in fair to poor condition.

[8] Target 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (n.d.) states that "[b]y 2020, at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes."

Report 2006–2011 reveals that funding per square kilometre of protected area, both federally and provincially, "has dropped from about $22.00 in 2005 to approximately $6.00 in 2011" (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2011, p. 51)–a point I return to below. A recent report by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) (2016), which monitors the state of Canada's plants and wildlife, indicates that Canada's species at risk are continuing to decline.[9] Even more disconcerting is that there is a growing concern that protected areas, nationwide, are under threat to downgrading, downsizing, and degazettement.[10]

3.2 Protected area downgrading, downsizing, and degazettement (PADDD)

There is an international trend toward the downgrading, downsizing, and degazettement of protected areas, known by the acronym PADDD. These terms are defined by Mascia, Pailler and Krithivasan (2011, p. 11) as "the decrease in legal protection [downgrading], a reduction in the size of a protected area [downsizing] and finally, total removal of an area from legal protection [degazettement]." Mascia et al., (2011, p. 11) cite three main reasons driving PADDD: (1) resource extraction, (2) infrastructure development, and (3) increased human activities. Importantly, they note that some PADDD shifts accommodate wildlife movement or settle local land claims by indigenous groups previously displaced by the establishment of unjust protected areas. According to the PADDD Tracker website of the World Wildlife Fund (2016b), out of 21 cases of PADDD in Canada (1900-2018), provincially and federally, 10 are the result of

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[9] This decline in species is noted globally as well. According to the Living Planet Report 2016 produced by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF, p. 18), 58% of the planet's animals have gone extinct in the past 40 years. The global decline of species in this decade is in part the result of a slowing rate of protected areas creation (also see: Watson et al. (2014); UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2016).

[10] See: Mascia, M. B., Pailler, S., & Krithivasan, R. (2012). PADDDtracker. org Technical guide. World Wildlife Fund, Washington, DC.

infrastructure development, 5 are the result of conservation planning[11] and the remaining 6 are the result of forestry, oil and gas, land claims, and environmental degradation.

Interestingly, the PADDD Tracker indicates PADDD in Canada spiked between 2010 and 2015.[12] Federally, in 2013, the Harper government decided to close the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Area (PFRA) program, which had safeguarded 1.8 million acres of grasslands since the 1930s, and turn those lands over to the provinces without conducting an environmental assessment and without ensuring that they remain intact for conservation purposes (CPAWS, 2015; Nature Canada, 2016). The loss of the grasslands protected under the PFRA program has resulted in Canada's "protected areas percentage drop[ping] from 8.7 to 6.34%" which greatly impacts Canada's ability to reach its Aichi Biodiversity Targets to conserve 17% of its terrestrial land by 2020 (Herriot, n.d.). The Prairie Grasslands in Saskatchewan are one of the most endangered places in Canada (Kraus, 2016). While not the focus of my thesis, PADDD has occurred in the provincial parks systems. For example, the Province of British Columbia downgraded their Parks and Protected Areas Statutes Act in 2011 to allow for the future exploration of oil and gas within park boundaries (Gage, 2014). According to West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL) (as cited in Gage, 2014), the Act now allows industry to conduct "research" in BC parks, and if industry can prove that the protected area would have greater economic, environmental, and social benefits if it were no longer protected, the BC government can legally authorize boundary changes. WCEL also notes that it is difficult to know precisely how much land is being removed from protection, as other land is being added to protected areas. Likewise, the Province of New Brunswick in 2014 made policy changes that allow for 20% more forested Crown land to be

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[11] The PADDD Tracker website defines conservation planning as "Protected area downgrading, downsizing, or degazettement resulting from legal changes that are designed to enhance the conservation efficiency and efficacy of a class, group, or geographically distinct set of protected areas. Involves simultaneous reallocation of lands or regulatory changes to multiple protected areas" (WWF 2016).
[12] See: http://www.padddtracker.org/countries/CAN.

deforested and has reduced from 28% to 23% the amount of protected public forest set aside to offset deforestation (CBC News, 2014a).

3.2.1 Commercial development pressures in national parks

Parks Canada's protected areas have not been immune to threats from degazettement, despite the common belief that national parks are beacons of protected nature that will be safeguarded in perpetuity. Several controversial commercial development projects and proposals—a proposed war memorial in Cape Breton Highlands National Park; a development project at Maligne Lake in Jasper National Park; and the proposed expansion of Lake Louise Ski Resort in Banff National Park—could be setting a precedent for dismantling policy frameworks that were set in place to protect nature. Interviews with four former Parks Canada managers suggest that a key trend in this period (2011-2015) involved a loosening of caps on development in parks —in striking reversal from the recommendations of the EI panel in 2000, which recommended that recreational activities and development projects "in national parks be assessed with ecological integrity as the determining factor" (Parks Canada, 2000, p. 11-11).

For example, the proposal for the "Never Forgotten National Memorial" to honour Canada's "war dead" in Cape Breton Highlands National Park, which featured a large statue called Mother Canada along with a visitor centre, restaurant, souvenir shop, and large parking area, received approval from Parks Canada (Paquette, 2015). Phase 1 of the monument was to be completed by 2017, to coincide with Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations. Supporters of the project included politicians, veterans, business owners, and tourism operators (Tunne, 2015). Overall public response, however, was negative. Documents accessed through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request indicate that "criticism centres on lack of public consultation on the Memorial's location, aesthetics of the statue, appropriateness within a national park, the environmental assessment process and concerns surrounding unique geological formations easily accessible at Green Cove" (Chief Executive Office, Parks Canada Agency, "Memorandum to Minister: Never

Forgotten National Memorial," 2015, p. 4). What is also noteworthy about this proposal is that Parks Canada, which lost 30 % budgetary capacity due to budget cuts in 2012, was required to donate $100,000 of their budgetary funding to the Never Forgotten National Memorial Foundation to support the development of a visitation analysis and to develop the Foundation's website (p.4). After the federal election in 2015, Parks Canada, under the new Liberal government, decided not to move forward with the proposed Mother Canada memorial, and it was terminated in February 2016 (Galloway, 2016).

In 2014, Parks Canada rejected a proposal by Maligne Tours to build a hotel at Maligne Lake in Jasper; instead, the Agency considered allowing Maligne Tours to construct tent cabins at Maligne Lake (CBC News, 2014a). For such a proposal to move forward, however, Jasper National Park would have to change their management plan to allow Maligne Tours to build new accommodations outside the townsite.[13] CPAWS, the Jasper Environmental Association, and Ecojustice took the federal government to court, claiming that not only did this proposal contravene Jasper National Park's management plan, but it also put a herd of endangered woodland caribou at risk. A court ruling in February 2016 agreed that Parks Canada could consider the proposed development project but that "proposals that contravene the Management Plan cannot receive final approval" (Ecojustice, 2016). As one ENGO participant remarked,

> What is disheartening about the proposed tent cabins at Maligne Lake is that small environmental groups have to go to great lengths to ensure that Parks Canada is adhering to its legal mandate to ensure ecological integrity in national parks. In this case, it is clear that Parks Canada is prioritizing things other than ecological integrity, like

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[13] A National Parks management plan is a legal document that lays out the long-term plans (approximately 15 years) for future management of a national park. (Parks Canada, 2019).

visitor experience and pushing for commercial development. (Personal communication,

Grant, May 2016).

Just one month prior to this ruling, Brewster Travel/Pursuit– which owns the Banff Gondola, the Lake Minnewanka Cruise, the Glacier Skywalk, and the Columbia Icefield Glacier tour -- announced that they purchased Maligne Tours (Jasper Environmental Association, 2015b). To date, Brewster Travel Canada has not constructed new tent cabins at Maligne Lake.

In 2015, the Lake Louise Ski Resort brought forward a proposal to double its size in Banff National Park. This requires removing the wilderness designation from the targeted land, prompting concerned citizens and environmentalists to create the campaign focused on stopping commercial developments in national parks (Alberta Environmental network, 2015) (see previous chapter).[14] Opponents to this proposal say that the proposed expansion violates Canada's National Parks Act and that in order for the ski resort to expand into a sensitive wilderness zone, the Act and wilderness regulations would have to be changed.[15] As one former parks manager notes, "the idea for designating wilderness areas was to protect those areas from Parks Canada itself. As soon as you designate lands as wilderness areas, they were supposed to be off limits to development" (Personal communication, James, 2016). Parks Canada, however, argues that the 2006 Ski Area Management Guidelines allow for new lands to be acquired in exchange for leasehold lands where there is a "net environmental gain" (Parks Canada, 2006b, p. 2). Parks Canada argued that the proposed Lake Louise Ski Resort expansion represents such a net gain as it would return 669 hectares of ecologically sensitive land back into protection by reducing the current ski area leasehold by approximately 1,521 hectares, in exchange for expanding the ski resort outside its current leasehold (Parks Canada, 2015d, p. 6 g). Critics argue that "relinquishing undeveloped land from the ski resort's lease area in return for

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[14] See: "Fight for Our National Parks" at http://www.fightforyourparks.ca.
[15] Amending Canada's National Parks Act could take years, requiring approval from both the Senate and the House of Commons before becoming law (Historica Canada, 2016).

doubling the capacity and infrastructure of the ski resort does not constitute a significant environmental gain rather, a net environmental loss" (CPAWS, 2015b).[16] Concerns focused on potential impacts to wildlife, including grizzly bear habitat.

Finally, high profile national parks leaders raised concerns about the public process for these proposed developments. In an open letter to the Minister of the Environment, 11 retired Parks employees' question "the 3-week public comment period to comment on two major documents, the 86-page Lake Louise Ski Hill Development Guidelines and the 170-page Strategic Environmental Assessment" (Derworiz, 2015b). The former employees argue that "Such a short comment period is not consistent with a desire for real public engagement, nor is it consistent with Parks Canada's once-acclaimed reputation for meaningful consultation" (Derworiz, 2015b). But according to Parks Canada (2015d, p. 5), "Three weeks is the standard comment period for most major public consultations in the Mountain National Parks and is consistent with the comment periods of other federal consultations such as those required under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012" (Parks Canada, 2015e, p.5).

3.2.2 Drivers of PADDD?

Overall, it is crucial to note that economic development pressures are creating PADDD issues. Interviews with four former Parks managers and three ENGO representatives suggest that Parks Canada is shifting away from its mandate of ecological integrity toward a tourism mandate that focuses on increasing the number of visitors, increasing revenue, and promoting private development (Personal communications, 2015-2016). As one former Parks manager deduced, "I would say that [Parks Canada] has turned into a rigid, hierarchical bureaucracy where corporate

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[16] The Liberal Government did not cancel plans to expand Lake Louise Ski Resort in Banff that was approved by the Harper Government prior to the 2015 Federal election. As it stands today it is still on the table. Calgary's (2018) bid for the 2026 Winter Olympic Games, however, have opened new debates on what role Banff National Park and Lake Louise Ski Resort could potentially play in hosting Olympic events (CPAWS website http://cpaws-southernalberta.org/news/havent-we-already-tried-to-bid-for-the-olympics-at-lake-louise).

goals such as branding, revenue targets, new park experiences, and visitation targets are applied universally across the board whether or not they make practical or ecological sense" (Personal communication, James, 2016). Such an assessment is far from what the Panel of Ecological Integrity envisioned when they called upon Parks Canada "to become an open, innovative, knowledge-based organization with a consistent focus on ecological integrity" (Parks Canada, 2000, p. 2-2). Four former Parks Canada managers I interviewed emphasized that, instead, there has been a shift within the Agency to support increasing visitation and allocating resources to enhance visitor experience.

I examine this shift to visitor experience in section four. But first, I look at Parks Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples and examine trends in budgets and spending.

3.3 Managing the settler colonial present in Parks Canada

> "To think about distant places, to colonize them, to populate or depopulate them: all of this occurs on, about, or because of land. The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about." - Edward Said (1994)

When one talks[17] about protected area creation in Canada, it is necessary to acknowledge the settler colonial context those protected areas are established within. Settler colonialism refers to a specific variant of colonial practice where settlers like me and my ancestors, never left (Coulthard 2014, Simpson 2001). Thus, to speak of Canadian national parks in the "public interest" is deeply problematic, re-affirming the dispossession that underlies the Canadian state.

Parks Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples is now a major plank of its policy work.[18] Since 1979, Parks Canada policy has required Parks Canada to negotiate agreements with

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[17] In this section I use the following terminology: Indigenous Peoples, Aboriginal Peoples, and First Nations Peoples to describe all groups who occupy this land known as Canada. Aboriginal Peoples is a term that is often used in Government of Canada documents.
[18] Parks Canada Policy states, "Where new national parks are established in conjunction with the settlement of land claims of native people, an agreement will be negotiated between Parks Canada and representatives of local native communities prior to the formal establishment of the national park,

affected nations prior to establishing new parks. According to Dearden & Berg (1993), legal

affirmation of land claims and treaty rights have allowed Indigenous Peoples to gain some say in

the establishment of national parks.[19] In 1994, the Canada National Parks Act was amended to

allow for national parks to be established as "reserve status," which "meant that sections of land

would be set aside as park reserves and managed as national parks until such a time as land

claims pertaining to that land were resolved" (Langdon, Prosper & Gagnon, 2010, p. 225). In

1999, Parks Canada created the internal Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (AAS) meant to help

increase the participation of Indigenous people in Canada's national parks (Parks Canada,

2016a). The EI panel went further, asking Parks Canada to "initiate a process of healing with

Aboriginal peoples and adopt clear policies to encourage and support the development of

genuine partnerships with Aboriginal peoples in Canada" (Parks Canada 2000, p. 21). In 2015,

Parks Canada released guidelines, Promising Pathways: Strengthening Engagement and

Relationships with Aboriginal Peoples in Parks Canada Heritage Places, to help Parks Canada

promote and strengthen relationships with First Nations peoples.

Over the past three decades, Parks Canada has worked toward addressing land claims and land

rights through consultation and negotiating agreements (Sandlos, 2014). Langdon et al. (2010)

claims that 68% of the overall national parks system has been created with Indigenous

communities and nations, who have gained some authority over land use management

decisions. From a policy basis, Dearden (2008) notes that, "Parks Canada has been very active

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creating a joint management regime for the planning and management of the national park (Heritage
Canada, 1979, as cited in Langdon, Prosper & Gagnon, 2010). Today, Canada's National Parks Act (2000),
the National Marine Conservation Areas Act, the Species at Risk Act, and Canadian Environmental
Assessment Act all legally require governments to seek consultation with First Nations people prior to
conducting activities that may impact Aboriginal rights and land claims (Parks Canada, 2014a, p. 11).
[19] In 1974 the National Parks Act was amended to include provisions for traditional hunting and fishing
practices and the new concept of a national reserve: land set aside for a future national park pending
settlement of any land claims. For the first time in history the agency acknowledged the role of people in
shaping the physical aspect of park environments and the different cultural meanings that people might
find there" (Campbell, 2011, p. 10) after Aboriginal people demanded that national parks recognize and
protect Aboriginal rights (Martin, 2011, p. 289). As a result, this is the first time that Parks Canada began
to redefine "wilderness" from being a vast empty land, to including a cultural landscape.

in developing not only a formalized consultative process, but cooperative management arrangements as well" (para. 24)**.** By 2010, Parks Canada had 18 formal cooperative management agreements with indigenous communities (Sandlos, 2014). And since 2011 Parks Canada has awarded "over 2,400 contracts to procure goods and services…to Indigenous businesses and businesses associated with Indigenous communities" (Parks Canada, 2016b, p. 8). The Agency has financially endorsed over 55 projects that promote relationship building with Métis peoples and has created 23 national historic designations highlighting indigenous peoples and culture. Indigenous Peoples now represent over 8% of Parks Canada's workforce (Parks Canada Agency, 2016b).

In an interview, a former high-ranking Parks Canada official asserted that the Agency, "is the international world leader when it comes to working with Indigenous peoples. This was not the case when the EI panel did their report. In fact, they identified significant weakness there, but we turned this completely around" (Personal communication, February 2016).[20] The Jasper Aboriginal Forum, established in 2006, is an example of Parks Canada's efforts, "to create a space for healing and reconciliation" (Parks Canada, n.d). The forum gathers together over two dozen indigenous groups, many of whose ancestors signed historical treaties with the Canadian government that granted them continued access to Jasper National Park for hunting and gathering purposes. These treaties, however, were never honoured, and these groups were dispossessed of their land (Youdelis, 2016). This forum, therefore, provides Parks Canada with the platform to improve relationships with Indigenous peoples by inviting them to consult on park management-related issues.

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[20] The EI panel report, Unimpaired for future generations? Conserving ecological integrity with Canada's national parks, volume I, challenged Parks Canada to "integrate Aboriginal peoples into the family of Parks Canada as trusted and knowledgeable friends within the spirit of ecological integrity" (Parks Canada Agency, 2000, p. 20).

The Aboriginal Peoples Open Doors Program, initiated by Parks Canada, invites Indigenous people to visit places to which they have historical ties, by providing them with a free admission pass (Parks Canada, 2014b). Corporate and management plans direct Parks Canada staff to work collaboratively with Indigenous peoples "by supporting traditional activities and incorporating Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in the management of national parks and park reserves" (Parks Canada, 2014b, p. 17). Many of these changes were provoked by a series of Indigenous rights and title court cases that raised the bar for consultation with First Nations Peoples.

Nonetheless, a question remains as to how this plays out on the ground, that is, how much of this is public relations and how much of it represents concrete change. Coulthard (2014) argues that there is also clear evidence that much of this work sits firmly within a "recognition" paradigm, whereby Indigenous culture and issues are made more visible in order to promote assimilation, while colonial power remains invisible. This is perhaps best illustrated by an incident in 2011, when Jasper National Park "commissioned and raised a totem pole along the main street in Jasper to signify their commitment to improving relationships with First Nations" (Youledis, 2016). However, management somehow erred and erected a totem pole of the Haida Nation, which resides on the Pacific Northwest coast. Locals and indigenous groups feared this would result in "misinformation to tourists about which nations lived in the Jasper area and felt slighted that the Alberta nations were not represented" (Youdelis, 2016).

Recent literature (see Youdelis, 2016; Sandlos, 2014; MacLaren, 2011) acknowledges that Parks Canada has made progress working with First Nations peoples to establish and cooperatively manage new parks and park reserves, but they also indicate that this is still a far cry from the autonomy and sovereignty indigenous people had before colonialism. MacLaren (2011, p. 336) points out that in the southern parks, for instance, the Agency still struggles with the issue of "invit[ing] evicted people or their descendants to return and take up residence in existing parks"

such as Jasper National Park. He notes that this is a "thorny" situation that brings up "questions of prioritizing the rights of different Native groups and of prioritizing eras of past occupation" (MacLaren, 2011, p. 336). Even though it may be challenging to find solutions that accommodate the needs of various Indigenous groups, MacLaren says that this "is not grounds for inaction" (p. 354). Sandlos (2014, p. 144) notes that participatory management practices with Inuit peoples in Canada's North also remain incomplete, as the "federal government has not surrendered any substantive regulatory powers over wildlife in the parks to Aboriginal groups or co-management boards in northern areas." Consequently, "co-management boards remain largely advisory in nature" (Sandlos, 2014, p. 146), and Indigenous knowledge is often co-opted to supplement Western science (Sandlos, 2014).

Youdelis (2016) argues that neocolonial relationships continue to be perpetuated through anti-political strategies that are disguised as indigenous consultation. They are "anti-political" in that they obscure power relationships in decision-making processes that render inequality invisible and inconsequential. Büscher (2010, p. 34) defines politics as "the social, deliberative process with which actors make decisions that determine social or public outcomes." Antipolitics, then, he argues, "aims to do away with this social, deliberative process and to 'predetermine' decisions and/or social and public outcomes" (p. 49). That is, all of the consultation and inclusion may be working to obscure the issues of dispossession and of power and control over land.

To substantiate her argument, Youdelis examines Jasper National Park's approach to consultation with various Indigenous groups regarding two controversial development projects proposed by Brewster Travel: The Glacier Skywalk and the expansion of accommodation at Maligne Lake. She says that the Parks Canada Agency's use of "interest-based" consultation, which means that they will only "engage with groups that show an explicit interest in any particular development proposal" and the Agency's stipulation "that Aboriginal and Treaty rights will not be discussed in regards to any given project" strongly suggest that consultation is

presented as window dressing, while concealing colonial power relationships that "invisibilize Indigenous laws, politics and systems of knowledge" (Youdelis, 2016, p. 9). Youdelis's examination of Brewster's Consultation and Aboriginal Engagement Report found that it did not indicate "which nations were consulted, what concerns were raised or how these were addressed" (p. 5). She suggests that Brewster showed favoritism for those Nations that were receptive to the Glacier Skywalk project and used incentives like free helicopter rides, site visits, and the promise of providing jobs for Indigenous members receptive to the project. She claims that this "divide and conquer" approach estranged the First Nations community from meaningful consultation. Her research suggests that economic benefits associated with development projects continue to reproduce colonial power structures that prioritize the interests of private developers and Parks Canada over the interests of Indigenous peoples (Youdelis, 2016).

Demonstrating the heterogeneous relationships between Parks Canada and Indigenous nations, the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area and Haida Heritage Site is often held up as "the most innovative and far-reaching" co-management agreement for a national protected area in Canada (Hawkes, 1995). The Minister of State for the Environment and the President of the Council of the Haida Nation signed the Canada–Haida/Gwaii Haanas Agreement in 1993, aimed at providing for "the conservation of both ecological and cultural integrity" (Government of Canada, 2010). The ultimate decision-making authority resides with the Archipelago Management Board, half of whose membership is from the Council of the Haida Nation, with the other half from the Government of Canada. This arrangement is unique. While dozens of co-management agreements have been reached across Canada, mostly in the North, partnerships have often been critiqued for their perpetuation of colonial management techniques, as illustrated by one Indigenous descendant who commented on the "consultation" of the Stoney Nakoda in the Mountain Parks: "in Jasper Indigenous input is merely sought in the spirit of being a 'good neighbour.' I absolutely couldn't imagine this happening on Gwaii Haanas. You

couldn't do anything without going to the Haida, so why is it different here?" (cited in Youdelis, 2016, p. 14). Arguably, part of what differentiates the Haida from the Indigenous groups in Jasper is the unity with which the Haida resisted colonial management power structures (see Takeda & Røpke, 2010).

The EI Panel stated in their 2000 report that they felt that "there is a genuine desire within Parks Canada to make progress toward integrating Indigenous naturalized knowledge and values into park management" (Parks Canada, 2000, p. 7-7). In the decade and a half that followed, Parks Canada has worked hard toward building relationships through reconciliation efforts. However, some of the literature, noted above, indicates that Parks Canada needs to move beyond the recognition paradigm and acknowledge the colonial power structures that continue to overshadow meaningful reconciliation. For these authors, the way the agency attempts to manage Indigenous relationships with discourse has parallels with how the Agency circumvents substantial action on prioritizing EI.

To understand the other changes that occurred within Parks Canada since the EI Panel released its initial report in 2000, I now turn to evaluating trends in resource allocations and budgets.

3.4 Trends in spending and revenue generation (2000-2015)

In the period 2000-2008, strong conservationists led Parks Canada and supported recommendations made by the Panel on Ecological Integrity by creating a world-class ecological monitoring system (see Woodley, 2010). Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's (1993-2003) financial support was instrumental to pushing forward EI. His 2003 budget awarded Parks Canada, "$74 million over a two-year period to create 10 new national parks, five new marine PAs and expand three existing national parks" (Department of Finance Canada, 2003, p. 20). An additional $25 million of ongoing funding was allocated to re-establish the ecological integrity of the national parks, which was further supported with a five-year allocation of an additional $60 million to,

"expand existing ecological integrity measures" (Department of Finance of Canada, 2005, p. 196). Overall, Parks Canada's budget has increased approximately 8% in this period (2000–2015) over both governments (Liberal and Conservative) (see figure 2).
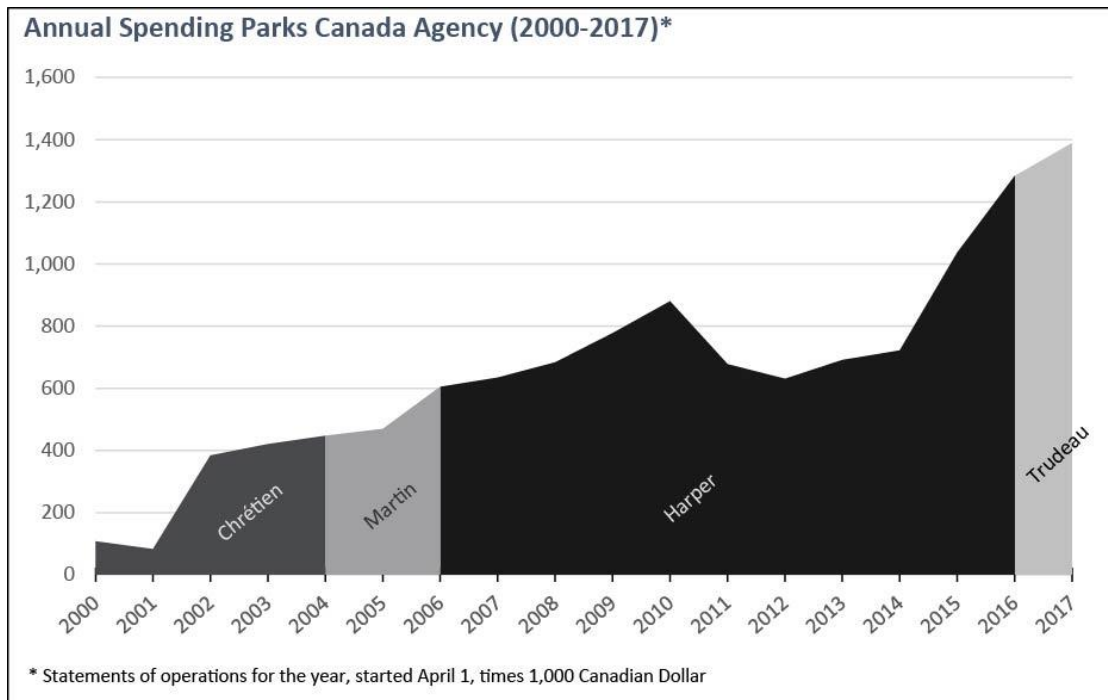
Figure 2: Annual Budget Parks Canada Agency (2000–2017)

In an interview with one former top manager at Parks Canada, I learned that this funding enabled Parks Canada to make considerable progress toward building a new culture of ecological integrity within the Agency, particularly between 2002 and 2008 (Personal communication, Joe, 2015)–largely funded by the Chrétien government. A 2008 report titled Parks Canada Status on Agency Progress since First Priority states that "The Agency ha[d] created and filled 54 new science positions and 22 new public education positions to support ecological integrity monitoring, restoration and the enhancement of public education and visitor experiences" (Park Canada, 2008b, p. iv). In addition, all Parks Canada staff from campgrounds to management received ecological integrity (EI) training, an Executive Director of Ecological Integrity was established, guidelines for EI restoration were drawn up, a National Fire

Management Program was established, and a world class EI monitoring system was created (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013, p. 19). In an interview, a former Parks Canada upper Manager noted that:

> A lot more money was put toward ecological integrity (EI) programs and a lot of that was manifested on these Actions on the Ground Projects.[21] [...] We needed to start showing some things on the ground, where we could actually show that we were making some progress. Sometimes some of the projects that were not necessarily all that sexy or complicated...were found to be as effective in terms of [...] helping restore the EI of, say, mountain or high velocity streams. That kind of work was done right across the country, not exactly fancy work, but certainly important work.... Other projects were much larger like [...] returning buffalo [...] back to Grasslands National Park. (Personal communication, George, 2016).

Dearden (2008) acknowledges that Parks Canada had made progress since the 2000 Panel on Ecological Integrity made its recommendation, but that there were still important ongoing issues that needed to be addressed. According to Deaden these "issues include a lack of a national protected area [PA] plan, the slow speed of establishment of new PAs, lack of monitoring for effectiveness, failure to establish research partnerships, and questions of accountability" (Dearden, 2008, para. 2). These were indications that ecological integrity, despite making considerable progress, was slowly falling out of fashion, towards an interest in visitation:

> In the early 2000s we were trained to talk about ecological integrity...2003 was "the year of the fire" and we were instructed to talk about the importance fire had in facilitating ecological integrity. There was big emphasis on ecological integrity in our training in the early years from 2003 to 2005, but after a while it became less important. Other training that came along, that I remember, was we had to do some reading about different kinds of users or visitors that come to

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[21] 'Action on the Ground' refers to "[p]rojects carried out by Parks Canada to improve the health of national park ecosystems" (Parks Canada, 2013, p.1).

the national park. They wanted us to ask visitors if they were nature lovers, recreational users, etc.

(Personal communication, Jacky, 2015)

In 2008, Parks Canada was allocated $42,000 per park to support the newly developed ecological monitoring program, but that funding was reduced to $15,000 per park later that same year (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013). According to the 2013 Office of the Auditor General's Report (2013, p. 70), this reduction directly compromised ecosystem monitoring. The withdrawal of financial support may have been linked to the 2007–2008 global economic crises. Somewhat contrary to this move but also in recognition of the financial crisis— in terms of economic stimulus, Parks Canada made the decision in 2008 to place a freeze on user fees, "to encourage Canadians to visit our unique treasures and to help Canada's tourism industry and local economies across Canada" (Parks Canada, 2009a). Prior to 2008, user fees had been legislated to increase annually under the User Fees Act 2003-2004, which was first broached by the Chretien Government and then implemented by the Martin administration (Parks Canada, 2015c). Frees increased in the fiscal year 2005–06 to 2008–09, with the goal of generating $25 million in new revenue per year. These funds were earmarked to support visitor experience programs and maintain visitor facilities (Parks Canada, 2006a). Despite this freeze, revenue from user fees continued to increase (see figure 3), but at a slower rate.
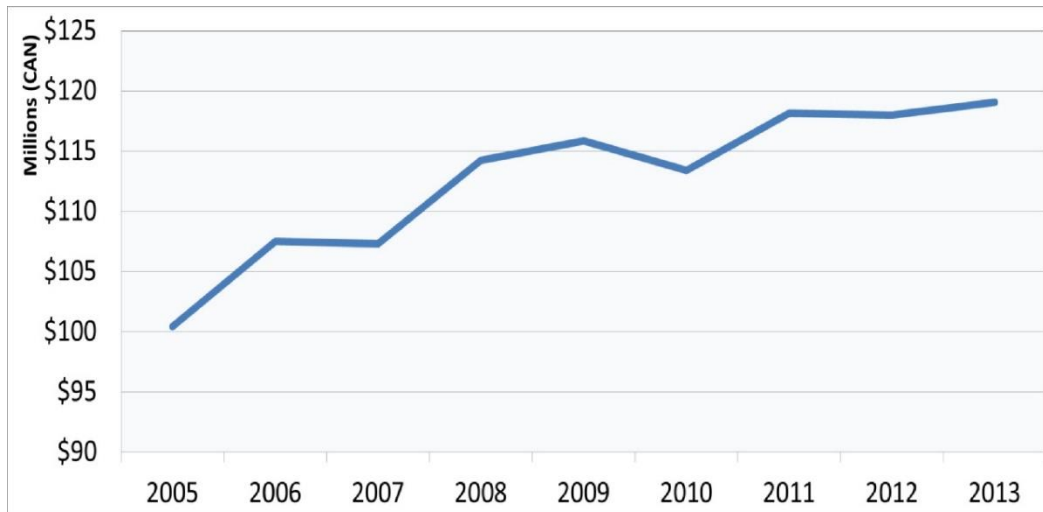
Figure 3: Parks Canada Agency Revenue retrieved from user fees recorded in Parks Canada Plans and Priority Reports from (2005–2013).[22]

The Economic Impact of Parks Canada report for 2008/2009 indicates that Parks Canada contributes approximately $3.3 billion annually to the Canadian economy, with 80% coming from visitor spending (see Parks Canada, 2011a). Yet, despite this, budget cuts in 2012 by Harper government reduced Parks Canada's overall spending by approximately $30 million annually over four years (see table 1). As a result of these cuts, Parks Canada was forced, "to reassess…the types and numbers of staff need[ed] to carry out the Agency's core responsibilities in each park" (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013, p. 28). Figure 4 (below) shows how Parks Canada reduced labour costs by over $10 million by consolidating service centers and increasing contracting out at all levels of the Agency (Government of Canada, 2016c).

Former Parks Canada research participant recalls that time: "Did it challenge us? It sure did. It was difficult and it was the most painful thing I ever, ever did in my 35-year career…. The government made that decision for us and we had to implement those decisions" (Personal communication, Jack, 2016). Parks Canada could not spend money it did not have. So, the Agency's first response was to eliminate a level of bureaucracy at the national office by making

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[22] Note: Entrance fees collected represents over 50% of all revenue generated, while camping fees, 15-20% and land rent and concessions over 20% (Parks Canada, 2015c).

smaller service centres that replaced regional offices. They also consolidated departments and reduced staff. On an operational level Parks Canada reduced hours and seasons of operation in addition to promoting self-guided tours as opposed to guided ones. Workforce adjustments directly impacted approximately 1,700 employees from all levels, which resulted in 638 job losses and 270 employees opting to take early retirement (Parks Canada, 2015a).

Parks Canada Agency	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
Monitoring integration and streamlining – EC/PC*	0	0	159	159
Enforcement – EC/PC collaboration	0	45	45	45
Consolidate service centres and increase contracting out	2,760	5,548	10,500	10,500
Streamline headquarters program management by 15%	1,598	3,342	3,500	3,500
Restrict public opinion research to mandated requirements and third-party agreement for market research	18	918	1,000	1,000
Eliminate spending on teacher and curricula tools development	176	886	950	950
Move from guided to self-guided visitor activities at select national historic sites	1	1,086	2,000	2,000
Reduce operating season at parks and sites to peak visitation periods	1,354	4,692	5,000	5,000
Other*	100	3,134	6,000	6,000
Parks Canada Agency, Total	6,007	19,651	29,154	29,154
Environment Portfolio (Environment & Parks Canada), Total	13,499	36,734	60,249	60,249
Fisheries and Oceans, Total	3,800	13,389	79,257	79,257

Figure 4: Budget cuts following the 2012 strategic and operating reviews.
The table above shows how much the Government expected to save, on an annual basis, from the cuts implemented.
Source: Government of Canada. (2016c). *Strategic and Operating Review: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.* Government of Canada. **https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/corporate/transparency/strategic-operating-review.html**

These austerity measures not only resulted in the downsizing of the agency, but it also resulted in the demoralization of its employees. After the 2015 election the Public Service Alliance of

Canada (PSAC) (2016) called on the new Liberal government to restore public services that had

been decimated under the Harper government. On their website, PSAC says that "[y]ears of

austerity measures and cuts to the federal public service and federal agencies such as the

Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Parks Canada and the Canadian Revenue Agency have

weakened the economy and demoralized public service workers" (Public Service Alliance of

Canada (PSAC), 2016, para. 3). One former Parks Canada employee recalls her experience at

Parks Canada after the cuts by saying, "I strongly feel that Parks had no care about how people

were treated. People in Ottawa certainly didn't care about their employees. The stress I

experienced after the budget cuts at Parks Canada really impacted the quality of my life"

(Personal communication, Jacky, 2015). In a 2015 report titled Five-Year Review of the Human

Resources Management Regime of Parks Canada (2015a), Parks Canada acknowledges that the

2012 workforce adjustment resulted in loss of corporate memory and knowledge within the

agency. Two participants (one former Parks Canada Manager and one ENGO) also note that this

loss is compounded by the fact that there was also "a huge group of people who have been

brought in in the last decade, who do not have a conservation background" (Personal

communication, Jane, 2016). These funding cuts to personnel directly contradicted the EI panel

recommendations, which emphasized the need to "provide parks with enough staff to carry out

their responsibility" in order to protect the ecological integrity of the national parks (Parks

Canada, 2000, p. 2-12).

In the 2013–14 fiscal year, 30% of full-time staff was replaced by seasonal staff. At the same

time, scientific staff decreased by 33% (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013, p. 27).

Despite this accounting, a senior Parks Canada executive argued that science staff were not most

hit. He says:

> These cuts affected every single program in Parks Canada, and I would say that visitor
>
> services were more impacted than conservation. That is not the word on the street, I

know, but that is the reality within Parks Canada. We had 1,900 people that were affected; close to 1,800 were not working in a conservation function. So that was a huge change. I think what it did was it forced our investments on things that really make a difference. It forced us to take a closer look at the organization. (Personal communication, Jack, February 2016)

CPAWS, however, objects. They say that cuts to resource conservation capacity outweighed those to visitor experience. In their 2016 report titled *A Call for Renewed Commitment to Nature Conservation* they argue that "During this time period [2012–2015], the Agency's Visitor Experience program staff grew by 9%, while the Conservation staff shrank by 31%" (CPAWS, 2016a). Unfortunately, the budgets are difficult to follow. For example, the graph below (figure 5) illustrates how funds for ecological integrity are allocated to the different programs. However, it is difficult to determine the exact amount of funds that goes directly into science, EI monitoring, visitor protection, and wages. This was reiterated by a former Parks Canada manager who says that when it comes to deciphering "[b]udget declines to conservation..... you almost have to do a forensic audit to track it" (Personal communication, Joe, 2015). Part of my research attempted to do just that. For example, in order to determine the specific number of science staff hired and terminated between 2005 and 2015 in each scientific category (BI-1, BI-2, BI-3, PC-1, PC-2, PC-3, PC-4, REM, and RES) and technical services (EG and GT) specifically; a Government Environmental Petition[23] was acquisitioned. However, the results of the petition only provided a single lump sum which reflects the 30% decline to scientific staff mentioned above (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2016, petition 391). National Executive Director of CPAWS, Éric Hébert-Daly (cited in Galloway, 2012, para. 6), argues that, "If you're cutting it by 30 per cent, you are cutting the actual science by 30 per cent. And what that means is more

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[23] An environmental petition, "is a way for Canadians to bring their concerns about environmental and sustainable development issues to the attention of the federal government [through a formal written request] and obtain a formal response" (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2016).

species will go extinct without us knowing about it." It is also important to note that in an

Auditor General of Canada's 2013 Report on Ecological Integrity in National Parks it states that

the decrease in funding and downsizing of conservation personnel were already happening prior

to these substantial cuts. While budget cuts in 2012 affected all departments, participants (6) in

this research also confirm that cuts to science outweighed those to visitor experience.
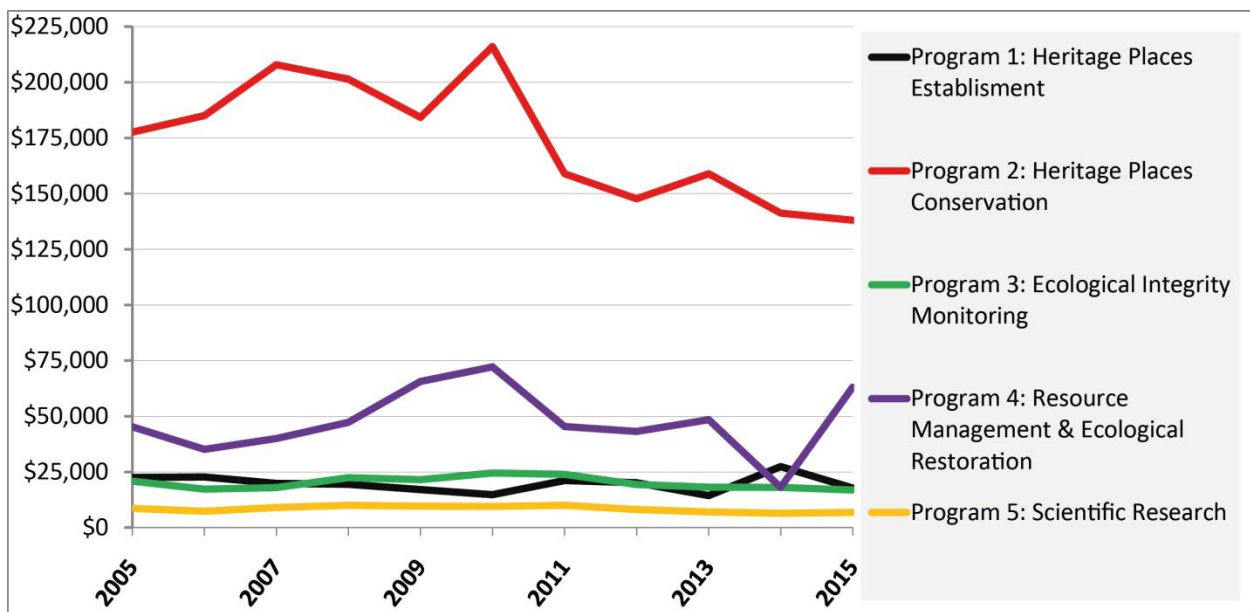
Figure 5: Decline expenditures for Ecological Integrity (1,000 Canadian Dollars).

Source: Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2016, petition 391

3.5 The change in allocation of funds

The allocation of funds within the Parks Canada Agency changed between 2005-2014 (figure 5).

Overall, there is a clear shift in the agency away from[24] prioritizing the conservation of heritage

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[24] Conservation of heritage places programs included National Park Conservation, National Urban Park Conservation, National Marine Area Conservation, National Historic Site Conservation, and Other Heritage Places Conservation.

places[25] and toward visitor experience programs. This coincides with the Agency's creation of the Directorate of External Relations and Visitor Experience in 2005. A former Director General of National Parks recalls that:

> "After 2005, there began a watering down of the mandate. Ecological Integrity is the primary mandate, but it is no longer the sole mandate. We have other responsibilities, such as visitor experience and the social sciences. My former position as Director General of National Parks was eliminated. It is now the Vice-President of Conservation and Park Establishment, and there is a new directorate for Visitor Experience that did not exist when I was there. It gives a sense of the drift out of conservation as the primary mandate into other mandates and other responsibilities, and a watering down of capacity." (Personal communication, Jim, 2016).

While funding for ecological integrity decreased, funding for infrastructure increased during the Harper administration (see Figure 6).
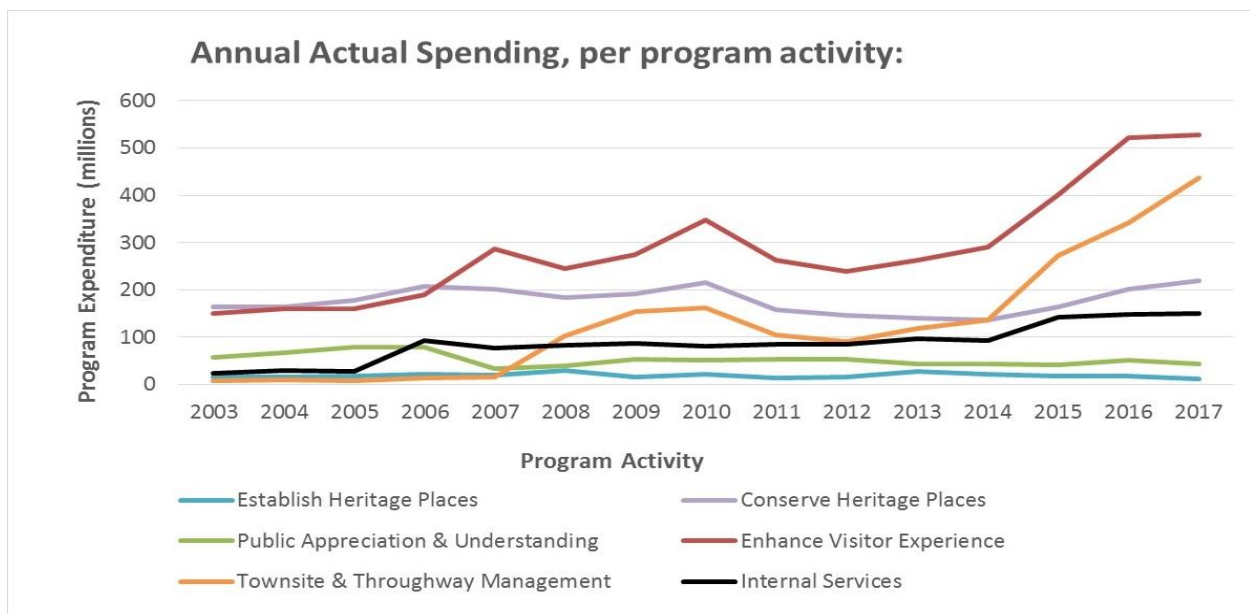
Figure 6: Annual Actual Spending.

[25] Visitor experience programs include National Park Visitor Experience, National Urban Park Visitor Experience, National Marine Conservation Area Visitor Experience, National Historic Site Visitor Experience, and Heritage Canal Visitor Experience. Three interviewees say that it is almost impossible to track how much money is going toward ecological integrity, plus it is hard to factor the amount of employee work time that goes into it.

For example, between 2007 and 2010, increased federal funding from the Conservative

Economic Action Plan lead to increased funds to support the management of town sites and

throughways (roads and bridges) (see figures 4 & 5). Figure 4 illustrates that while all

departments were faced with budget cuts in 2010 (coincident with the end of funding from the

action plan), visitor experience and town site / throughway management recovered more

quickly. A 2012 internal audit of Parks Canada's Visitor Services Office indicates that between

2007 and 2010, 30% of all expenditures went toward programs that facilitate visitor experience

(Parks Canada, 2012, p. 77), a number that jumped to 40% in 2014 and 2015. In that 2012

report, Parks Canada argued that since 66% of the Parks' revenue comes from visitors

(approximately $100 million annually) and that 40% of its assets (valuing $10 billion) are

directly associated with visitors, it makes sense for Parks Canada to invest in and prioritize

visitor experience (Parks Canada, 2012),[26] marking a shift away from EI.

Furthermore, a National Asset Review (NAR) of Parks Canada determined "that over half of the

Agency's holdings were in poor or very poor condition" (Parks Canada, 2015b, p. 9). To address

Parks Canada's deteriorating infrastructure, the Conservative government announced in 2014

the Federal Infrastructure Fund that would provide $2.8 billion to address this problem. Even

though investing in Parks Canada's crumbling infrastructure is clearly needed, this huge

investment is also an indication of how funding priorities shifted in this last decade –which

compromised funding for ecological integrity.

For example, the 2000 Panel on Ecological Integrity stressed the importance of investing

financially in science expertise to inventory, research, and monitor the ecological health of the

park system (Parks Canada, 2000). Yet, a 2013 Auditor General's report notes that Parks

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[26] In 2015–2016 Parks Canada's revenue from user fees equaled approximately $118 million (Parks
Canada, 2016a).

Canada did not have a plan for how it would address the backlog of work required to manage threats to ecological integrity caused by budgetary declines to conservation in this most recent decade (Auditor General of Canada 2013, p. 28). In their 2016 State of Canada's Natural and Cultural Heritage Places report, Parks Canada, however, says that they have rectified this backlog and that all national parks now have a fully implemented monitoring plan in place (Parks Canada, 2016b). CPAWS, however, argues that this is misleading. They say that Parks Canada reduced the monitoring program by 28%; therefore, the scope of the program was also reduced to reflect budget cuts and loss of science personnel needed to carry out a full monitoring program (CPAWS, 2016c).

3.5.1 Covering shortfalls? The rise of park-generated revenue

When Parks Canada became an agency at the end of the previous decade (1990s-2000), they were told to cover a greater amount of their budget by collecting revenue from visitor fees that provide a personal benefit, such as recreational fees. Since that time, the formula representing funding by the government for public services verses private services is 75/25, meaning 75% is covered by government and 25% is generated by each park (Parks Canada, 2015a). Each Field Unit is required to set annual revenue targets. Field units can keep and spend any excess revenue, which surpass their target. (Parks Canada, 2009a). However, most parks do not have the number of visitors needed to generate the 25%; only four parks nationally are able to cover their own visitor services costs from their revenue: the mountain parks of Banff, Yoho, Kootenay, and Jasper. The mountain parks have the highest number of visitors; some of their surplus revenue is used to cover parks that are losing money. However, those parks unable to meet their revenue targets must, for the most part, reduce their expenditures (Parks Canada, 2000). In their report, the EI panel was concerned that this move to the 75/25 scheme put pressure on Field Units to forgo ecological integrity in favour of development projects that

generate much needed revenue (Parks Canada, 2000). This problem deepened in 2009 when the Government of Canada froze user fees and again in 2012 due to budget cuts.

The question is: does this 75/25 formula lead Parks Canada toward activities that are focused on generating revenue? The answer is not simple. As one former park superintendent noted, "The organization is hard-wired to be open to mandate creep and is susceptible to increased demands for commercial development that can increase visitor numbers and generate more revenue" (Personal communication, James, 2016). Wanting to increase visitation to generate revenue is not openly acknowledged by the Agency (interviews). But, at the same time, visitation has become the key metric by which the value of a park is measured. As one former upper management employee of Parks Canada, argues, "In terms of our investment in visitor experience, it is not about generating revenue. To me it is about connecting more people to nature" (Personal communication, Jack, 2016). Yet the high number of visitors in the mountain parks creates a greater need for staff, infrastructure, and associated maintenance—in other words, higher costs. Revenue generated through business leases and licences on a percentage of gross annual revenues, from big operations such as the ski hills (e.g., Lake Louise, Sunshine and Mt Norquay) and Brewster Travel (Sulfur Mountain Gondola and the Glacier Skywalk) generate a significant amount of revenue for the agency (see figure 6), which makes such partnerships highly lucrative (Personal communication, John, 2015). For example, a 2010 Parks Canada revenue audit shows that the six mountain parks generate 70% of all revenue collected from leases, licences of occupation, and other operating revenues across the national parks system (Parks Canada, 2013b).

3.5.2 Parks Canada's partnership with Brewster Travel/Pursuit

One notable relationship is Parks Canada's partnership with Brewster Travel Canada, which owns and operates several attractions in the mountain parks, including the Glacier Skywalk. The Glacier Skywalk opened in 2014, offering visitors "from around the world a unique way to learn

about the Columbia Icefield's special natural and cultural heritage (The Honourable Rob Merrifield, Member of Parliament for Yellowhead cited in Parks Canada, 2014d). The structure was built on an existing roadside viewpoint, and according to Parks Canada it met its land use zoning requirement. A former senior manager of Parks Canada, notes that "if it can be proven that you can mitigate those environmental issues and you can prove that EI is not been significantly impacted," then it makes sense to work with private organizations who are willing "to take the risk of building that infrastructure and doing all the environmental assessment work" (Personal communication, George, 2016). This quote reflects the Harper government's push to ensure that federal departments increase Public Private Partnerships (P3s)[27] to eliminate bureaucratic inefficiency and help pay for infrastructure (see: Budget 2011, Government of Canada).

But critics argue that the Glacier Skywalk is problematic as it presents a privatized enclosure of beauty, whereby a public roadside view has been fenced to block the view from motorists that now can only experience it for $32 per person on the skywalk (CPAWS, 2015c). This partnership also raises questions regarding Brewster's 'privileged position' with Parks Canada. One interviewee noted, "If the Skywalk was deemed necessary to build, in the interest of fairness, shouldn't it [the contract] have been open [for bids] to whomever wanted to do so?" (Personal communication, John, August 2015). Possible conflict of interest issues arise in the national parks as they respond to the demands of generating more revenue while also protecting the environment.

What does the Brewster case tell us about the budgets and revenues of the most recent decade and a half (2000-2015)? Sandilands (2013, p. 98) best sums it up when she writes that Parks Canada is "caught between the proverbial rock and hard place: on the one hand, their primary

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[27] In 2008, the Harper Government created PPP Canada Inc., a Crown Corporation. For more information on P3's see: Whiteside, H. (2013). Stabilizing privatization: Crisis, enabling fields, and public-private partnerships in Canada. Alternate Routes, 24, 85-108.

legislated mandate is to protect and enhance ecological integrity, and on the other, they are not only not given the resources necessary to carry out that mandate but are also increasingly required to expand paid visitation in order to meet basic staffing, policing, and maintenance requirements." Unpacking this conundrum is central to understanding the dynamics between "use" and "preservation" being played out in Parks Canada, a point that will be discussed in the following chapter. As can be imagined, Parks Canada's pressure to both develop and protect was further compounded in the post EI period by a decline in visitation and a growing fear in Parks Canada that Canadians had become disengaged with nature.

3.6 The visitor "crisis"

Parks Canada is responsible for both protecting the ecosystems of these natural areas and managing them for visitors to understand, appreciate, and enjoy in a way that doesn't compromise their integrity (Parks Canada, 2015a). A defining feature of the 2000–2015-time period is Parks Canada's concern with declining visitation to national and historic sites, which I describe as "the visitor crisis." Visitation is reported to have dropped by 20% over a 15-year period starting in 1997 (Parks Canada, 2013c, p. 15). Declining visitation creates the concern within Parks that national parks and historic places are becoming less relevant to Canadians, resulting in the Agency producing less revenue and therefore contributing less to the Canadian economy (Parks Canada, 2013c).

Declining visitation is noted as a concern early in the new millennium. For example, in the 2002–2003 Parks Canada Agency Annual Report, the agency expressed concern that Canadian demographics were changing, with an aging population, increasing urbanization, and growing immigration. As a result, Parks Canada was facing new challenges to meet the needs of the aging population and to reach out to new Canadians. The spectre of declining visitation was further heightened by the fear (and socially publicized narrative) that Canadians were becoming

increasingly "disconnect[ed] with nature, generally; and with parks and protected areas, specifically" (Parks Canada, 2014c, p. 11).

Part of the push to increase visitation was also based on international and internal social science research (from Parks Canada) on North American parks that showed that visitor experience management was an important component of facilitating protected area stewardship (Jagar et al. 2006). Research found that not only were "Canadians who have visited a national park…more likely to be supportive of activities Parks Canada undertakes to fulfil its mandate," but they were also more willing "to use taxpayer money for the creation of new parks, compared to 40% of people who had never visited a park" (as cited in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2015, p. 255). Since the 1990s had witnessed a steady increase in visitation, the sudden decrease in visitation in this decade was cause for alarm. Not only did this decline threaten revenues, but it had the potential to threaten Parks Canada's political justification for its own existence (Shultis and More, 2011).

These statistics are cited in Parks Canada's own literature, such as The State of Canada's Natural and Historic Places Report (Parks Canada, 2011b, p. 37): "Research has shown that Canadians who have visited a national park or national historic site are significantly more likely to feel a sense of connection with these places (90%) than those that have never visited (20%), so it is imperative that opportunities for immersion in Canada's natural landscapes and historical places become more accessible to Canadians."

The Agency's initial response to the decline in visitation was to focus on its mandate and its three core objectives: protection, education, and visitation (Jagar et al. 2006) (see figure 6). For instance, in 2001 Parks Canada implemented the "Engaging Canadians Strategy", the goal of which was to "raise awareness, to foster understanding and enjoyment, and to strengthen the sense of ownership that Canadians have for our National Parks and National Historic Sites" (Bronson, 2004, p. 68). Parks Canada's website also introduced an online bilingual curriculum

for teachers to use to reach Canadian youth through the schools (Parks Canada, 2007)[28] although it should be noted that budget cuts from 2012 to 2014 "eliminated spending on teacher and curricula tools development" (Government of Canada, 2016c) (see figure 4).

Then, in 2005 the agency created the Directorate of External Relations and Visitor Experience to nationally administer "social science, public information and education, corporate communication, visitor experience, and stakeholder and partner relations" (Parks Canada, 2010b, p. 8). This directorate became essentially the marketing arm of the agency to target specific segments of the population such as "new Canadians, urban youth (18–34), young families and school-aged children" to entice them by providing "more creature comforts; more technology based services; and more unique, authentic, interactive, personalized, and diverse experiences" (Parks Canada, 2012, p. 38), all with an aim of stoking long-term growth in visitation. The federal government also contributed additional funding ($55.3 million) to Parks Canada between 2006 and 2008 to help improve visitor experience (Industry Canada, 2008). In 2010, Parks Canada introduced a new vision to emphasize this shift, which states that "Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada" (Parks Canada, 2010a, p. 5). With this mindset and new institutional priorities established, Parks Canada set a goal to increase visitation by 10% by 2015 (Parks Canada, 2010a).

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[28] These initiatives fell in line with recommendations made by the EI Panel that Parks Canada provide formal interpretative information to young people, educators, visitors, government officials, partners and parks staff on ecological integrity to cultivate a culture of environmental stewards (Parks Canada, 2000, Appendix G: 20).

Figure 7: Parks Canada's Three Core Objectives

This new vision and shift in the agency toward other responsibilities such as visitor experience is accompanied by concern that national parks must compete for visitors with other parks, destinations, and leisure activities. Parks Canada's 2010 Corporate Plan added "Competitive Position" to its list of corporate risks for the first time.[29] In order to improve its competitive position, Parks Canada invests in hosting special events, celebrating national anniversaries, promoting new recreational activities, and providing alternative accommodations (Parks Canada, 2010b). The "visitor crisis" is a key driver underpinning Parks Canada's move to reorganize the Agency around tourism. It seems likely that this is not what the El Panel had in mind when it recommended that "product marketing of national parks should end and that the focus be placed on social marketing, policy marketing, and even de-marketing of the parks, with

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[29] Parks Canada developed its first Corporate Risk Profile (CRP) in 2008, to mitigate challenges and risks. According to Parks Canada, "[c]hallenges are issues with which the Agency is currently dealing [and] Risks…are potential events with which the Agency may have to contend in the future" (See: Parks Canada, (2009). *2010-2011 Parks Canada Agency Corporate Plan*, Government of Canada. p. 17 https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/docs/pc/plans/plan2010-2011/index).

a focus on ecological integrity (Parks Canada, 2000, 10-20). Although the effort of Parks Canada to ensure that that national parks continue to be used and enjoyed by Canadians is in line with their mandate, this new shift in focus ignores concerns raised by the EI panel that increased visitation endangers the ecological integrity of the parks. This shift to marketing and promotion is noted by a former member of the EI Panel who says:

> There has been a dramatic shift of investment toward visitor services, increasing visitation, branding and community outreach, etcetera. There has also been a lot of new people hired who do not have an ecological background; instead they have a business or marketing background. If you go into a Parks Canada Office today and asked them about EI and the EI panel, they probably won't know what you are talking about. EI is old news. (Personal communication, Joe, 2015)

As part of its campaign to protect parks in the future, the Agency is focusing on marketing new experiences, products, and attractions (oTENTiks, geocaching, via ferrata, the GranFondo cycling race, music concerts, etc.)[30] that were not seen in the previous decade, to attract visitors to national parks.

Parks Canada has, therefore, embarked on marketing campaigns in order to increase visitation. My interviewees and PC documents (see Parks Canada, Evaluation of Visitor Services Offer, 2012) emphasize that this turn is fuelled by concern that Parks are losing relevance with

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[30] Marjorie Huculak, Executive Service Manager for Banff National Park, is quoted in the Calgary Herald (2008, March 24) saying that "the key [to hosting special events such as dragon boat races] is trying to make sure they don't impact other visitors or ecosystems." Yet, the reality is that hosting special events do effect wildlife and visitors alike. For example, the GranFondo bike race (hosting 1,500 cyclists) in Banff National Park had to be rerouted in 2012 due to grizzly bear feeding on buffalo berries along the roadside and was rerouted again in 2016 due to wolves., Parks Canada, however, argues that the rerouting is an indication that they are able to mitigate these challenges for wildlife and visitors (Derworiz, 2016, July 1). In response to increased events in the national parks, Kevin Van Tighem, former superintendent of Banff National Park, is quoted in the Calgary Herald as saying that, "Every time you throw a special event, you inconvenience every regular park visitor who has to wait for traffic jams, who has to pay premium prices at a hotel room, (and) who can't get a seat at the restaurant, because the place is jammed" (Derworiz, 2014, November 26). He goes on to say, "You are not improving the effectiveness of the destination, you are reducing it."

Canadians and thus at risk of losing their political constituency. In response, Parks Canada has shifted focus to emphasizing attachment to place in order to cultivate pro-environmental behaviour and support. This point is illustrated in the following comments from a former Parks Canada top manager:

> Parks change in size. They only are as strong as the value that people put into the Parks Act. That is only a piece of legislation, and legislation can be changed. If people lose interest in them, what is to say that the legislation will not get changed? It might not be an issue now, but a generation from now, what is to say it won't happen? If we haven't been able to convince people to come to these parks and have them realize that these are their parks for them to enjoy in an appropriate fashion, then this generation that we have today and the people who are working in parks will have missed an opportunity to keep these parks and historic places and intact protected areas for future generations. (Personal communication, George, 2016)

And there is a demonstrated decline in visitation as a percentage of the Canadian population (see figure 8).

According to Statistics Canada, 20.6% of the population is new immigrants and the majority live in urban areas, particularly in Canada's largest cities: Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver (Statistic Canada, 2011). Statistics Canada reported in 2006 that "four out of five Canadians were living in urban areas" (Statistic Canada, 2006, p. 30). Increased urbanization is also thought to be contributing to children living a more sedentary lifestyle and is leading to what author Richard Louv (as cited in Shultis & More, 2011) described as "nature-deficit disorder." Canadians' relationship with nature is further compromised by the fact that most national parks are not geographically situated near large urban areas and are therefore inaccessible to many. The creation of Rouge National Urban Park in the Greater Toronto Area is an example of the ways in which Parks Canada is working to overcome barriers to visitation by urban Canadians.

To overcome transportation barriers, for example, Parks Canada has partnered with Parkbus to provide bus service from Toronto to Bruce Peninsula National Park and Fathom Five National Marine Park (Parks Canada, 2019a). The Agency's partnership with Mountain Equipment Co-op provides camping gear for Parks Canada's learn-to-camp and equipped camping programs (Parks Canada, 2019a) and is helping expose a growing culturally diverse population to camping outdoors.
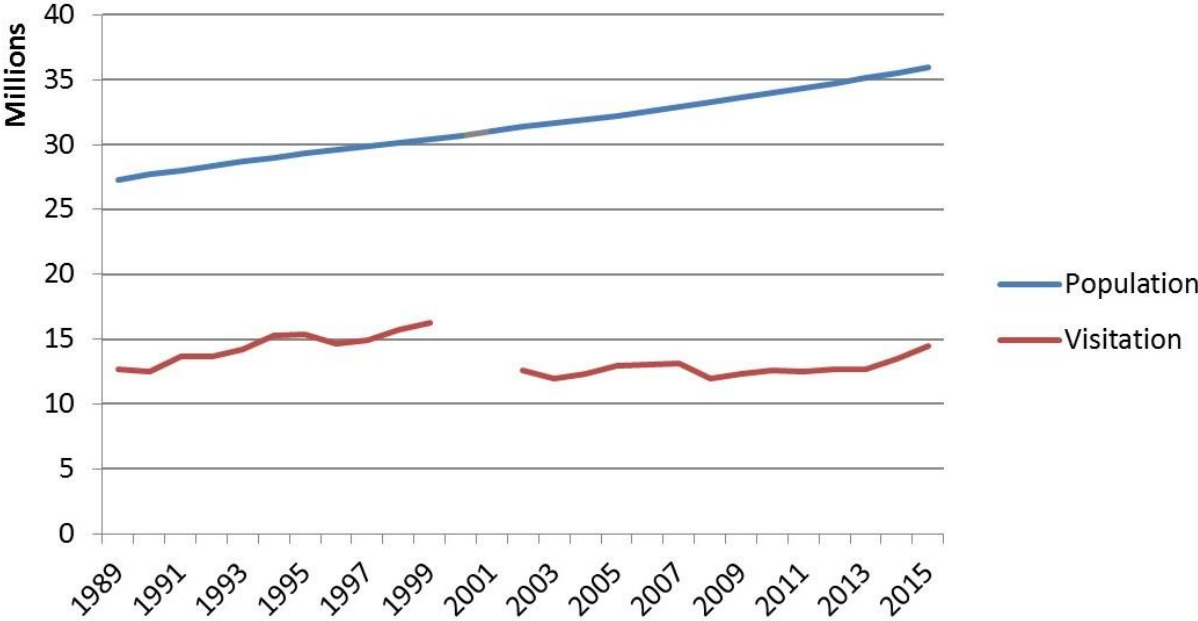
Figure 8: Parks Canada visitation correlated with population in Canada (1989–2013)

While there is a decline in parks visitation as percentage of population, four former Parks Canada managers and three representatives of environmental NGOs I interviewed all claim that the "visitor crisis" is being overstated (Personal communication between January and April, 2016). For example, when asked in an interview if the decline was a valid concern, a former Director General of National Parks responded:

> Yes, there is no question, if you look on a per capita bases visitation is dropping. Most of the people visiting national parks are white, elderly, and affluent. Most of Canada is becoming more urbanized; some people say that it is up by 85%. Plus, immigrants have

little understanding about the Canadian experience of camping and enjoying nature. However, if you ask some Parks people, they are starting to see more and more new Canadians beginning to visit national parks…. I do not disagree with the notion of promoting National Parks, but I do not think it is the crisis that some are making it out to be. (Personal conversation, Jim, 2016)

The same interviewees acknowledged that promoting national parks could help facilitate support for protecting nature. However, they are concerned that Parks Canada has internally rationalized the idea that national parks are becoming less relevant to Canadians and that they, therefore, must invest in providing new attractions and increase private developments. This is exemplified in a quote from a conservationist: "It is really important that we do not drink this Kool-Aid about people being disengaged. That people do not care about nature and that private people with private interest need to take over conservation from public interest is absolutely wrong" (Personal conversation, Joel, 2015). Furthermore, Wright and Matthews's (2015, p. 8) study of North American National Parks found that there "is very little empirical evidence to guide park managers and policymakers on what kinds of activities/experiences will best connect people to nature in a way that will increase support for pro-environmental behaviour and conservation initiatives over time." My research participants and the above research indicates that the visitor crisis may have been overstated by the Agency. Yet the crisis continues to reshape parks policy, priorities and spending.

3.6.1 Drivers of reduced visitation: disconnection or economic shifts?

Shultis and More's (2011, p. 124) analysis of the declining visitation to parks in the US and Canada found that both national agencies "had assumed that the public had become 'disconnected' from national parks." Yet a 2012 Canadian Nature Survey (Federal, P. Territorial Governments of Canada, 2014) highlights just how important nature is to Canadians. The survey indicated that "[m]ore than two-thirds of Canadians (70%) chose to spend time outdoors in the

last year in order to experience nature and almost half of Canadians travelled to experience more nature (47%)" (p.1). Research by Balmford et al. (2009) on global trends shaping nature-based tourism found that overall visitation to protected areas was increasing, but at a slower rate. They suggest that this could be due to nature enthusiasts choosing to visit developing countries as they become more accessible and, also because they can be cheaper and less crowded than protected areas in richer countries (Balmford et al., 2009).

Furthermore, a study commissioned in 2015 by Banff Lake Louise Tourism in partnership with Parks Canada indicates that visitors to Banff National Park were very satisfied with their visit to the park and the outdoor activities it provides, but they were less satisfied with the costs associated with value for their money for restaurants, accommodation and tourist attractions (as cited in The Rocky Mountain Outlook, 2016b)[31]. A former Parks Superintendent explains that,

> In the survey they found that the biggest concerns people had were the costs and overcrowding in national parks. People really felt that national parks were expensive, and that is a perception thing. The cost of getting into the parks, the cost of accommodation, cost of restaurants, and the time waiting in long traffic jams just wasn't worth it so they went somewhere else. But from a social mission point of view, national parks are there to connect people to their national heritage. If people went somewhere else, that is not necessarily a bad thing. Maybe they went to Kananaskis or the Tyrrell Museum or Head-smashed-in [Buffalo Jump]. The point is they were going somewhere to enjoy a heritage or nature orientated experience, and therefore, we had succeeded at our social mission to get people interested, motivated, and connected to their heritage (Personal conversation, James, 2016).

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[31] The 2015 survey cited above, mirrors an earlier survey called the Summer Indexperience– 2008 Banff National Park Final Report (Zins Beauchesne and Associates, 2008). This report shows that 85.8% of visitors to Banff National Park were satisfied with cleanliness, atmosphere, and nature, but less satisfied with value for money for activities.

The decline in visitation is not universal throughout the parks system. Banff, Yoho, and Pacific Rim national parks all experienced either no difference or an increase in visitation between 2002 and 2011 (Parks Canada, 2012, p. 30). A 2011 Parks Canada report titled Evaluation of Parks Canada's Visitor Service indicates that the number of Canadians visiting national parks increased during this time, while visitors from the US decreased substantially (as mentioned above), which is not surprising given 9/11 and the 2008 global financial crisis (Parks Canada, 2012, p. 38). This same report states that Parks Canada's revenue continued to increase despite there being a decrease in visitation. The report explains this by saying that "many visitors do not have to pay to access a site so trends in paying visits may be distinct from trends in overall 'person-visits'" (p. 6). Another Parks Canada report titled The State of Canada's Natural and Historic Places 2011 found that much of the decline since 2000 occurred at national historic sites (down 24%). The decline in visitation to both natural and historic places recovered in 2012 and continued to grow at a rate of 5% annually, reaching 23 million visitors by 2015–2016 (Parks Canada, 2018a, p. 43).

Parks Canada continues to depict decreasing visitation as the most critical issue facing the agency, as is reiterated in Parks Canada 2015-2016 Plans and Priorities (2018a, p. 17): "In order to maintain its relevance and appeal to Canadians, the Agency is working to attract new audiences and influence them to visit its places." Revenue needs aside, the Liberal government withdrew user fees in 2017 in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Canada's Confederation. This is a signal of how important visitation is and also how linked national parks are to the Canadian national imaginary.

This analysis of the visitor "crisis" supports earlier research carried out by Shultis and More (2011), which found the increasingly prioritization of visitor experience within the Parks Agency to be driven by fears of decreases in visitation, which are linked to declining political support and reduced revenues. For a government agency like Parks Canada that has experienced

ongoing budget cuts and organizational changes, this is a valid concern. But this research also indicates that Parks Canada's solution to focus on increasing visitor numbers by providing new attractions and marketing the parks to new audiences in order to make national parks more relevant to Canadians may be inflated. And this shift to visitor experience not only represented a change in budgetary priorities, but it is also linked to an increase in private commercial development projects, which some argue (More, 2005) threaten the ecological integrity of the national parks as well as, encouraging more privatizations of park experiences (as with the skywalk example).

Three key tensions that emerge from the "visitor crisis": 1) a tension between use and conservation, 2) tensions created by decreasing budgets and the emphasis on increasing revenue, and 3) tensions between private interest verses public interest. These tensions are not new; they were present prior to the last decade and a half. However, a key shift is that the previous decade (1990-2000) was concerned with increasing visitation threatening ecological integrity of parks, and this decade was primarily concerned with real or perceived decreasing visitation in parks. This analysis of the decline in visitors raises some questions: Is the visitor decline (as percentage) something to be considered a crisis? Does it threaten the political clout of Parks Canada? Does it threaten their ability to generate revenues?

3.7 Conclusion

How do we understand the changes that have taken place in Parks Canada this past decade? The previous decade indicated that national parks faced threats of over-development, compromising ecological integrity. The Panel on EI verified this threat and recommended that the Agency place ecological integrity as it first priority. Following this, legislative and policy changes were enacted, and funds increased to support EI. Yet, this research found that despite the growth in protected areas in Canada, there are increased concerns that economic development projects in the National Parks are creating Park Downgrading, Downsizing and Degazettment (PADDD),

and budget cuts disproportionately impacted scientific staff and ecological monitoring. Concerns about declining park visitation "the visitor crisis" lead to the creation of visitor experience and branding objectives in the Agency, which appear to disconnect the Agency from the recommendations made by the EI Panel. Instead of creating a culture of ecological integrity, this research suggests that Parks Canada has moved toward creating a culture of tourism and marketing. In the next chapter I ask, why has it been so hard for Parks Canada to lead with ecological integrity as its "First Priority?"

4 Parks Canada's struggles to lead with ecological integrity: "The Perfect Storm"

How do we understand the shifting trends over the past fifteen years of change in Parks Canada, including ongoing budget cuts and the reorienting of spending priorities; development pressures; a rise in partnerships with Aboriginal peoples; and efforts to mitigate the decline in visitation? These changes in Parks Canada are complex and cannot be explained without examining them within the broader political and economic context and within structural dynamics. This includes the global financial crisis of 2008–09 and subsequent rise of austerity and stimulus spending, the broader rise of neoliberal policies and practices in Canada and within state dynamics of nation-building and economic growth. Placing these shifts within these dynamics–aka a political ecological approach (see chapter 1) - is a key objective of this chapter.

The previous chapter shows that it is difficult to turn Parks Canada into an institution that leads with ecological concerns. The EI panel report and the 2000 National Parks Act mandating EI as the park management's first priority were meant to be the final nails in the coffin of the use–preservation debate. Yet, over the past few years, environmentalists, civil society, and Indigenous nations are rallying to "Stop Development in Our National Parks." In a 2014 press release, twelve environmental groups[32] state: "We are deeply concerned that the Government of Canada's management of our national parks has shifted dramatically in the wrong direction, putting our most treasured protected places at risk" (CPAWS, 2016c). They call for "Parks Canada to refocus on nature conservation and stewardship, and to reverse the relentless focus on marketing, tourism, and increasing visitation with little regard to the impacts on nature" (CPAWS, 2016c). In addition, a civil lawsuit ruling in 2016 "confirmed that proposals violating

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[32] The twelve environmental groups are: Equiterre, Ecojustice, Pembina Institute, Greenpeace, CPAWS, David Suzuki Foundation, Sierra Club of Canada Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, West Coast Environmental Law, Environmental Defence, Nature Canada, and Wildlife Conservation Society Canada.

park management plans cannot be approved" (Ecojustice, 2016). Environmental watchdog reports from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) all question whether Parks Canada is meeting its legal requirement to manage national parks with ecological integrity as its first priority (see, for example, CPAWS, Losing Ground: Time to Embrace the True Value of Parks 2014). All of this action suggests that current federal laws do not allow conservation to be eroded in the service of market interests, and neither will civil society.

But even still, and as charted in the previous chapter, there are signs that the federal government and Parks Canada bureaucracy have minds of their own (a point I return to in the next section). As Tom Nudds, a member of the 2000 EI panel, stated in 2012: "EI has disappeared from Parks Canada's organization charts; there is less emphasis on 'greater park ecosystems,' where a number of important threats to ecological conditions in parks arise; and resources to address questions about the causes and consequences of changes in ecological conditions in and around parks have been reduced" (as cited in Gailus, 2012, para. 2). Another member of the EI Panel and former Parks employee, notes, "there has been a major sliding on our measurement of EI in national parks, and we have gone down to report card-based measurements [i.e. State of Parks reports], rather than fully well documented reports with the statistics, metrics, and details to back them up" (Personal communication, Joe, 2015). More recently, the Mikisew Cree First Nation asked the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to list Wood Buffalo National Park as threatened due to oil, gas, and hydro projects outside the park (Mah, 2016).[33]

I suggest that civil society and Indigenous Nations are here (as in the past) acting as Polanyian "counter-movements," pushing back against marketization and development in parks. Indeed, Locke (2009) argues that civil society is the owner of national parks, and as owner, it is civil

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[33] See Mah, B. (2016, September 26). National Park under siege, says First Nation, as UNESCO World Heritage Committee visits. Retrieved from http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/wood-buffalo-national-park-under-siege-fears-visiting-unesco-world-heritage-committee.

society's responsibility to be engaging with the governments who hold national parks and protected areas in trust as a public good to ensure they remain intact for the benefit of society. Locke says that "bad things happen to parks and protected areas" when civil society is disengaged and leaves it exclusively up to the government to establish and take care of protected areas (p. 102). Locke (2009 says history shows that, when civil society engages in conservation, as it did in 1971 to stop the expansion of Lake Louise Ski Resort and again in the 1990s to stop overdevelopment in Banff National Park, then preservation takes precedence. Despite civil society's efforts, the question remains as to whether the state can truly foreground EI, given its commitments to growing the economy (M'Gonigle and Takeda 2013)—a key question of this chapter and point I return to in paragraph 4.3.

As these more recent struggles over parks show, this tension between use and preservation, which was supposed to be resolved by the EI panel in 2000, continues into the new millennium. The so-called final nail of the EI panel is the latest in an over 100-year history of civil society counter movements pushing back against marketization and development in parks. The pendulum between these two paradigms is not new but appears to be an ongoing feature of national park management; the decades appear to repeat themselves.

The big question to ask is: why? Why is it so hard for Parks Canada to lead with ecological integrity as its first priority? Is the source of this difficulty lodged in a foundational social process of "market society" —as Polanyi suggest, as a kind of quasi-naturalistic push in liberal capitalism toward marketization followed by push-back of protective forces? My answer to this is: yes, in part. The "in part" is important because if the answer is yes followed by a full stop, we would expect to see a swing back to emphasis on protection over the next few years, perhaps due to the election of a supposedly more environmentally-minded government in the Trudeau Liberals. In what follows I shed more focused light on this most recent pendulum swing, to trace the specific contours and contexts of this particular decade and a half, which will leave us in a

better position to understand what might come next. Is this swing different than what came before? And if so, how?

In order to shed light on these questions, the rest of the chapter examines the organizational culture shifts in the decade, the broader (largely Harper government-led) era of neoliberal austerity and extractive economic development, as well as the role national parks play in cultivating national identity. Finally, I draw these arguments together and ask whether the decades repeat themselves and whether Parks Canada has gone full circle, back to the very beginning when the first national parks were created to promote tourism and facilitate nation building. Or, has a tipping point occurred, whereby Parks Canada is now fully transitioned into something new and different? We might be tempted to ascertain that the decades repeat themselves, but this approach may cloud our vision from the more foundational patterns taking place. While the future of national parks is to come, I argue that under neoliberalism the state no longer functions as a counterbalance to mitigate the "use" verses "preservation" dynamic. I suggest that Parks Canada has been repositioned to its original purpose as a nation builder, emphasizing the cultural and particularly national role of the Parks Agency. I suggest that the changes in the Agency, combined with the broader context—namely the shifting role of the state—means it will be difficult, if not impossible, to swing the pendulum back to support ecological integrity.

4.1 The changing culture of Parks Canada Agency

The Panel on Ecological Integrity report (2000) found that one of the biggest barriers to EI as the primary mandate of Parks Canada was the culture within the organization. One quote from the El panel report stands out: "This is a cultural problem…. Despite all the promising rhetoric, the fact is that staff in National Parks is restrained by a corporate culture that does not value, indeed actively discourages, advocacy and activism in defense of ecological integrity" (Parks

Canada, 2000b, pp. 2–4). A key question we might ask, then, is how the culture of the Parks Canada has fared in the past decade and a half?

For a while (2000-2008)–due to the EI Panel Report, the willingness of Parks Canada's CEO, Tom Lee (1993-2002) to implement the Panels' recommendations and the millions initially invested by Prime Minister Chrétien (1993 to December 12, 2003) to finance ecological integrity–Parks Canada was led by strong conservationists within the organization, which created a world-class ecological monitoring system (see Woodley, 2010).[34] It is important to understand that various departments comprise Parks Canada , some of which have nothing to do with ecological integrity and some were resistant to change, as exemplified by the "arming of the wardens" issue (2001-2008).

4.1.1   Arming the wardens

In 1909, the National Parks hired Fire and Game Guardians to protect the wilderness from predators and poachers. Through the decades these Guardians, whose title changed to "Park Warden" in the 1950s (Kaye, 2015), became a symbol of wilderness protection in the National Parks (Francis, 2011). The Warden's job entailed resource management, visitor safety and law enforcement, requiring that Wardens to be proficient at horseback riding, mountaineering, climbing, ski touring, and more (Francis, 2011). According to two interviewees, traditionally the Wardens held a privileged and highly coveted position within the organization): they were the ones that worked their way up through the Agency into management positions, which allowed employees to learn every aspect of the organization and to understand the complex nature of conservation planning. Most importantly for our discussion, it was wardens who were initially in

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[34] In a 2011 Globe and Mail article titled "The latest Canadian export: park-management know-how," former CEO of Parks Canada, Alan Latourelle, is quoted saying that, "I think we as a country, and we as an organization, have developed approaches to conservation, to visitor experiences, to restoration, to new park establishment that are now seen as international examples," (retrieved from: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-latest-canadian-export-park-management-know-how/article590713/).

charge of enforcing EI in the National Parks. The arming of the wardens (described below), therefore, situates the dynamics taking place within the Agency, at a time when Parks Canada was responding to changes of the National Parks Act, to lead with EI as its first priority.

In 2001, a legal battle arose between Parks Canada and the Public Service Alliance of Canada following a grievance filed by Banff National Park Warden, Doug Martin, who asked that Parks Canada to issue wardens side arms. This request was motivated by a succession of potentially serious law enforcement incidents that took place in Banff and Jasper National Park. As a result, wardens realized that there were very real risks involved in their enforcement jobs and that they were poorly equipped to deal with more serious, and possibly violent, crimes that might warrant an arrest (Personal communication, James, Joe, Jeff 2015-2016). As one Park's warden with thirty-five years experience in service explained, "Park Wardens were not adequately protected to do law enforcement work" (Personal communication, Jeff, 2015). Staff that supported the arming of the wardens "called for better law enforcement training at the RCMP Depot, advocated for better enforcement tools such as CPIC (Canadian Police Information Centre), demanded more professionalism in law enforcement and requested closer working relationships with other armed agencies" (Personal communication, Jeff, 2015). Parks Canada Health and Safety Officer, Robert Grundie, investigated the grievance and agreed, recommending in an internal report that Parks Canada address this safety issue. What followed was eight-year battle pitting wardens against each other and the Agency.

Over a two-year period, starting in 2001, it cost the Agency $40 million to hire RCMP officers to do law enforcement in the parks, while wardens were temporarily relieved of their law enforcement duties pending a decision (Foss, 20002). At the same time, the government started to invest in ecological integrity (EI), providing $75 million over a five-year period. In 2004, the CEO of Parks Canada, Alan Latourelle, lamented that the government's investment in EI fell short of the funds needed "for Parks Canada to do everything the panel recommended. And

there . . . [was] no new money to address the $425-million shortfall that we (face) over the next five years to deal with decaying assets" (Struzik, 2004). Thus, the $40 million RCMP expenditure was not insignificant to the Agency. In contrast, Mark Halley, the president of the National Park Warden Association, suggested that "it would cost Parks Canada less than $1 million to issue side arms to wardens in direct enforcement roles and to train them to use them" (as cited in Foss, 2002). The cost differential suggests that something else was going on in this battle. In an interview one retired Parks Canada employee suggested that executive realm of Parks Canada acted vindictively to make an example of the wardens for acting out against their employer and this resulted in the "rejigging [of] power structures" (Personal communication, James, 2016) within the Agency. Another former warden believes that dismantling the warden service allowed Parks Canada to remove a conservation block to development pressures and that, by restructuring the warden service, Parks Canada could move forward with their plans to enhance visitor experience with new development projects. (Personal communication, John, 2015).

Finally, in 2007, an Occupational Health and Safety review, conducted by Labour Canada, ruled in favor of arming wardens and Parks Canada responded by reorganizing the Warden Service the into three specialized units: law enforcement, resource conservation, and public safety (Occupational Health and Safety Tribunal, 2007). Only those trained in law enforcement (one hundred staff) retained the title of Warden and could wear the uniform, which symbolized the long-standing tradition of protecting the wilderness.

The arming of the wardens resulted in Parks Canada management perceiving the wardens as going against the Agency. This stance is reflected in the way the Agency teamed up with Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) to reprimand and discipline the Parks Canada Health and Safety Officer, Robert Grundie, for his initial report in 2001, which

recommended that wardens be armed (May, 2016). A former park employee described the tension within the Agency as creating an atmosphere of paranoia:

> It became increasingly isolating to be in resource conservation. There was a sense that you were constantly being watched and found wanting ... It created a dynamic that pulled people farther and farther apart, and their behaviours started to prove the other side's point of view about them and vice versa, which reinforced the opinion that things needed to change. So that is where things were going within the organization as we see the backlash against EI develop. (Personal communication, James, 2016)

This quote paints a picture of the polarizing dynamics that ensued through the arming of the warden battle, highlighting the disarray within Parks Canada. But at the same time, it also indicates that the battle masked other concerns as noted by journalist Ed Struzik. In a 2004 eight-week series on "the troubled future of Canada's national parks," he writes in the Edmonton Journal that Parks Canada's "fight with its wardens at a time when the financial crisis had reduced morale to historic lows . . . diverted attention from some more serious concerns about conservation and backcountry maintenance." This dispute, therefore, provides insight into the bureaucratic struggles taking place with Parks Canada that intensified the initial backlash against EI, contributing to a shift away from resource conservation, and, I argue, away from EI. But there is still more to say about the culture with in Parks Canada.

4.2 Organizational change post EI report: integrating mandates

Organizational change in the years 2000–2015 had a huge influence in swinging the pendulum away from 'preservation' to 'use'. Changes in leadership, strategies, and budgetary restructuring shifted the overall ideology of Parks Canada.

Allan Latourelle, Chief Executive Officer of the Parks Canada Agency (2002 - 2015) is a key figure in the post EI era that helped facilitate this shift towards emphasizing 'use'. Latourelle

was a political appointment with a background in finance who had formerly held positions both with the National Capital Commission and the Department of Canadian Heritage. He also worked at Parks Canada as the Director General for Western and Northern Canada (1997) and as the Chief Administrative Office (1999-2002). Latourelle came on board as the CEO at the start of EI Panel implementation, just as the battle with the Wardens was heating up and visitation began to drop. How Latourelle responded to these tensions, while working towards organizing Park Canada as an Agency, provides insight into a complex situation. From the onset, Latourelle believed that managing visitors was just as important as protecting ecological integrity in the National Parks (MacLaren, 2010).

Latourelle tackled the issue of staffing silos in the Agency by focusing on delivering an integrated mandate that included three elements: conservation, education, and visitor experience.[35] The integrated mandate was not supposed to be about finding balance between the three elements; rather it was supposed to be "about delivering them all at once" (Personal communication, James, 2016). For example, the 2008 Guide to Management Planning clarifies that, "planning for visitor experience and public education entails also planning for protection; making decisions about protection means also considering actions for visitor experience and public education" (Parks Canada, 2008a, p. 5). Jager and Sanche (2010) suggest that this new approach shifted Parks Canada away from the old debate between use and preservation, which traditionally pitted visitors against conservation. Instead, visitors experience became a way to create environmental stewards and constituents to rally for political support for the creation and maintenance of national parks.

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[35] According to Dick (2011), Harkin the first commissioner of the Dominion Parks Branch (later known as Parks Canada) also strongly believed that "without the values of 'benefit, education and enjoyment,' national parks could not build a constituency of support among the Canadian public for continued protection." Dick says that Harkin viewed the dual mandate as "not only integral but indispensable to the continued success and survival of the national parks system" (p. 375).

But, at the same the time, the decrease in visitation meant that Parks Canada had to first focus on luring visitors back to the National Parks, a lure that often involved (and continues to involve) offering up new attractions and increased focus on visitor satisfaction (see the next section). One former parks employee suggested that the shift towards visitor experience impeded the ability for the agency to manage visitors, which, "seemed to have gotten spread out amongst visitor experience, external relations, and the superintendent" (Personal communication, John, 2015). However, he went on to explain, "there is no real clear idea about who is managing what when it comes to people. If you are going to be managing resources in a national park in most cases you need to manage people, because they have the biggest impact to resources" (Personal communication, John, 2015).

The Agency reported Latourelle's integrated strategy to be a success: "This integrated approach to the delivery of Parks Canada's mandate has strengthened the Agency's contribution to all aspects of sustainable development—environmental, social and economic" (Parks Canada, 2017c). But as one former Parks Canada employee explains that the various departments within the Agency misunderstood what the integrated mandate meant, "because we compartmentalized [the integrated mandate] in our brains, and in the organization, we have had that problem from day one, watching it like a pendulum as it swung from one aspect to the other" (Personal communication, James, 2016). Focusing on an integrated mandate was, for some, also a sign that the Agency was beginning to "water down" the mandate, in that ecological integrity was "no longer the sole mandate" but that the organization had other responsibilities (Personal communication, Jim, 2016). As one interviewee explained:

> My concern is that once those people [trained in EI] and that culture [of conservation] are gone, then I am not sure that there will be a functional conservation ethic left within Parks Canada. Things are becoming more specialized, and there are merits for people to become more specialized in a certain role. What happens when organizations get smaller and people become more specialized, what really starts to disappear is that land management ethic. That goes back to

knowing what is on the land, knowing who is there and knowing how the land is being used and

seeing change over time. [The loss of an EI culture] is my biggest concern for the future. (Personal

communication, John, 2015)

Concerns for decreasing visitation destabilized the balance between conservation, education and

visitation that the integrated mandate attempted to achieve. Instead, Visitor Experience became

a key priority in restructuring Parks Canada.

4.2.1 The rise of "visitor experience" and austerity measures

This inability to fully implement EI recommendations, including the creation of a culture of EI,

was further exacerbated by the "visitor crisis" with visitation declining by approximately 20%

between 1997-2012, alongside fears that Canadians were becoming increasingly disengaged with

nature (see chapter 3, pp. 68-78). I suggest that this mounting visitor crisis drove Parks Canada

to reorganize the Agency around tourism. A restructuring of Parks Canada's programs began in

20078/2009 with the purpose of "increas[ing] Parks Canada's relevance to Canadians (Parks

Canada, Parks Canada, 2010a, p. 13). Parks Canada brought in new employees without

conservation backgrounds (Personal communication, Jane, 2016). Indeed, this shift away from

ecological integrity toward visitor experience is reflected in Parks Canada's expenditures, with

increases in visitor experience, and declines in establishing and conserving heritage places–

which includes ecological integrity (see figure 9).[36]

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[36] To clarify, the scope of heritage places includes both conservation and historical places. This blending of
programs was noted by the EI Panel as being confusing; "result[ing] in a loss of focus on ecological
integrity" (Parks Canada, 2000, p. 2-5).

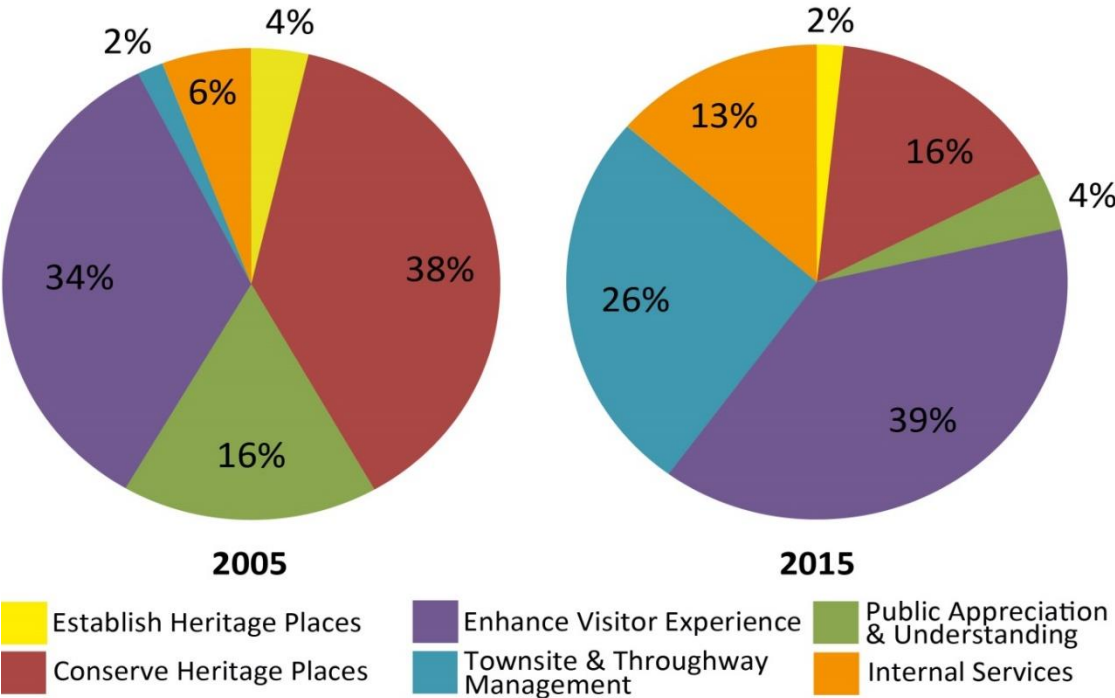**Comparison of annual spending per program activity (2005 versus 2015)**

Figure 9: Comparison of annual spending per program activity (2005-2015).

4.2.2 Budget cuts 2012

Budgetary restructuring further shifted Parks Canada toward visitor experience and "use." A

change in government in 2006 brought a right-leaning Conservative government focused on

institutionalizing austerity measures, which took the wind from of any EI-focused sails. Even

though the Harper government took a while to turn its sights on Parks Canada, budget cuts in

2012 resulted in the agency reducing its labour force by approximately 1,700 employees.

Scientific staff decreased by 33% and, in the 2013–14 fiscal years, 30% of full-time staff were

replaced by seasonal staff (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013, p. 27). These budget

cuts resulted in many employees having to reapply for their jobs. This time period also

witnessed reductions in experienced staff, as many employees took early retirement (Park

Canada, 2013d, p. 17), as well as some high-profile dismissals. For example, over a hundred

former upper management Parks Canada employees wrote an open letter to protest the firing of

Dr. John Wilmshurst, a Resource Conservation Manager in Jasper National Park, in June 2015. In the letter, former Parks Canada employees wrote, "[t]he reasons for Dr. Wilmshurst's firing is unknown but it appears consistent with the purging of science-based management taking place in the national parks of Canada" (as cited in CBC News, 2015c). The letter indicated that there have been other firings in Parks Canada, which reflect a similar pattern occurring in other federal departments. The letter writers' surmise that when "those who dare to speak up on issues related to the ecological integrity of the national parks or the commemorative integrity of the national historic sites are removed from their positions, a deep fear is instilled to ensure that those remaining tow the party line"[37] (CBC News, 2015b). Three interviewees mentioned this particular case evolving Wilmshurst and expressed concerns that his firing was part of a broader attempt to excise staff with strong beliefs about conservation. All of these shifts—staff reductions, retirements, and dismissals — contributed to Parks Canada further shifting away from ecological integrity. As one ENGO interviewee observed of these dynamics:

> Within Parks Canada there was a perfect storm, in that the demographics of the Agency changed [and] a massive amount of staff retired [at] the same time that the shift [toward visitor experience] happened. In past times, when you had challenges like this in government, there [was] still ... a strong conservation ethic within the Agency, so that when opportunity arose the Agency was ready to go grasp the opportunity to go back toward conservation; there was enough of a conservation core in the Agency. But because of demographics the large proportion of staff who were conservation focused have left....[A] huge group of people [were] brought in in the last decade who do not have a conservation background, so that has resulted in a loss in corporate memory. Now there

[37] See CBC News (2015c, September 24), Open letter from former Parks Canada employees. Retrieved from: http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/open-letter-from-former-parks-canada-employees-1.3242812

are still good people in the field, but the overarching culture has shifted [away from ecological integrity]. (Personal communication, Jane, 2016)

The newly elected Liberal Government (2015) provided hope that Parks Canada would, "get back on track, making decisions based on science… [(not just politics)] and get away from development [projects] that have been a part of the Harper era" (Personal communication, Jeff, 2015). But the above quotes suggest that the people within the Agency are not up for the task.

To summarize, while the EI report suggested the culture of Parks Canada was a key barrier to leading with EI, the above trends suggest a move toward a decentring of EI within the organization. Why this difficulty? And will the pendulum towards conservation swing back? To help answer these questions, I turn to the broader political-economic shifts that took place during this time, particularly the rise of neoliberal governing approaches.

4.3 Parks Canada and neoliberalism: the guiding mantra of our times

The changes witnessed in Parks Canada over the past two decades also must be understood in the context of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is based on the belief that society should be "organized around self-regulating markets [free] from social and state intervention" (Glassman, 2009, p. 497). This political theory can be characterized by two processes: the "roll-back" of state services (including austerity measures) and the "roll-out" of new, often market-based, neoliberal policies such as fee for services or privatization (Peck and Tickell, 2002). In relation to conservation and resource extraction more specifically, Apostolopoulou and Adams (2015) provide a more colorful analytical frame that focuses on the relationships between "green" and "un-green" grabbing. Green grabbing is the expansion of market-making in conservation—meaning, conservation is being forced to "pay its own way" through things such as carbon offsets, payment for ecosystem services (PES), visitor user fees, etc., that make nature

conservation more open to capital accumulation and less dependent on state revenue. Un-green grabbing, on the other hand, involves the expansion of development and extraction without any pretence of being good for the environment. Neoliberal practices such as increased privatization, deregulation, and re-regulation strategies create the conditions for both green and un-green grabbing to occur. The roll-back of the state promotes smaller government and less interference in conservation and environmental regulation, which facilitates un-green grabbing. Austere budgets, therefore, lead governments to look to the private sector to fund environmental conservation–namely through market-based mechanisms.

It is crucial to note that neoliberalism is not a full-scale departure from what came before–this theory is an intensification of liberal processes baked into state and market dynamics. Here we return to the work of Karl Polanyi (1944, 2001), argues that, over time, the rationale of the market system becomes embedded in social relations, which then binds liberalism and capitalism together (p. 170). In liberal capitalist relationships, the State and individuals work in tandem: the former to grow the economy to maintain its own legitimacy; and the latter to maximize their utilitarian accumulation of wealth (M'Gonigle and Takeda, 2013). But, as Polanyi explains in his theory of the "double movement," the State must also be responsive to land/labor exploited or harmed in the capitalist pursuit for accumulation. Thus, the State puts in place laws and regulatory institutions to monitor the effects of the market in order to maintain its legitimacy (Polanyi, 1944, 2001, p. 80).

M'Gonigle and Takeda (2013) acknowledge the State's role in this double movement but argue that the State's commitment to "mitigated production" overrides its ability to make transformative social and environmental changes (p. 1067). They argue that the ideology of economic growth is constitutively engrained in the State–politically, culturally, and economically. Therefore, no liberal state would jeopardize its own legitimacy to forgo economic growth to support substantive solutions to environmental problems. Under neoliberalism,

liberal ideologies about the importance of growing the economy are magnified. The state re-commits to growth as an overriding priority but also "innovates" new ways to maintain legitimacy on the environmental side.

Turning back to Parks Canada, I suggest that the Harper era of federal government (2006-2015) can be productively read through the framework of Apostolopoulou and Adams (2015) "green" and "un-green" grabbing. On the side of "green grabbing," during the Harper decade the Conservative government deregulated environmental laws in two controversial omnibus budget bills passed in 2012, C-38 and C-45. These bills eliminated the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, while making amendments to The Fisheries Act,[38] the Navigable Waters Protection Act, the National Energy Board Act, and the Species at Risk Act, all of which removed barriers for investors, particularly the oil and gas industry, in order to promote economic growth during a period of heightened economic worries (Clogg, 2013). The Harper government also cut the budgets of Environment Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Parks Canada, which not only reduced staff and scientific capacity, but reduced freedom of expression within the public scientific community.[39] According to Turner, Harper wanted to "diminish the government's role in environmental stewardship [by] reduc[ing] the government's ability to see and respond to the impacts of its policies, especially those related to resource extraction" (2013, p. 31). As Peyton and Franks (2016) outline, the Harper government embraced neoliberalism to promote extraction and solicit foreign investors.

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[38] See: Hutchings, J. A., & Post, J. R. (2013). Gutting Canada's Fisheries Act: no fishery, no fish habitat protection. Fisheries, 38(11), 497-501.

[39] On February 20, 2013, the Environmental Law Clinic at the University of Victoria filed a complaint with Ms. Suzanne Legault, the Information Commissioner of Canada, requesting that she investigate obstruction allegations, against the federal government, for muzzling scientists (Jones, 2013). On Feb. 28, 2018, the Information Commissioner of Canada (as cited in Meyer 2018), confirmed the muzzling of scientists by the Harper Government broke communications and transparency rules. According to a report by the French National Trade Union of Scientific Researchers, the muzzling of scientists is a global phenomenon (SNCS-FSU) (Linnitt, 2014).

At the same time, re-regulation by the state created new opportunities to open protected areas

for capital accumulation, increased exploration, and privatization by reducing red tape

(Apostolopoulou & Adams, 2015).[40] The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA), for

example, was replaced by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012, "which

eliminat[ed] thousands of environmental assessments, reduc[ed] public involvement and

affect[ed] how environmental assessment [was]done on the ground" (West Coast Environmental

Law, 2013). The new CEAA 2012 Act made it difficult for environmental organizations and the

public to legally challenge environmental assessments (Gibson, 2012). Not only was Parks

Canada no longer legally obligated to conduct a comprehensive environmental assessment, but

the private sector became responsible for conducting public consultations (Personal

communication, Jane, 2016). Timelines for public consultations also decreased, which continues

to seriously limit public engagement (Gibson, 2012). For instance, Parks Canada did not make a

single change to the proposed expansion of the Lake Louise Ski Resort after public consultation

forums raised valid concerns about taking environmentally sensitive land out of protection

(Personal communication, Jane, 2016). As several interviewees argue, the proposed expansion

of Lake Louise makes a mockery of the consultation process–a process that Parks Canada had

previously done well, as noted by environmentalists (Personal communication, August 2015 and

2016).

Apostolopoulou and Adams (2015, p. 30) show that the global intensification of "green" and

"un-green" grabbing reflects capitalism's strategic interest in both promoting and obstructing

nature conservation. This they argue ultimately "leav[es] for 'protected natures' two choices:

either to be further degraded to boost growth or to be 'saved' through their deeper inclusion as

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[40] MP Elizabeth May (2013) says this, in a HuffPost Blog, about the restructuring that took place under the Harper government: "Everything is controlled through the PMO [Prime Minister's Office]. Respect for an independent and professional civil service has been replaced by political interference in departments and civil servants on a routine basis. Westminster parliamentary democracy was never about one-man rule. Democracy is being stolen in plain sight, but no one seems to notice."

commodities visible to the market" (p. 30).The situation in Canada reflects both of these tendencies: with the visitor crisis, we see Parks Canada desperate to increase numbers in order to maintain revenue, but also to garner political and public support of parks and, thus, also within the state. That is, the Agency must position itself competitively within the machinations of the government between the demands of other arms of the state, such as the Ministry of Finance and Revenue Canada. Within Parks Canada, neoliberal approaches to parks management are apparent throughout the period 2000-2015, but also further back (see Dempsey and Dearden 2004, Kopas 2007). We see this trend particularly in austerity measures that led to staff layoffs and contracting out, increased emphasis on user fees, as well as increased emphasis on development and visitation. The expansion of Lake Louise Ski hill, the Brewster Ski Walk, the proposed tent cabins at Maligne Lake, and the planned Mother of Canada Memorial can be understood as sites of "green grabbing", not projects meant to support conservation. These large development projects generated through business leases have increased Parks Canada's revenue substantially, thus, becoming an important revenue source for the Agency.

And beginning in 1998, with the creation of Parks Canada as an Agency, such revenue became more and more important to support visitor services and activities (recall from chapter 3 (p. 65), the new policy that Parks should aim for a 75/25 revenue target–75% from the federal government, 25% generated by the park, and 70% of all revenue generated by the six mountain parks (Parks Canada 2015a). In part, the revenue-generating imperative re-positions Parks Canada from a service organization–serving the nation–into a quasi-economic one, another hallmark of neoliberalism.

 Political theorist Wendy Brown (2015, p.27) argues that neoliberalism represents "a transformation of the state," whereby the neoliberal subject has replaced the more traditional Lockean liberal subject and incorporates into the market aspects of civil life traditionally viewed as being outside of the market. To illustrate, in 2015, Parks Canada was prepared to bring in

high-end clients via helicopter (tours costing up to $300) to hike and observe whooping cranes

in their nesting grounds at Wood Buffalo National Park (CBC, 2015b). Richard Zaidan (as cited

in CBC News, 2015a), manager of visitor experience at Wood Buffalo, explained the rationale for

the tours as an opportunity to education visitors on this threatened species to generate support

for their protection.[41] This attraction was cancelled after Salt River First Nations criticized Parks

Canada for not consulting them and threatened to file a court junction to stop the tours.

Subsequently, this push-back was successful, but it sheds light on how the logics of

neoliberalism, which demand that citizen-subjects "open up new avenues for 'moving capital'

and securing profit" (Büscher, and Arsel, 2012, p. 130), are being played out in the national

parks.

This broader context of neoliberal reforms help explain why EI is difficult to center in Parks

Canada as the organization becomes increasingly wrapped up in revenue generation, alongside

environmental de-regulation that loosens restrictions on development. But, and this is crucial,

in the past 15 years, the federal government has certainly not abandoned its mission in favour of

revenue generation. New national parks have been created and introduced, as well as new

programs, such as the Natural Areas Conservation Program. Furthermore, as noted above, Parks

Canada did make efforts to address the EI report and had some strong Environmental ministers

in the beginning of this decade, even within the Conservative camp, such as Jim Prentice, who

promoted national parks.[42] Why? Compared to Greece and the UK, where Apostolopoulou and

Adams conducted their research, Canada was not as constrained by the financial crisis. Too,

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[41] See: CBC News 2015a. article titles, Wood Buffalo National Park to offer first whooping crane tours. Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/whooping-crane-tours-on-offer-at-wood-buffalo-national-park-1.3005330. Also see: CBC News. 2015b titled, Parks Canada cancels whooping crane tours in Wood Buffalo National Park. Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/parks-canada-cancels-whooping-crane-tours-in-wood-buffalo-national-park-1.3085386.

[42] Also see Derworiz (2016) tribute to Jim Prentice in the Calgary Herald, titled, "Prentice was a 'true leader' for Canada's national parks as environment minister." "Retrieved from http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/prentice-was-a-true-leader-for-canadas-national-parks-as-environment-minister.

neoliberal theory suggests that bureaucracies, such as Parks Canada, have lives of their own and serve other purposes in maintaining state legitimacy. For example, concerns raised by Parks Canada regarding declining visitation to parks is a complex one that cannot be reduced to a need for user fees. I suggest that Parks Canada's special role as a nation builder is another important feature that impedes the implementation of a strong EI mandate. To elaborate on this, I turn to the literature on nation-building and national parks.

4.4 Nationalism, nation-building, and national parks

Even though national identities and nation-building techniques vary across the world, there are "conventional symbols" that are used by nations to legitimate their own power and to signify their nationhood to one another (Billig, 1995, p. 85). National parks are one of these universal symbols, which plays a key role in the construction and affirmation of Canadian identity. As Cronon (1996, p. 13) writes, "To protect wilderness was in a very real sense to protect the nation's most sacred myth of origin". Kopas (2007, p. 179) argues that national parks "were intended as instruments of nation building when they were first established" and have become a symbol to unify and give meaning to the nation. Many scholars (Braun, 2002; Kopas, 2007; Thorpe, 2012; Francis, 2011; Baldwin et al., 2011; Erickson, 2013) also note the important role that Canadian parks plays in placing wilderness at the core of nation building. Thorpe (cited in Baldwin et al., 2011) suggests that wilderness protection is a site where settler Canadians are encouraged to embrace and cultivate their Canadian national identity through wilderness experiences. A 2010 survey found that Parks Canada is the fourth most recognized symbol of Canadian identity (Environics Institute, 2010, p.4). But the meaning of national symbols is not stagnant; they can be challenged, amended, or replaced, as different actors struggle to define what constitutes the nation (Nieguth & Raney, 2017).

4.4.1 The changing role of national parks in nation building

It wasn't until 1911, when the national parks became their own branch of the government—the Parks Branch—that national parks began to be promoted as representing Canada, a nation separate from its British roots. First Nations peoples were not included within this shift, yet another example of the dispossession that marked the establishment of the Canadian state (see Thorpe, 2008; Francis, 2011; Coulthard, 2014). J.B. Harkin, the first commissioner of the parks, and parks employee M.B. Williams were instrumental in building a Canadian parks philosophy (MacEachern, 2011). They campaigned both to Parliament and the Canadian public on the value that national parks held for the nation, promoting the idea "that these places being preserved today were being preserved forever" (p. 44), while linking Canada's greatness as a nation to its people and natural resources. Their efforts to win public and political support paid off as nine new parks were designated and visitor numbers increased under their watch (MacEachern, 2011).

According to Nieguth & Raney (2017, p. 89), there is much to be learned about changing state ideologies by carefully examining how the state uses national symbols. For example, Mortimer-Sandilands (2009) argues that the national parks system plan developed in the 1970s was not only about promoting ecological preservation during a time of increased environmental awareness; it was also a political move orchestrated by the Trudeau government to unify Canada during a period of heightened fears of Quebec separation. She says that the meaning of "what and who parks were for" shifted from "parks supporting recreational experiences of national citizenship to one of parks embodying ecological national heritage" (p. 173), whereby ecological integrity described the characteristics of a unified Canadian territory, which was an attempt to dissolve provincial borders. According to Mortimer-Sandilands, this idea of linking ecological integrity with federal nationalism was taken up again in the 1990s, when Parks Canada was moved to the Ministry of Canadian Heritage from the Ministry of the Environment, which

fostered the idea that protecting biological diversity coincided with preserving national heritage (p. 178). She argues that the EI report brought forth in the previous decade (1990-2000), reinstated "ecological federalism" (p. 178), whereby the "state and nature [are produced and define the nation] under the banner of integrity" (p. 163). Mortimer-Sandilands says that the EI Panel, in their attempt to assert that the national parks have always been about conserving nature, inadvertently hid the history of race, class, and power relations that has been and continues to be played out in national parks (p. 62). So, while the EI panel recommendations emerge out of a concern for the ecological health of the parks, they also need to be understood in terms of nation-building and nationalism, whereby EI serves as a means of legitimizing the state.

The unification of Canada has always been overshadowed by fears of separation. National parks, therefore, play an important role in mitigating national and sub-national sovereignty. For example, Mortimer-Sandilands (2009) says that early park creation in Quebec and Ontario was viewed by the state as a way to unify the nation. National parks were portrayed as symbolic gifts from the federal government to the provinces that promised not only economic development, but the opportunity for citizens to explore the diversity of the nation through wilderness experiences.

Indigenous peoples, as opposed to Quebecoise, were historically written out of national park creation, displaced from their traditional lands, and restricted from hunting and gathering in national parks (Thorpe, 2012; Francis, 2011). They have, however, gained greater influence in decision making in national park creation over the past three decades (as discussed in more detail in Chapter 3); Parks Canada is noted for strengthening their relationship with Indigenous peoples in this most recent period (2000-2015), though they are a far cry from a decolonizing approach (see MacLaren, 2011; Sandlos, 2014; Youdelis, 2016). Parks Canada is also recognized for its linguistic duality, offering visitor information in both of Canada's official languages

(Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2012). This form of inclusion suggests that cultivating relationships with French and Indigenous Canadians is important to Parks Canada.

The Harper Conservative Government (2006) set to change how Canadians viewed themselves and the nation. Bourrie (as cited in Cobb, 2015, para. 4) argues that the conservatives "wanted to change the story of Canada from what they saw as a Central Canadian narrative to a more western, more militarist[43], less peacekeeping–a more heroic version of Canadian history." Griffiths (cited in Carlson, 2012, para. 11) adds that Harper was attempting to create a "more traditional national identity" by focusing on our British roots and our accomplishments. Griffith, however, was concerned that it would be difficult to sell this new patriotic framework to Indigenous people and the Québécois. This prompted Griffiths (as cited in Carlson, 2012. Para. 11) to ask, "How do we make those subgroups feel part of the larger, patriotic conversation?" Considering these issues, one way to construct a narrative of a unified nation is to enlist the help of national symbols such as Parks Canada. Parks Canada's role as storytellers, "recounting the history of our lands and our people," (Parks Canada, 2012, p. i) provides the ideal platform to promote national and subnational sovereignty.

For example, the Harper government invested heavily in the search and discovery of the "ill-fated Franklin Expedition Ships lost in 1846" (Parks Canada, 2014e), for a cost of $2.8 million (Thompson, 2015). The government also spent an additional $7.2 million in advertising the expedition's historical significance to Canadians (Thompson, 2015). The project was partially financed by government departments and agencies, including Parks Canada ($1.03 million), Environment Canada ($13,901), and Fisheries and Oceans ($36,600), whose operating budgets had been heavily reduced by the Harper administration (Thompson,). The Franklin expedition

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[43] Parks Canada portrayed this shift to emphasis Canada's military achievements by supporting the proposed National Memorial of Commemorate Canada's War Dead Wherever They May Lie, and designated new historic sites such as the Canadian Car & Foundry in Thunder Buy, Ontario, which recognizes the contribution Canadians made during World War II.

not only shows the kinds of projects the Harper government was giving value to, but it also highlights the role that Parks Canada plays in cultivating sovereignty at home and abroad. The latter is particularly important since climate change in the Arctic has revitalized debates about who controls the water and ice in the Northwest passage. Within this context, the discovery of Franklin's ship is important, as it reasserts and legitimizes Canada's historical claims to the Arctic by linking its authority over its territory, natural resources, and people to its colonial roots (Hodgetts, 2013).

Parks Canada's promotion of the War of 1812 is another example of the crucial role that National Parks play in managing Indigenous and Quebec nationalism. Celebrating the War of 1812 was a big part of Parks Canada's itinerary as hosts for "The Road to 2017", which counted down significant historical events that shaped Canada leading up to the 150th anniversary of Confederation. The War of 1812, despite having taken place before Canada became a country in 1867, was heavily promoted by the Parks Canada Agency. Shaw (as cited in Beeby, 2012), creative consultant for Canadian Heritage, explains that the reason that the War of 1812 was so significant was that it "may be the last time aboriginals, the French and the English worked together." To celebrate the bicentennial of the War of 1812, Parks Canada (2017d) invited visitors to experience wide range of programs at national historical sites such as: battle re-enactments; aboriginal history programming; theatre performances; concerts and sunset ceremonies. The emphasis on the War of 1812 demonstrates Parks Canada's continuing nation building role–this time focusing on creating a false sense of solidarity between friction-filled people, groups, and communities.

To celebrate Canada's 150 Anniversary since Confederation, the newly elected Liberal Government waived entrance fees to National Parks, Heritage Places and Marine Conservation Areas. This celebration, however, betrays a limited and constructed understanding of Canadian national identity and its colonial ties. Jago (2017) writes in The Walrus that it is hypocritical to

celebrate Canada's 150 in, "a parks system that has robbed and impoverished Indigenous peoples." In failing to address their historic role in removing of Indigenous people from National Parks (Hamilton, 2017), Parks Canada missed an opportunity to address Canada's "history of colonialism and dispossession" (Sandlos, cited in Hamilton, 2017).

These examples portray the political agendas at play in nation building. In the decade and a half that followed the EI report, I argue that governments from Harper to Trudeau continued to use National Parks for their nation building capabilities first, as opposed to their ecological value or, as Mortimer-Sandilands (2009) suggests, at times utilized EI as a form of nation-building. But this nation-building role must also be understood in the era of neoliberalism, whereby the state is compelled both to operate with fiscal austerity and still provide a certain level of protection for its citizens. Blad (2011) argues that under neoliberalism the state shifts away from providing economic protection toward facilitating cultural protection. That is, as the state pulls back in support for citizen protections through cuts to social services (for example), it risks losing legitimacy. Blad argues that an emphasis on cultural protections–including an extended emphasis on nation-building–fills this void. Such an analysis can help us to explain what has gone on in the last 15 years in Parks Canada, which (to remind) began with concerns about EI, led to some investment in EI, all of which waned when it hit up against Harper's austerity push and the "visitor crisis." But the parks cannot be simply left to crumble or decline in use given their crucial role as a national symbol. Understood this way, declining visitation to National Parks represents not only a threat to Parks Canada's revenue vis-a-vis reduced user fees, but also a threat to the very core of "Canadian-ness." I suggest that, as National Parks become the site of budget cuts and staff layoffs, they simultaneously become even more important as cultural symbols to the nation. The push to advance visitation and "use" becomes propelled by a double whammy rationalization: both to increase revenues and to ground the nation.

In what follows, I outline two programs that demonstrate Parks Canada's work as a "cultural protection" provider in a time of neoliberal belt tightening: The Learn to Camp Program and the rise of Parks Canada branding both demonstrate an increased emphasis on use over protection, which undermines the EI imperative.

4.4.2 Nation Building and learn to camp

Blad's ideas about nation building to legitimize the state provide a compelling lens through which to examine Parks Canada's Learn to Camp Program. This is one of the Agency's attempts to attract new Canadians to the national parks. In partnership with Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), Parks Canada invites new and urban Canadians to learn how to camp and enjoy Canadian wilderness. This program was created in 2011 in response to the "visitor crisis" and attempts to entice underrepresented groups to visit national parks. Canada has a fast-growing population, but research indicates that new Canadians only represent 12 percent of park visitors (Jager & Haplenny, 2012). The Learn to Camp Program is not only a way to build support for national parks by cultivating a love for nature; it also provides the state with the opportunity to promote cultural integration.

Sullivan's 2015 study on new Canadians' participation in the Learn to Camp Program found that participants not only enjoyed the program, but that they identified with "being Canadian[while] 'performing Canadian' activities (building camp fires and setting up tents) in Canadian park spaces" (p. 85). Some Learn to Camp events even host citizenship ceremonies, which reiterate the importance of identifying with Canada's wilderness. Parks Canada encourages all new Canadians to visit its national parks by providing new citizens with a Cultural Access Pass, valid for one year. These initiatives indicate that national parks have become sites that welcome immigrants and create a unified Canadian identity. Day argues that "Canadian diversity is symbiotically dependent upon this fantasy of unity" (as cited in Sullivan, p. 9). Even though the Learn to Camp program perpetuates this "fantasy of shared experiences in nature" (Sullivan,

2015, p. 9), Sullivan notes that, the fantasy does not go far enough in acknowledging Canada's colonial past but, instead, foregrounds Canada's Euro-settler history.

Sullivan's critique of the Learn to Camp Program sheds light on the role national symbols, such as Parks Canada, plays in the production of Canadian identity. But it also reveals that the visitor crisis compels Parks Canada to invest in nation building campaigns to lure new visitors to the national parks. While I am not suggesting these programs are entirely wrong or bad (see Sullivan for a nuanced criticism), I suggest these programs are a part of Agency's new focus on increasing visitation, which is a part of the broader shifting allocation of resources to support these programs and changing dynamics away from EI.

4.4.3 Cultivating cultural protection through nation branding

Nation branding is another tool used by the state to focus on providing cultural protection (Blad, 2011) within the context of globalization (Aronczyk, 2013) and neoliberal hegemony (Brown, 2015). Aronczyk (2013, p. 108) writes that, "the purpose of nation branding is to promote a nation's core values in such a way that it appears more attractive than its peers."[44] In other words, Parks Canada proclaims the need to lure visitors away from other attractions outside national parks. Marland (2016, p. 241), writes that "Crown corporations [such as Parks Canada] confront the greatest competitive pressures to engage in commercial branding" that are often "brought about by an adjusted mandate" or, in Parks Canada's case, a new vision. This trend, he writes, leads to new logos and visuals that give Crown corporations a modern look with a "unified message in language, tone, voice, tagline, visual identity, color, photography and typography" p.241.) for the purpose of gathering supporters and developing brand loyalty

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[44] Parks Canada (as cited in Ruskin, 2019) is set to refresh its brand again. It is launching a new campaign in 2021 that is, "focus[ed] on consolidating the visual appearance and communications of the brand identity." The Parks Canada brand is said to be worth $40 million.

(Aronczyk, 2013). For Parks Canada the need to make national historic sites and parks relevant to Canadians led to new Agency branding and marketing campaigns.

In 2009, Parks Canada's corporate plan reveals for the first time its efforts to build awareness through branding and social media endeavors (Parks Canada, 2009c). The new message from Parks Canada is that, in order to build relevance to Canadians, the Agency needs to compete with other tourist destinations and leisure activities. By 2014, the Agency attempted to rebrand itself with the "Proper Awesome Campaign," which asked Canadians: "When did everyday ordinary become awesome?" (Parks Canada, 2016d). The campaign, which cost just over $1 million (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2016), was pulled within a year as it was not well received by the public and replaced by another million-dollar promotional campaign called "Time to Connect."[45] And, in 2016, front-line staff members were given brand training for the first time, an indication of not only how the Agency has drifted away from ecological integrity, which is no longer offered during training, but also how new market logics have been incorporated into the training and orientation of parks workers. According to three interviewees, this focus on branding and marketing led to shifts in hiring practices. As one former Parks Canada manager stated: "There has also been a lot of new people hired who do not have an ecological background; instead they have a business or marketing background" (Personal communication, Joe, 2015). This disclosure suggests that the reallocation of resources shifted away from EI to support a new organizational logic that focused on enhancing visitor experience.

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[45] Thornton and Ocasio define institutional logics as "the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality" (Quoted in Greenwood, Oliver, Suddaby, & Sahlin-Andersson, 2008, p. 101).

4.4.4 Nation-building trumps all?

Marketing the national parks to attract visitors, gather public support, and cultivate a national identity is not new. MacEachern (2011, p. 5) suggests that parks staff in the 1920s and '30s were instrumental in creating and presenting "an image of parks that resonated with national and international audiences." Saari's (2015, p. 402) analysis of early National Parks Branch promotional material reflects how ideas about who and what national parks were for changed from usefulness in the 1930s, to recreational playgrounds in the postwar era, and then to nature sanctuaries in the late 1960s. She concludes that Parks Canada's emphasis on visitor experience in the new millennium reflects the Agency's return to historical themes that promote "usefulness, modern conveniences and naturalness" (p. 446). Parks Canada's marketing response to the "visitor crisis"—creating new attractions, revamping facilities, branding merchandise, and hosting events (like Learn to Camp) to entice new visitors—mirrors the marketing of national parks in the early years to be "relevant" to not only Canadian citizens, but to politicians and the international community. This indicates that National Parks are being used as a nation building project to change how they are perceived abroad and at home.

The visitor crisis, then, was not simply due to concerns over declining user fees (although as I've argued, this matters). The visitor crisis needs to be understood as intersecting with the role parks play in nation-building. Former CEO of Parks Canada, Alan Latourelle (2010, p. 139) explains Parks Canada's important role in nation building as follows:

> Parks Canada protects a selection of these sites because they help us explore the history of our vast country and understand what it means to be Canadian….The work we do at Parks Canada is far more than keeping facilities in good repair, welcoming visitors, protecting a piece of nature from poachers or vandals, or making a government bureaucracy run smoothly. Our work—when you go right to the heart of it—is at the very core of what used to be called "nation-building."

This sentiment is also reflected in Parks Canada' new vision statement, published in 2010, which states that "Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada" (Parks Canada, 2011c. P.19). This new vision does not reference EI, yet another indication of how far Parks Canada has drifted away from the EI Panel's recommendation to turn the Agency into an organization that leads with EI as its first priority.

Parks Canada's role in fostering nationalism through nation building, while not necessarily anti-EI, scarifies resources and precedence away from EI thus causing it to fall to the wayside. My research suggests that promoting national parks through branding and the creation of new attractions is forgoing any analysis of the impact on ecological integrity. Overall, I suggest that the culture of conservation in Parks Canada has shifted towards a culture of tourism and marketing.

4.5 Conclusion

So why it has it been so hard for Parks Canada to lead with ecological integrity as its 'first' priority? In conclusion, I suggest three processes are involved: 1) the original mandate, known as so-called dual mandate of "use "verses "preservation;" 2) cultural change within the Agency, based in neoliberal pressures; and, 3) the special role that parks play as nation-builders.

Earlier in this chapter, I suggested that historically Parks Canada's movement from use to preservation swings in a kind-of Polanyian double movement—the state moves towards increased commercialization and then civil society pushes the state back. So, is history repeating itself, is this the latest in the Polanyian double movement? Or has there been a total restructuring of the agency through the adoption of new institutional logics?[46] Former park

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[46] According to the Parks Canada Act (1998) the Ministry responsible for Parks Canada must hold, "a round table every two years to seek advice from Canadians on matters for which Parks Canada is responsible" (Parks Canada, 2017, p. 14) Let's Talk Parks, Canada! Minister's Round Table on Parks Canada 2017.

managers and environmentalists say that what is happening in Parks Canada today is not simply the promotion of national parks (the "use" pendulum), but rather that we are witnessing a dismantling of park policies that once supported ecological integrity. Many participants in this research study (15 out of 18) argue that ecological integrity has been removed from the narrative and has been replaced with concerns for generating revenue and increasing visitation, thus gutting the use verses preservation paradigm. As one participant notes:

> Having a goal to increase visitation has both good and bad implications, but not having a plan on what are you going to do with the gridlock…. Where are people going to stay and where are they going to camp? You have to ask these kinds of things when you set these visitation goals or open an area for increased visitation. So, you need to ask yourself, what are the ecological impacts to increased visitation and what are the impacts on visitor experience? But no one is asking this kind of question. The only litmus test is whether or not visitation is increasing (Personal communication, John, 2016).

In prioritizing increasing visitation over EI and in not asking questions about the consequences of use, particularly in mountain parks, the Agency continuously fails to address the effects of use, which the EI Panel attempted to address decades ago. Increased tourism and development are impacting both visitor experience and ecological integrity, alike. Use impacts quality visitation in several ways: it generates traffic congestion and parking gridlock; it overwhelms infrastructure facilities and creates waste management issues; it contributes to crowded trails and long wait times; and, it elevates service costs, pricing out low-income families. But, the effects of use on ecological integrity have dire consequences for the environment and wildlife. Some of the effects of use on EI include erosion of trails and the trampling of vegetation, increased human wildlife conflict, loss of habitat and fragmentation, and the direct or indirect death of animals (road collisions, 'destroying' animals, food habituation) (Robbins, 2017). For example, starting in 2016, the Bow Valley wolf pack lost four pups due to train collisions, while

an additional pup and their mother were put down when they became habituated to food in the campgrounds. The following year the collared alpha male wandered outside the park boundary and was shot by a hunter (Jarvie, 2017). Paul Paquet (as cited in Jarvie, 2017), adjunct professor at the University of Victoria, says that this tragedy is the result of, "...a legacy of decisions that have been made over the years that favoured development over wolves. It's undeniable. It's not a criticism of the decisions — or the people who made them — it's just a fact."

Four interviewees commented that the 'use' verse 'preservation' paradigm was an ongoing feature of the national parks. As mentioned above, the dual mandate aims to safeguard "ecological integrity" on the one hand and preserve the "commemorative integrity" of Canada's parks on the other. One participant says that this is partially the result of the, "original sin, we were born as a tourism attraction, around the hot springs in Banff. We have been ambivalent about our purpose ever since" (Personal communication James, 2016). In an interview with an ENGO (Personal communication, Joel, 2015) he says that:

> I think conservation goes through waves or patterns over time. If you took a snapshot of nature conservation in the 1950s you would say that the idea of parks is dead, yesterday's idea. We are in a brand-new world of the automobile and conservation is yesterday's news. Fast forward 20 years, Prime Minister Jean Chretien [1993-2003] creates ten new national parks from his mandate on public lands and every country in the world signs on to the Convention on Biodiversity saying they want to save nature. Fast forward today you see declining investment in Parks Canada, emphasis on market mechanisms. To me this [decade of change] is just another blip in the trajectory of conservation...

The two quotes above illustrate that there is a longer liberal problem here, one embedded within the logics of national parks management that prioritizes development, not only a neoliberal problem.

To recall, Locke (2007) claims that nature conservation in Canada's National Parks suffers when society is disengaged with nature and thrives when civil society is engaged in its protection. A point that Polanyi (1944/2001) makes about the role of the state. He envisioned the State as an active participant in creating the conditions to advance the market, but he also noted that the state also had an important role to play in ensuring that land and labour (fictitious commodities) are not totally consumed by capitalist pursuits of accumulation. In this way, the State acts as a mediator between these two poles, although unevenly (M'Gonigle &Takeda, 2013). Yet, Polanyi's double movement suggests that the pendulum swings back to preservation under a government that supported environmental protection, signals of which appeared in the election platform of the federal Liberals, including Parks Canada.

Several positive indications that the new Liberal Government were going to swing the pendulum back to support 'preservation' included: the canceling of two controversial development projects—the Mother Canada statue and the prioritizing ecological integrity legislation for Rouge National Urban Park (CPAWS, 2016a). But, at the same time, the Liberal's did not cancel the approved (Harper 2015) expansion for Lake Louise ski hill. And, in their first budget (2016), they allocated $66 million to build a controversial bike path in Jasper (CPAWS, 2015). This led CPAWS and others to take up the gauntlet once again and campaign to fight for ecological integrity in Canada's national parks (see: CPAWS's 2016 report titled Protecting Canada's National Parks: A Call for Renewed Commitment to Nature Conservation).

In 2017, the Liberal Government responded to these concerns by addressing them at its' eight Minister's Round Table[47]. The Parks Canada Agency Act (1998) requires the Ministry presiding over Parks Canada to hold a Round Table every two years (starting in 2001) to seek advice from

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[47] "New Management Priority called 'One Team, One Vision,'" in the Plans and Priority report for 2010–2011. "Parks Canada will focus its efforts on leveraging the talent and engagement of its team of employees in the collective achievement of the Agency Vision, which focuses on creating a sense of connection to Canada's natural and cultural heritage" (Parks Canada, 2011b, p. 14). Note that this new vision does not reference EI.

Canadians on matters for which the Agency is responsible. Recommendations put forward by the Round Table must be addressed by The Minister within 180 days. CPAWS (2016a, p. 42), however, argues that there has been a major shift in focus at these Round Tables, starting in 2008 through 2014, from discussion about conservation to themes on increasing visitation. In contrast, the most recent Round Table (2017) titled, 'Let's Talk Parks, Canada!,' invited all Canadians to participate (Parks Canada, 2018f).

This Round Table asked "how government, Indigenous peoples, environmental groups, the private sector, and all Canadians can work together to respond to the challenges facing our national parks and national historic sites" (Parks Canada, 2019d, p. 18). In turn, CPAWS (2017, p. 8) asked the Liberal Government to commit to: "1. Refocusing on ecological integrity and evidence-based management, and restoring open, transparent decision-making; 2. Delivering on the government's commitment to limit development in national parks; 3. Focusing on nature-based visitor experiences; and 4. Expanding Canada's protected areas systems." In response to the Minister's Round Table, the Liberal Government allocated $1.3 billion in its 2018 budget to protect Canadian habitat and species (Parks Canada, 2018e). They stated that the federal government had made "a recommitment to ecological integrity as the first priority in decision-making and commitment to advancing conservation science and Indigenous traditional knowledge to ensure Parks Canada can respond to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and development and commercial pressure" (Parks Canada, 2018f, p. 32), another indication, that the decades repeat themselves as Polanyi's double movement implies.

But, the report also, acknowledges that, "the environment and the economy can complement each other while still maintaining a focus on ecological and commemorative integrity," reiterating the important role that Parks Canada plays in contributing to the Canadian economy (about $3.38 billion annually) (Parks Canada, 2019d, p. 41). M'Gonigle and Takeda (2013) would argue that state logics that facilitate economic growth and development are deeply

embedded in society simply do not allow for "environment first." The Liberal governments support for the expansion of Lake Louise ski hill in Banff National Parks exemplifies these state logics. As one interview explains the ski hill expansion, "it is all rearguard action now" (personnel communication, Joe, 2015).

While I agree with the overarching arguments of M'Gonigle and Takeda (2013)–the state is a contradictory institution and, as they write, often the "biggest developer around" (p. 1054). But I argue that there are specific characteristics of neoliberalism–as a kind of "super powered liberalism" that further pushed the institution away from the emphasis on preservation and on EI. I argue that in the neoliberal era Parks Canada has become an increasingly economic, market "subject-institution" increasingly reliant on user fees, as well as becoming repositioned to its original purpose as a nation builder, emphasizing the cultural and particularly national role of the Parks Agency. I suggest that the changes in the Agency, combined with the broader context– namely the shifting role of the state–means it will be difficult, if not impossible, to swing the pendulum back to support ecological integrity. In the concluding chapter, I take up this argument in more detail.

5 Conclusion: transformative shifts in Parks Canada logics?

Even though we might be tempted to accept that the decades repeat themselves, this paradigm clouds our vision from the more foundational patterns of neoliberalization. Borrowing from Sassen's (2006) ideas about how nations are constructed, deconstructed and reconfigured as new political logics are put forward, in this concluding chapter I consider how changes witnessed within Parks Canada in this most recent decade are different from what we have seen in the past; that is, there is a transformation of the political terrain upon which the double movement occurs.

5.1 Understanding change in a neoliberalized world

In brief, Sassen's research examines how the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—institutions originally designed to build nation states and protect their economies—have since been repositioned to promote the deregulation of the state and the opening of national economies. The tipping point of this transformation occurred in the 1980s, when the IMF and World Bank adopted neoliberal ideologies that promoted a free market economy. Sassen argues that societies are unable to recognize exactly when and where changes are taking place and as a result cannot interpret their importance (p. 17). Using historical analysis to track foundational shifts in complex institutional systems, Sassen examines three categories that she says chart changes: capabilities, tipping points and organizational logics, all of which are discussed below, in relation to Parks Canada.

5.1.1 Capabilities

According to Sassen (2006), capabilities are the key enablers that make possible the advancement of neoliberal transformation. She says that to "interpret foundational change"

within a nation state it is helpful to examine changes that preceded the current period being studied. As she explains, "the new does not invent itself" (p. 402). Sassen writes that "Change can be shown as conditioned by capabilities developed in the period that is about to be left behind" (p. 402). Two key shifts (or capabilities), I suggest, are found prior to my study—in 1993, when Parks Canada was moved from Environment Canada to the newly created Department of Canadian Heritage, and then in 1998, when Parks Canada became an Agency responsible for generating its own revenue to be reinvested in providing visitor services. Both of these events produced major capabilities toward developing a new era of park management.

Kopas (2007) writes that the transfer of Parks Canada to the newly created Department of Canadian Heritage altered the meaning of national parks away from environmental protection toward greater emphasis being placed on cultivating cultural heritage and promoting national identity. One former Parks Canada employee notes that this merger took funding away from conservation (Personal communication, James, 2016), as the allocation of resources to the various programs often forces superintendents in field units to choose between "ecological integrity versus historic conservation" (Parks Canada, 2000). Kopas (2007) writes that the move to Heritage resulted in Parks Canada losing "control of its own budgets, personnel decisions, long-term planning and other administrative activities" (p.163), making it difficult to manage park programs. This upheaval was compounded by concerns about decreasing EI, massive budget cuts and increased market-oriented solutions to solve fiscal instability, which paved the way for Parks Canada to be repositioned into an Agency with little or no contestation (Dearden & Dempsey, 2002).

In 1998 Parks Canada became an Agency, reflecting a shift to managing the national parks as a business, incorporating market-based approaches to management. This change in meaning was disconcerting to the EI Panel, which recommend that Parks Canada "move away from the language of business and adopt a language that emphasizes ecological integrity and

conservation" (Parks Canada, 2000, p. 8), a recommendation that was largely ignored. More (2005) article presented at the 2005 George Wright Forum, echo the panel's concerns. He writes that "user fees ... favor the wealthy...[while] partnerships can create undue influences in public management, and the business language shifts the conception of management away from the public and towards the private" (p. 19). Reflecting on the shift to becoming an Agency, one former Parks Canada manager states that:

> It was supposed to be a good thing...it provided Parks Canada with the capacity to finance its operations with reserved revenue and collect its own visitor fees. It was meant to be a good thing; it was meant to make Parks Canada less vulnerable to changes in appropriations; it was supposed to provide us with a pool of resources to finance and provide cost recovery for providing visitor services. But it also gave Parks Canada a shadow mandate. The clear mandate is clause #4 of the National Parks Act, and that is why there is even an agency to manage national parks. And a core bottom-line responsibility of the organization is clause #8 of the National Parks Act, which is the Ecological Integrity clause. So, on the face of it, that's what Parks Canada is all about, but Parks Canada is also about chasing the buck. (Personal communication, James, 2016))

This quote suggests that becoming an agency was a major capability that set the foundations for visitation numbers to be more important than EI.

5.1.2 Tipping Point

Moving to Department of Heritage and becoming an Agency did not result in the development of new organizational logics. But they helped create the conditions for the possibility of a tipping point. A "tipping point," according to Sassen, is a moment—often a crisis event—whereby new organizational logics replace older ones.[48] Within Parks Canada, I argue that the visitor crisis

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[48] In making an announcement for additional funding for Banff National Park, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change (Government of Canada, 2016c), reiterated that "Our Government is committed to protecting and restoring Canada's natural and cultural heritage. These investments will continue to improve and restore ecological integrity in the park and expand cultural heritage programming to ensure visitors and future generations can enjoy Banff National Park and understand the significance of cultural heritage in Canadian history."

was the key tipping point. This crisis—first noted in the 2002–2003 Parks Canada Agency Annual Report—created an overarching dynamic within which a bundle of micro processes transformed the logics of the organization. This tipping point emerged from a kind of perfect storm, influenced by diverse factors, many of which have been discussed in this thesis, such as: a reasserted emphasis on parks as national symbols; becoming an agency promoting neoliberal style governance; backlash from the EI report; the arming of wardens; a new CEO; the change in government to one that was pro-extraction and anti-science; budget cuts; and the global financial crisis. The visitor crisis is the tipping point, one that led to the agency's new vision statement that "focuses [the agency] on creating a sense of connection to Canada's natural and cultural heritage" (Parks Canada, 2011d, p. 14). Making national parks relevant to Canadians thus became the new organizational logics of Parks Canada, overriding EI.

5.1.3 Change in Organizational Logics

Sassen (2006) argues that the third indicator to mark change occurs when new capabilities are constructed that support the new logics of the institution. The creation of the External Relations and Visitor Experience Directorate in 2005 represents such a new capability. Created to respond to the visitor crisis, it was designed to build public support for national parks by focusing on marketing new attractions, products and experiences to attract new visitors (see: Jagar and Sanche, 2010). This new bureaucratic emphasis shifted and continues to shift Parks Canada away from EI, creating new path dependencies such as increased concern with being competitive with other attractions and destinations. The Agency now sets goals to increase visitation (such as one made in 2010 to increase visitation by 10 percent by 2015, as cited on page 70).

Even though institutions advocate for the new logics, Sassen says that traces of the old logics remain. In the case of Parks Canada, EI is still on the books, meaning that Parks Canada has an obligation to lead with EI as its first priority, which legally takes precedence over use. Yet Fluker

(2009) says that even though the 2000 National Parks Act strengthened ecological integrity, giving Parks Canada the legal right to take precedence over use, it also inadvertently made it easier for the Agency to choose human use over EI. He explains that "This human–nature dualism is...troublesome in that ecological integrity has little or nothing to say about managing humans in the parks, but convenient in that decision-makers can employ...[clause 4 (1) that stipulates that Canada's National Parks are to be used and enjoyed, thus] disregarding ecological integrity to serve their own preferences" (p. 9). As one former superintendent explains:

> ...when visitation numbers decline and revenues go down there is a lot of attention paid to that.... It moves the organization into survival mode, so if we do not have enough revenue, where are we going to get the money? That is where the agency act has got a built-in fatal flaw. It is hard-wired to the mandate creep [that]...accommodate[s] new ideas that... [focus on] get[ting] as many visitors as we can to generate more revenue. (Personal communication, James, 2016)

This demonstrates how deeply the visitor crisis is entrenched within this policy flaw that legitimizes the use paradigm. By keeping EI on the books, the Agency can justify its investment in visitor experience as not being about generating revenue but rather, ostensibly, about connecting more people to nature and also generating the revenue to advance ecological integrity. This logic enables Parks Canada to not only swing the pendulum to support use, but it does so in a way that avoids public contestation by rooting the rationale in both preservation and use.

5.2 Conclusion

In this thesis I analyzed the changes that took place in Parks Canada between the 2000 Panel on Ecological Integrity and the announcement made in 2016 at Banff National Park by the new Liberal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna. Chapter 3

examined what happened between these two events. I found there has been a steady increase in the creation of national parks, alongside growing concern over commercial development projects in national parks. Overall budgets for the national parks have also increased; however, there has been a noticeable shift in the allocation of resources to promote visitor experience and support infrastructure projects. Unlike the previous decade, this decade was marked by a noticeable decrease in visitation, which prompted Parks Canada to refocus the Agency around increasing tourism. Furthermore, there has been a concerted effort to improve relationships with Aboriginal peoples, although for some these efforts are tending to stay firmly within the recognition paradigm—failing to address the crucial land and benefit questions (see: Coultard, 2014, Sandlos, 2014 and Youdelis, 2016).

5.2.1 Visitation versus Conservation

Parks Canada has historically moved between emphasizing use and preservation, like Polanyi's double movement—with the EI report representing a significant shift toward preservation. Yet my literature review and data collected through interviews with former Parks employees, environmental NGOs and government officials found that the tension between visitation and conservation continues in the decade and a half since the famed EI report. Not only was this tension not "solved" through the EI Panel, but my research shows that the tension was intensified. Increased pressure for commercial development, the reorganization of the federal government around austerity measures, inadequate funding and a decrease in scientific personnel to monitor protected areas have contributed to a deficiency in the creation and maintenance of protected areas in Canada (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013; CPAWS, 2015).

Thus, a second research question emerged. In chapter 4 I explored why it was so hard for Parks Canada to lead with ecological integrity as its first priority. I argued that three processes are at play: (i) the original mandate, the so-called dual mandate of "use" versus "preservation"; (ii)

cultural change within the Agency, based in neoliberal pressures, which has become the guiding mantra of our times; and, (iii) the special role that parks play as nation-builders.

5.2.2 Paradigm shift within the Parks Canada Agency

While it would be easy to say that history repeats itself in parks—between use and preservation—my research suggests that there is foundational shift afoot: the double movement is perhaps playing out in an institution with changed logics. Drawing from Sassen, in this final chapter I argued that the Agency's core logics have firmly moved away from EI and toward visitor experience. The Agency now has an entire arm of the bureaucracy focusing on increasing visitation, branding and marketing, and there is evidence that the culture has even further shifted away from EI—perhaps more so than even prior to the EI report in 2000 (recall, the culture of Parks Canada was then found to be the largest barrier to EI).

 The visitor crisis was a tipping point toward this shift, which identified two problems: a decrease in visitors would lead to a decrease in revenue; and a fear that national parks would no longer be relevant to the public, which would threaten funding for Parks Canada. Furthermore, Blad (2011) reminds us that the state needs symbols of the nation, like Parks Canada, to promote nation building in order to legitimize itself, and that these symbols are increasingly important in a time when the state is rolling back economic protections. My research shows that the governments—of any political stripe—tend to value Parks for its nation-building above all else. Even though constructing an EI culture within the national parks system could benefit society, cuts to EI and education (see diagram #6) indicate a contradiction within the Agency's organizational logics. Park Canada rationalized increasing resources for expanding Visitor Experience, claiming that in order to build a society that values EI, the agency first had to entice Canadians to visit national parks.

5.2.3 What will the next decade bring?

I foresee that the double movement will continue, with conservationists fighting both government and entrepreneurs seeking new ways to profit off parks. But this double movement seems to be playing out in a changed context wherein the Parks bureaucracy and the government appear to be committed, more than ever, to visitor expansion and tourism in Canada's national parks. There have been some positive signs from the Liberal government: in the 2016 budget the Liberal government[49] committed $123.7 million for the creation of new national parks and marine protected areas (Government of Canada, 2016). This increase in protected areas, however, has not been supplemented with the additional funding required to maintain these areas, which means resources are being diverted from existing parks. These financial commitments are welcome news to conservationists; however, environmental policy changes and reduction in science capacity in national parks brought in during the Harper decade also need to be addressed (CPAWS, 2016). The Liberal Government's 2018 budget may do just that, allocating "$1.3 billion dollars over 5 years to protect Canada's land, freshwater, and wildlife" (CPAWS, 2018). This investment will allow the government to meet its obligation to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to protect 17 percent of Canada's land and 10 percent of Canada's oceans for conservation. As yet, there are no specific detail on whether or not some of this funding will go directly to reinstating EI back into national parks management.

Parks Canada at this junction needs strong leadership from government to implement the EI recommendations from almost twenty years ago. This will require that science capacity be reinstated so that proper documentation and monitoring of EI is taking place, and a large-scale effort to situate EI at the middle of the organization—again. But as M'Gonigle and Takeda (2013) indicate in their critique on liberalism, what can the state really do to make

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[49] According to environmental groups, some positive signs that things are changing in Parks Canada are scrapping the proposal to build a memorial in Cape Breton Highlands National Park, plans to privatize Mountain Park Hot Springs, and the proposal to widen the shoulders of the Bow Valley Parkway. However, the lack of funding for ecological integrity is disconcerting.

transformative environmental change when it is tied to growing the economy first and foremost? Can civil society push back, as Polanyi suggests, to protect the environment? Or are we entering a new phase of Parks Canada, whereby any push back will have to settle for mitigating development and rearguard action? If the final approval for the expansion of the Lake Louise ski hill is any indication, Parks Canada will continue to juggle visitor experience and EI, but within the dynamics of neoliberalism.

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