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Article

Rethinking national parks as a key to regional development: Beyşehir Lake National Park

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ABSTRACT

National parks are defined by showing a unique structure with residential areas where bring various cultural and traditional aspects and sustain local handicrafts being loca-specific. National parks are not only protected due to their natural beauty and resources but also seen as a mechanism to stimulate different economic activities locally. Therefore, it has been necessary to define a multidimensional and layered actor system in the management of national parks. National parks, where are an economic landscape based on knowledge and innovation; being more efficient, more environmentally, and more competitive in terms of resource use; facilitate social and regional integration by encouraging a high employment rate within the framework of inclusive growth principles, are considered not only ecological factors, but also an important element of the planning system. This study aims to reveal the implications of how national parks can be an element of value in terms of regional development policies. Three main topics have been discussed on this subject: evaluations of the social, economic, and governance dimensions. In this study, In-depth interviews were conducted with visitors of the national park, local people, and various institutions for revealing the conflict areas, especially between local people and economic actors. As a result of the study, proposals have been developed to overcome the existing problems in front of the national parks to have an active role in terms of regional development policies.

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INTRODUCTION

Due to technological developments to meet the needs of the increasing world population, the ecological balance is disrupted by the excessive and rapid use of natural resources as raw materials in the execution of economic activities. The

deterioration in nature over time negatively affects public life and the utilization of natural resources by individuals. Considering the environmental quality or quality of the environment as a welfare-enhancing factor like other needs in developed and developing countries, it complies with the rational behavior criterion, which is one of the main

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objectives of the economy. From this perspective, the rational use of natural resources has become a necessity to ensure a welfare-enhancing quality of the environment. In addition, it is pointing out that countries that process and utilize natural resources are more developed.

It is emphasized in many studies that natural resources should be included in national income accounting, which is a measure of the growth rate (Talay et al., 2010; Mendelsohn and Olmstead, 2009; Füzyova et al., 2009; Pirikiya et al., 2016). National parks, which comprise the issue of this study, can be expressed as one of the natural resource elements. Besides, national parks make significant contributions to the economy and providing social benefits, since national parks are defined by showing a unique structure with residential areas where bring various cultural and traditional aspects and sustain local handicrafts being local-specific (Maior et al., 2016). Hence, it can be said that national parks can provide a contribution to rising national income.

The main factor that led to the emergence of the national park concept was the need to protect natural, historical, and cultural values. First, on a trip to the Dakotas in 1832 by George Catlin, an American artist, raised concerns about the effects of the westwards spread of America on nature and the need to protect it through government policies. Catlin's idea resonated widely, and Yellowstone became the starting point for the perception of a protected space (Brockington, 2003). Thus, Yellowstone National Park was declared the world's first national park in the United States in 1872. In Europe, Sarek National Park was declared the first national park (Kılıç, 2018). In Turkey, "Yozgat Pinetum National Park" was declared a national park for the 1st time in 1958. Shah (1995) offers clues on the changing meaning of national parks within the framework of the new paradigm, emphasizing the need to develop a wide range of solutions for the protection of resources. It is stated that the exploitation of national parks due to excessive use will require institutional arrangements to compensate for their externality and are extremely important for sustainability.

In this study, the activities of national parks such as agriculture, food, forests, tourism, as well as the production and marketing of local products, being attractions for people's choice of a healthy and peaceful environment, providing fresh air and water and preventing flood risk have also been discussed as the subjects of regional planning. While the main emphasis has traditionally been on conservation, it has been focused on the shift of the paradigm on national parks. Within the framework of these disputations, it was aimed to reveal the role of Beyşehir Lake National Park (BLNP) in new regional development paradigms. BLNP, which is the study area, is located between the borders of Konya and Isparta provinces, in a transition area between the Central Anatolia Region and

the Toros Mountains. The National Park includes a large part of Beyşehir Lake, Turkey's largest freshwater lake. There are 33 large and small islands in the lake. The presence of Byzantine monasteries on some islands gains importance in terms of faith tourism. BLNP is an extremely convenient environment for tourism with its nature landscapes and trekking, hiking, mountain biking, safari areas, picnic areas, and camping opportunities. In addition, 588 plant samples were collected within the borders of the National Park, 153 bird species were determined, and it is seen that it is quite rich in ecological terms. Discussing the important social, economic, and institutional problems of the national park, which has an important potential in terms of ecological and natural features in the region, constitutes the main starting point of the study. The paper, which evaluates protected areas within the frame of new discourses such as governance, participation, social networks, and learning, will contribute to planning approaches for sensitive areas such as national parks.

THE ROLE AND CHANGING MEANING OF NATIONAL PARKS

National parks are seen primarily as an ecological problem. This perspective ignores the relationship between both ecological and socioeconomic location, context, and connectivity. In particular, the existence of a social context that creates demands and expectations about ecosystem management, as well as administrators and policymakers, as well as people working and visiting protected areas, has brought policies beyond the protection of ecological structure to the agenda in recent years (Allen and Giampietro, 2014; Cumming and Allen, 2017). In recent years, scientific studies have increased the discussions on protected area discourse. Several other social impacts such as the problem of development of residential areas in protected areas, conflicts, limited access to natural resources, the collapse of cultural and social institutions, and local livelihoods have revealed this perspective. In addition, the emergence of protected areas as a means of achieving better protection and socio-economic results, which adopts an inclusive management approach, including joint management, local empowerment, and the provision of culture and livelihoods, has accelerated the process (Xu and Melick, 2007; Wang, 2019).

Therefore, the protection of the natural structure, approaching economic and social development with a holistic perspective and the triggering of the local economy are among the important issues discussed in terms of the development of the relations of national parks with their social and economic environment (Borrini et al., 2013; Getzner, 2010; Mose and Weixlbaumer, 2007; Phillips, 2003). In the process, the introduction of new spatial approaches regarding protected areas by emphasizing

the legal framework of the regions and revealing the local development dynamics between the users and the inhabitants by diversifying the functions of protected areas has become a current issue (Dudley, 2008). These discussions have been forcing us to have a new and different perspective on national parks.

Determining the role of national parks in the local economy stands in the way of researchers as an overly sensitive and difficult issue. Although important studies have been carried out on this subject since the Brundtland Report in 1988, no clear methodological conceptualization has been presented. Discussions on the economic aspect of protected areas are addressed from three perspectives: the economic valuation of the protected natural environment, the effects of protected areas on the local economy, and the social aspects of national park management (Costanza et al., 1997; Povazan et al., 2014).

It is known that the understanding of conservation or the perspective regarding protected areas has undergone significant changes in the past 30 years. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines a protected area as “a land and/or marine area dedicated to the conservation and maintenance of biodiversity, natural and associated cultural resources, governed by legal or other effective means.” (IUCN, 1994) In another definition; areas with protected status are described as “a geographically defined area designated or arranged to achieve specific conservation objectives” (Borrini et al., 2004). It can be said that the IUCN refers more directly to the economic and cultural aspects of conservation. In 1969, at the 10th General Assembly Meeting of the IUCN, a definition of the national park was accepted: “A national park is a fairly large area: (1) where one or several ecosystems have not undergone significant change by human activities; has a special scientific, educational and recreational value in terms of plant and animal species, geomorphological areas and habitats, or that the natural landscape is of superior beauty; (2) that the necessary measures have been taken by the highest expert decision-making body of the country as soon as possible to prevent or remove the operation or occupation of the whole area and to require a careful approach to the ecological, geomorphological or aesthetic features that distinguish it as a national park; and (3) places where visitors are allowed to enter under special conditions for inspirational, educational, cultural and recreational purposes” (Güleç, 1990).

In recent years the national parks have undergone a change as an important mechanism that supports domestic economic sustainability. This approach has intensified efforts to understand the impact of functional change between national parks and areas surrounding the park. In today's discussions, efforts to explore the social and economic aspects of national parks have been accentuated

by the conservation of nature and the development of tourism and the local economy (Getzner, 2010; Mose and Weixlbaumer, 2007; Phillips 2003). It, however, should not be forgotten that there is a delicate balance between tourism and the sustainability of the resource values of protected areas. The discussions are taking place on new spatial forms that will focus on improving the social functions of national parks and establishing positive relationships between the institutions/actors responsible for the national parks and local communities (Dudley, 2008; Phillips, 2003).

National parks, where are an economic landscape based on knowledge and innovation; being more efficient, environmentally, and competitive in terms of resource use; facilitates social and regional integration by encouraging a high employment rate within inclusive growth principles, are considered not only ecological factors but also an important element of the planning system. The changing meaning of national parks can be shaped by three main ideas: viewing from the upper scale, change in ecological perspective, and location-specific differences. Upper-scale approaches are evaluated as the density of networks and connections of national parks, integration of national parks into regional and national economy and politics, and their importance in terms of a national conservation strategy. From an ecological perspective, ecosystems are exposed to diverse influences, destructions, and an adaptive process strongly linked to local biological history and context. In terms of location-specific differences, working with local communities, NGOs and the private sector is an emphasis on place-specific differences based on the fair sharing of benefits arising from the creation of a governance structure, preservation of biodiversity, sustainable use and use of genetic resources and advantages among social actors.

Within the framework of the new paradigm, national parks have been defined as an element of the national and international system, beyond being an isolated area from their surroundings. This perspective has made national parks part of non-local relationship networks through various networks and links. National parks are not only protected due to their natural beauty and resources but also seen as a mechanism to stimulate different economic activities locally. Therefore, it is necessary to define a multidimensional and layered actor management system in the management, which was handled in a complex structure. While the national parks are considered as landscape area that provides sustainability of the local in line with the socio-economic and cultural goals, it started to be seen as a structure dominated by the understanding of being governed according to the decisions taken based on the consultations of different actors. In this framework, the shifts in the meaning imposed on national parks are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Paradigm shift in perspective toward national parks (Borrini et al., 2004; Phillips, 2003)

Traditional understanding of protected areas	Emerging understanding of protected areas
They are considered isolated separate spatial units.	National parks have started to be considered as a part of national, regional, and international systems.
National parks have their own way of governing.	It has come to be seen as part of spatial relationships (protected areas associated with “corridors,” “steppingstones” and biodiverse areas).
There is an understanding of decision-making against the specific situation instead of using past experiences in the management of national parks.	Long-term governance and decision-making mechanisms are established using the advantage of continuous learning and experience.
There is an understanding of a strict protection of natural and landscape assets.	In addition to the protection of assets, there is an understanding of the rehabilitation of the region and the restoration of its cultural assets.
There are perspectives to sustain the functioning of the ecosystem beyond the efficient use of the national park.	It is about ensuring the sustainability of national parks from a perspective of interactive and relational use in accordance with socio-economic and cultural goals.
A technocratic and bureaucratic management approach dominates in national parks.	National parks are managed according to the decisions taken based on the consultations of different actors.
There is an understanding of management that does not consider the activities, needs, and participation of local people.	There is an understanding of negotiation-open governance that is sensitive to the concerns of local communities.
The management responsibility is centralized.	There is an actor-driven management approach, including different layers of governance, local communities, the private sector, NGOs, and others.
There is an understanding of prioritizing benefits for visitors and tourists.	The interests of local communities take precedence.
National decisions take precedence over local needs.	It is seen as a community heritage and national.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to reveal the effects of BLNP on the local economy. It is aimed to reveal clues about how to treat national parks as an actor in terms of local development by focusing on the possible effects on the social and economic development of the locality, especially against the literature focusing on the ecological diversity of national parks. Especially in recent years, considering the theoretical approach and social and economic dimensions of national parks within the framework of development paradigms, which forces them to think within the framework of conceptual approaches such as sectoral diversity, economic resilience, and ensuring local competitive conditions make the study unique. In this framework, a qualitative study method based on in-depth interviews was adopted in the study, and the opinions of the relevant actors regarding the effects of BLNP on the local economy were determined.

BLNP is in a transition area between the Central Anatolia Region and the Taurus Mountains within the borders of Konya and Isparta provinces and is located on an area of 86,855 hectares within the borders of Beyşehir province in Konya. The area covering a part of Beyşehir Lake was declared a National Park with the decision of the Council of Ministers numbered 93/4020 on January 11, 1993. However,

the borders of the BLNP were revised by the decision dated November 27, 2018, and numbered 30608. As a result of this change, agricultural and forest areas, and settlement areas were excluded from the borders of the national park (Table 2 and Figure 1).

According to the border changes, while the settlements and agricultural areas around Beyşehir Lake were taken out of the national park border, Dedegöl Mountains, which have rare mountain ecosystems, were included in the national park borders to protect the ecosystem integrity. It can be said that the reason for the border change is the problems arising from the legal status of the national parks of the inhabitants of the settlements around the lake. The National Park includes a large part of Beyşehir Lake, Turkey's largest freshwater lake. There are 33 large and small islands in the lake. The presence of Byzantine monasteries on some islands caused the region to gain the importance of faith tourism.

BLNP is a region with an extremely important advantage for tourism with its natural areas, scenic spots, and trekking, hiking, biking, safari areas, and camping opportunities. Also, it has the potential to offer significant advantages in terms of the socio-cultural and socio-economic development of the region in terms of its ecological values and cultural depths. However, the disadvantages brought

Table 2. Land use in BLNP (National Park Regional Directorate, 2019)

Land Use	According to the old boundaries (ha)	%	According to the new boundaries (ha)	%	Range (ha)
Grassland and steppe areas	1.316,89	1,52	592,14	0,72	-724,75
Rocky areas	51,47	0,06	51,47	0,06	-
Forest areas	16.802,79	19,35	22.083,33	26,88	5.280,54
Reeds-swamp areas	1.600,15	1,84	1.654,11	2,01	53,96
Agriculture areas	13.270,48	15,28	2.018,60	2,46	-11.251,88
Lake areas	53.302,29	61,37	55.726,56	67,83	2.424,27
Settlement areas	510,93	0,59	30,56	0,04	-480,37
TOTAL	86.855,00	100,00	82.156,77	100,00	4.698,23

by the protection status in rural economic activities have caused the national park areas to be seen as regions with a problematic status for the inhabitants of the region.

Studies on national parks are generally based on quantitative analysis. However, it is known that the explanatory level of quantitative analysis is insufficient in determining the problems related to user behaviors, the realization of the economic and spatial demands of the local people, and the conflicts between the user-local people-government. In recent studies, information about the behavior, motivations, and opinions of visitors and users is considered critical for the effective planning and management of protected

areas (Griffin et. al., 2008; Antonio, et. al., 2013). At this point, qualitative research methods are preferred in efforts to understand the existence of a complex and layered social, personal, and relational world and how it is created (McLeod, 2001). This study conducted in-depth interviews with visitors (383 visitors), local people (a focus group discussion with the village community in 12 rural areas), and various institutions (3 citizen associations, 2 voluntary organizations, and 2 associations), for revealing the areas of conflict between the strict principles/rules for the protection of the national park and the local people and economic actors in 2019 July. It is aimed to access information such as how approaches to the protection of national parks have evolved to ensure the economic sustainability of the locality, how BLNP has led the development of various economic and social relations networks around the region, how BLNP contributes to the transformation of rural areas in in-depth interviews. Furthermore, it has been discussed how to put forward innovative approaches to national parks within the scope of both urbanization and conservation understanding and policies by questioning the effects of trends such as suburbanization or counter-urbanization, tourism, and secondary housing development on the social structure.

Finally, to reveal the effects of BLNP on the local economy are analyzed by the diversity of opportunities provided to economic sectors, and the processes producing economic value are analyzed. It has been questioned how the social relations emerging between the local people, visitors, and investors affect the adaptation of the local people to processes such as qualified agricultural production and access to foreign markets that are not easily articulated. It has been investigated whether there is a mechanism to reveal new ideas in mutual learning processes regarding the region of the relations between the local people and the visitors because of long-term stays in camping areas and secondary housing. All these analyses are discussed under three main topics: evaluations on the social dimension, economic dimension, and governance dimension.

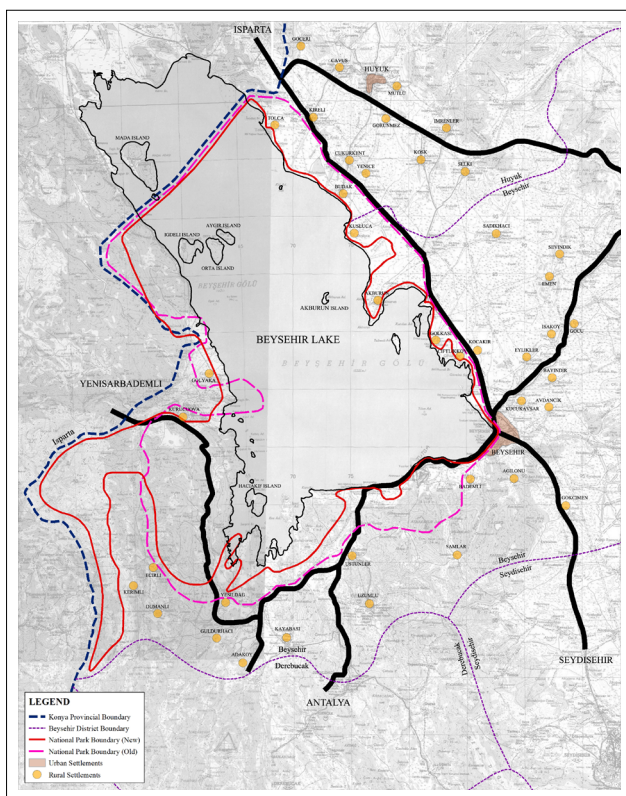


Figure 1. Old and New Boundaries of BLNP.

EVALUATION OF BLNP WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS

Social Dimension Evaluations of BLNP in Regional Development

The regional development literature, which has undergone a paradigm shift in the past 30 years, has also brought important differences in the strategies for protected and sensitive areas such as national parks. Assessments of the role of national parks in the local economy are fed by approaches such as ecosystem (Wall-Reinius and Fredman, 2007), evolutionary economic geography's path dependence (Boschma, 2015; Martin and Sunley, 2015), governance theory (Borrini et al., 2013; Getzner, 2010; Laing et al., 2009), and institutionalism and social capital theories (Bathelt and Glucker, 2003; Amin and Thrift, 1995; Halfacree, 1993). From the traditional point of view, evaluations aimed solely at conservation perceive the areas where agricultural production takes place as non-production areas.

This paradigm shift has led to the social and political concerns of national parks at the local level. With the dominance of liberal economic view that emphasizes the economic importance of national parks, the declaration of the BLNP as a national park has made it necessary to evaluate it through a series of social relations networks, until it is seen as the engine of regional development.

Emphasizing that the local social and economic context in which national parks are embedded should be considered when analyzing their economic relations, this theoretical framework pioneers the consideration of protected areas in a relational whole within the framework of the new paradigm. The perspective emphasizes the whole of local dynamics and social relations of the space, and strives to address the relationship between areas with strict protection rules such as national parks, and residential areas, and development with their social dimensions. While this approach provides an important opportunity for the functionalization of areas with protected status, it creates an opportunity for the elimination of social conflict areas, especially with new dynamics emerging in rural settlements. The problems caused by using the national park in restricting the economic activities of local landowners and in the adoption of the principles of protection of the natural structure and the relevant land management have brought about the deterioration in the social structure. The negative attitude of these locals toward national parks is an indication of their limited awareness of protection.

This approach has significantly affected rural settlements and local people in BLNP, just as is the case in national parks generally. Strict principles and rules for the protection of the national park have been the main dynamics of the conflict between locals and protected areas. In this context, it can be said that approaches to the protection of national parks

from a traditional point of view have evolved in recent years to be seen to ensure the economic sustainability of the local. The protective regime of BLNP pioneers the development of various economic and social relations networks not only in the region but also in its surroundings. Restrictions arising from the protection priorities of BLNP are seen by local communities in the region as an obstacle to local development and lead to various conflicts. The social and political resistance to overcome this situation has not yet developed in rural Beyşehir.

The contribution of national parks to the functional transformations of rural areas within its vast area has been the focus of economic geography discussions. Trends such as the decline in traditional agricultural employment, suburbanization or counter-urbanization, the development of tourism, and the development of secondary housing have a strong impact on the direction and speed of functional changes in the buffer zones of national parks. These changes have occurred rapidly in rural areas within BLNP, and this trend continues to increase.

Beyşehir is very close to where we live, we can come in about 1–1.5 h. Because of the natural beauty and geography of this place, we would like to have a place to stay on weekends. However, the fact that various opportunities in the region are not yet at the desired level causes some reservations. In fact, from this point of view, the demand for the region will grow with the restoration and functionalization of secondary residences, camp areas supported by various services and historical residences in rural settlements. These developments will lead to the development of ties between locals and visitors. Now, we can say that BLNP lacks these features. The only thing that attracts us here is the natural beauty and the presence of the lake. (It was compiled from interviews with 383 visitors in the BLNP).

Although the national park led to an increase in social diversity in the region and feed the learning processes through networks of relations, the inadequacy of infrastructure and the inadequacy of local organizational in BLNP prevent the development of these opportunities. As can be understood from the information obtained from the interviews in the field study, the inadequacy of physical facilities in the region and the lack of organizational activities to eliminate the inadequacy of the awareness level of the local people about the impact of the national park on social development reveal that it is an obstacle to the development of social diversity. They consist of similar social or countryfolk groups who have migrated from the region where coming from outside the region proves this situation.

The first measure for the protection of Beyşehir Lake began in 1957 when the forests south of the Lake were

given the status of “Conservation Forest.” Beyşehir Lake was accepted as “Drinking Water Reserve” pursuant to the Water Pollution Control Regulation, which came into force in 1988. In 1989, Beyşehir Lake and its surroundings were declared first and second-degree natural sites. Later, due to the reactions of the people in the settlements, the settlements were changed to a grade III natural site in 1991. In addition, there are archaeological sites in various locations around Beyşehir Lake, and the area where Eşrefoğlu Mosque Complex is located on the lakeshore of Beyşehir District has been declared as an urban site area. With the decision dated February 20, 1993 numbered 21502, the part of Lake Beyşehir within the provincial borders of Isparta; due to its land structure showing a different topography, the spread of plant and animal communities on it, rare natural resources and historical features have been declared “Kızıldağ National Park;” while the part remaining within the provincial borders of Konya has been declared as “BLNP” due to its historical remains, geomorphological formations, natural plant communities, rich bird communities, and hydrological features. The park boundaries have taken their current form (Figure 1).

BLNP should be considered not only as a physical environment but also as a social environment that adds meaning and value to this environment. The fact that the national park is intertwined with urban and rural settlements also contributes to the social and cultural development of the city. Urbanization and changes in legal regulations have increased the pressure of the city on the national park and there have been disputes between local governments and administrations regarding the national park. In this sense, it has been necessary to adopt innovative approaches to national park areas. In this process, in addition to the conflict of authority between institutions, the understanding of the way rural residents use natural resources and the behaviors related to agricultural production was seen as a problem area beyond evaluating the national park as a potential. It, also, has been determined that the BLNP does not make an effort to strengthen social interaction and that the national park has a point of view only to protect natural beauties and prioritize policies for daily tourism when the studies of the institutions responsible for developing policies and strategies related to the national park are examined.

Economic Impacts of BLNP

The effects of national parks on the local, regional, and national economy are often explained through the lenses of the tourism sector (Byström and Müller, 2014; Eagles and McCool, 2002; Getzner, 2003; Huhtala, 2007; Mayer et al., 2010). The multiplier effects of economic dynamism brought about by tourists visiting national parks are considered an important factor in the economic development.

In line with the principle of free access to natural values, the entry and use of facilities in most national parks in

Europe are offered free or at a relatively low cost (Mayer and Job, 2014). It is difficult to estimate the actual number of visitors required to calculate total visitor expenditures in national parks where admission is free or entrance fees are seasonal or charged (Job, 2008; Mayer and Job, 2014). The expenditures of the national park visitors, the return from the goods and services offered, and the changes in employment and wages have been the subject of quantitative research to evaluate the economic role of the national parks based on the income growth of the region. Such studies fail to make contributions in determining the local links between national parks and the way in which the park is embedded in the local economy.

The economic relations established by the BLNP should be handled within the whole body of direct and indirect relations that generate economic value. In this context, investment projects, management structure, various supports, and relations with the local are defined as the direct relations of BLNP that produce economic value. BLNP has enabled the development of fishing activities in rural settlements on the lakeshore. Secondary housing development and the presence of campsites in the region have contributed to the emergence of economic activities aimed at meeting the needs of visitors from outside the region. In some rural settlements, attempts to transform historical buildings into accommodation facilities pioneered the development of non-agricultural economic activities in the region. Touristic expeditions such as bird watching, hiking and photography to the islands within Lake Beyşehir allow the young population in the region to provide guidance, therefore contributing to the human capital development.

I live in the town of Yeşildağ, and I do farm. In addition, I offer guidance services to visitors who come to see the Storks Valley and campsite in our town. Especially between April and July, there are intense tourist visits, and we sometimes go on 5–10-day expeditions. The job of guiding visitors to the national park for nature tourism has experienced significant development in Beyşehir in recent years. We have started having a second income (Osman İltar, The Tour Guide of Yeşildağ Settlement).

BLNP has the potential for economic development due to the characteristics that enable it to integrate various types of tourism. Besides nature-based tourism, it has important attractions in terms of culture and faith tourism. However, the inadequacy of necessary facilities and maintenance problems means that BLNP is preferred at the regional level and is mostly for day-to-day use. This has resulted in an inadequate economic assessment of the potential of BLNP (Table 3).

When Table 3 is examined, it is determined that most visitors come from surrounding settlements within a 100 km distance. In addition, it has been determined that as the

Table 3. Visitor views on the tourism potentials of BLNP

Distance Travelled by Visitors	No.	How long Have You Been Coming to the National Park? (%)	Would you recommend the National Park to those around you? (%)	Purpose of Visit ¹					
				Ease of Access	Resource Values	Quality of Service	Interest and Curiosity		
0–30 km	58	First Time	3.4	Yes	8.6	2.06	2.74	0.96	1.93
		1–3 Year	13.8						
		4–6 Year	10.3	No	91.4				
		7++ Year	72.4						
31–50 km	32	First Time	15.6	Yes	6.3	1.93	2.13	1.00	2.00
		1–3 Year	6.3						
		4–6 Year	6.3	No	93.8				
		7++ Year	71.9						
51–100 km	175	First Time	28.0	Yes	8.6	2.06	2.12	1.15	2.21
		1–3 Year	29.1						
		4–6 Year	13.1	No	91.4				
		7++ Year	29.7						
101–200 km	74	First Time	31.1	Yes	6.8	1.76	2.40	1.13	2.34
		1–3 Year	27.0						
		4–6 Year	14.9	No	93.2				
		7++ Year	27.0						
201++	44	First Time	27.3	Yes	4.5	1.69	2.16	1.56	2.14
		1–3 Year	18.2						
		4–6 Year	18.2	No	95.5				
		7++ Year	36.4						
Total	383	First Time	23.8	Yes	7.8	1.95	2.27	1.15	2.17
		1–3 Year	23.2						
		4–6 Year	13.1	No	92.2				
		7++ Year	39.9						

arrival distance increases, the desire of visitors to visit the national park increases due to their interest and curiosity. Therefore, visitors may not have the desire to visit the national park for a second time. The main reason can be cited as the lack of a variety of services. The main reason why a significant number of visitors do not recommend BLNP is again cited as inadequate services.

BLNP enables the establishment of social relations between the locals and visitors, depending on the time visitors spend in the region. It has been determined that the social relations between the locals and the visitors are because of long-term stays in the campsites and secondary residences, thus contributing to a mutual learning process. The strong relations that emerge between the tour guides in rural areas and the groups that visit the region have led to a mutual exchange of ideas on the development of economic activities in the region.

Indirect relationships include tangible and intangible resources arising from the natural value of the park and related to the social and cultural sphere. There are several potential forms of the indirect economic impact of national parks. For example, sustainable agriculture depends largely on the qualitative factor that arises directly from the value of the natural environment of the national park. The presence of a national park in the context of increasing counter-urbanization movements makes neighboring rural areas an attractive place for tourism and second homes (Mika et al., 2016), this stimulates demand. In addition, owing to the proximity of a national park, local governments, and institutions can apply for and receive funding for “ecological” projects. As a result, the indirect economic function is defined by its natural values in intangible aspects, as a factor that stimulates economic activity, and an increase in the economic value of areas beyond the park.

It has been observed that the adoption of the form of agricultural production, like organic farming and good agricultural practices, has begun. After tourism activities, qualified agricultural production, which emerged because of learning processes and the demands of visitors, led to positive developments in the economic income of the region. It can be stated that agro-tourism in BLNP, which is seen as an important strategy, especially for the protection of agricultural land, will play a critical role in eliminating the spatial disadvantages of rural settlements, and low income. The successful agro-tourism systems in rural areas have the potential to reverse negative economic trends by bringing in visitors and creating new jobs and local business ventures (Topçu, 2016).

BLNP have various directional and density relations with the regional social and economic systems in which they are located. The economic relations are based on the relations between different actors, including elements of the local economic system, administration, visitors, local authorities, and the residents (Figure 2).

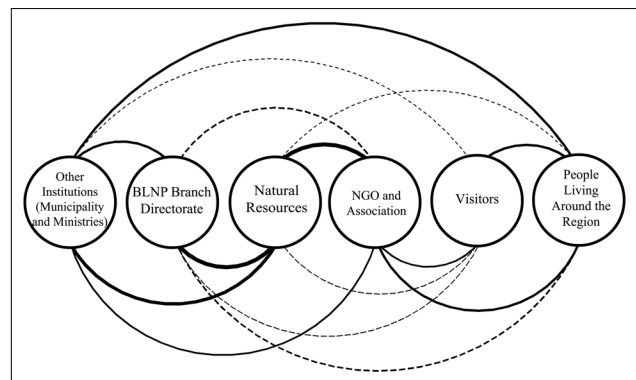


Figure 2. Relationships between Actors in BLNP.²

A strong relationship exists between the natural resources of the BLNP and the BLNP Branch Directorate under the 8th Regional Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. While the authorities arising from the legal regulations are a determining factor in the decisions of the institution within the national park, local conflicts could also arise from rigid behavior. The physical development of the national park has been realized through investments made with the shares allocated from the central budget. Preparations for 1/25,000 scale planning work in BLNP can be seen as an initiative toward harmonization with the local.

The relations between the BLNP administration and the residents of the region are seen as the most important obstacle in the development of the local economy. The parallel understanding of strict protection by the administration, and the local people understanding of the resource use concepts constitute the main starting point of the conflict. This problem brought along a political process until the determination of new boundaries in 2018 that excluded rural settlements from the park boundary. In addition, the sales carried out by the national park administration, especially for local businesses, created more employment opportunities in the region. It causes dynamism in this region.

One of the important reasons why the BLNP cannot contribute sufficiently to the local economic development process is the existence of different institutions' authorities in the region, which has become a source of conflict. Apart from the General Directorate of National Parks in the region, the different powers, and responsibilities of institutions such as DSI, Konya Metropolitan Municipality, Beyşehir Municipality, and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization are seen as one of the disadvantages in the development of policies and strategies. Particularly, the decisions taken by the national park administration from a centralized point of view may not reflect the demands and expectations of local. In studies conducted, the lack of various facilities in campsites, beaches, hiking routes, historical sites to be visited, and the poor maintenance of the surroundings lead to a decline in the demand for

the region. With various funds provided by national and international organizations, efforts to develop different projects related to protected areas have gained momentum in recent years. However, it can be said that even with the various actors working together and with the support of national and international funds, the deficiency of human and social capital potential in the Beyşehir region could not solve the problems of the national park. Efforts aimed at prolonging visitors' stay in the region have not reached the desired level.

The dominant position of the elements restricting the role of BLNP in regional development has caused the rural population not to gain sufficiently from the economic benefit of the national park. While protecting the resources of the national park, which is not seen as a means of economic income, has lost priority, it has become more important to create new agricultural production areas and to uncover the pastures for grazing.

Therefore, the impacts of the BLNP on regional economic development are handled in the context of the relations between the actors. Along with the economic value produced by the functioning of the national park, the realization of projects and investments with the roles assumed by various institutions will be one of the elements that will revive the economy.

A Regional Approach to BLNP

The possible impacts of national parks on the regional economy will vary based on the potential of each national park, as well as the community and social structure in the region. In this context, the most distinguishing aspect of BLNP is that it is integrated with Kızıldağ National Park located within the borders of Isparta Province. In other words, Beyşehir Lake and Kızıldağ National Parks, which have the same morphological and ecological features, are perceived as parks with different characteristics due to the administrative boundaries determined in a normative way.

It is necessary to develop a regional perspective in terms of the size and features of the BLNP. Accessibility opportunities in the region, along with significant potential in terms of accommodation facilities and tourism activities in the region, constitute the dynamic of local development. Although BLNP has significant potential for the development of different economic sectors, other industries based on tourism, agriculture, and forestry have had a low impact on local development.

High unemployment rates in rural settlements can be considered significantly eliminated through the development of local businesses in BLNP. Lack of support by the society that cannot perceive the benefits obtained from the national park is seen as one of the important problem areas of insufficient understanding of the national park and low social value level in the region. With the declaration

of the national park, there has been a significant impact on the people of the region regarding the development of their understanding of nature conservation, their perception of the region, and their lives and quality of life. This demonstrates what BLNP can offer regarding both conservation and tourism infrastructure.

It should be emphasized that there are some issues that national parks must face within the framework of new paradigms. In the context of new discussions, the issues that are difficult to operate or apply in the BLNP in a regional approach lens are listed below.

- **Resolution of Political Structure:** The management of protected areas requires the consideration of protected areas together with their close systems (Tomaskinova and Tomaskin, 2013). Protected areas, together with their ecological structure, economic resilience, and interaction between stakeholders, must establish a sustainable management agreement by establishing strong networks with their environment. Especially in the new paradigm, perspectives aimed at reducing the impact of the centralized management system risk bringing with it the problem of faster destruction of protected status. Along with the incompatibility between local institutions, local pressures can bring a series of destruction to the BLNP. An asymmetric force can be formed against the local political climate.
- **Pressure from Stakeholder Participation:** Although discussions on participatory and governance-oriented decision-making processes have intensified in the new paradigm, the problem of "stakeholder fatigue" (Phillips, 2003) may arise in the decision-making process for BLNP, which has a constraining effect on local economic activities. It is not possible to claim that BLNP is made of local capabilities that can make fine political decisions about the composition of stakeholders, and how the conflicting interests would be reconciled.
- **Conservation Awareness Problem:** Understanding national parks evaluation as an element of the local economy, while factoring in the balance between sustainability and conservation use, can be considered a difficult process to implement due to the conservation awareness problem in the Beyşehir region. In particular, the decline of the fish population in Beyşehir Lake and the change of the national park boundary because of local pressures present the problem of local conservation awareness. Beyşehir countryside lacks responsible traditions for the use of natural resources.

On the other hand, a strict understanding of conservation continues to be the cornerstone of the national parks protection system. The new paradigm does not intend to undermine the value of such places, but to show how their management has radically changed (need to change), and to emphasize the contribution that can be made by the other

protected areas of equal importance. Institutional capacities and capabilities in the region do not have the flexibility to conduct the negotiation process healthily.

- **The Normative Perspective Problem:** The new paradigm mandates an approach beyond the boundaries of the protected area. BLNP planning approach should be done in a way that includes interactive areas and settlements outside the normative boundaries. The bureaucratic structure and legal framework are seen as the main obstacles to the implementation of this approach.
- **Regional Planning:** The roles of national parks in the regional development within sustainable principles can be realized by creating alternative scenarios, not ignoring the contribution of dynamic spatial urban models, and considering the possible effects on the environment (Unverdi and Unverdi, 2016). Continuing in a balanced manner between the legal status of BLNP and the agricultural areas, which are defined as the economic income source of the rural areas, requires the implementation of long-term regional plans. It can be realized with the “inclusive area management” functions that will emerge among the actors for developing an important sustainability policy.

CONCLUSION

The economic impact of a national park is determined by the central government's policy for the conservation of nature and the attractiveness of the national park area. National parks vary due to differences in countries' legal regulations, conservation regimes, and certain local conditions. The increasing social demand on natural resources have given rise to various pressures on the areas surrounding national parks.

The impact of national parks on the local economy is not only about increasing their attractiveness as a tourism destination but also how and to what extent they are made accessible to the public. Conservation of the BLNP with a strict understanding curbs tourism development. It is inevitable to establish an innovative and viable governance system for the Beyşehir settlement to benefit from the national park socially and economically. To achieve this, it is necessary to develop a mechanism in which all stakeholders in Beyşehir will cooperate within the common goal. The initiation of various projects to mobilize local resources and the efforts to increase the potential for social-human capital may eliminate numerous obstacles to the cooperation in the process of transforming the national park into an important element for local development.

On the other hand, beyond characterizing national parks as areas where natural resources are protected with a traditionalist approach, it is necessary to consider Beyşehir urban and rural areas as a critical element in terms of

economic development and competitive structure, as emphasized in economic geography discourses. BLNP has significant potential to transition from local to global, establish relations with different economic actors, attract investors, and put in place measures aimed at improving the quality of life through funds.

NOTES

¹3 very important, 2 important, 1 not important.

²The thickness and discontinuity of the links between the actors illustrate the strength of the relationship. Thick lines indicate strong relationships, while dashed lines indicate weak relationships.

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