

Conflict Management in Protected Areas in Turkey: Küre Mountains National Park Example

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the conflicts in protected areas in Turkey using the example of Küre Mountains National Park and to develop conflict management recommendations for this national park. In accordance with this purpose, the issues and the areas where conflicts were experienced, parties to the conflict, the causes and the consequences of the conflicts, and the conflict styles and strategies of the parties involved were determined. Within the scope of this study, it was revealed that there were various conflicts regarding the park's management practices, tourism activities, use of forest resources, and wildlife management processes. Most of these conflicts, both at individual and organizational levels, stem from the inadequacies of national park administration such as in the area of public relations. In order to manage the conflicts effectively, there is a need for a participatory management model that incorporates the conflicting parties.

Keywords: Bartın, conflict map analysis, conflict tree analysis, forest, Kastamonu, sustainable forest management

Introduction

One of the biggest causes of environmental problems is excessive and improper use of natural resources. Humans, who use natural resources as if they are nondepletable, have caused harm to these resources and caused many other environmental problems. Therefore, one of the most effective ways to protect and hand over these resources, which are becoming more and more important day by day, to future generations is to create protected areas (Kuvan, 2012; Phomma et al., 2019).

Creating protected areas (PA) has been an important tool for conserving nature (Hummel et al., 2019) and preventing deforestation (Amin et al., 2019). The creation of PAs is the cornerstone of efforts that sustain Earth's biodiversity and ecosystems, shaping culture and society worldwide (Ladle et al., 2011), and a key conservation strategy for forest protection and biodiversity (Phomma et al., 2019).

National parks, nature reserves, landscape protection areas, nature parks, and nature protection areas are the prominent PAs statuses. The concept of a PA was born from the necessity of limiting human use that had started to pose a threat to natural sources (Kuvan, 2005). In order to reduce the negative influence of the rural population living in or around the PAs, it has been attempted to create opportunities that will provide economic benefits to such communities. For example, striving to ensure the welfare of local communities while conserving biodiversity is known as "Parks versus People," and making ecosystem services paid services is one of the few strategies developed to reduce potential conflicts in this regard (Silveira-Junior et al., 2020). However, such methods may not be sufficient to completely eliminate the conflicts that may occur between the local people and the PA administrations.

The emergence of conflicts over natural sources is a complex issue where social, political, cultural, and economic factors elevate each other. Conflicts arise from increased competition, especially when it comes to accessing and sharing scarce resources (Thondhlana & Cundill, 2017).

Protected area–human relationships are among the important issues of PA management (Allendorf, 2020). Conflicts in PAs are caused in particular by long-term restrictive rules that conflict with the interests of villagers who depend on local resources for their survival (Phomma et al., 2019). Taking into account the interests of all

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parties increases the likelihood of conflicts resulting in a win–win situation. A conflict in which only one side’s interests are protected results in a win–lose situation (Lewis, 1996). The positive attitudes of locals toward PAs and their support and willingness to participate in conservation efforts should not be underestimated. The prevalence of a positive attitude toward a PA in a local community is an indication of a potential to find common ground with conservationists (Allendorf, 2020).

Protected Areas and Conflicts in Turkey

Enacted in 1956, Forest Law No. 6831 puts the forests in Turkey into three categories according to their attributes: protection forests, production forests, and national parks. Following this law, Yozgat amlıęı National Park was declared as the first national park in 1958. As they are included in the forest regime in Turkey, nature parks, nature protection areas, and nature monuments are referred to as protected forest areas, along with national parks (Kuvan, 2012). Protected areas have been started to be managed according to National Parks Law No. 2873 since 1983 (Thrown, 2018). As seen in Table 1, according to data from 2021, there are 46 national parks (908,544 ha), 250 nature parks (107,632 ha), 31 nature protection areas (46,461 ha), and 115 nature monuments (9393 ha) in Turkey, established in accordance with National Parks Law. As a result, the total area of protected forest areas in Turkey is 1,072,030 ha, which corresponds to 1.3% of the country’s surface area. Other important PAs that are not included in National Parks Law are wildlife protection and development areas, and protection forests. Eighty-four wildlife protection and development areas cover an area of 1,158,820 ha, and there are 54 protection forests with a total area of 247,708 ha.

Under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks is responsible for the management of national parks, nature parks, nature protection areas, nature monuments, and wildlife protection and development areas (Atmıř & il, 2013; URL-1, 2020). Under the same ministry, the General Directorate of Forestry is responsible for the management of the protection forests. Fourteen Ramsar areas, 72 wetlands, 336 gene protection areas,

318 seed stands, and 207 seed gardens are also included under PAs. In total, PAs cover an area of 3,632,737 ha in Turkey (Table 1).

Various problems have been frequently mentioned with regard to the management of PAs in Turkey (Akgün, 2009; Atmıř, 2018; Grmüş, 2016; Gmüş et al., 2010; Kuvan, 2005; Kuvan et al., 2018). It is stated that the management of PAs by more than one institution causes legal and administrative confusion (Gmüş et al., 2010). In addition, there are problems between local people, the tourism sector, the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, the General Directorate of Forestry, and other public institutions, who are the main stakeholders of the PAs, due to a lack of an established system and a common plan for utilization (Karahalil, 2009). In PAs in Turkey, the most salient conflicts are related to obtaining forest products and services, use of water resources, tourism events, and wildlife protection efforts (Yıldız & Atmıř, 2019).

Küre Mountains National Park (KMNP) was selected for this study because it was the first PA in Turkey that utilized a process of participatory planning during its establishment. Nevertheless, the national park administration has not been able to attain the ideal organizational structure, complete the necessary investments, or establish a healthy communication environment with the local people and the park users in the past two decades since the establishment of the park (Grmüş et al., 2015). Although it has been said that a participatory model has been applied during its establishment phase, there have been serious conflicts between different groups of interest in this national park, especially for reasons due to the incompetency of the national park management (Yıldız, 2019; Yıldız & Atmıř, 2019). In this national park, where the conflicts mainly arise from issues related to wildlife, recommendations for conflict management need to be developed after determining the root causes and the possible effects of the conflicts. In this way, it will also be investigated why the participatory planning method could not prevent conflicts in this national park, which was allegedly established utilizing this method. In this context, this study was carried out to examine the conflicts in KMNP and to develop suggestions for conflict management. In line with this purpose, the characteristics of the conflicts and conflict styles, and the strategies of the parties of conflicts were determined. It is hoped that the determined strategies and recommendations will guide the management of conflicts in the country’s PA management.

Methods

Materials

The study is based on the data on KMNP, located within the borders of Kastamonu and Bartın provinces in the west of the Black Sea region in Turkey. Data sources include any plans or documents that may be relevant, such as KMNP long-term development plan, other development plans, Central Hunting Commission Decisions, and KMNP-related project outputs, meeting reports, and presentations. To collect additional information, surveys were conducted as well.

With a cabinet decree dated July 7, 2000, KMNP was declared the 32nd national park in Turkey (REGA, 2000). Since 2011, it has been managed by KMNP Directorate, whose head office is located in Bartın (URL-2, 2012). The buffer zone around the 37,753-ha national park is 134,366 ha (Anonymous, 2012). Extending in the east-west direction, the national park has a plateau character in its entirety (KMNP, 2020). The borders of KMNP are shown on the map in Figure 1.

Table 1.
Protected Areas by Status, Number, and Area in Turkey (GDF, 2021; GDNCNP, 2021)

Protected Areas	Numbers	Areas (ha)
National park	46	908,544
Nature park	250	107,632
Nature protection area	31	46,461
Nature monument	115	9393
Wildlife development area	84	1,158,820
Ramsar area	14	184,487
Wetland with national importance	59	869,697
Wetland with local importance	13	14,513
Protection forest	54	247,708
Gene protection forest	336	43,120
Seed production area	318	41,880
Seed orchards	207	1506
Total	1527	3,633,761

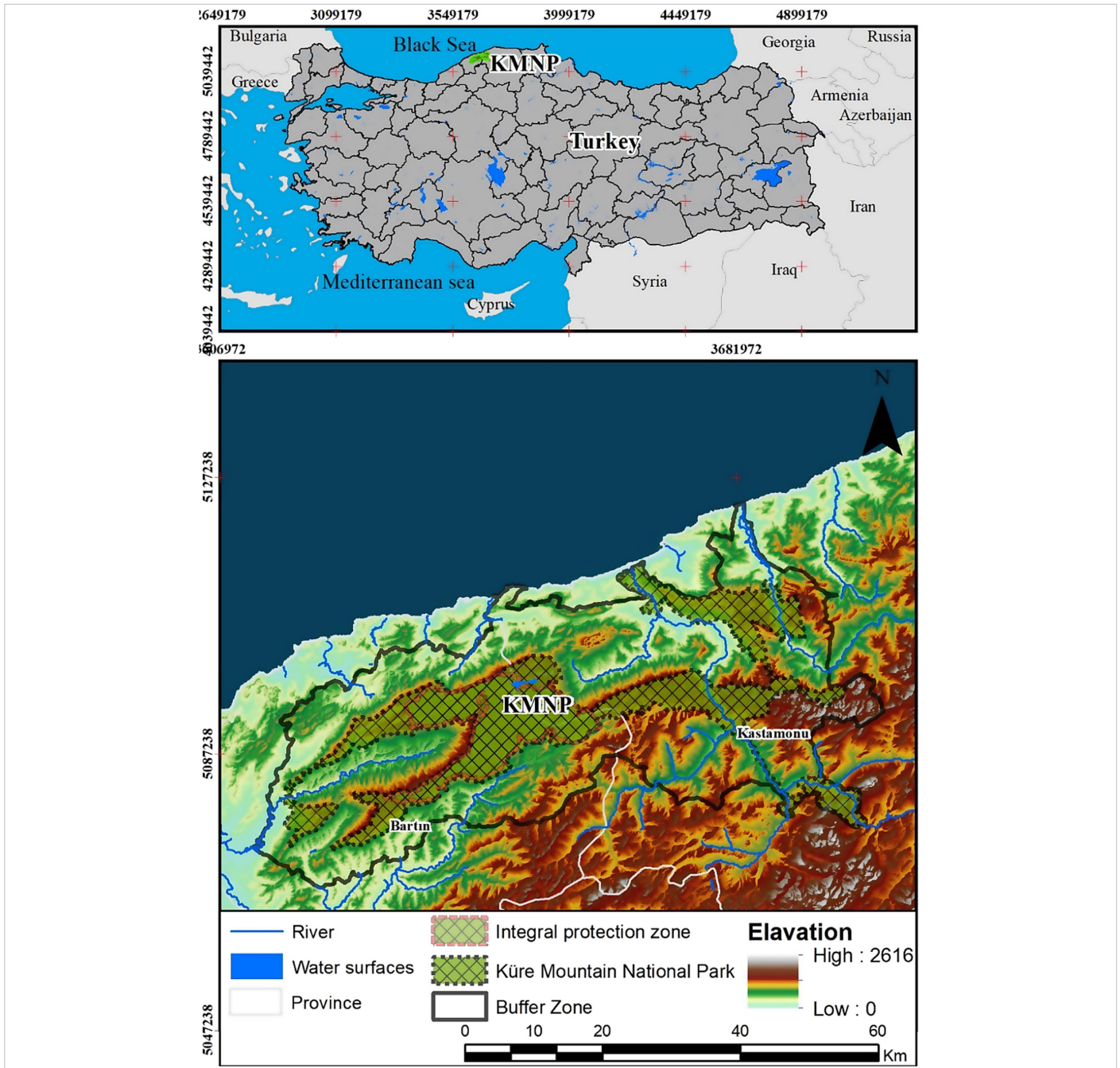


Figure 1.
 Boundaries of Küre Mountains National Park.

In terms of canyons and caves, KMNP is considered to be one of Turkey's most biodiverse locations, and, following Toros Mountains, it is seen as the second most important karst area in Turkey (Akbulut et al., 2015). Küre Mountains National Park is also of international importance; in a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) study that determined 100 forest hotspots in Europe, it was among the nine forest hotspots located in Turkey (Görmüş et al., 2015). According to UNDP (2010), KMNP is one of Turkey's "311 Key Biodiversity Areas." Similarly, WWF has identified the national park as one of the "122 Important Plant Areas" in Turkey. In addition, this area is a part of the "North Anatolian and Caucasus Temperate Zone Forests," which is one of the "200 Ecological Regions" at the global level in terms of nature conservation (KMNP, 2020).

Küre Mountains National Park was the first and only national park in Turkey—and 13th in Europe—certified by the PAN Parks (Protected Areas Network) Foundation, which aimed to improve the quality of management of PAs and promote rural development (Akbulut et al., 2015; Atmış, 2009; Görmüş et al., 2015). In addition, in Wilderness Academy Days 2019, in the presence of the representatives of various European countries that have been previously awarded this certificate, KMNP was awarded the Platinum Wilderness Certificate issued by the European Wilderness Society headquartered in Austria (URL-3, 2019).

Although it was established in 2000, KMNP's long-term development plan was prepared more than a decade later, in 2012. according to

this plan, KMNP is divided into four zones: absolute protection zone, sensitive protection zone, sustainable use zone, and controlled use zone. The planning area includes these four zones located within the boundaries of KMNP and the buffer zone (Anonymous, 2012).

Life still continues in the villages around the national park (Görmüş et al., 2015). In this sense, these settlements are included in the buffer zone in order to secure the biodiversity in the national park (Anonymous, 2012). The settlements that surround and interact with the national park are within the borders of Bartın's central, Amasra, Kurucaşile, and Ulus districts, and Kastamonu's Azdavay, Cide, Pınarbaşı, and Şenpazar districts. A total of 21,030 people live in these settlements. Therefore, 79% of the buffer zone population is within the borders of Bartın province and 21% is within the borders of Kastamonu province. When the population changes of the villages around KMNP were examined, it was found that there was a population decrease of more than 50% between 1990 and 2016 (TURKSTAT, 1991, 2016).

Methods

In order to obtain information about the conflicts in the KMNP, interviews were made with the representatives of the public sector, private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The information related to the types of conflicts, the reasons for these conflicts, how these conflicts affect the national park and the local people, and what can be done to reduce conflicts were attempted to be collected with the help of those interviews. Field studies within the scope of this study started with exploration trips. The first round of meetings with focus groups was held on July 28, 2015. Surveys were conducted between February 25, 2017, and February 15, 2018. In addition, data were collected by interviewing interest groups such as local public institutions, private organizations, associations, and foundations (Yıldız, 2019). Table 2 includes the list of stakeholders interviewed. In addition to the surveys with the local people, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 25 officials from the public sector, 4 business owners from the private sector, and 3 association presidents from NGOs. Finally, 6 personnel from the KMNP Directorate were interviewed (Table 2).

While determining the villages where the surveys would be carried out, it was aimed to cover all dimensions of the conflict including its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects. In that sense, it was decided to visit the majority of the villages in the buffer zone by making "Full Area Sampling." In selecting the people to be surveyed, the "Improbable (Unlikely) sampling method" was used, which is based on the principle of taking into account or not certain characteristics of individuals and objects. Also "Quota Sampling" technique was used by grouping certain features from the research universe as common features and taking samples from them until they reach a certain number (Aziz, 2014). As to create the research universe, it was aimed to conduct the surveys with at least 421 randomly selected individuals who were over the age of 18 (2% of the buffer zone population).

It was preferred that the questionnaires conducted through face-to-face interviews were implemented in the summer months due to ease of transportation and the increased population. Field studies were not limited to questionnaires as field observations were also made. Moreover, focus group meetings were held and in-depth interviews were conducted. Notes were prepared from the dialogs during the interviews and the interview data were classified (Yıldız, 2019).

In the surveys conducted with the local people, 42 closed and semi-closed-ended questions and a Likert-type scale including the Conflict Management Style Scale were included. A total of 32 field trips were

made for the surveys. As a result, 110 out of 118 villages in the buffer zone were visited. In these villages, 425 individuals were surveyed. Thus, the goal of conducting surveys with at least 421 individuals in total was achieved (Table 3). Different from the surveys, questions were asked to the KMNP management and stakeholders other than the local community within the framework of two different interview charts, and the descriptive analysis method was used to analyze the interviews. A total of 6 days were allocated for these meetings, which were held with 38 stakeholders at certain intervals. Particularly, the participants in the public sector were interviewed by appointment (Table 2).

In this study, conflict tree analysis and conflict map analysis methods have been utilized. As a visualization and classification tool, conflict tree analysis consists of static factors as the roots, dynamics factors as the leaves, and the problems as represented by the trunk of the tree, which connects static and dynamic factors. It helps with discussing the issues of conflict together with their causes and their consequences and helps determine the priority areas that conflicts point toward (Hammill et al., 2009; Mason & Rychard, 2005). On the other hand, conflict map analysis is a technique that helps illustrate the power of the actors participating in the conflict (i.e., their impact on the conflict) and their relationship with each other. The conflict map of the stakeholders is a tool that enables understanding and analyzing the conflict by taking into account the actors participating in the conflict and how they relate to each other (Mason & Rychard, 2005).

It is determined that the conflict resolution strategies of the parties corresponded to one of the following three solutions: "one-sided the solution," "joint solution," and "solution with the decision of the third-party" strategies, as widely mentioned in the literature and expressed by Karip (2013). Also, by utilizing Linnell (2013), the issue analysis of the conflicts experienced in KMNP was made. Field studies, on-site reviews, surveys, and interviews have been used in the detection and evaluation of the conflict resolution strategies mentioned above.

Table 2.
List of Local Stakeholders Interviewed

Stakeholder Groups	Position	Number of Person	Total
Public sector	District governor	7	25
	Mayor	4	
	Gendarmerie commander	4	
	Secretary of special Provincial administration	1	
	Forest ranger	6	
	Director of forest enterprise	1	
	Veterinary	2	
Private sector and associations	Business owner	4	7
	President of association	3	
Directorate of KMNP	Director	1	6
	Engineer	3	
	Forest protection officer	2	
General total			38
<i>Note: KMNP = Küre Mountains National Park.</i>			

Table 3.
Number of Villages and People Surveyed

Province	District	Number of Total Villages	Number of Villain Surveyed	Number of Person Surveyed
Bartın	Amasra	5	5	24
	Merkez	26	25	88
	Kurucaşile	13	10	59
	Ulus	26	26	76
Kastamonu	Azdavay	5	5	26
	Cide	29	26	75
	Pınarbaşı	8	7	48
	Şenpazar	6	6	29
General total		118	110	425

Results

Conflict Analysis in Küre Mountains National Park

The lack of a legal basis for the buffer zone concept and the dispersed geographical structure of KMNP are examples of conflicts experienced due to structural issues. Having legal responsibility only within the national park boundaries significantly limits the national park administration's activities in the buffer zone, where it does not have a legal responsibility. Moreover, it is frequently criticized that the field inspections cannot be performed adequately within the borders of the national park due to a lack of personnel.

As a result of a lack of public relations, the perception that the national park administration is indifferent to the local people also causes conflicts. The fact that the majority of the local people do not have any information about the national park and that they do not know the staff of the national park administration personally shows the extent of such inadequacy of public relations. Görmüş et al. (2015) claim that the people of the region are not sufficiently aware of the existence of KMNP. In other words, communication between the national park administration and the public is extremely ineffective.

Serious conflicts arise from information-related issues such as lack of information, dissemination of inaccurate information, or distortion of information. The boundaries of KMNP, the implementation of area-guiding efforts, the condition of the flora-fauna, the prohibitions in the area, etc. are constantly discussed by the local people who lack clear information on these issues. Rumors such as previously unobserved wild animals (lynx, snakes of different breeds and sizes, bears, etc.) being spotted around the national park or wild animals being released into the national park by the administration have been spreading and are believed by a significant portion of the public.

There are also conflicts in KMNP arising from the subject of values. The disappearance of some of the traditional values, the lack of respect for others' values, and the inability to perceive others' different values can be counted as the underlying causes of conflicts arising from values. For example, especially in conflicts involving wild animals, not receiving any support from the national park administration or any other state institutions, having their losses underestimated, or facing sanctions even in cases where they harm only aggressive wild animals leave local residents feeling inferior.

In KMNP, it was observed that, generally, "one-sided solution" and "solution with the decision of the third party" strategies are resorted to for conflict resolution. It was also observed that conflicts result in lose-lose as well as win-lose. According to observations and evaluations, if an appropriate communication platform is created, conflicts in the national park are likely to result in a win-win.

According to the conflict tree analysis conducted within the scope of the study, the conflicts experienced in KMNP are grouped under the following four headings: national park management practices, wildlife management, forest resources management, and tourism practices.

National Park Management Practices: Most of the local people, NGOs, and the representatives of institutions have conflicts with the national park administration for various reasons but especially due to lack of communication. The decrease in the information provided following the announcement and establishment phase and the failure of the administration to establish a connection with the public are seen as important causes of conflict. For example, failure to meet the expectations of individuals who do not understand the difference between the buffer zone and the national park leads to conflicts. The lack of public relations efforts and promotional activities by KMNP administration and the prohibition on collecting wood or non-wood forest products in the national park are seen as important causes of conflict. The inadequacies of the national park administration, especially in patrolling poaching and monitoring tourism practices, also cause reactions.

The consequences and possible effects of conflicts regarding national park management practices are as follows:

1. development of a negative perspective toward the national park,
2. development of negative feelings towards the national park administration,
3. incorrect and incomplete identification of the area,
4. destruction of resources in the area, and
5. development of a negative perspective toward tourism.

The local residents whose expectations of obtaining income from tourism turn out to be in vain, and those who are not given support despite suffering losses from wild animals have negative views about the national park and the national park administration. Locals do not know where the national park begins and where it ends. Both the local population and the staff in the relevant institutions and organizations observe the destruction in the area and react to the poachers and illegal salep (*Orchidaceae* sp.) collectors in the national park and its surroundings.

The inadequacy of the KMNP administration in supervising the tourism activities and the fact that the local people cannot generate income from what appears to be freely practiced tourism in the area result in tourism being viewed negatively.

Wildlife Management: In Turkey, most PAs are not fenced, and people, livestock, and wildlife move across PA boundaries. For this reason, conflicts break out from time to time between the wild animals in unfenced KMNP and the local people living around the national park.

The local residents, who claim that the production of forest products is excessive around the national park, see the cutting down of fruit trees

that wild animals feed on as the most important reason why wild animals turn to the areas where people live.

The consequences and possible effects of wildlife conflicts are:

1. material damages (agricultural land pillages, beehive damages, attack on domestic animals, etc.),
2. moral problems (fear, anxiety, helplessness, rage, anger, etc.),
3. poaching,
4. biodiversity loss,
5. wildlife–human conflicts, and
6. traffic accidents.

Material damages and moral problems are experienced as a result of conflicts with wild animals. Among the individuals interviewed, there were individuals injured by wild animals such as wild boar and brown bear, along with those who had lost relatives or acquaintances as a result of brown bear attacks.

In addition, it is thought that populations of harmless wild animals such as gazelles, roe deer, and deer have decreased due to poaching. Apart from this, wild animal species such as brown bears, wolves, and wild boars are killed as well in retaliation for the damage they cause or in self-defense. On the other hand, material damages occur and wild animals and people get injured or even die as a result of traffic collisions involving wild animals on the highways.

Forest Resources Management: Although the literature suggests that conflicts in the forest resources management processes break out between the forestry administration and the local people, there also exist conflicts of national park administration–local people and national park administration–public sector.

In cases where the local people cannot meet their needs for wood and non-wood forest products from the forests in the buffer zone, their attempt to meet those needs from the forest areas in the national park causes conflicts. In KMNP, some local residents take advantage of the lack of inspections and damage the natural resources in the national park. In addition, they are no longer employed as forest workers as wood production was suspended in the areas that have been included in the national park. This situation has even triggered migration in some of the villages. Another threat is the quarries and hydropower plants (HPPs) that are intended to be built around the national park. Those kinds of investments cause conflicts as they are seen as a threat to natural life by the local people and NGOs.

The consequences and possible effects of conflicts regarding forest resources are as follows:

1. Atmospheric pollution,
2. People standing trials for forest crimes,
3. Destruction of forest resources,
4. A feeling of anger toward and fear against forestry administration, and
5. Biodiversity loss.

As a result of conflicts over forest resources, flora and fauna are damaged and the future of biological diversity is threatened. It was observed that some individuals from the local people unknowingly and unintentionally damage rare, unusual, and delicate species and cause these species to disappear. Quarries and HPPs are thought to cause air pollution and damage forests and natural life.

People can actually commit a crime while using forest resources and end up standing trials. Those who think they have the right to benefit from the forests, but are prevented from doing so, feel anger and fear for the forestry management and the national park administration. Nevertheless, some individuals meet their many needs illegally from forest resources anyway, despite the fear of punishment.

Tourism Practices: Differences between tourism practices and people's perceptions and expectations cause conflicts between the national park administration, local people, area guides, tourists, and the public sector. At the root of these conflicts lies the national park administration's attempt to take the tourism practices under its control on the grounds that the resource values in the area are being damaged.

The main causes of conflict are the inadequacy of KMNP administration in field inspections, communication problems with other interest groups, and lack of coordination. Lack of data regarding incoming visitors, lack of information on tourism activities, and an incomprehensive implementation of guiding services also cause conflicts. In addition, the local people expect to generate income from tourism by selling local products and providing accommodation in their homes.

The consequences and possible effects of conflicts in tourism practices are as follows:

1. biodiversity loss,
2. adverse effects on tourism,
3. local people starting to view tourism negatively,
4. inability to generate income from tourism,
5. pollution, and
6. not knowing the number of visiting tourists.

The local people think that the lack of an effort on the side of the national park administration to improve tourism activities affects tourism negatively. In addition, people start to look negatively on tourism when they are prevented from earning an income from tourism by, for example, setting up a marketplace for selling local products or accommodating tourists in their homes. In addition, unguided and unchecked tourism activities are thought to negatively affect biological diversity. Failure to clearly identify the number of visitors in the area, the presence of unguided visitors walking freely around the area, and the pollution caused by the trash left behind by the visitors are among the possible effects of tourism practices.

Conflict Map Analysis in Küre Mountains National Park

The conflict levels between interest groups are more clearly demonstrated by a conflict map. In this study, a conflict map was created especially for those who are in active physical interaction with KMNP. In this map, in KMNP, the effects of conflicts on the area and stakeholder relations were analyzed with regard to national park practices, wildlife, forestry practices, and tourism issues. In addition to this, conflicts in the area were attempted to be transformed into concrete data by field mapping of conflicts using mapping software (Figure 2).

Although the local people have their own expectations from forest resources, especially in the form of firewood and non-wood forest products, their conflicts with biological material smugglers show that they feel responsible for these resources. With regard to tourism, the national park administration experiences conflicts with the local people and tourism enterprises. On the other hand, there is a friendly relationship between tourism operators and tourists. Area guides, on the other hand, have broken connections with the national park administration,

National park administration implementations	National park administration		Local people
	Village heads		National park administration
	National park administration		Public institutions authorities
	Tourism establishments		National park administration
Wildlife management	National park administration		Local people
	Poachers		Gendarmerie
	Local people		Poachers
	Local people		Non-governmental organizations
Forest resources management	National park administration		Local people
	Local people		Bio-smuggler
	Local people		Forest management
	Local people		Public institutions authorities
Tourism implementations	National park administration		Local people
	Tourism establishments		Tourists
	National park administration		Tourism establishments
	Local guides		National park administration
Note:	Conflict Broken connection Positive, close relationship Weak, informal and intermittent link		

Figure 2.
 Conflict Levels Between Stakeholders of KMNP.

KMNP = Küre Mountains National Park.

stating that neither the national park administration nor the area guides association defends their interests (Figure 3).

Civil society organizations are considered to be silent on national park-related issues, and therefore, there is a conflict between the local people and NGOs. The local people expect support from especially NGOs and frequently reproach them for failing to do so.

Field investigations, interviews, and survey data were used to create the field mapping of the conflicts experienced in KMNP (Figure 4). The map reveals the causes of conflict and helps to determine in which villages the efforts to reduce or prevent the conflicts should be concentrated.

Conflicts regarding wild animals manifest themselves in the form of moral problems as well as material damages. Wild boar is unanimously seen as a threat to crop production in almost all villages. The damage by brown bears is at a considerable level. Beehive damages are experienced in most of the villages where beekeeping is practiced for additional income. Some villages claim to suffer damages from wolves. Poaching of wild animals such as roe deer, gazelle, and deer is also a subject of conflict.

The ongoing cadastral problems in Hasanlar, Ortaca, Kayacılar, and Yaylaköy villages are also a subject of conflict. Some individuals think that they are victims claiming that the lands which they were not able to cultivate due to the presence of wild animals have in time turned into forests and therefore become state property. It is claimed that, in the villages of Celalli and Gürpelit, the inclusion of forest areas in the national

park area negatively affected the employment opportunities generated by wood production, triggering migrations. The construction of HPPs in Hacıahmet, Hamitli, and Çamdibi villages is another matter of conflict. It is claimed that HPP construction in Hacıahmet and neighboring villages negatively affects the agricultural areas and hazelnut orchards there. There are conflicts between individuals and groups who are for and against HPPs, especially in the villages in Loç valley in Cide district.

The ongoing animal husbandry activities in Kirazcık, Ören, and Yıldızalan villages cause difficulties in finding grazing areas. Although hesitantly, the villagers state that they release their animals for grazing without discriminating between the national park areas and other forest areas. There are conflicts in the villages of Kozanlı, Köklü, Muratbaşı, Sümenler, and Söğütlü over the share of income from tourism. High financial expectations increase the intensity of such conflicts.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Locals claim that, in the event of a conflict in the PA, the national park administration uses the styles of “dominating” and “avoiding” the most and the styles of “reconciling” and “problem solving” the least, whereas the national park administration thinks that they mostly use “problem solving” and “complying” styles and the least frequent styles they use are “dominating” and “avoiding.” Thondhlana and Cundill (2017) also reported that reserve managers of PAs in South Africa thought that they did not have any conflicts with local communities and that their relationship with them was positive. Nevertheless, local communities thought otherwise, reporting conflicts arising from

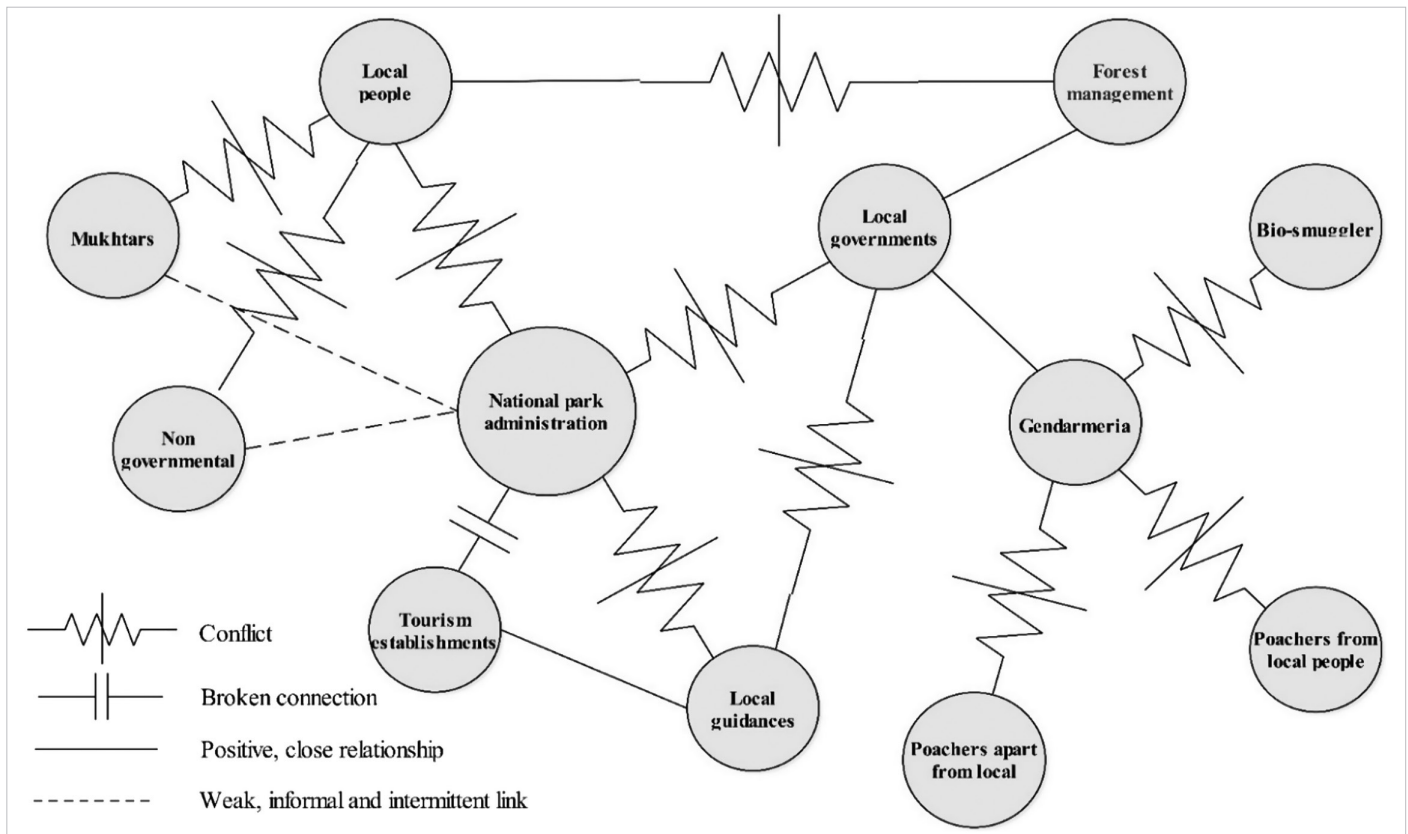


Figure 3.
 Stakeholder Map of the Conflicts in Küre Mountains National Park.

restricted access to the reserves, inability to derive benefits from PAs, and communication problems. Due to this discrepancy between the views of the national park administration and the public, problems continue to accumulate.

Conflicts regarding management practices in KMNP mostly manifest themselves in the form of national park administration–public conflicts. The local people consider that regulations concerning the national park are an added value and want the buffer zone to be included in the scope of those regulations as well. In addition, many people who live in the buffer zone find the practices inadequate and criticize the national park administration, thinking that they live within the national park boundaries. In a similar finding, Soliku and Schraml (2018) revealed that negative attitudes are caused by the lack of public’s participation in the establishment of parks, misunderstandings regarding the national park concept, and the conflicts between the local people and the park administration. Also, Biru et al. (2017) reported violent conflicts between local communities and the national park administration due to illegal grazing and illegal use of other park resources, adding that 85% of park officials saw local residents as a threat. On the contrary in our study, it was observed that the problems experienced were mostly attributed to the national park and the national park administration.

Wildlife is perceived as a threat by the local people who, consequently, develop expectations from the national park administration regarding wildlife damage. For example, projects were developed in Majella National Park (Italy) to compensate for the financial damage caused by wild animals (Görmüş et al., 2015). Due to the absence of such

compensatory measures for damages in PA management practices in Turkey, conflicts with wild animals in KMNP have become armed conflicts, which are way beyond being perceived or sensed conflicts. It is reported that the lack of a compensatory regulation despite the presence of wildlife damage creates a negative attitude toward PAs and promotes further conflicts during conservation efforts. Therefore, mechanisms that ensure compensation for the loss of crops or domestic animals are recommended to be included in national park management plans (Biru et al., 2017; Can, 2021).

While the conflicts in the field are thought to result in only win–lose, it is seen that they can also result in lose–lose. For example, in this study, it was found that the local people who claimed to have suffered damages from wild animals ignored slaughtering of wild animals by poachers. Görmüş (2016) states that there are human–wildlife conflicts in and around the KMNP park, and both sides are affected negatively by this type of conflict. Also, according to Görmüş (2016), the most significant conflicts in the area occur between institutions and the local community, with institutional efforts to protect the environment leading to tension between local residents’ quality of life and conservation objectives. According to the analysis made by Yıldız and Atmıç (2019) using news articles in the national and local media, it was revealed that both humans and wild animals were harmed in wildlife–human encounters, and injuries and even deaths were reported on both sides. Similar to those who live around other national parks, the local people living around KMNP believe that the national park management brings wild animals from elsewhere and therefore react to the national park management. For example, Alkan and Ersin (2018) similarly demonstrated that an important part of the interviewees in their study in Kızıldağ and Kovada Lake

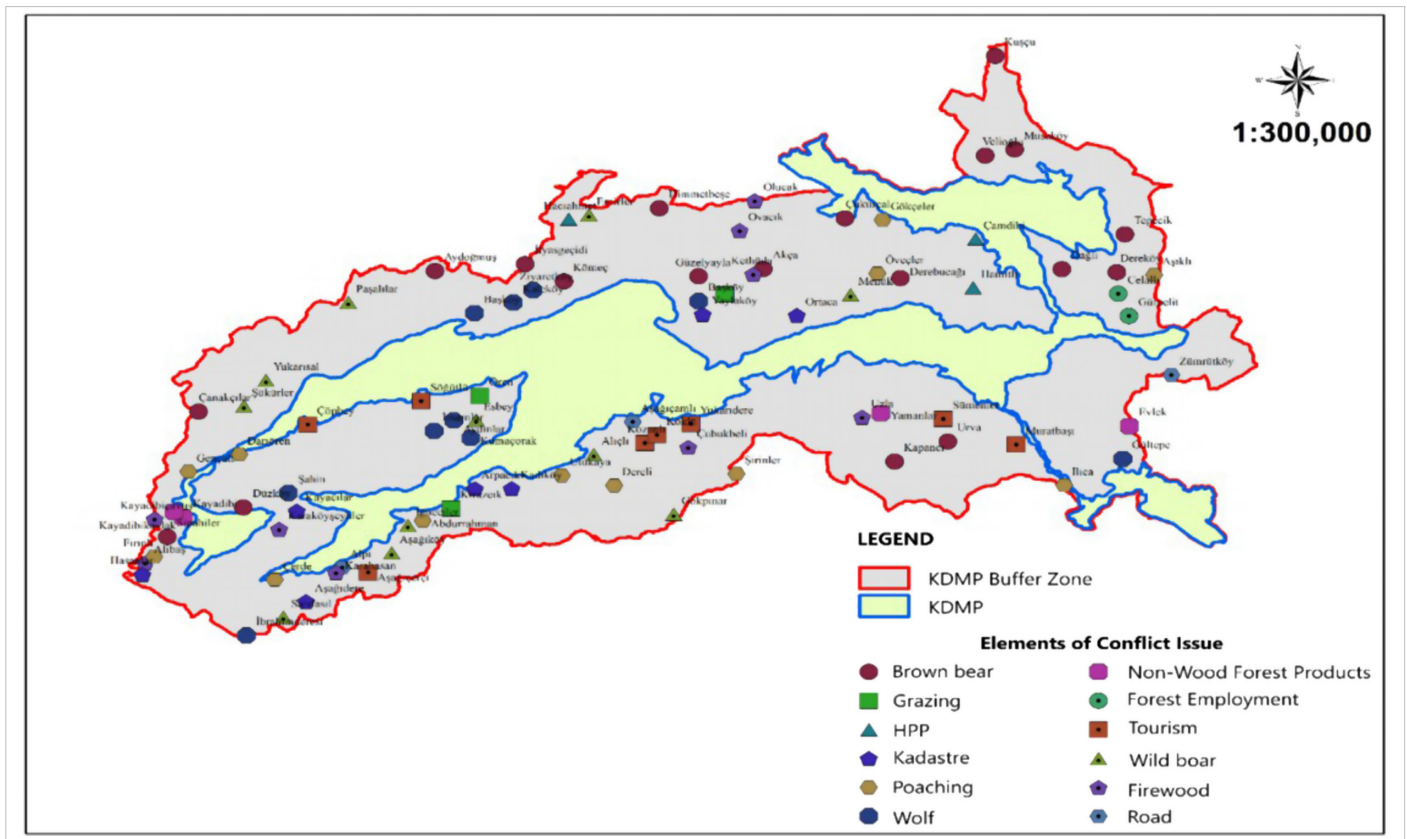


Figure 4.
 Conflict Map of the Küre Mountains National Park.

national parks believed in rumors that the national park administration had released predators such as wolves and jackals into the region.

Although the permanent population around KMNP has been declining over the years, wildlife encounters of those who return to their villages temporarily in the summer months to attend to their vineyards and gardens and for beekeeping create both fear and reaction. The reason for such encounters is that these areas, which are abandoned for the most part of the year, have been transformed back into the habitats of wild animals. Poaching, on the other hand, is another cause of conflict. Anti-poachers feel that the national park administration does not carry out field inspections frequent enough. As a result, wild animals, which suffer from food and water shortages due to drought, habitat fragmentation, and changes in biodiversity, enter settlements and harm agricultural products and domestic animals and cause conflicts. The deficiencies of KMNP administration in monitoring wildlife cause reactions.

Local residents see the inadequacy of accommodation facilities, food and beverage units, signs, signboards, and roads as a proof of the national park administration's reluctance to attract tourists to the area. Similarly, in different studies on KMNP, it was seen that the most important issue with ecotourism practices was the inadequacy of accommodation facilities (Görmüş et al., 2015).

The conflicts between the local public and NGOs are based on the perception that NGOs remain silent on the issues regarding the national park. In his framework on protected areas, Lewis (1996) stated that

NGOs, which are considered to be neutral, should be included in conflict management.

In this study, the conflicts in KNMP were attempted to be revealed. In this context, it was determined that there exist various conflicts regarding the national park management practices, tourism activities, forest resources, and wildlife management processes in KMNP. The conflicts in the area are mostly due to the inadequacy of the national park administration and its shortcomings in public relations.

It should be noted that there are conflicts at the organizational level as well as at the level of individuals. It is necessary to ensure the coordination and cooperation of the national park administration with other public institutions, organizations, and commercial enterprises in order to solve the problems and minimize conflicts.

Lack of information is another major cause of conflicts. In order to eliminate its inadequacy in terms of promotion, information, and education activities, it is necessary for the national park administration to focus on informing the public about the PA that is the national park and about the administration itself as an institution. Appropriate tools should be used for informative efforts. Otherwise, misinterpreted information will continue to cause conflicts in defense of perceived threats.

The inadequacy of the mechanisms monitoring the use of resources raises concerns about the sustainability of resource values, which are observed to be used insensibly and improperly. Area monitoring and inspection mechanisms should be strengthened in order to increase

the level of people's sensitivity for the conservation of biological diversity.

While the national park administration thinks that they mostly use "problem solving" and "complying" styles in resolving the conflicts, the local people claim that the administration mostly uses "dominating" or "avoiding" styles as a solution. As a result, the study determined that, among the conflict management solution strategies, "one-sided solution" and "solution with the decision of the third party" strategies were applied. In addition, there are examples where win-lose and lose-lose strategies are applied. However, it is clear that reconciliation and mediation techniques would be useful for a win-win strategy in conflict management about natural sources.

Conflicts between local communities and wild animals in the form of crop loss, attacks on domestic animals, and beehive damage can be mitigated by the implementation of policies that allow appropriate strategies and actions to be developed for compensation of damages. It will be beneficial to fulfill this need, which is also included in the KMNP long-term development plan, during the plan revision.

The continuity of cultural values can be ensured by opening courses that aim to revive traditional handicrafts, wood carving, and the manufacture of dolls with local clothing and by establishing promotion and sales areas in high foot traffic spots.

Security units (gendarmerie), local administrations, and forestry organizations especially find the national park administration inadequate in terms of area protection and state that the capacity of the national park officials should be developed and their numbers should be increased. However, the protection of the area is the common duty of all of these stakeholders. Therefore, there is a need for a coordination-based protection model.

The institution that looks most favorably upon the declaration of the national park is the gendarmerie. On the other hand, it is striking that the village heads, who are the representatives of the local people, have negative views on the declaration of the national park. Interviewees from the public sector, private sector, and the local people experience especially communication-related conflicts with the national park authorities. So much so that, even on issues related to the national park, the above-mentioned parties prefer to communicate with the forest management directorate, gendarmerie, village heads, or other stakeholders rather than communicating with the national park authorities themselves. There is a need to establish communication channels that will strengthen the relationship of the national park management with the stakeholders.

Beekeeping in forest areas is carried out in all districts of Kastamonu province at varying levels. On the other hand, because brown bears damage locals' beehives, brown bear-human conflict is more prevalent in the parts of KMNP within the borders of Kastamonu. The people who consequently suffer financial losses are constantly expressing their grievances and expecting support.

The degree of awareness of the prohibitions related to the national park on the Kastamonu side of KMNP is higher than on the Bartın side. This may be due to the fact that it is geographically easier for the public in Kastamonu to access the resource values in the national park and that the warnings about the use of those resources are made more frequently on the Kastamonu side. In addition, although it still is a

low-intensity activity, area-guiding services are present in Kastamonu, in contrast to the Bartın side. First of all, field guidance should be made more systematic and active. Thus, a new source of income can be provided to the local people and the destruction of natural assets in the area can be prevented.

Although the national park administration states that the investments in tourism are distributed equally, the local people on the Bartın side claim that the investments are mostly made on the Kastamonu side.

When examining the conflict map that illustrates the stakeholder relations, it is seen that the attitudes of the local people and the stakeholders toward the national park administration and the national park area were partially positive in the first years after the establishment of KMNP. Nevertheless, established relations weakened over time and conflicts began to appear. For this reason, there is a need for a governance style that will strengthen the relations between the national park and the local people. For this, an effective conflict management approach should be developed.

According to the map in which the conflicts in the area are analyzed, wild boars are seen as a common threat in almost all villages. Product losses caused by wild boars in the villages whose livelihoods depend on hazelnut production and the losses caused by brown bears in the beekeeping villages put a financial strain on the producers. On the other hand, even those who live in villages that are far from the national park borders have held the national park and national park administration responsible for their conflicts with wild animals as their level of knowledge on the extent of the authority of the national park administration is low.

In this study, the root causes and possible consequences of the conflicts in KNMP were attempted to be revealed through conflict analysis. In order to effectively manage conflicts in the field, a participatory management model that includes all parties of the conflict is needed. It is evident that conflict mitigation measures and conflict resolution suggestions that can be developed as a product of such an organizational model would make significant contributions to the protection, use, and management of the national parks.

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