

**Towards establishment of national parks in Northern Ireland:
suitability, meeting mandates and seeking consensus**



Nicola Jayne Allen

BSc (Hons) International Travel and Tourism Management

Ulster Business School
Ulster University

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ABSTRACT

National parks benefit from the highest levels of environmental protection in the world. Yet, Northern Ireland is the only region within the United Kingdom to elude such a status. Complexities within national parks link to ecological protection, the use and enjoyment of natural resources while also sustaining local livelihoods. This generates entrenched positions by stakeholders living within these settings. However, to date, research focuses on the failings to establish a national park with very limited research aiding the movement of stakeholders from 'positions of issues' to 'positions of interests' in order to find common ground.

This research aims to assess the potential of national park establishment based on suitability of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) located in Northern Ireland and find consensus between stakeholders that safeguard the national park tri-mandates of 'conservation', 'use' and 'sustainable livelihoods'. To achieve this, the study investigated best practice from best case exemplars, measured attractiveness of AONBs based on suitable attributes, and investigated stakeholder positioning regarding their willingness to compromise against a fully-protect to fully-develop scale. The research design comprised of a mixed methods approach which employed an exploratory multi-phase sequential strategy. It utilised both primary and secondary data including in-depth interviews, content analysis, maps and documentary sources. The data collection took place between September 2018 and October 2020.

Firstly, the findings revealed 'partnership', 'negotiation and mediation', 'communication, engagement and empowerment', 'adhering to the national park mandates', and 'aligning to national park status' were all concepts of best practice aiding pre and post national park issues between stakeholders. Secondly, the findings highlighted the most attractive AONBs in Northern Ireland based on natural, built and tourism attraction attributes. Lastly, the findings demonstrated that there has been progress toward the support of national park establishment in Northern Ireland. Stakeholders displayed willingness to compromise, aligning to the park mandates and placing superiority on ecological protection over the use of resources. This research culminates by presenting a conceptual model on identifying the space along the fully-protect to fully-develop continuum which allows for 'compromised mandates' to be

satisfied whereby ecological integrity is not compromised by the desire to promote recreation and tourism use and opportunities that facilitate sustainable livelihoods. As such, the conceptual model identifies common ground and potential negotiation to expand that space with the potential third mandate of 'sustainable livelihoods' being the key to unlocking the conflicting scenario between the traditional national park dual mandates. As a result, the research contributes knowledge toward stakeholder movement involving positions and interests to seek consensus and reduce the risk of conflicts in a protected area context.

Keywords: national parks, mandates, stakeholder interests, common ground, Northern Ireland.

ABBREVIATIONS

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ASSI	Area of Special Scientific Interest
BR	Biosphere Reserve
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CCS	Countryside Commission for Scotland
CNP	Cairngorms National Park
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
LDP	Local Development Plan
LLTNP	Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MNR	Marine Nature Reserve
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPCA	National Park Conservation Association
NPS	National Park Service (US)
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSA	National Scenic Area
PMP	Park Management Plan
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDNP	South Downs National Park
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UK	United Kingdom
UNEP-WCMC	United Nations Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
US	United States
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WHS	World Heritage Site

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This thesis has its central focus on gaining a wider understanding of the process of national park establishment for regions that have yet to set aside areas that can be accorded with the highest level of protection. National parks have evoked a considerable body of scholarly research where national parks are examined with reference to tourism activity from the perspective of the impacts generated (Butler and Boyd, 2000; Eagles and McCool, 2002; Hall, 2008; Colhoun, 2008; Selman, 2009; Mayer et al., 2010; Reimann et al., 2011), understanding the relationship between national parks, tourism and local communities (McNeely, 1995; Nepal, 2000; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Stone and Nyaupane, 2016; Curcija et al., 2019), the role of partnership in park management (Boyd and Timothy, 2001; Buckley and Sommer, 2001; Wilson et al., 2008; Bramwell and Cox, 2009; Austin et al., 2016); and stakeholder engagement (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Buono et al., 2012; Rao, 2013; Stringer et al., 2017; Mannetti et al., 2019). As such, many of these elements result in conflicts where resolution is sought (Ritchie, 2000; Tudor et al., 2014). Surprisingly less attention has been paid to research that examines the actual process of park establishment, compared to research that has examined management failure and other strategies post-designation (Illsley and Richardson, 2004; Darcy and Wearing, 2009; Svajda and Fenichel, 2011; Bell, 2013; Mumich et al., 2020). There are few places that cannot boast of having a national park; Northern Ireland, the geographic focus of this thesis, is one exception having failed to set aside areas afforded the highest degree of protection from modern day development and use.

There is a unique history as to why this is the case and it is important that narrative is offered here in this introductory chapter before the author offers a general commentary on potential research contributions, the overall aim and related objectives and the structure the thesis takes.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In the past 150 years, the movement and popularity of national parks virtually spread to most countries around the globe (Butler and Boyd, 2000). The idea of a national park is generally embraced as an acceptable image and brand which can be regarded as special (Butler and Boyd, 2000; Eagles and McCool, 2002). The main obligation of national parks is the conservation and preservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity which creates a problematic conflict as these areas are typically used for local livelihoods; therefore, formulating a conflicting relationship between the dual mandates, protection versus use. Today, this relationship is increasingly challenging with increasing visitor numbers to many national parks and community empowerment becoming increasingly important for management of such landscapes. Consequently, such a designation brings economic, social and environmental benefits but also possesses negative connotations. Issues can arise from governance, tourism, and conflicts between stakeholders and communities (Jamal and Getz, 1999; Eagles, 2009; Reimann et al., 2011). Despite these issues national parks are represented as the highest protected environmental status globally. However, in recent years socio-economic development has evolved into a significant element within national park systems, particularly in the United Kingdom (UK). This element facilitates the sustainable development of local communities' livelihoods alongside the protection of the landscape. Therefore, this movement attempts to balance an effective management approach by integrating socio-economic gain with proper protection of natural heritage in a sustainable manner. However, it is emphasised that conservation and protection of such areas takes precedence over socio-economic development.

After World War II, the UK countryside and Ireland rapidly changed and took on a more consumptive/development role (Marsden, 1999), which sought to incorporate environmental and economic land use along with worldwide sustainability agenda (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998; Cantore et al., 2011). The protection of specific lands viewed as having ecological value was part of this countryside shift creating a protected area system including national parks. On the contrary, Northern Ireland was the only region of the UK not to follow this movement. In doing so, the Northern Irish countryside suffered limited growth and investment which as a consequence sheltered itself from increasing globalised economic opportunities, particularly from the tourism industry

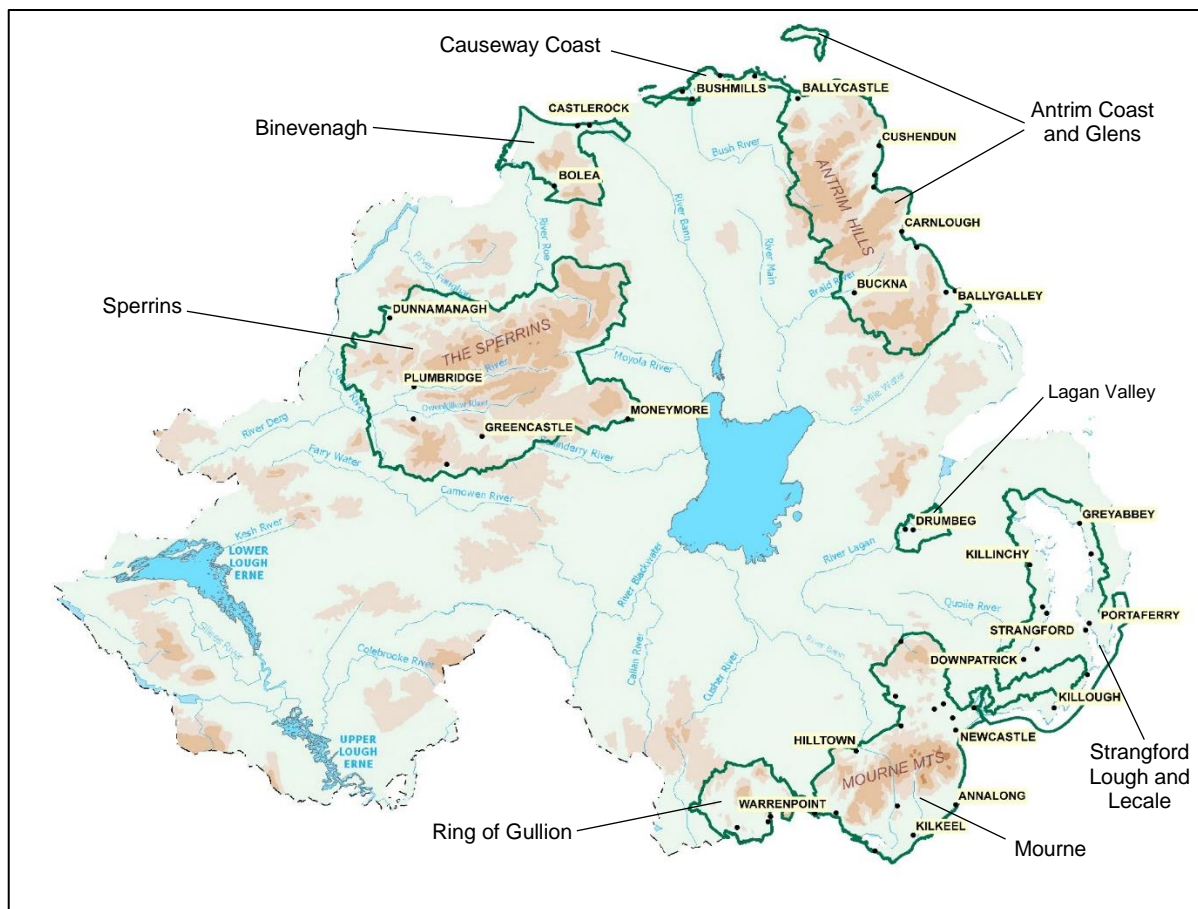
(Bell and Stockdale, 2015). In recent decades since the peace process (post 1998), the image of Northern Ireland and its tourism industry has undergone a transformation but one that is highly dependent on its natural and cultural environment. Yet, the sustainability and conservation of these environments has not kept up with the development for recreation and tourism activities. As such, national parks are deemed to be one mechanism for managing the tourism and natural resource paradox, particularly in Northern Ireland (Bell, 2013). Subsequently, Northern Ireland endeavoured to support conservation goals by relying on the setting up of Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONBs), which are recognised as a lower protected status of the natural landscape (Boyd, 2016).

AONBs in England and Wales are seen as being equally valuable as national parks and on par legally for protection of nationally important landscapes (Natural England, 2011). Nonetheless, AONBs have no statutory management or planning power unlike national parks where this responsibility sits with National Park Authorities, who also possess the right to prevent insensitive development. However, AONBs are chiefly managed by local authority advisory committees, partnerships or local trusts set up by local councils and government which lack many statutory management rights. As a result, it is debated that AONBs as a type of protected area, particularly in Northern Ireland, are being offered inadequate land protection and insufficient funding to manage their natural and cultural resources (Bell, 2013), and in turn possess limited opportunities for sustainable development which current legislation fails to embrace (DOE, 2011). In addition, AONBs are not legally obliged to provide public recreational opportunities whereas this is under the remit of national parks which subsequently place more emphasis on conservation. Furthermore, it is emphasised that the existing legislative Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985 is outdated for future national park designation and inadequate as a management mechanism for AONBs and future national parks in Northern Ireland (DOE, 2011).

This research specifically focuses on understanding stakeholders' stance towards establishing of a national park across different areas within Northern Ireland. In order to regionalise the national park debate, all AONBs must be investigated to understand the suitability and credibility of specially acclaimed areas to justify best selection for national park designation. Northern Ireland encompasses eight AONBs. Figure 1.1

shows their location and illustrates that differences exist between these designated areas, in terms of landscape characteristics, size and presence of settlements. Consequently, these landscapes offer attributes suitable for lands designed as national parks, namely areas unique ecological integrity, places of interest and opportunity for sustainable development to take place for local livelihoods, recreation and tourism. Table 1.1 below provides some statistics for each AONB across Northern Ireland.

Figure 1.1: Map of AONBs in Northern Ireland



Source: McKenzie (2019).

Table 1.1: Northern Ireland's AONBs: Establishment year and size

Name	Year Established	Size (ha)
Antrim Coast and Glens	1988	72,488
Binevenagh	2006	16,594
Causeway Coast	1989	4,213
Lagan Valley	1965	3,880
Mourne	1986	57,965
Ring of Gullion	1991	15,328
Sperrins	2008	118,205
Strangford Lough and Lecale	2010	52,503

Source: Author.

Historically, the introduction of the national park concept in the UK during the 1940s was explored in Northern Ireland with the recommendation of five areas for national park designation. These included small areas within the Antrim Hills, the Sperrins, the Mourne, Slieve Gullion, and Lower and Upper Lough Erne to the west. Subsequently, with no enabling legislation in place at the time no national parks were designated. Decades later, Northern Ireland endeavoured to establish a national park and the idea was discussed on several occasions after laws were passed in 1965 (Amenity Lands Act) and 1985 (Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Act) to allow for the creation of such spaces (Bell and Stockdale, 2009). The majority of this debate was based around the Mourne AONB which the government saw as being the most suitable, credible and justified area for this landscape status (Bell and Stockdale, 2016). It was first proposed as the 'Celtic National Park' before being renamed as 'Mourne Mountains National Park' in 1998 (Bell and Stockdale, 2009). However, the lack of detail around the proposal and who was responsible for the planning powers meant the proposal failed. At the turn of the millennium, a re-examining process began to reopen the debate on the Mourne Mountains National Park. Progress was made with public consultations taking place in 2006 and 2007 which later failed to designate the area as a national park. In a working paper, it was found that this consultation failed due to opposition from local stakeholders and the community, particularly farmers (McAreavey, 2010). This opposition was re-emphasised during the second consultation in the same area in 2011 to 2013. Conclusively, the then Environment Minister in the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mark H Durkan, decisively put the National

Parks Bill on the shelf until a later date (BBC, 2013). Since then, a Mourne Mountains National Park Bill was submitted to the Assembly in 2017 with the aim to reopen the debate (Keelan, 2017), however no progress has been made and the Bill was never officially discussed by ministers. To this day, national park proposals are still on the shelf.

The main reasoning for the failure to designate the Mourne Mountains as a national park was due to opposition from landowners which included a fear of additional land and farming use restrictions (Bell and Stockdale, 2009). In addition, stakeholders and locals had concerns over possible environmental impacts if visitor numbers increased, possible rising house prices and lack of clarity over access arrangements meaning a change to access and occupiers' liability was a worry for many landowners. However, in Northern Ireland accessible rights and occupiers' liability is an underlying problem. Unlike England, Wales and Scotland, visitors and walkers do not have the right to roam freely across Northern Ireland's countryside. The local government found that the occupiers' liability legislation was unclear in terms of the balance between the rights of landowners and visitors wishing to access land for recreation purposes (DOE, 2011). Furthermore, some upland public access areas are based on a de facto agreement with landowners who feared this de facto would become a formalised agreement with a national park designation resulting in increased level of liability placed on them. However, in a consultation document from the Department of Environment, now known as Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, it was stated that this would not be the case as the de facto brings higher liability whereas a formalised agreement would in reality decrease a landowners' liability (DOE, 2011).

Moreover, the primary legislation drafted from the early 2000s, if it was to be carried through into law, lacked key details such as how a national park would affect the local community and lacked the necessary information on aims, management and planning structures (Bell and Stockdale, 2016). This primary legislation also included a reordering of the recognised aims attributed to national parks where economic and social development took precedence over conservation of the landscape, therefore being opposite to national park counterparts elsewhere both in the UK as well as internationally.

Furthermore, the support for a national park in the Mourne was jeopardised with a dominant and influential 'anti-national park' position taken by the local media which fuelled mistrusts which in turn increased opposition (Bell and Stockdale, 2016). In addition, some major stakeholders who own land or are directly affected by national park designation were excluded from the initial stages of the consultation, creating a lack of trust in the overall process (Bell and Stockdale, 2016). Finally, it was understood that the failure to establish a national park in the Mourne was due to stakeholders and local residents regarding the idea as a 'done deal' by the government as the debate was not regional, and therefore did not consider other potentially suitable areas across Northern Ireland (Bell and Stockdale, 2016). It is this lack of regional debate that underpins the rationale for this research which is discussed in the next section.

1.3 RATIONALE

Given the controversial history of attempts towards national park establishment in Northern Ireland, it is self-evident that stakeholders play a vital role in the success or failure of not only national park designations but of wider natural resources management (NRM) projects. In a broader business context, previous research has found that an organisation cannot ignore legitimate stakeholders' interests and issues as this can damage the long-term reputation, value and sustainability of that organisation (Freeman, 1984; Sternberg, 1997). In this context of NRM studies including national park establishment, central government and management bodies need to consider the views of all stakeholders impacted by any scheme and ultimately be included in the decision-making process. In the past, perceived low power stakeholders, such as communities, lacked empowerment and high rates of exclusion in NRM projects which have only in recent decades started to shift towards greater engagement, empowerment and inclusion (Eneji et al., 2009; Idrissou et al., 2013; Huyett, 2013; Matilaninen and Lahdesmaki, 2014). In addition, it has been previously highlighted that NRM involving elements of conservation need to be in-depth to expand the knowledge on the realities of participation and local contexts which are not conducted by Government or State bodies (Sarkki et al., 2015).

NRM studies on privately owned lands typically involve an array of stakeholders creating a complex scenario and increasing the chances of conflict. However, some stakeholders entrench themselves into positions according to their issues and own interests. Therefore, this research aims to contribute theoretically to understanding stakeholder positioning in terms of consensus-building in natural settings, with particular reference to national park establishment and park mandates. The research will generate a conceptual model based on stakeholder positioning and degrees to which possible conflicting parties are willing to compromise while meeting national park mandates. In doing so, this understanding could help build consensus before formal conflict resolution mechanisms are required to reach agreement.

In the case of Northern Ireland, the country lacks updated legislative policy, adequate management structures and financial support for all protected areas; especially so for AONBs. As such, national park designation of any AONB faces some difficulty from the start due to outdated legalisation. Previous research conducted in Northern Ireland investigating national park designation has focused on the failings on consultation processes, governance and deep-rooted political adversities (Bell and Stockdale 2009; McAreavey, 2010; Bell, 2013; Bell and Stockdale, 2016). None of these studies examined potential common ground with stakeholders on the topic of national park establishment. Consequently, by understanding stakeholders' stances and interests in a non-formal process could have the ability to gauge stakeholders' willingness to compromise and seek consensus in order to adapt and update legislative policy to be robust and meet national park mandates within the interests of stakeholders. In addition, it is evident that the appropriate management of protected areas and national parks should be included in regional strategies and planning processes (Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Saviano et al., 2018). Therefore, the introduction of a national park to Northern Ireland would not only have the opportunity to produce updated legislation but encourage sustainable management for ecological integrity as well as for tourism. A national park would allow for effective integrated management, sufficient statutory powers to promote conservation, sustainable livelihoods and offer ongoing prospects for additional funding. Conservation and good environmental practice has suffered for many years in Northern Ireland with a sustainable tourism strategy, the first of its kind, only being created by Tourism Northern Ireland in late 2019 and it could be debated that a national park would go a long way in supporting these principles and aims.

Furthermore, in a practical sense, the rationale for undertaking this research opens up the regional debate to ascertain the suitability and attractiveness of all AONBs within Northern Ireland for national park designation. As highlighted in section 1.2, formally only the Mourne AONB has ever been proposed for national park establishment. Therefore, by opening up the debate to all eight areas allows for an equal opportunity for the AONBs to be assessed based on their attributes alone before engaging with stakeholders in the best suited areas. In doing so, the research will provide insight into the wider process of establishing national parks in areas where they have not been previously considered. In addition, the rationale is based on research that is driven through the use of learning from best case exemplars in terms of stakeholder engagement and conflict resolution for pre as well as post national park designation. In light of the above comments, attention shifts next to outlining the overall aim and specific objectives of the study that was undertaken.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

In light of the above commentary on background and research rationale, the overall aim for the study was as follows:

"To explore the potential of a national park in Northern Ireland, identifying suitable candidate areas, ensuring national park mandates are upheld and assessing the stance of key stakeholders"

To assist the achievement of this aim, the following four objectives were identified:

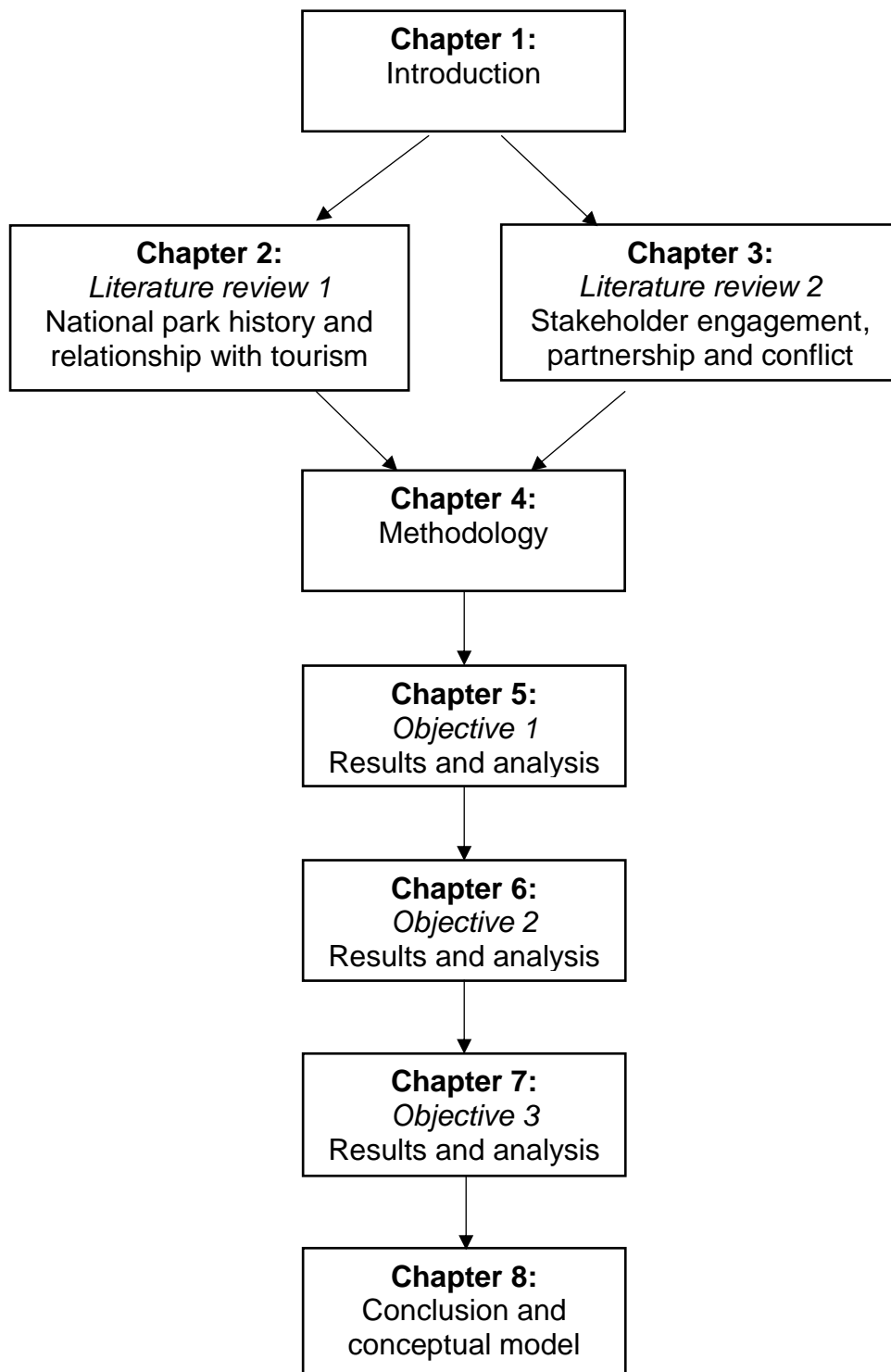
- To learn from best practice how other regions of the United Kingdom moved toward national park establishment.
- To comprehensively undertake an audit of a number of candidate regions across Northern Ireland based upon suitable attributes for national park establishment.
- To identify issues of 'common ground' between stakeholders in preferred regions that would facilitate dialogue toward national park establishment.
- To develop a 'common ground' model that aligns with national park mandates and has replicability for countries yet to establish a national park.

1.5 THESIS STRUCTURE

Proceeding on from this introductory chapter, the thesis is divided into an additional seven chapters. Figure 1.2 below illustrates the overall structure the thesis takes. A brief description of each chapter follows.

Chapter 2 focuses on the contextual setting of national parks, including their historical development and how that history over time relates to national parks as places where tourism can take place. The reader is offered a quick snapshot of national park establishment across a century and a half, including how the term national parks has been defined and how they have emerged as part of a wider protected area systems. Specific reference is made to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) categorisation system of protected areas. Attention is also paid to understanding the changing mandates of national parks over time and how tourism becomes entangled within a wider complex relationship between places to be protected and places to be used. The chapter also provides scholarly critique of the research undertaken on tourism impacts within a national park context, the role of communities within parks, and the emergence of a wider debate of national parks as being exemplar landscapes that promote sustainability. Much of this discussion helps to frame discussion across the scholarly community that in some geographic areas a tri-mandate for national parks has wider applicability than the traditional dual mandate between that of protection versus use.

Attention in Chapter 3 shifts toward examining the scholarly literature pertaining to stakeholder engagement, partnership forming and strategies that can be implemented to avoid conflicting situations emerging. This is examined within a wider NRM context including national parks.

Figure 1.2: Overall structure of the thesis

Critique here focuses on ‘best practice’ in terms of participation and the challenges involved with engaging stakeholders, particularly at the local community level. As

community empowerment has grown in recent years, the concept of partnership has become critical to the success of NRM projects. Critique is offered on stakeholders, partnership, conflict and resolution. Conflict resolution techniques (negotiation, bargaining and mediation) are explored in turn as ways to build consensus between stakeholders. The chapter concludes by examining scholarly theoretical thinking around the concept of 'stakeholder common ground' and the scope this offers in the development of a conceptual model for this study.

Attention shifts in the next chapter to setting out the research methodology, including data collection methods used for this study. Broadly, the study adopts a mixed methods sequential strategy that employs a pragmatic philosophical stance to enable the examination of multiple realities in order to solve specific research objectives whilst allowing for a degree of flexibility. Primary and secondary data collection methods are utilised, namely in-depth interviews, content analysis, maps and documentary sources. In turn, this fourth chapter of the thesis considers the methods used, their strengths and weaknesses for each of the research objectives previously stated. Commentary is also offered on the data analysis strategy adopted and its justification in terms of its evaluation from a validity, reliability and generalisability ethics perspective.

There are three analysis and discussion chapters, each given over to a specific research objective. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the first objective, and uses a mix of primary and secondary data collection methods to understand national park establishment through best practice of recently established national parks in England and Scotland (the details of these exemplars is presented within this chapter) and how partnership forming and overcoming conflict are essential in achieving 'best practice' for any consideration of national park establishment in Northern Ireland. Chapter 6 provides detailed description of how the second objective was researched, the development of an attractivity scorecard to ascertain which of the eight AONBs across Northern Ireland were best suited for national park consideration. The process involved in the design and implementation of the attractivity scorecard is set out in this chapter. Based on the outcome of applying the scorecard, the top 3 AONBs were further examined through engaging in a process that involved in-depth interviews of these AONB managers. Findings here include management thinking around the

scorecard, stakeholder engagement, views on national park establishment and the role of tourism if an AONB was uplifted to national park status. Chapter 7 presents the findings of the third objective based on deep interviews of stakeholders across selected AONBs. Focus here is around the possibility of gaining consensus or the willingness of stakeholders to compromise their views in order to meet the mandates of a potential new national park for conservation, use and sustainable livelihoods. The findings and discussion offered in this third and final analysis chapter provides the basis of the development of a conceptual model which is presented within the final concluding chapter which also sets out the wider contributions of the research presented in the thesis along with potential areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL PARK HISTORY AND RELATIONSHIP WITH TOURISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the national park concept in a global context and examine the relationship that has existed between national parks and tourism. Globally, national parks are virtually everywhere and can be seen as a 'brand' for countries to promote their national identity, demonstrate their responsibility towards conservation and also attract tourism. This chapter draws attention to how national parks across the world are different depending on country and how international guidance for protected areas and national parks was slow to be developed. It is important to understand the connection between national parks and tourism as one of the leading economic sectors within these settings. However, it is vital to also recognise the relationship with a third component: the community. In addition, all three components must acknowledge and appreciate the complexity of protecting and conserving ecological integrity, natural resources and biodiversity with the use from tourism and many other industries.

The chapter is structured as follows: section 2.2 discusses the global spread of national parks, including their history with specific reference to the UK and Ireland, given the context of this doctoral research. Section 2.3 examines the evolution of the definition of the term 'national park', which is followed by section 2.4 which reviews the development of a wider term of 'protected areas' and how this is important with regard to national parks and specifically national parks within a UK and Ireland context. Section 2.5 explores the relationship between national parks, tourism and, where appropriate, local communities. This relationship is framed within a wider debate of the evolution of national park mandates, where the focus is on protection, use as well as landscapes that offer scope for sustainable livelihoods. Section 2.6 offers a summary and conclusion to the chapter.

2.2 GLOBAL HISTORY

The initial concept of 'parks' derived from medieval England and evolved from large areas, mainly for game hunting, to modern spaces for gardens and recreation for local

people to enjoy as industrialisation and cities grew (Taylor, 1995). Despite the long historical existence of 'parks', the pioneering idea of 'national parks' was not established until the 1830s by George Catlin. Miles (1995) noted how explorers in the western state of California, including Catlin, were attracted by the wilderness of Yosemite Valley and intrigued by the surrounding areas' potential of endless resources and economic opportunity. The idea of a national park was introduced; however, it took time for the possibility of protecting areas and park creation to reach influential people in government. Yosemite was essentially the first model to the national park concept (Miles, 1995), yet surprisingly Yosemite (established in 1890) was not declared the first national park.

Hall and Frost (2009a) identified that there are three notable broad stages in the history of national parks. Firstly, the end of the nineteenth century; secondly, the first half of the twentieth century; and lastly, the mid twentieth century onward. The next subsection takes each of these three time periods in turn giving a brief overview of the global history of national parks and their establishment.

2.2.1 Stage one: end of 19th century

In the mid nineteenth century, there was emergence of urbanisation, deforestation and overuse of land occurring globally. There was a need for open 'natural' areas for people and relaxation; therefore, recognition that the land needed to be preserved for future generations (Boyd and Butler, 2000).

Thirty years after the idea of national parks in 1832, the United States (US) was the first to establish national parks which would be viewed as being isolated wilderness and monumental in their nature. In 1872, Yellowstone National Park was declared the first national park in the North West of the US. Bartlett (1989) discussed the original act for Yellowstone and highlighted that new park lands would be protected from human settlement. Moreover, the act declared that lands were set aside "as a public park or pleasuring ground for benefit and enjoyment of the people", and "rules and regulations which would provide for the preservation from injury and spoliation of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonders within said park, and their retention in their natural condition" (Bartlett, 1989, p.2). In other words, Yellowstone

was formed for recreation and preservation of natural resources within the park boundaries.

Essentially, Yellowstone was seen as a template and provided seven main principles (Table 2.1) which would influence future models of national parks (Frost and Hall, 2009a). The principles demonstrate a summary of significant characteristics of national parks, however these were not fixed, therefore the initial model was open to adaptation.

Table 2.1: Seven principles from Yellowstone National Park model

1	Term national park first created. The term can be transferred to be used elsewhere not just one specific place. Captures the public's imagination.
2	First reservation of natural wonders and monumental scenery. Highlights the need for preservation of the natural environments. 'Monumentalism' dominates the national park concept for decades.
3	Preservation is for enjoyment for the people. National Park established for tourism management. Prevent inappropriate tourism development.
4	National Park is highest level of status with highest level of governance.
5	National Park is permanent protected area.
6	Scientific investigation and public debate help establish national park.
7	Indigenous people considered very little, creating conflicts.

Source: Adapted from Frost and Hall (2009a, p.28).

Yellowstone was the first stepping stone in the chain which would gain popularity of the idea. The concept spread further to English-speaking settling countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Frost and Hall, 2009b). It was only five years later after Yellowstone that Australia declared the Royal National Park its first national park, with Canada following in 1885 with Banff National Park. New Zealand established Tongariro National Park as its first in 1887. By 1900, a total of 14 national parks had been established between Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US combined. These early national parks all followed the wilderness typology; however Banff National Park was considered an anomaly of these as it was established as a European traditional spa with emphasis on hot springs, a grand hotel and spectacular scenery (Boyd and Butler, 2000).

During this early period, lands designated for national parks were seen as 'worthless' as they could not be developed for other human uses (Miles, 1995; Boyd and Butler, 2000; Hall and Frost 2009b). In addition, there was a lack of funds for protection and a lack of legislation regarding management. As a result, the US Army were the protectors of parks from 1886 to 1918 with little legislation which was not put in place until 1894, some 22 years after the designation of Yellowstone (Miles, 1995). Movements towards more adequate legislation and management of national parks would not occur until the first half of the twentieth century. The early parks were developed around the 'worthless lands' thesis; how ironic that would prove to be as many of these were soon to be visited by early tourists; setting a precedent for parks to be viewed through a tourism lens; albeit elite early travellers, which would later give rise to the acceptance of national parks as places to be visited and open to tourists.

2.2.2 Stage two: first half of 20th century

It was during this particular period that the concept of national parks began to spread globally beyond predominantly English-speaking countries. Europe was slower to respond to the designation of such areas. Countries such as Italy, Greece, Sweden and Romania were amongst the first to establish parks, a considerable 37 years after Yellowstone. One major intention of national parks was to generate great symbolic power, while inferior countries saw the concept as a way to affirm their national identity (Frost and Hall, 2009c). Sweden designated a phenomenal nine national parks at the same time in 1909, including Sarek National Park and Abisko National Park, two of the most famous out of the nine. Between 1909 and 1950 a total of 36 national parks were designated in Europe, including Killarney National Park in Ireland.

The 'powerhouse' countries, such as the UK, France, and Germany focused their intention more towards park creation in their African and Asian colonies rather than creating national parks at home. Therefore, they lagged behind in land conservation during the first half of the twentieth century. Namibia, a German colony, was the first African country in 1907 to have an established national park. However, the first Asian national park was not established until 1933 in the Philippines which was under Spanish rule. Taman Negara National Park in Malaysia was the first park in a British colony, established in 1939. Frost and Hall (2009b) noted that cultural and

environmental influences, such as the lack of public lands, caused the lateness to establish national parks in the 'powerhouse' homelands.

The African and Asian national park model was quite different from the Yellowstone model. Primarily, these parks were established to protect wildlife not the scenery (Frost and Hall, 2009b) and did not place emphasis on public enjoyment. The European 'powerhouse' countries were concerned with the preservation of game animals and therefore took an international approach to national park establishment especially within Africa. The Asian park model was somewhat alike to African parks; though colonialism was of a different nature and Europe was aware not to unsettle local communities with growing nationalism occurring by establishing parks on private land (Frost and Hall, 2009b).

In the early 1900s, the US moved toward the need for protection for historic ruins, places and landmarks. This resulted in the passing of the Antiquities Act which instated areas as 'national monuments' which brought into being a confusion between the distinction of 'parks' and 'monuments' (Miles, 1995). Consequently, the system of parks was already beginning to evolve showcasing possible complications for the future. With the establishment of parks and monuments continuing through this early period and with a growing emphasis on conservation, the US government recognised that designation status did not guarantee protection and management of resources (Miles, 1995). As a result, in 1916 the US was the first country to develop an official government body, the National Park Service (NPS), to oversee the protection and management of national parks whilst monuments would be overseen by another government department decades later. In addition, the National Park Association, now known as National Park Conservation Association (NPCA) was founded in 1919 as an independent organisation which aimed to be a citizen watchdog of the NPS and focused on the promotion and educational use of national parks.

Along with the establishment of the NPS in 1916 and the early evolution of park systems, American legislation (the National Park Service Act) acknowledged the dual mandates, preservation and use, for the first time (Boyd and Butler, 2000). Boyd and Butler (2000, p.20) stated that "the wording of the Act confirmed the dual mandate of parks, namely the conservation of park resources as well as providing for the

enjoyment of the public". At the time this acknowledgement may have seemed insignificant, however the dual mandates would go on to play a vital role in national park management.

Towards the latter years of this period, the US not only were establishing 'national monuments' and 'national parks', there was a surge of new 'park' types including National Recreational Areas, National Battlefields, National Historic Parks, and many more (Boyd and Butler, 2000). These parks were not purely based on wilderness and historical ruins any longer, as Zinser (1995, cited by Boyd and Butler, 2000) identified three distinct groups of parks: natural value parks, historical value parks, and recreational value parks. This development of the park 'system' would lead into the mid twentieth century and help shape the development of national park systems within individual countries recognisable today.

2.2.3 Stage three: mid-20th century to the millennium

After the Second World War, a resurgence to designate national parks occurred. By this time it was seen that any country was not a 'true nation' without a national park (Hall and Frost, 2009a). It was during this period that national parks were growing in importance not only for national identity but also from the perspective as places for conservation of nature and of safeguarding biodiversity. But they remained attractive from a recreation and tourism point of view. In the period 1935 to 1975, the US established 15 national parks, Canada established 12 parks, Australia established 145 parks (60 in Queensland State alone), and New Zealand established 7 national parks. With the success of national park creation elsewhere, the European 'powerhouse' countries recognised they could not stand back and only establish parks in their colonised territories. The United Kingdom was the first of the 'powerhouse' countries to establish its first national park in 1951, namely the Peak District National Park, an incredible 79 years after Yellowstone. France and Germany, mainly due to their involvement with the war and land ownership issues, did not establish their first national parks until 1963 (France) and 1970 (Germany). In total between 1935 and 1975, 79 nations had established one or more national parks, and between 1976 and 2009 another 51 nations had national park status.

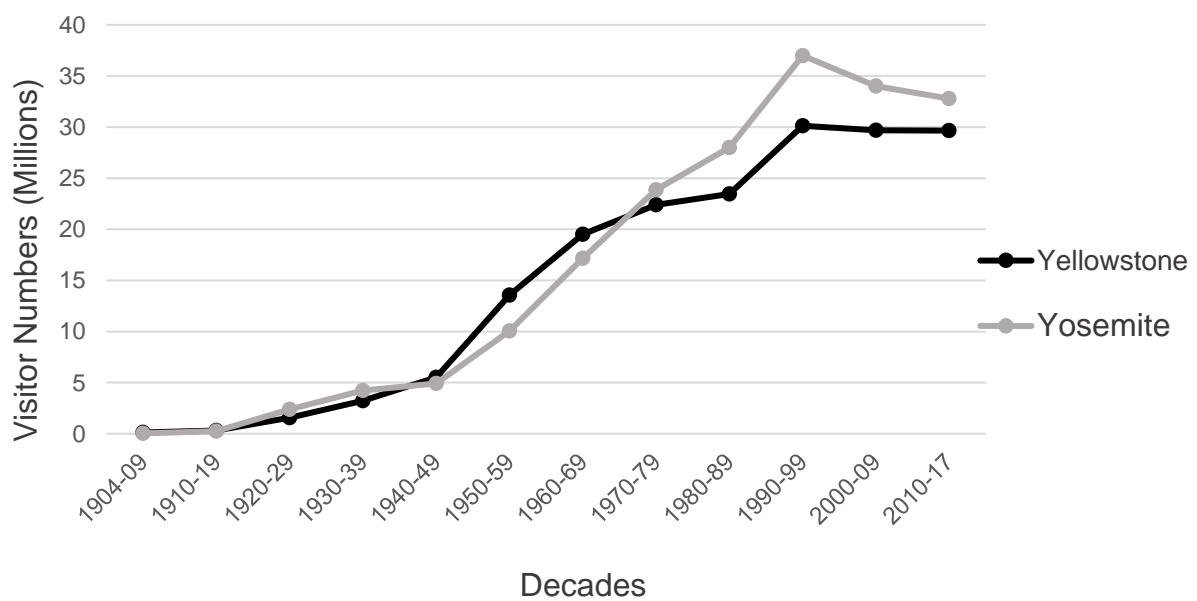
Unlike the American, African and Asian national park models, the European national park model was quite different. Many European countries lack publicly owned land; therefore it was unsuitable to establish a national park on the model of requiring a large area that would be owned outright by the government and not be in the hands of private landowners. Moreover, European national parks had the difficulty of more stakeholder conflicts either in support of or against national park establishment. This resulted in national park models beginning to evolve into single country models of national park systems that could be justified against national and local circumstances. This, however, created very different models of national parks, contrasting the largely 'wilderness/wildlife' model of the early parks (US, Canada, New Zealand, Africa, and Asia) with the 'working and living landscapes' model (many European nations including the UK) of national parks and resulted in debate over which model was the most effective from a management perspective.

With regards to management during the mid-twentieth century, individual countries were passing their own policies and legislations to regulate some methods of management of protected areas. Similar to the US, Canada followed this example in the 1950s by recognising the concerns of balancing preservation and use. With a high demand on land in Banff National Park, a comprehensive zoning scheme was not employed in the park until the 1970s (Boyd and Butler, 2000). From this scheme, it was seen that this "provided a broad framework for land management, attempting to balance the system's twin mandates of preservation and visitor enjoyment..." (Boyd and Butler, 2000, p.24). It was not until 1969 that the International Union of the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) developed a new classification around the wider label of protected areas, that national parks (wilderness model) were viewed as a distinctive category to those where national parks were developed on working landscapes that included private lands. Up to this point, the definition of a national park was open to many interpretations. The IUCN protected areas list would continue to develop and be updated in years to come (this is discussed later in section 2.4).

During the mid-twentieth century with the advancement in car ownership, better transport systems and the revelation of the Second World War ending, populations in many developed countries were beginning to appreciate outdoor spaces, and this

resulted in an increase in tourism and recreational activities within national parks. From a US perspective, looking at two of the first national parks ever established, Figure 2.1 shows the comparison of visitor numbers to Yellowstone and Yosemite National Park; both followed a broadly similar trajectory of slow growth followed by substantial rise of numbers between the 1950s and the 1980s. These decades of ever increasing visitor numbers only start to plateau and even decline by the 1990s but this is visitation at very high levels. It has been reported that across the 1990s, both parks had attracted record numbers; Yellowstone attracting over 30 million visitors and Yosemite attracting over 36 million (Ziesler, 2017).

Figure 2.1: Yellowstone National Park and Yosemite National Park visitor numbers



Source: Author. Adapted from NPS (2018).

As the figure shows, there has been some decline in visitor numbers to Yosemite but in recent years around the centenary of the establishment of the national parks service numbers were recorded as being the highest ever (4.25 million to Yosemite, 5 million to Yellowstone) as a result of deliberate campaign of promoting parks as places to visit and enjoy. US national parks are part of a wider national park system; one that takes in national battlefields, national monuments and national recreation areas, but which still accounts for a quarter of all visits across the system (Ziesler, 2017).

To date, there is over 3,600 national parks in the world today. However, there is no exact figure regarding total number of visitors to national parks in a worldwide perspective. Despite this, in 2014 researchers attempted to conduct the first study ever that gauges the global visitation numbers in all protected areas worldwide. They estimated that there could be approximately around eight billion visits per year with expenditure at approximately around US\$600 billion (Balmford et al., 2015). The review will now move its attention towards the historical standpoint of the UK and Ireland in terms of national park establishment.

2.2.4 History of UK and Ireland national parks

The concept of protecting scenery originated in the Lake District as far back as 1810; a considerable time prior to Yellowstone being established (MacEwen and MacEwen, 1982). Nevertheless, the concept of national parks in the UK took a long time to be established. The Second World War was a decisive factor in national park creation as after the war, there was demand of green recreational spaces for families to relax and national parks were seen as an easy solution to the needs of post-war Britain (MacEwen and MacEwen, 1982). Parker and Ravenscroft (2000, p.98) noted that British “national parks effectively had to fit into a rural economy which was dominated by commercial agriculture and regulated by a land use system dominated by urbanised forms of control”. In order to meet these needs, the ‘National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949’ was passed by Parliament to enable the government to establish national parks across England and Wales. Part I of the Act (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, p.1) stated that National Parks Commission will be in charge of:

- (a) the preservation and enhancement of natural beauty in designated National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), and
- (b) encourage the provision or improvement of facilities for enjoyment and opportunities for open air recreation and the study of nature.

In addition, Part II of the Act defined the areas for designation as “extensive tracts of country in England and Wales” (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, p.3). A civil servant and architect involved in the setup of the UK national park

system stated that these areas should be confined to “relatively wild country, to mountains and moors with associated farm lands of their valleys and fringes, heaths, rocky and infertile coastlines and the rougher parts of numerous downs, hills and forests” (MacEwen and MacEwen, 1982, p.13).

The first UK national park to be established was the Peak District National Park in 1951, followed by ten more national parks between 1951 and 1957; these are listed in Table 2.2 with their year of establishment and size noted. A distinct pattern evolved; first extensive development of a system of predominantly upland and heath landscape parks across the 1950s, followed second by incremental additions to the system in the late 1980s before more recent parks were established post 2000. Discussion of parks in Scotland is discussed later. Currently 15 national parks comprise the UK system; the majority being found across England.

Table 2.2: UK national parks (England, Scotland and Wales)

Name	Year Established	Size (ha)
Peak District National Park	1951	143,700
Lake District National Park	1951	236,200
Snowdonia National Park	1951	217,600
Dartmoor National Park	1951	95,300
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park	1952	62,100
North York Moors National Park	1952	143,400
Yorkshire Dales National Park	1954	217,900
Exmoor National Park	1954	69,400
Northumberland National Park	1956	104,800
Brecon Beacons National Park	1957	134,400
The Broads National Park	1989	30,300
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park	2002	186,479
Cairngorms National Park	2003	452,729
New Forest National Park	2005	57,000
South Downs National Park	2010	162,400

Source: Author. Adapted from National Parks UK (2017a).

As the 1949 Act was legislation specifically for England and Wales, this left behind Scotland and Northern Ireland from establishing national parks. Scotland had the potential for great national park success and also adopt a model that was closer to the American ‘wilderness’ park (MacEwen and MacEwen, 1987) compared to its English

and Welsh counterparts. A report in 1945, known as the Ramsay report, proposed five national parks for Scotland (Loch Lomond/Trossachs, Glen Affric, Ben Nevis, Cairngorms, Loch Torridon) (CCS, 1975). These proposals failed, and the Countryside Commission for Scotland (CCS) chose to identify national scenic areas (NSAs) in the 1970s; the equivalent to AONBs found in the rest of the UK. It was at the turn of the millennium that legislative change took place in the form of 'The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000' which saw the establishment of Scotland's national parks, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park in 2002 followed by the Cairngorms National Park in 2003.

As for Northern Ireland, the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order of 1985 provided the legal basis to allow for national park establishment. However, no national park was designated and instead AONBs became the highest level of protected areas. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, two separate proposals for a national park in the Mourne Mountains were put forward for public consultation in 2007 and 2011 which both failed due to lack of local support.

The British national park model has always been inconsistent with the other parks worldwide. The American 'wilderness' national park system in the 1950s was still the template for designation of such areas especially as definitions and guidelines would not exist until much later. With the legislation in place in Britain, it was thought that there was an element of wilderness protection, yet there was no attempt to exclude human population from the lands and restore complete natural beauty before human intervention. MacEwen and MacEwen (1982) stressed that the British approach to national park creation has misled visitors with the name 'national park' and have taken an imaginary step to preservation of wilderness landscapes when the land has diverse ownership and a diversity of uses. Additionally, the purpose of British national parks did not align with the dual mandates of landscape protection as well as their use for outdoor recreation which included tourism (Parker and Ravenscroft, 2000). The issue of equal priority was addressed in the 1974 and current Sandford Principle which states that "where irreconcilable conflicts exist between conservation and public enjoyment, then conservation interest should take priority" (National Parks UK, 2017b).

Compared to the UK, Ireland was relatively faster at national park establishment. As mentioned in section 2.2.2, Ireland established Killarney National Park in 1932 which originally was the Bourn Vincent Memorial Park. The ‘Bourn Vincent Memorial Park Act’ was passed by the Irish Government to create the national park, although the park was expanded in the 1970s and was re-designated under the IUCN categorisation system in the 1990s (Craig, 2001). After Killarney, it took over 50 years for another Irish national park to be designated. Table 2.3 shows all six Irish national parks with their designated year and size.

The Irish national park model is somewhat similar to the European model as the land is owned by the State, but this is only after the government purchased the land from the local communities. With regards to size, Irish parks are relatively small compared to the British and European models.

Table 2.3: National parks in Ireland

Name	Year Established	Size (ha)
Killarney National Park	1932	1,932
Glenveagh National Park	1984	16,540
Connemara National Park	1990	2,957
The Burren National Park	1991	1,500
Wicklow Mountains National Park	1991	20,000
Ballycroy National Park	1998	11,779

Source: Author. Adapted from WorldAtlas (2018).

With the late formation of definitions and protected area categorisation system, it is unsurprising that the historical context of national park establishment across the world is confusing with a ‘no one size fits all’ scenario. In light of this, this review now shifts to examining the development and revisions of what was meant by the term ‘national park’.

2.3 EVOLUTION OF THE ‘NATIONAL PARK’ DEFINITION

The confusion over what a national park was historically was due to a lack of clarified definition for many years. The definition evolved over the years from various sources, but these are seen more as viewpoints rather than official definitions. It was close to

100 years after the designation of Yellowstone before an official international definition was affirmed.

Miles (1995 cited US 42nd Congress Act, 1872) stated that national park areas should be reserved from 'settlement, occupancy or sale' and land should be dedicated for public enjoyment. This is the idea of what national parks should be and lacks certain concepts such as conservation or protection of wildlife. Despite this, it could arguably be the first definition of the national park concept. However, it is thought the first definition was stated in 1916 when the NPS in the US was established. Frederick L. Olmsted stated the purpose of national parks was "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (MacEwen and MacEwen, 1982, p.4). This definition is somewhat clearer and had the intentions of clarifying how potentially new national parks should be chosen and managed with the national park system which encompasses the idea of conservation, nature, wildlife and human use.

With the concept of setting areas aside for national parks growing globally, other countries built upon the NPS 1916 definition. In 1944, Ron Cooper affirmed the importance of public access to parks in New Zealand's National Park Act. The Act (Hall and Frost, 2009a, p.10 cited Thompson, 1976, p.11) stated:

"a national park is...a wilderness area set apart for preservation in as near as possible its natural state, but made available for and accessible to the general public, who are allowed and encouraged to visit the reserve. In such an area the recreation and enjoyment of the public is a main purpose, but at the same time the natural scenery, flora and fauna are interfered with as little as possible."

Cooper embedded the American concept of wilderness and enjoyment into the definition, and essentially highlighted that the priority of parks is for recreational purposes and conservation was a secondary objective.

Furthermore, in 1945, John Dower recognised the confusion surrounding defining national parks. Dower defined national parks as (MacEwen and MacEwen, 1982, p.13 cited Dower, 1945, p.6):

“an extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation’s benefit and by appropriate national decision and action, (a) the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved, (b) access and facilities for open-air enjoyment are amply provided, (c) wildlife and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected, while (d) established farming use is effectively maintained.”

Again, similar to Cooper’s definition, the concept of wilderness and enjoyment are present in Dower’s definition. Conversely, the priority of such areas is placed on conservation and preservation rather than enjoyment for the first time since the beginning of national parks existence. Dower’s definition played a vital role in the passing of legislation for the creation of national parks in England and Wales.

It was not until 1969 that the first major international definition came to be from the IUCN. MacEwen and MacEwen (1982, p.15 cited IUCN, 1975) stated that a national park is:

“a relatively large area (a) where one or several ecosystems are not materially altered by human exploitation and occupation, where plant and animal species, geomorphological sites and habitats are of special scientific, educative and recreative interest or which contain a natural landscape of great beauty and (b) where the highest competent authority of the country has taken steps to prevent or eliminate as soon as possible exploitation or occupation in the whole area and to enforce effectively the respect of ecological, geomorphological or aesthetic features which have led to its establishment and (c) where visitors are allowed to enter, under special conditions, for inspirational, cultural and recreative purposes.”

Despite the definition being quite lengthy there is an overriding emphasis on conservation of natural beauty and the landscape over the utilisation of the area for

enjoyment, recreation and other human activities. Additionally, it is the first time a definition has introduced scientific, educational and cultural elements whilst placing importance on ecological protection. The introduction of this IUCN definition enabled many governments to begin to understand the choices of areas for national park designation.

In 1994, the IUCN revised the definition of national parks in an attempt to simplify and further clarify the meaning. The IUCN (2008, p.51) revised the national park definition in 1994 to state the following:

“natural area of land and/or sea, designated to: (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for future generations, b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area, and c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational, and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.”

Moreover, the 1994 definition introduced the component of water based national parks. Compared to the 1969 definition, a drawback of this definition is there is a missing reference to scale or size of the area and reference to wildlife which have both been present previously. In addition, the introduction of the term ‘environmentally and culturally compatible’ indicated there was more a positive emphasis on recreational use of natural resources within these areas.

The 1994 definition has further been revised by the IUCN in 2008. The current national park definition encompasses the elements of the previous statement whilst being more directly rigorous, including the size and wildlife elements. The current definition (IUCN, 2013, p.16) states that a national park is a:

“large natural or near-natural areas protecting large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also have environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities.”

This definition reiterates the prominence of conservation over recreational use in these protected areas, reinforcing the national park dual mandates. The attention of the review shifts to a discussion of the next section pertaining to protected areas, their types, whilst recognising the global categorisation system that is currently in place to distinguish the highest level of protected areas globally.

2.4 PROTECTED AREAS AND CATEGORISATION

As the national park system developed and expanded globally, there was a growing need for a system regarding all types of protected areas. The previous section demonstrated the evolution of a 'national park' definition, however a protected area system also needed to address the definitions and objectives of different types of protected areas which clearly outlined the criteria for such areas. As protected areas were being declared, there was no clear distinction of what exactly a 'protected area' was. The IUCN created a category system and development guidelines to enable countries to measure an area they deem to need protection against international guidelines and help governments employ a particular category to the area.

Essentially, protected areas are for biodiversity and conservation (IUCN, 2013). They play a crucial role in maintaining and preserving ecological processes on land and in the world's oceans. Protected areas can be seen as an attempt of national and local governments to preserve the unique characteristics and habitats of areas, conserve the cultural and heritage of people's livelihoods, and similarly provide economic opportunities. On an international level, the conservation of protected areas enables preservation and sustainability of the planet for future generations and help towards combatting the effects of climate change (Selman, 2009; IUCN, 2013; Moyle and Weiler, 2017). Protected areas can include an array of ecosystems (i.e. grasslands, deserts, forests, marine) and can vary in size, shape and location. Though, "the degree to which protection actually occurs depends on adequate funding, diligent enforcement, and the strength of citizen support" (Prato and Fagre, 2005, p.4).

For over 120 years since the first protected area was designated (Yellowstone National Park), there was no clear definition of the term 'protected area'. A report by the IUCN in 1978 failed to state this to many countries despite the increase of the wide

variety of protected areas being established. This set in a period of confusion especially with the protected areas categorisation system also being developed at the same time. The terminology of 'protected area' and elucidation of categorisation of these areas were not detailed until 1994. The IUCN (2008, p.9) stated a 'protected area' was an:

“area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.”

This definition was formulated to encompass the newly developed 1994 protected area categorisation system (discussed further in section 2.4.1 below). The overall definition aims to emphasise that areas must be managed long term with regard to maintaining biodiversity and other resources. However, one key shortcoming to this definition is that it did not recognise the term 'conservation', despite the main priority of the IUCN being designed around the conservation of nature. Therefore, an explanation was needed to address this issue, and this came about through the IUCN's updated guidelines of the protected area management categories in 2008. The new IUCN's (2013, p.8) revised and current definition states that a protected area is:

“a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”

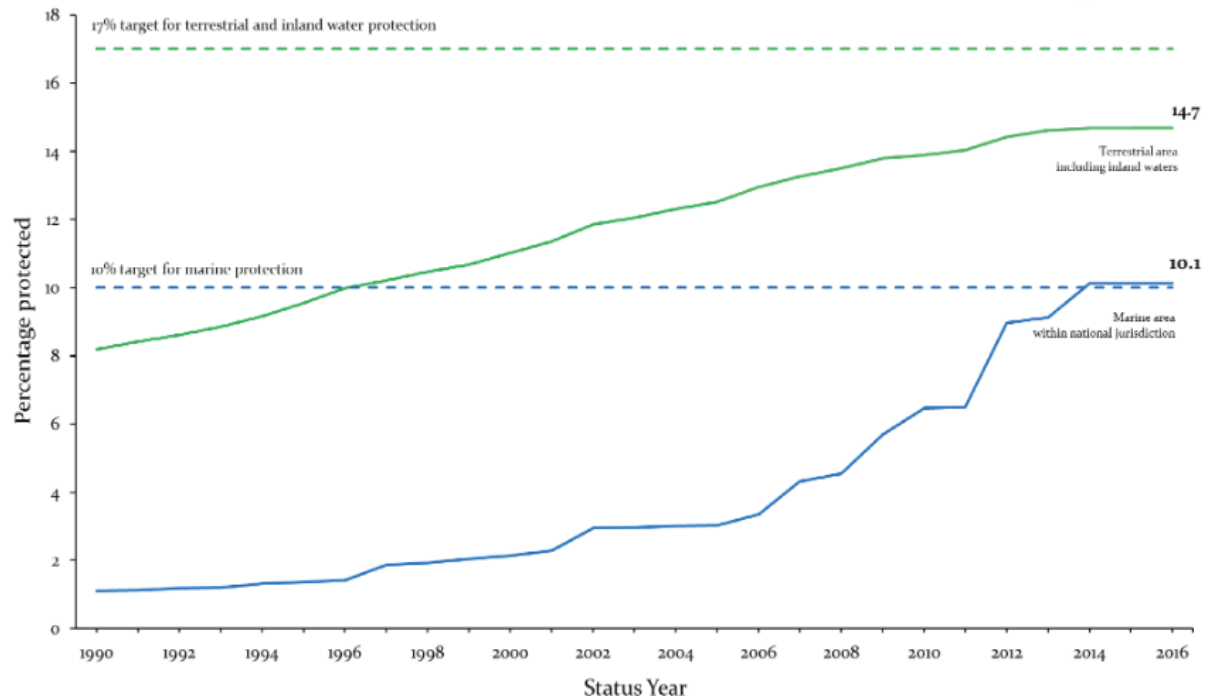
This revised definition aims to elucidate that all protected areas should place priority on conservation of nature as the primary objective over all other values and this should be a long-term position in employing management techniques for conservation. Furthermore, the definition clarifies that a protected area may not just be land and/or sea but can be any type of geographical space including inland water or coastal space.

In order for a nation to declare any type of protected area, the IUCN have further stipulated that before a country chooses and submits assignment criteria, they must first make sure that the area meets the 'protected area' definition. Therefore, any area

for consideration must fundamentally fulfil each word or phrase of the definition and also meet the primary objective to conserve nature over any secondary objectives which come into conflict with this.

Today, the IUCN works alongside the United Nations Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) in biodiversity conservation of protected areas and helps assist in decision-making strategies with regards to management of sensitive land and sea areas. The latest UNEP-WCMC and IUCN report (2016) stated there is a total of 217,155 designated protected areas (202,467 terrestrial and 14,688 marine) across 244 countries and territories globally. The report illustrated a graph showing the increase of protected areas by percentage from 1990 to 2016 (see Figure 2.2). In 2016, 14.7% of the world accounts for terrestrial and inland water protection and 10.1% accounts for marine protection in the world's oceans (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2016). In addition, by 2020 the UNEP-WCMC aimed to have 18% of the world's terrestrial and inland water to be protected. This was an ambitious aim that failed to be achieved with current protected area coverage equalling 15.4% of the world.

Figure 2.2: Percentage coverage of protected area designations by year



Source: UNEP-WCMC (2018).

In the UK, there are 27 different types of protected areas which separate into international sites, national sites, regional sites and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or private sites (IUCN NCUK, 2012). Table 2.4 demonstrates the most notable and recognisable protected area types in the UK.

Table 2.4: Other protected area types in the UK

World Heritage Site (WHS)
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
National Scenic Area (NSA) (Scotland equivalent to AONB)
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (England, Wales and Scotland)
Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) (Northern Ireland equivalent to SSSI)
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Special Protection Area (SPA)
Biosphere Reserve (BR)
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)
Marine Nature Reserve (MNR)
National Nature Reserve (NNR)

Source: Author.

However, every country has their own set of protected areas with different legislation and governance which do not meet the IUCN protected area categorisation guidelines which is discussed next.

2.4.1 Development of IUCN categories

The IUCN was first established in 1948 and was set up initially “to encourage international cooperation and provide scientific knowledge and tools to guide conservation action” (IUCN, 2018). The organisation has “become the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it” (IUCN, 2018), which encompasses nature conservation, human interaction and economic development in its drive towards sustainability of protected areas. The IUCN works closely with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which was originally established for restoring a culture of peace universally while the Second World War was occurring. Today, the organisation is more recognisable for its designation and management of World Heritage Sites

(WHS). The early relationship allowed the IUCN to examine the impacts that human activity was having on biodiversity and natural landscapes in the mid-twentieth century before focusing on releasing publications regarding protection of at-risk wildlife species and the development of a protected area categorisation system.

In 1962, the IUCN along with the now World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), formerly known as Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, prepared a 'World List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves' for the world's first conference on national parks (IUCN, 2013). The first attempts at a categorisation system was the UN List of Protected Areas in 1966 and it had a simple categorisation of national parks, scientific reserves and natural monuments (IUCN, 2013). This categorisation was added to in 1978 with a proposed ten categories which was separated into three main groups (A, B and C). These groupings are illustrated in Table 2.5. The drawbacks of this category system included not having a clear definition of the term 'protected area' in 1966 and there was a lack of a marine dimension to the system (IUCN, 2013).

Table 2.5: IUCN proposed categorisation in 1978

Group A	Categories for which WCPA have responsibility:
I	Scientific reserve
II	National Park
III	Natural monument/national landmark
IV	Nature conservation reserve
V	Protected Landscape
Group B	Categories of importance to IUCN (not in scope of WCPA):
VI	Resource reserve
VII	Anthropological reserve
VIII	Multiple-use management area
Group C	Categories part of international programmes:
IX	Biosphere reserve
X	World Heritage site (natural)

Source: IUCN (2013, p.4).

In 1994, sixteen years after the ten category system had been established, the IUCN shortened the list and evolved a more robust system that would be easier understood and applied. In addition to clarifying definitions of each category including the term

'protected area', the IUCN (2008, p.4) based the categories on the following key principles:

- Implementation of primary management objectives
- Assignment criteria not based on commentary management effectiveness
- Categories are international
- National names can vary
- All categories are important
- Gradation of human intervention is implied

In comparison to the 1978 categorisation, Table 2.6 demonstrates the simplified and current system in use today. The main changes to the system resulted in the removal of categories VI to X. Categories I-V have been expanded into six management groups with one sub-divided (Ia and Ib) and name changes for clarification. Since the development of the protected area guidelines in 1994, the IUCN have further published guidance on applying the criteria to specific geographical areas and governance of categories which continues to be updated and presented in revised publications (IUCN, 2013). The current version of guidelines published in 2008, and reprinted in 2013, was drawn up in association with the WCPA which resulted in the publication of the 'Best Practice Protected Areas Guidelines'. The report provides further in-depth assistance on certain types of protected areas such as 'large-scale marine protected areas', 'wilderness protected areas' and 'urban protected areas'.

Table 2.6: IUCN protected area categorisation system

	Category	Brief Description
I	<i>Strict Protection:</i>	
Ia	Strict nature reserve	Area mainly for science with strict access
Ib	Wilderness area	Area preserved for wilderness without human habitation
II	National park	Area protected for ecological processes and recreation
III	Natural monument/feature	Area conserved for specific natural feature
IV	Habitat/species management area	Area conserved through management intervention
V	Protected landscape/seascape	Area protects distinct integrity with human interaction
VI	Protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources	Area conserved for use of natural ecosystems and resources sustainably

Source: Author. Adapted from IUCN (2013).

Category I is subdivided into Ia (Strict nature reserve) and Ib (wilderness area) due to different restrictions on human activities within the area. Category I is described as strictly protected areas protecting biodiversity, geological and geomorphological features with limited access of human visitations, use and impacts (IUCN, 2008). This category has the highest level of restriction which only offers authorised human interaction for monitoring and scientific research purposes. Shark Bay Marine Park in Australia is a protected category Ia marine area and is also an UNESCO WHS which has enlisted strict access because of large marine animals such as turtles and sharks, as the name suggests. The majority of category Ia areas have the title ‘nature reserve’, ‘ecological reserve’, ‘biological reserve’ or ‘conservation park’. Category Ib protected areas are described as large unmodified and slightly altered regions which retains and preserves natural character and condition, without influence of permanent human habitation (IUCN, 2008). These areas would have relatively higher level of human activity compared to category Ia, however the usage of such areas is permitted by indigenous and small local communities. With the first national parks being designated for wilderness in the US, the term ‘wilderness’ unsurprisingly had to be distinguished as a management category. A large proportion of wilderness parks are to this day in the US and each have their own regulations in place. For example, Table Mountain

Wilderness Park in Nevada restricts all motorised vehicles and bicycles entering the area (Wilderness Connect, 2018).

As mentioned, Category II (national park) protected areas are referred to as being large natural or natural areas which protects ecological processes which also takes account of environmental and cultural compatibility regarding education, scientific, spiritual and visitor prospects (IUCN, 2008). Human interaction with such areas are very highly dependent on popularity of each park, therefore these areas have in place a tourist infrastructure and possible zoning procedures. For instance, The National Park of Abruzzo, Latium and Molise in Italy utilises a four-tier zoning management scheme which clearly defines the levels of restriction of human activity and interestingly, each zone demonstrates a similar correlation with other IUCN categories (IUCN, 2008).

Protected areas designated under Category III (natural monument or feature) are defined as areas that protect specific natural monuments including landforms or geological features (IUCN, 2008). Although, these monuments or features can be relatively small in size and human visitation can be very high as recreational and tourist activities are encouraged. Category III protection is limited to only that natural monument or feature and therefore does not protect the whole ecosystem or ecological processes surrounding it. For example, in Switzerland, the Rhine Falls is a large waterfall that is protected but recreational activities such as boat trips and canoeing at the falls are allowed (Rhein Fall, 2018).

Category IV (habitat/species management area) are areas that protect particular species or habitats through priority management (IUCN, 2008). The habitat sites are based on biodiversity nature and using traditional management approaches for ensuring the survival of habitats and/or species. Therefore, the area is small and requires regular intervention through management rather than through restriction or recreational usage. Laohu Valley Reserve in South Africa is a relatively large area designated to restore the population numbers of South China tigers as well as managing the habitat by removal of invasive plants within that landscape (Save China's Tigers, 2018).

Category V (protected landscape/seascape) category aims to balance the interaction between human and natural integrity of the land and/or sea with implementation of traditional management techniques and preservation of the areas values. The IUCN (2008, p.20) describes this category as the following:

“a protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.”

Therefore, there can be a high level of human visitation in these protected areas. The Gulf Islands National Seashore in Florida employs a balanced approach between recreational opportunities (e.g. biking, fishing, camping) and conservation of marine and terrestrial wildlife (e.g. sea turtles, dolphins, herons) (Visit Pensacola, 2018). Furthermore, this category is commonly associated as being the UK national park model which is discussed later in the chapter.

Lastly, category VI (protected area with sustainable use of natural resources) are protected areas that conserve ecosystems and habitats whilst incorporating their cultural and traditional natural resource management values and systems (IUCN, 2008). These areas aim to sustainably manage the use of natural resources and conservation of ecological processes and habitats which encompass low levels of non-industrial use. The use of the areas by human intervention must be sustainable and have tourism or recreational opportunities as a secondary objective. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park was established under category VI in cooperation with the Australian Government to use and manage all ecosystem resources within the marine park in a sustainable manner (GBRMPA, 2018).

There has been one major misunderstanding that has occurred since the introduction of the IUCN guidelines which relates to the actual name ‘national park’. This confusion is that not all designated named national parks are under management objectives of category II. In other words, ‘national park’ is seen as a ‘brand’ name which can be established by meeting the objectives of any of the other categories. Additionally, “the

names of all protected areas except the ones in category II were chosen to relate, more or less closely, to the main management objective of the category” (IUCN, 2013, p.11). This is illustrated in Table 2.7 where examples of named national parks exist within each of the management categories. An example of this is Dipperu National Park (Queensland, Australia) is protected exclusively for scientific values and only allows access to authorised personnel for scientific research, management or monitoring purposes. Whereas, Expedition National Park (Queensland, Australia) is a protected ecosystem with sustainable use of its natural resources with low human interaction but not strictly restricted compared to Dipperu National Park.

Table 2.7: ‘National Parks’ in various categories

Category	Name	Location	Size(ha)	Date
Ia	Dipperu National Park	Australia	11,100	1969
II	Guanacaste National Park	Costa Rice	32,512	1991
III	Yozgat Camligi National Park	Turkey	264	1988
IV	Pallas Ounastunturi National Park	Finland	49,600	1938
V	Snowdonia National Park	Wales, UK	214,200	1954
VI	Expedition National Park	Australia	2,930	1994

Source: IUCN (2013, p.11).

Furthermore, the guidelines have identified it can be puzzling distinguishing the most suitable category and emphasises “the category should be based on the primary management objective(s) of the protected area” (IUCN, 2013, p.34). Moreover, 75% of the protected area must meet and be applicable to the primary objective (IUCN, 2013). Furthermore, it is recognised that the primary objective of these IUCN categories may be well defined but on the ground the management of the protected areas can vary in terms of their success (Svajda and Fenichel, 2011). The guidelines have recognised that confusion exists between category II and V which applies to this study. This review now shifts to examine the differences between these two categories and draws on the context of both the UK and Ireland national park system for wider discussion.

2.4.2 Differences between category II and V

With the confusion surrounding the term 'national park', it is critical to understand the difference between category II and category V as these categories are relevant to this thesis. As named national parks can be established under different management categories, it is important to note the categories of UK and Ireland's national parks. All 15 national parks within the UK (England, Wales and Scotland) have been designated category V, whilst all six national parks in Ireland are designated category II. It is imperative to understand the differences between these two categories to be able to classify which best suits any national parks which may be designated in the future in Northern Ireland.

As previously mentioned, category II (national park) by description aims to protect the large-scale ecological processes and the whole ecosystem within that landscape whilst incorporating the opportunities for spiritual, scientific, educational and recreational benefits. Table 2.8 illustrates the primary objective, other objectives, distinguished features and acknowledges the main difference to category V areas. The primary objective emphasises the protection of natural biodiversity with ecological and environmental structures and processes, indicating this has priority over the promotion of the area for educational and recreational purposes by the order in how these objectives are worded. From the point of view of 'other objectives', it is critical to highlight that these protected areas must consider the needs of communities and the usage of resources as to not affect the achievement of the primary objective. In other words, the conservation and protection of the ecological processes and integrity of the area is continuously the priority over the needs of human use whether that is by the local communities or recreational visitors.

Therefore, if a conflict arises, conservation and protection will take precedence. However, there is a political perception globally that these national parks are under increased pressure from recreational and tourism use in order to reap greater economic benefits (IUCN, 2008), resulting in certain national parks being exploited and the conservation of the area becoming a secondary priority. The distinguishing features and the main difference showcases that protected areas under category II must be in areas in a significant natural state before human interaction and essentially protect the

majority of the whole natural ecosystem. Furthermore, the size of such areas is typically large, and to ensure the preservation of the natural state there should be a minimal level of management interventions utilised. As mentioned previously, zoning is a commonly employed method used in the management of national parks in this category. Canadian national parks were the first to implement zoning and has an established zoning framework for all terrestrial parks which is mainly self-regulated to guide decisions regarding land management and visitor use (Thede et al., 2014).

Table 2.8: Scope for IUCN category II

Primary objective	To protect natural biodiversity along with its underlying ecological structure and supporting environmental processes, and to promote education and recreation
Other Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage the area in order to perpetuate, in as natural a state as possible, representative examples of physiographic regions, biotic communities, genetic resources and unimpaired natural processes. • To maintain viable and ecologically functional populations and assemblages of native species at densities sufficient to conserve ecosystem integrity and resilience in the long term • To contribute in particular to conservation of wide-ranging species, regional ecological processes and migration routes • To manage visitor use for inspirational, educational, cultural and recreational purposes at a level which will not cause significant biological or ecological degradation to the natural resources • To take into account the needs of indigenous people and local communities, including subsistence resource use, in so far as these will not adversely affect the primary management objective • To contribute to local economies through tourism
Distinguishing features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major natural regions, and biological and environmental features or scenery • Should be sufficient size with ecological quality • Long term with minimal management intervention • Composition structure and function of biodiversity should be in a significant 'nature state' or with high potential of restoration to 'nature state'
Main difference to Category V	Protected areas essentially are natural systems or in a process of being restored to natural systems – Category V are cultural landscapes and aim to be retained in its current state

Source: Author. Adapted from IUCN (2013).

Category V (protected landscape/seascape) areas aim to protect distinct land or sea characteristics that have developed over time from human interaction whilst encompassing their ecological, biological and cultural values. Preservation of ecological integrity is vital to the description of this category. Table 2.9 demonstrates

the primary and other objectives of category V areas, the distinguishing features and the main differences to category II. The primary objective emphasises the protection and sustaining of landscapes or seascapes which have been created through traditional management approaches from human interactions. This is further emphasised in one other objective stating there must be a balance between conservation and human interaction. This balance between conservation and use validates a clear link to the national park dual mandates. Also, a framework for community involvement linking to the management of these areas is an objective showcasing that the community is a key stakeholder in decision-making processes of this type of protected area. The distinguishing features in category V are separated into 'essential characteristics' and 'desirable characteristics'. It is important to note that nature, a balanced interaction and traditional land-use are all emphasised above recreational or tourism opportunities. Therefore, this clarifies the objective regarding recreation and tourism that it is not any more important than the other objective.

The main difference between category II and V is the human interaction that occurs within the protected area. In comparison category II could be seen to be more regulated and somewhat stricter than category V. Furthermore, in relation to protection, unlike category II, a category V area protects a fragmented part of an entire ecosystem and relies more heavily on regular traditional management techniques with community support and involvement. In addition, cultural values of the landscape and/or seascape are of importance in category V as these cultural characteristics have been developed over a long period of time from the local community and reflect the livelihoods of the people.

As mentioned, the UK employs category V for its national parks system whilst Ireland employs category II. For Northern Ireland this raises two questions of 'which category is best suited for any future potential national park(s)?' and 'do we follow the example of the UK or Ireland?'. There are three clear differences between national parks in the two regions, namely land ownership, governance and size. Firstly, in the UK, land ownership within national parks is mainly private, therefore these protected areas have the element of human involvement which has shaped the land and created the ecologically, biologically and culturally characteristics over time, meeting the description of category V. Additionally, Parker and Ravenscroft (2000) noted that

British national parks do not conform to the definition of 'national park' set out by the IUCN. However, in Ireland, the land within national parks have all been purchased by the Irish State government (Bell and Stockdale, 2009). Moreover, Craig (2001) suggested that Irish national parks may be more appropriately suited under the designation of category V due to the high quality of inhabited land involving human interaction, especially before State land purchasing occurred.

Table 2.9: Scope for IUCN category V

Primary objective	To protect and sustain important landscapes/seascapes and the associated nature conservation and other values created by interactions with humans through traditional management practices
Other Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain a balanced interaction of nature and culture through the protection of landscape and/or seascape and associated traditional management approaches, societies, cultures and spiritual values • To contribute to broad-scale conservation by maintaining species associated with cultural landscapes and/or by providing conservation opportunities in heavily used landscapes • To provide opportunities for enjoyment, well-being and socio-economic activity through recreation and tourism • To provide natural products and environmental services • To provide a framework to underpin active involvement by the community in the management of valued landscapes or seascapes and the natural and cultural heritage that they contain • To encourage the conservation of agrobiodiversity and aquatic biodiversity • To act as models of sustainability so that lessons can be learnt for wider application
Distinguishing features	<p><i>Essential characteristics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High and/or distinct scenic quality with significant habitats, flora and fauna and cultural features • Balanced interaction with people and nature which has endured over time and area has integrity or integrity can be restored • Unique or traditional land-use patterns (e.g. sustainable agricultural systems) <p><i>Desirable characteristics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for recreation and tourism • Traditional social organisations (i.e. livelihoods and beliefs) • Recognition by artists of all kinds and in cultural traditions (now and in the past) • Potential of ecological and/or landscape restoration
Main difference to Category V	Includes an option of continuous human interaction with the landscape and/or seascape – Category II includes minimal human interaction in order to preserve the best possible 'natural state'

Source: Author. Adapted from IUCN (2013).

Secondly, the IUCN recognises four types of governance of protected areas: governance by government, shared governance, private governance, and governance by indigenous peoples and local communities. Due to land in the UK being privately owned, the management of the national parks cannot be solely from government. However, protected areas may have multiple governance types, particularly in categories V and VI, with the possibility of falling under an overview of one authority (IUCN, 2008). This means that depending on relationships, the UK national parks can employ either shared or private governance which also encompasses an element of governance by local communities. In relation to Ireland, as the land is State owned, national parks are administered by the government under the State Property Act 1954, therefore any settlements or households are governed by the State. Furthermore, political speaking, as Northern Ireland is part of the UK, it could be debated that the region follows in line with the UK Government and not with the Republic of Ireland.

Lastly, with regards to the size of national parks, category II is stated as 'large natural areas' and usually category V protected areas are smaller. Though controversially, Ireland has three out of its six national parks below 3,000 hectares in size, whereas the UK's smallest national park is 30,300 hectares. The different sizes of national parks in the UK and Ireland were shown previously (see Tables 2.2 and 2.3, section 2.2.4). Moreover, as stated earlier in this thesis (see Chapter 1), the smallest AONB in Northern Ireland is 3,880 hectares, larger than three Irish national parks. Therefore, in terms of size, it could be seen as irrelevant in the designation of any potential national parks in Northern Ireland. By examining the differences of land ownership, governance and size, it is clear that Northern Ireland's landscape falls under category V. Also, as the category stipulates that human interaction over time has altered and modified the natural characteristics of the land, this further demonstrates how any future national parks in Northern Ireland would need to be established under the guidelines of this protected areas category. From examining the IUCN categories, it is clear that tourism plays a role in the use of natural resources within protected areas, especially national parks. It is therefore essential that attention now shifts to address the nature of the relationship between tourism and national parks.

2.5 TOURISM AND NATIONAL PARKS

Up until 2020 the tourism industry has grown increasing faster than any other industry over the last six decades and has become a global phenomenon with more accessibility for everyday people to travel and explore new destinations. International arrival numbers in 1950 were just 25 million, today these numbers have increased to 1.4 billion individual international trips (Roser, 2020). In 2018, the travel and tourism sector was the second fastest growing world sector, generating approximately 10.4% of global gross domestic product (GDP), contributing \$8.8 trillion to the world economy, while accounting for 319 million jobs (one in ten of all global jobs) (WTTC, 2019). The World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC, 2019) forecasted pre-covid-19 that by 2029, the sector will account for a total of 421 million jobs globally. Therefore, many governments see tourism as an economic opportunity for employment and economical profit.

The definition of tourism has evolved over the decades since the first attempts to define the term 'tourist' in the late 1930s. Debates existed in a bid to clarify the distinction between 'visitor' and 'tourist', and the distinction between 'domestic' and 'international' tourists (Page, 2015). These distinctions became more complex when terms such as 'travellers' and 'excursionists' are considered. The idea of travel became commonly linked to tourism and today both are interchangeable. Today, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2020) defines tourism as:

“Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure.”

The term 'usual environment' is seen to be critical within the definition and therefore has continuously been included across all definition revisions. This term is used to separate visitor and traveller and exclude travellers that regularly commute between

familiar locations such as places of study, work, friends' homes to the place of residence (Fletcher et al., 2017).

There are many types of tourism, known as niches, which are recognised and studied individually and collaboratively. Novelli (2004) recognised sport tourism, health and well-being tourism, medical tourism, film tourism, slow travel, low-cost travel and volunteer tourism as all trends and forms of tourism that people seek to explore. Additionally, cultural tourism, business tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, city tourism, mountain tourism, gastronomy tourism, education tourism, water/coastal tourism and rural tourism have all become tourism types recognised by the UNWTO (2019). In recent years, tourist boards globally have gathered and increased momentum in marketing strategies showcasing their destination's niche tourism attractivity. Travellers are progressively seeking and wanting to experience more and more new 'niche products' and these markets typically attract high spending tourists (Novelli, 2004), therefore it is little wonder many nations, regions and cities are increasingly promoting unique and niche ventures.

Since the millennium, one type of tourism that has rapidly grown is nature-based tourism (Fredman and Tyrvaenen, 2010). Hall and Boyd (2005) highlighted that nature-based tourism includes types of niche tourism such as adventure tourism, wildlife tourism, ecotourism and many more. It is argued that the increase in nature-based tourism is due to the growing urbanisation resulting in fewer inner-city green areas but also due to the increase in commercialisation of outdoor recreation (Buckley, 2000). Consequently, natural resources and biodiversity form the basis of nature-based tourism. As a result, national parks and protected areas are seen as a magnet for this kind of tourism. Therefore, a relationship between tourism and protected areas has been longstanding since the dawning of national parks in 1872, where public enjoyment was one reasoning for the protection of such natural beauty. This theme of enjoyment and visitation rights has continued over the century when national parks are considered.

For this reason, national parks have developed a label or brand within tourism as a form of attractiveness (Wall-Reinius and Fredman, 2007). Boyd (2004) suggested that such areas have become 'tourist icons' where promotion and marketing has resulted

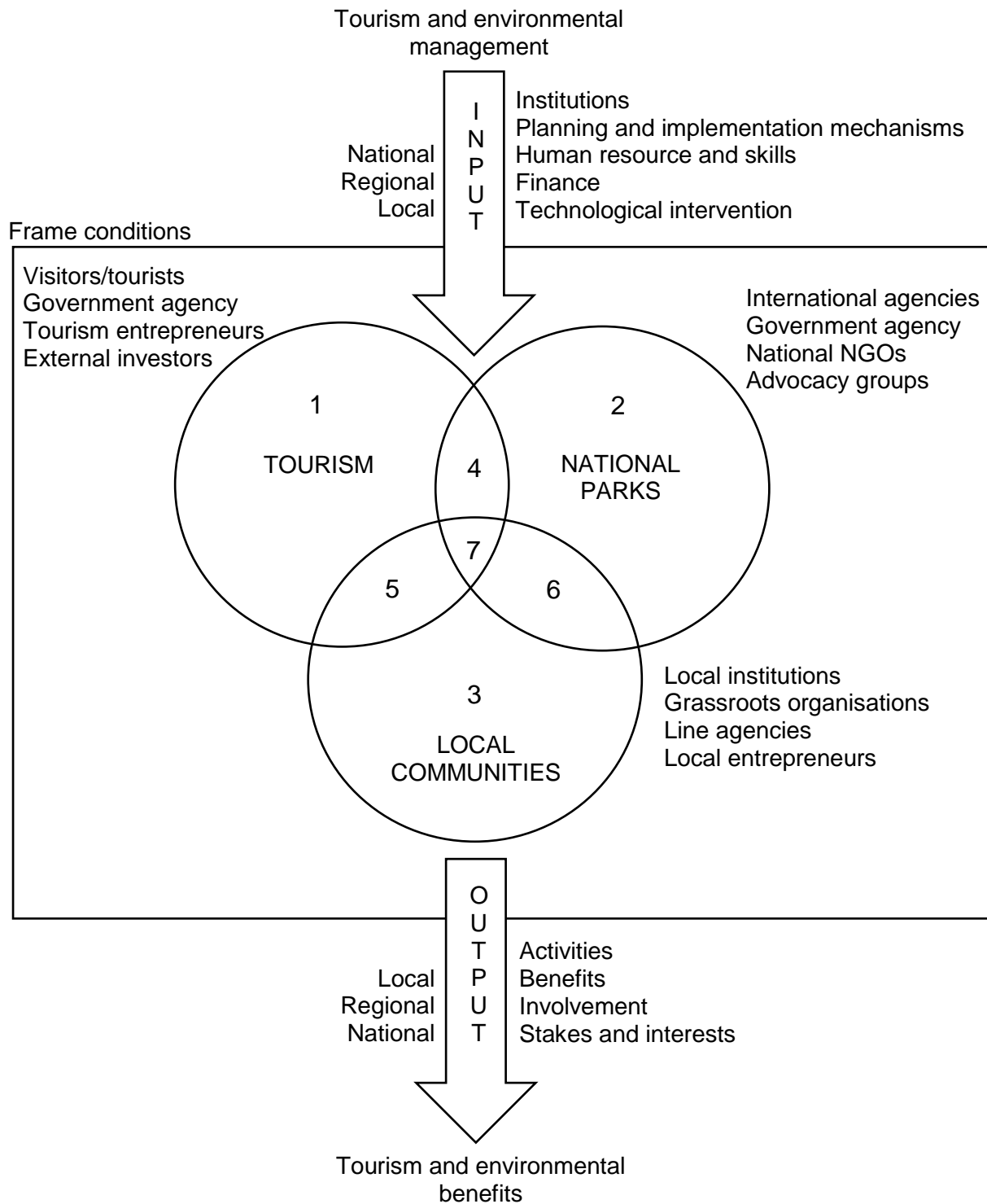
in parks being seen as 'must-see attractions'. It is recognised that of all types of protected areas (i.e. nature reserve, biosphere, etc), the labels of 'national park' and 'world heritage site' engender brand identity, possess a superior level of attractiveness and greater marketing opportunities (Palmer, 1999; Eagles, 2001). As national parks are commonly situated in peripheral areas, a strong tourism branding is acknowledged as an economic tool to strengthen regional development in weak local economies (Weiler and Seidl, 2004). In Reimann et al. (2011), questionnaires conducted in five Estonian national parks found that tourism entrepreneurs were happy with the branding provided from the parks but also highlighted the relief that 'national park' labelling was used and not 'nature reserve' or any other lower protected area status. However, a national park can only support tourism activities and marketing if there is ample amount within the boundaries to be of interest to attract visitors. Moreover, tourism services in national parks can only be supported if the local communities are willing to provide the services and consent to the presence of outsiders (Reimann et al., 2011). Therefore, local communities have a role to play in the relationship between tourism and national parks which the review will now shift towards examining this triple affiliation.

2.5.1 Local communities, national parks and tourism

Tourism, not only in a national park context, often is seen as a tool that provides economic and social benefits to community economies which in turn influences and encourages local people to support conservation (Nepal, 2000; Stem et al., 2003). The economic advantages from tourism are viewed as an opportunity to integrate national parks and local communities resulting in tourism being considered a mediator and a significant resource in the partnership between people and parks (McNeely, 1995). Tourism development in protected areas and national parks has the potential and in many cases the responsibility to enhance the livelihoods of local communities living within or adjacent to the boundaries (Eagles and McCool, 2002). Furthermore, community-based tourism in these areas is seen as a tool to maximise opportunities to local people, giving local communities the prospect to own and/or manage tourism, in turn creating wider community benefits (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Curcija et al., 2019).

The linkage between tourism, national parks and local communities has been examined by Nepal (2000) as three main actors with overlapping relationships. The author stated that there are seven main interactions between the three components. Figure 2.3 demonstrates seven interactions interconnecting with each component. Nepal (2000) identified that the process's inputs are influenced by institutions, planning, human and financial resources and technological interference, whilst the outputs are influenced by the interactions between the three actors which can impact the diversity of activities, the benefits and involvement, and each actor's stakes and interests. Tourism (1) is the actor solely related to the development of that industry with its main frame conditions being tourists, government institutions and policies, entrepreneurs and investors. National parks (2) are the second actor whose resource drive the mandate for tourism and what the park boasts to entice tourists and services. Local communities (3) provides the role of knowledge, skills and attitudes related to tourism development which can have significant power in the formation of tourism and conservation strategies. As these three main actors interact with each other, they create the interaction positions of 4, 5, 6 and 7. Interaction 4 relates to the natural resources being developed and humanly influenced for tourism, whilst interaction 5 relates to the involvement and benefits between the tourism industry and local communities. Interaction 6 demonstrates the collaboration in conservation, policies and decision-making approaches between the national park and local communities. Finally, interaction 7 illustrates how all three actors interact to have a balanced relationship which provides development, fulfilment of interests and mutually benefits all actors. It must be emphasised that institutional agenda on a national, regional and local scale outlines the framework conditions (entries inside the box) and the actors' interactions. For example, the institutional agenda input will impact and define the tourist or visitor type and the tourism services of the destination. Furthermore, depending on how balanced these interactions are will have a lasting impact on the positive, negative or neutral outcomes.

Figure 2.3: Seven interactions between tourism, national parks and local communities



Source: Nepal (2000, p.75).

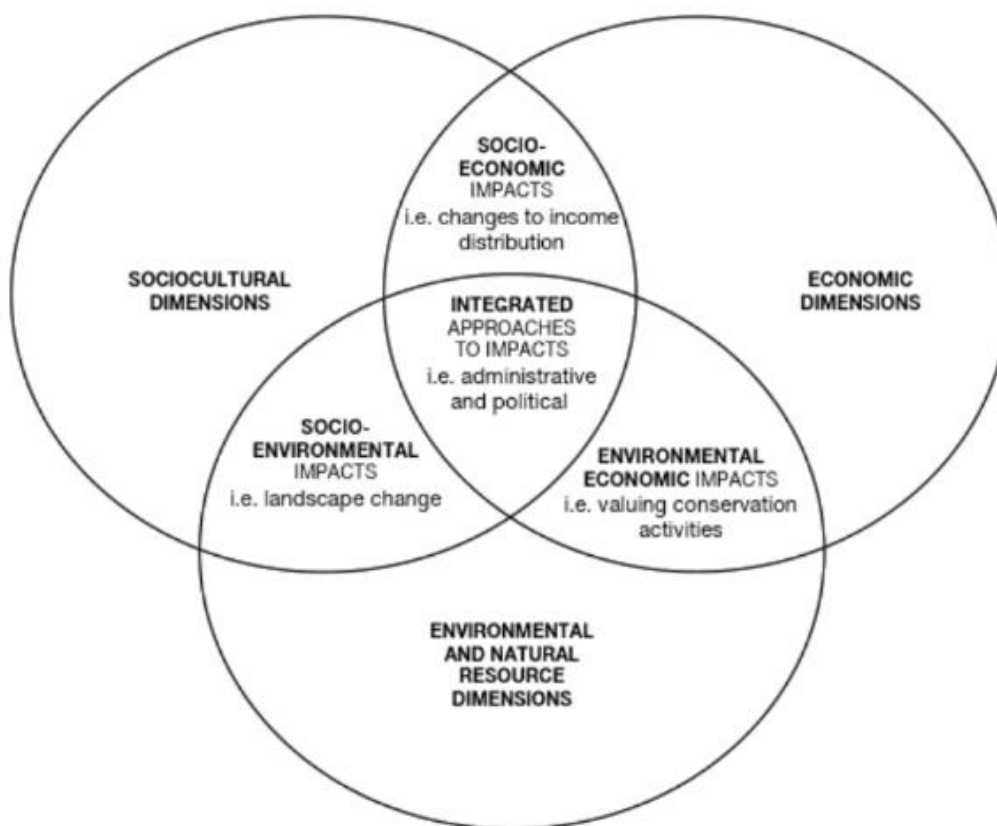
Case studies that demonstrate the complex relationship between local communities, the tourism industry and national parks tend to look at the conflicts and the issues that can arise in this scenario. Therefore, gaining a balanced approach between these three actors is particularly difficult. National park authorities have to understand and acknowledge the interests of local communities regarding tourism development whilst upholding their national parks' primary objective of managing the protection of biodiversity, ecosystems and the natural landscapes. Stone and Nyaupane (2016) explored the linkage between tourism, community livelihoods and the Chobe National Park in Botswana. The study found that the community is supportive of tourism and recognised community wildlife-tourism had the potential to improve locals' livelihoods. It was also found that the national park authority had a history of poor communication with the communities resulting in a strained relationship between the two actors. An important finding highlighted that the treatment of the community will reflect the support and benefits for the park authorities and tourism industry. This study demonstrates the difficulties of achieving a balanced relationship, especially as the empowerment of the community grows and potentially holds more control than the other actors. The review will now shift to examining an array of impacts from designation of a national park with connections to tourism and how some impacts affect local communities.

2.5.2 Impacts

The association of local communities and tourism development in national park settings provide a wide variety of purposes and opportunities that can result in many beneficial and detrimental effects particularly linking to economic, social and environmental impacts. Typically, impacts are described as direct and indirect to those living within or adjacent to park boundaries (Fortin and Gagnon, 1999). Many of these impacts within protected areas and national park systems have been widely studied across developed and developing nations and showcases that these impacts are having an increasing effect on how local communities and stakeholders view protected areas positively or negatively as an influence on their local area. As such, the magnitude of impacts can have the ability to either bring communities together or create tensions resulting in conflicts.

In an attempt to understand the impacts experienced from these special designations, Hall (2008) illustrated in a Venn diagram the overlapping of impacts that occur in a wider tourism context. Figure 2.4 demonstrates the socio-cultural, economic and environmental as the main dimensions which could coincide to produce complex correlations that may result in conflict. The intertwining of these dimensions creates socio-economic, socio-environmental and environmental-economic impacts. The overlying of all three main dimensions has the ability to generate integrated approaches to understanding tourism impacts. A positive outcome of this tri-overlapping includes enhanced international recognition of a region or destination and the setting up of new developmental institutions to benefit all in the destination. However, these integrated impacts may also have the aptitude to have a negative effect such as the economic exploitation of local communities, the unpopular use of tourism funds and local communities experiencing a loss in their decision-making power (Hall, 2008).

Figure 2.4: The three main dimensions of tourism impacts



Source: Hall (2008, p.28).

Although, protected area and national park designations are established to protect and conserve nature, the three main dimensions discussed previously form the basis of the impacts on the area and surrounding park boundaries. Furthermore, “these impacts tend to be affected by primary and subordinate legislation and by planning, management and policy objectives” (Selman, 2009, p.5146). Selman (2009) has argued whether the impacts of designation of protected areas fits into the modern 21st Century, with particular reference to the UK landscape. Planning controls and land ownership can hinder the effects of designation while also policy, social, technological, environmental and economic drivers can affect the quantity and quality of the land. Selman (2009 cited Colhoun, 2008) summaries the potential positives and negatives of national park designation (Table 2.10), and conversely argued that the benefits of designation outweigh the costs as without protected areas such as national parks the countryside would be in far worse conditions.

Each of these impacts chosen in Table 2.10 are under researched on an individual basis, however mixed impacts in protected area tourism have been widely explored (Butler and Boyd, 2000; Eagles and McCool 2002; Reimann et al., 2011; Dwiyahreni et al., 2021). With tourism being a leading industry within many of these natural environments, there has been an increasing amount of research conducted on visitation and tourist numbers to protected areas producing economic, social and environment impacts. Reimann et al. (2011) investigated the tourism impacts on local communities in five Estonian national parks. The results highlighted that residents agreed that culture and heritage needed protection by national park authorities, yet they did not agree with some restrictions put in place, mainly regarding fishing or new buildings. Despite national parks having the perception of increasing visitor crowding in the area, residents were not overly cautioned on visitor disturbance; instead they were more concerned about damage of the culture, heritage and environmental values of the landscape. There was a correlation between locals living in close proximity to the main tourist attractions experiencing more disturbance by visitors. In addition, the majority of locals agreed that the national parks improved their quality of life and that more tourism enterprises (i.e. accommodation, restaurants, visitor centres, etc) could be created within the parks and therefore were open to further tourism development.

Table 2.10: Potential positives and negatives of national park designation**Potential positive impacts**

- Additional government funding for the national park area.
- Direct employment via an established National Park Authority.
- Landscape and built heritage protection and maintenance of the area's biodiversity.
- Increased opportunities for recreation and increased numbers of visitors.
- Increased visitor expenditure and employment associated with the tourism industry and countryside management.
- Increased levels of visitor management.
- Higher property values.
- Support for local services.
- Possible use of the national park 'brand' for local produce schemes and for attracting visitors.

Potential negative impacts

- Increase in the number of second homes.
- Decline in house affordability and change in social mix.
- Negative effects on some land values due to increased restrictions.
- Possible impacts due to visitor numbers on the landscape, biodiversity and built heritage unless careful management is put in place.
- Potential conflicts between tourism/recreation and landowners, especially if access points are not adequate.
- Potential increases in traffic congestion associated with increasing numbers of visitors.
- Changes in employment profile – tourism jobs which tend to be lower paid and seasonal.

Source: Selman (2009 citing Colhoun, 2008).

2.5.2.1 Economic impacts

Economically, in a wider context international tourism is viewed as an important incentive to promote and grow national and regional economies (Li et al., 2018). Within protected areas, tourism can economically benefit local communities development and fashion constructive incentives for conservation contributing toward the fundamental goals of such areas (Zal and Breda, 2010). In addition, income, employment, and tax benefits are all economic values that can create positive opportunities in national parks

through tourism and recreation, whilst also providing important economic development for adjacent and gateway communities (Prato and Fagre, 2005).

With regards to economic impacts from visitation in protected areas, Mayer et al. (2010) examined the economic impacts of tourism across six German national parks by measuring visitation numbers, the structure and size of tourist expenditure and if this is influenced by visitor affinity. The study showed that the size of the economic impact changed due to the variation of visitor days and the average daily expenditure of tourists. The results of the study highlighted that visitors with high national park affinity tend to stay longer therefore having higher expenditure allowing an opportunity for park tourism marketing to promote their unique selling points and increase nature-based tourism. However, results also indicated that there is no significant difference between expenditure of high affinity and normal visitors with regards to day and overnight stays. In addition, across the six German national parks, approximately 49-51% of gross visitor spending is retained as direct and indirect regional income which Mayer et al. (2010) stated as being within the same magnitude in comparison with other European national parks and is relatively small compared to US national parks. This is mainly explained through the charge of entrance fees to US parks.

Furthermore, a study by Cline et al. (2011) estimated through an input-output analysis the regional economic impact of a proposed 423,915 acre protected area for a national park or national monument designation in Ferry County in the US. If the area was designated a national park, estimates demonstrated that it could potentially receive a total of 1.26million visitors annually, generate over \$43.6million from direct recreational expenditure impacts, create over 1250 jobs and generate over \$8.5million in output impacts (indirect and induced effects). When compared to potential national monument designation, the national park designation estimates are substantially greater. Although, there are limitations to this study as it is based on estimations and reinforces that there is a significant regional economic benefit to the any given proposed national park designations in the future.

Economic values have also been examined from the perspective of the association between visiting protected areas and visitor mental health. Buckley et al. (2019) found that protected areas contribute to health economics value, placing a US\$6 trillion price

tag on mental health benefits globally which is of greater magnitude than the global protected area tourism value. This highlights the significant social, health and well-being importance on conservation policies of valued lands.

However, parks in receipt of tourism revenue may experience these funds being reinvested back into tourism sites and new ventures rather than being reinvested into the park management, conservation and biodiversity (Zal and Breda, 2010). Although, job creation is mainly an economic positive, the negative impact on the employment sector could potentially produce a loss in job diversity in the area (Colhoun, 2008). Also, resource use could influence tourism opportunity costs where resource use for other industries could have been more profitable (Strickland-Munro et al., 2010). Furthermore, particularly within developing countries there can be negative economic leakages from tourism revenue where enterprises are under foreign ownership. These leakages can have direct and indirect impacts which Mbaiwa (2005) examined in Okavango Delta in Botswana, described as a mosaic of protected areas. The results found were negative, that tourism development was advancing enclave tourism, providing fewer opportunities for locals to manage the area and economic leakages were contributing toward poverty alleviation.

2.5.2.2 Social impacts

Socially, one of the main tourism positives for its inclusion in protected areas and national parks is the increase in tourist and visitor numbers. National parks generate recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual values that visitors may not experience in residential built-up environments; and provide socio-economic opportunities for employment (Prato and Fagre, 2005). This increase in visitors to the area has the ability to enhance the outside perception of the communities images and surrounding area (Gursoy et al., 2004). Dongmei et al. (2015) investigated between 2010 and 2012 the change of residents support and perceived impacts from tourism in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, China. China has a complex protected area system with 'national park forests' seen as closest to the IUCN's category II with Zhangjiajie being one of the first in 1982 (Petrova, 2016). Dongmei et al. (2015) study found that in 2010 residents within the park perceived economic impacts from tourism were supportive, however this directly impacted upon their perceived social impacts and indirectly upon

their perceived cultural impacts. By 2012, the study indicated that residents' support for economic impacts from tourism decreased and the concerns for perceived social impacts had increased. The results implied that management and development of tourism in the national forest park needed to understand and place more importance on socio-cultural impacts rather than economic impacts and consider residents' attitudes effectively into the future.

Conversely, socio-cultural impacts arising from tourism within protected areas are recognised to positively educate residents and tourists regarding conservation, wildlife, biodiversity and many other aspects. Telfer and Sharpley (2008) identified that socio-cultural skills can be exchanged through tourism and help revitalise traditions, arts, crafts, languages and ancient cultures. Although, socio-cultural negatives can occur from tourism some of which include exploitation, commercialisation and commoditisation of cultures (Eagles and McCool, 2002). Similar to that of enabling amicable tourist-resident relationships, the increase of unwanted tourists can create a hostile relationship and environment for all in the area. Therefore, in many countries the tourism industry in protected areas needs to be constructively organised in order to enable local residents better access to tourists, but also aid an amicable relationship between residents and visitors (Goodwin, 2002).

Another major social benefit is the impact these special areas have on well-being and quality of life. A study by Saayman et al. (2009) investigated the social and economic impacts in Wilderness National Park in South Africa which demonstrated that communities overall experienced social impacts directly from the park. The results showed that the park played a significant role in increasing community pride, conservation, tourist numbers, as well as people moving into the area. The community, however, indicated that the park did not contribute towards the reduction in crime, drug use or participation levels in community activities. Although, it was made clear that the respondents recognised that park management were possibly unaware that this should be under their remit to help with these issues. The study highlighted that the park overall contributed towards greater social impacts than economic with respondents confirming they were experiencing a better quality of life living in the national park. Another study conducted in five Finnish national parks and one strict nature reserve areas examined the perceived health and well-being benefits by

visitors to the areas (Puhakka et al., 2017). The results illustrated high positive effects on visitors' physical, psychological, and social well-being. The study also found that meeting new people out on park paths and activities improved a person's social and cognitive skills. Furthermore, the study highlighted that different protected areas affected the well-being levels due to the characteristics of the park, visitor numbers and visitor profiles. Parks that were farther away from major populated centres showed higher levels of perceived well-being as these were in remote areas where visitors required more preparations and motivation to travel to such locations.

2.5.2.3 Environmental impacts

Environmentally, tourism can contribute towards species conservation, predominantly within national parks and game reserves. Wildlife of this kind is seen as a tourism asset where tourism creates development and infrastructure and in turn supports park management (Ooi et al., 2018). Landscape conservation, biodiversity and ecological maintenance, built and cultural heritage conservation and preservation are all beneficial aspects for protected areas which also reap benefits from tourism (Colhoun, 2008). In such special areas, such designation can bring greater local focus and gratitude by local communities for the natural environment (Colhoun, 2008), and have the ability to increase environmental identity of that area and their communities (Eagles and McCool, 2002). Prato and Fagre (2005) stated that the standards of ecological processes in national parks can be measured against resource extraction and environmental degradation; and water-based areas are sources for providing habitat to endangered species of fish and other wildlife as well as providing clean supplies of water. With regards to farming within protected areas, this sector can benefit from agri-environment schemes, particularly within European areas, in an effort to maintain and environmentally sustain the landscape and wider agriculture industry (Colhoun, 2008). Moreover, the importance of ecological integrity is vital to the environmental landscape and tourism within protected areas and national parks is not considered to contribute towards ecological decline (Andereck et al., 2005).

A growing major positive of national parks and other protected areas is their contribution towards carbon emissions and climate change. Protected areas have the ability to stock and lower carbon levels but also reduce deforestation within their

boundaries to combat increasing global temperatures (Clark et al., 2008; Campbell et al., 2009). Conversely, evidence is showing that climate change itself may affect national parks and tourism opportunities within them. Scott et al. (2007) examined future implications of a changing climate on nature-based tourism in Waterton Lakes National Park in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. The study examined a warming planet scenario and results suggested in the 2020s and 2050s visitation numbers were predicted to increase between 10-36% especially through the warm-weather tourism season with the possibility of an extended tourist season. However, the predictions for environmental changes were mostly negative. The scenario indicated that these changes would result in disappearance of glaciers and reduction in cold-weather tourist season for winter sports. Moreover, recent research, particularly in US national parks has explored climate changes and the impacts on the parks themselves. The research has predicted that dry-climate national parks will be highly vulnerable compared to wet-climate national parks (Jedd et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2018). It is understood that if changing climate conditions continues, the tourism industry and park management will need to ascertain changing tourist behaviour and adapt plans to support tourism providers and all other industries within park boundaries.

Although, literature relating to tourism and recreation in protected areas commonly focusses on the negative environmental impacts, and in turn the effects of increased visitor numbers. An increase in visitation numbers beyond the carrying capacity and threshold level of an area can have a detrimental impact on ecological integrity and the quality of visitor experiences (Prato and Fagre, 2005). It is viewed that recreation and tourism in protected areas results in a degradation of natural resources and increasing levels of erosion, littering, disturbance to wildlife and biodiversity, whilst putting pressure on certain interesting sites (Prato and Fagre, 2005; Colhoun, 2008). Wildlife, endangered species and vegetation can all become stressed, resulting in altered habitats, reduced species development and negative natural changes, respectively (Haukeland et al., 2013). Furthermore, an increase in visitor numbers can cause overcrowding, human and vehicular traffic, having a negative effect on local communities and residents both from a social and environmental perspective. Additional traffic can increase the number of vehicle-wildlife collisions, essentially killing wildlife (Ament et al., 2008). Since the 1980s, UK national parks have seen a significant rise in traffic, especially to honeypot sites, and it is estimated approximately

93% of all trips are taken by car to national parks (Cullinane, 1997; Whitelegg, 2013). The high levels of traffic have created congestion and park issues through many national parks. In the Lake District National Park in England, there is currently an ongoing debate regarding the introduction of congestion charges for tourists as one possible solution to ease traffic (Kirby, 2019). Although, it must be recognised that transportation and trips in vehicles can be a form of recreation within national parks where iconic routes and roads have been designed and developed to provide infrastructure between tourist sites but also for the enjoyment of experiencing the natural scenery (Hallo and Manning, 2009; Manning et al., 2014).

Despite all the effects, it is unrealistic to expect that tourism will not have negatives no matter the context or environment (Reimann et al., 2011). Therefore, it is important to recognise all potential positive and negative impacts and make efforts to minimise and manage them as sustainably as is possible. It is to this issue of sustainability that this review now turns to help address national park mandates that are often seen to be in conflict with each other, and the last concept to be considered in this overall review.

2.5.3 The role of tourism in the park mandates and sustainability

With the growth of the travel and tourism sector globally, a complex and delicate relationship has been created within protected areas, national parks and other sensitive environments. Particularly in Europe, it is becoming increasingly difficult to balance the use of land and natural resources with their protection due to the interests expressed by an array of stakeholders. As previously mentioned in section 2.2.2, the dual mandates, preservation and use, was first acknowledged in US national park legislation back in 1916. The 'preservation' mandate is now more commonly referred to as the 'protection' or 'conservation' mandate as national parks in New World countries suffered an identity crisis and problematic relationship of preserving an area which should be unimpaired whilst utilising the area for enjoyment and recreation (Boyd, 2004).

Despite many systems recognising the need for protection of ecological integrity, tourism and recreation can be seen to be overshadowing the protection of natural qualities. In recent years, in a bid to balance the need for conservation and use, many

policies, planning and management strategies in some protected areas systems are focusing on integrated approaches to state a clear vision for protection of ecological integrity and for tourism use (Boyd, 2004). An integrated approach, particularly in conservation management, has developed a dynamic innovation paradigm which comprises social, visitor and tourism dimensions whilst incorporating the interests of local people, businesses and traditional land use (Eagles et al., 2002; Mose, 2007). The development of this approach in recent times can be seen as the application of best practice from New Zealand. Higham et al. (2016) found in a comparative study that New Zealand's park system has been a longstanding advocate for a dynamic integrated approach regarding conservation and tourism, whilst the Norwegian system employed a traditional approach of unrestricted outdoor recreation access to citizens with no conservation management priority placed on visitor services and development.

The dual mandates are still widely known as the basis for management in national park landscapes. The protected area systems in Canada, managed by Parks Canada, underpins the park mandates that ecological integrity of natural resources takes precedence over fostering enjoyment (Parks Canada Agency, 2018). In the UK, the park mandates are illustrated through the Sandford Principle, where conservation and protection is the priority over the use for enjoyment purposes. Conversely, Boyd (2004) highlighted that park mandates may favour ecological integrity but in practice the draw towards using natural resources for tourism intentions may be more encouraged for financial assurance.

The complexity of balancing conservation with the use of natural resources for agriculture, tourism, livelihoods and many other sectors in the last few decades has been advanced through sustainability thinking. Sustainable development was first introduced globally by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, subsequently obtaining the attention from scholars. Sustainable development is described as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p.15). The tangible link between protected areas and sustainability gained momentum particularly in 1992 during the World Congress on national parks and protected areas where the 'Global Biodiversity Strategy' was implemented (Mose and Weixlbaumer, 2007). However, sustainability and national parks received very little attention within scholarly

research. Tourism has long been recognised as an activity interconnected to the concept of sustainability as the industry relies on the environment and in many cases natural resources (Boyd, 2000). Therefore, sustainability plays a key role in maintaining nature without limiting the transformation of resources from being damaged and consumed from tourism activity (Page, 2015), and it is considered that environmental sustainability is a prerequisite to optimising tourism's development potential (Sharpley, 2009).

Accordingly, sustainable tourism is viewed as a sub-set of sustainable development and of tourism, (Hall, 2008). In essence, sustainable tourism incorporates the principles and applications of sustainability involving the economic, social and environmental aspects of the tourism industry (Johnston et al., 2007; Hall and Lew, 2009), and increasingly involves stakeholder involvement and participation (Waligo et al., 2013). With popularity and growing significance placed on sustainability and sustainable tourism development at the turn of the millennium, protected areas and national park management bodies amplified the emphasis of these concepts within management plans by considering them as core objectives (Sharpley and Pearce, 2007). As a result, sustainable development has become a significant agenda within all types of protected areas and is essentially the underpinning work done by management bodies (Austin et al., 2016; Karhu et al., 2020). Protected areas of all forms are viewed as cornerstones toward wider national and international sustainability and conservation strategies (Svajda and Fenichel, 2011). This importance of sustainability was debated by Boyd (2000) in relation to the park dual mandates. Boyd (2000) suggested that the concept of sustainability is vital as a management tool within national park landscapes and also stressed that sustainability can fulfil both park mandates to conserve and protect natural resources whilst providing recreational and tourism opportunities. As such, sustainability is recommended as a third mandate to national parks and other protected areas, creating a triple mandate approach.

The importance of protected areas and national parks in sustainability and sustainable development can be seen as part of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Dudley (2019) noted that the contribution of protected areas to help achieve these goals is enormous and somewhat unmeasurable. Protected areas and

national parks have the ability to contribute towards over half of the 17 goals identified due to the role these areas play in conserving biodiversity. Such goals, particularly SDG14 (Life below water) and SDG15 (Life on land), emphasise the importance of ecosystems conservation, however other contributing goals include SDG3 (good health and well-being), SDG6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG13 (Climate action) (UNEP-WCMC, 2018). Therefore, the role of sustainability is evidently significant to protected natural landscapes and understandably should be viewed as a robust third mandate in national park systems globally.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the historical background of national park establishment and the interconnection of these natural spaces with the tourism industry. This critique noted the foundations and development of national park systems on a global scale to what they are today and how confusion has riddled the system for many years and somewhat continues to do so. It has also been highlighted how tourism has been present within national parks since the beginning of their existence.

In order to understand where a possible national park for Northern Ireland could fit in a broader system of protected areas, this review presented the narrative around the development of a protected areas system, including national parks and how the classification and criteria have changed over time. Specific attention focused on understanding the characteristics and differences of type II and V areas as the latter were deemed to be the most suitable to showcase the natural landscape of areas across Northern Ireland, the proposed study region.

The chapter also outlined how preservation and enjoyment have underpinned the creation of national parks, in the development of a dual mandate where the importance of each has changed over time. The review of tourism impacts, specifically linked to protected landscapes illustrated that there were both positive and negative outcomes from an economic, social and environmental standpoint. The review concluded with discussion around the concept of sustainability as a means to address the conflicts inherent in the dual mandate that parks have struggled with over time (Eagles et al.,

2002), but also as a third mandate option for protected areas including national parks (Boyd, 2000; Austin et al., 2016). However, in order to successfully achieve sustainability in a wider tourism context, management must include the community and gain the support from stakeholders. This is also the case in protected areas and national parks. Stakeholders play a vital role in the influence of sustainable tourism development strategies, whilst stakeholder participation and involvement in decision-making processes is critical to the implementation of sustainable tourism and conservation in natural landscapes (Waligo et al., 2013). Conversely, with an array of stakeholders involved in decision making, tensions and conflicts can arise within these landscapes. As such, the next chapter offers a critique of stakeholder engagement and examines strategies that can overcome conflicts that often arise between stakeholder groups.

CHAPTER 3

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 explored the history and establishment of national parks as defined unique cultural landscapes, which have increasingly become viewed as having tourism value. This chapter turns the attention toward concepts relevant to ensuring effective management of national park landscapes, namely stakeholder engagement and addressing problems between stakeholders through conflict resolution. Both concepts need to be understood in the context of contested landscapes such as national parks, and in the wider field of NRM. It can be argued that both concepts are interlinked; people opposing ideas, different values and change compared to the norm is part of everyday life. Therefore, it is not surprising for an array of stakeholders with interests in natural resources to oppose and dispute development, the type of governance and other matters that may affect them.

This chapter is therefore structured as follows: section 3.2 offers the reader an understanding of the stakeholder concept, including different theories, as well as the importance of identifying, mapping and engaging stakeholders, the latter drawing heavily on literature around the concept of partnership. Section 3.3 examines conflict resolution. It commences from a standpoint of understanding the concept of conflict and the process involved in conflict, examining the interconnection between conflict resolution and conflict management, and concludes by assessing what are viewed to be the vital elements and mechanisms used to resolve conflicts. This section concludes with discussion of the extant literature that advocates moving stakeholders from entrenched positions toward interests as a crucial step in finding common ground toward resolving conflicts. Section 3.4 provides a concluding summary of the chapter. This review and critique of the extant literature commences with an examination of the stakeholder concept.

3.2 THE STAKEHOLDER CONCEPT

Stakeholder theory has penetrated into many disciplines such as law, health care, public policy and scholarly literature in recent decades (Parmar et al., 2010); however,

the term 'stakeholder' first originated in business management literature in the 1960s by Stanford Research Institute. It became highly popularised by R. Edward Freeman in 1984 with the publication of his book, 'Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach'. This book can be seen as the seminal work which was influential in many disciplines in the decades to follow. The idea of stakeholder theory originates from the influence of business ethics (Stark, 1993). The theory came at a time in the 1980s when scholars and practitioners were trying to acquire management theories which explained the complexities of management problems involving levels of change and uncertainty (Parmar et al., 2010). Furthermore, the theory is described as an approach which is simple and pragmatic to management (Crane and Matten, 2016).

The emergence of concepts such as stakeholder theory, stakeholder management and stakeholder perspective can be interchangeable (Parmar et al., 2010); therefore making them difficult to differentiate in literature with separate connotations. Although, one definition of 'stakeholder' which is commonly used across all these disciplines is that taken from Freeman (1984, p.46), who defines a stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives". This definition excludes stakeholders that cannot affect (have no power) and cannot be affected (have no relationship) with the organisation (Mitchell et al., 1997). Freeman (1984) went on to argue that an organisation's strategic management must not exclude those who have a stake in the business enterprise. Therefore, a stake can facilitate the identification of stakeholders. However, Crane and Matten (2016, p.62) argued that "stakeholder theory...has to provide a compelling reason why other groups also have a legitimate claim on the corporation". For example, terrorists are usually not identified as stakeholders, but the theory could incorporate them as having a stake in conflicting scenarios (Phillips, 1997). As such, stakeholder theory systematically questions which groups of stakeholders do or do not require management (Mitchell et al., 1997).

Donaldson and Preston (1995) studied the stakeholder concept and suggested three different models within stakeholder theory: descriptive, instrumental, and normative. Firstly, descriptive seeks to understand how managers handle stakeholders and their interests. It provides the language, terms and concepts employed in an organisation's stakeholder inclusive agenda (Carroll et al., 2018). In other words, this model

describes how the organisation functions. As such, Donaldson and Preston (1995, p.66) suggested that it describes the organisation “as a constellation of cooperative and competitive interests possessing intrinsic value”. The second model is instrumental, which shows the relationship between stakeholder management and achievements of the business. This model should depict the managing of stakeholders in practice which has a direct result on achieving business goals and performance factors, such as profitability, growth and sustainability (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). In simple terms, the instrumental model attempts to discover whether considering the stakeholders’ interests is beneficial to the organisation or not (Crane and Matten, 2016), and attempts to balance these benefits. Lastly, normative acknowledges that all stakeholders have intrinsic value and have legitimate interests. It attempts to find out and understand the reasons why stakeholder interests should be taken into consideration by the organisation (Crane and Matten, 2016). The model is considered to be the ethical view as it demonstrates that regardless of stakeholder instrumental use to management, they hold value and focuses on the treatment of stakeholders (Carroll et al., 2018). These three models depict the different uses of stakeholder theory; however, they are seen to be interconnected with descriptive uses supporting instrumental and normative uses, therefore underpinning the workings of stakeholder theory as a whole (Kaler, 2003).

Despite these three models, Donaldson and Preston (1995) argued that stakeholder theory is managerial which goes beyond the description of relationships and the cause-effect of these. As such, stakeholder management encompasses some elements of the three models. However, Crane and Matten (2016) suggested the main perspective of stakeholder management is from the instrumental model perspective, as the organisation seeks to comprehend the legitimate interests and expectations of stakeholders which ultimately attempts to benefit and satisfy these in alignment with the organisation’s core goals and interests. Freeman (1984, p.53) defined stakeholder management as “the necessity for an organisation to manage the relationship with its specific stakeholder groups in an action-oriented way”. In doing so, the central component to successfully managing stakeholders is having concurrent attention given to legitimate interests of all appropriate stakeholders which Donaldson and Preston (1995) stated must take in the formation of organisational structures and strategies, as well as during case-by-case decision making periods.

Conversely, there are limitations to stakeholder theory. Parmar et al. (2010) identified that the theory can be an excuse for managerial opportunism and can also place its main concern on the distribution of financial outputs. This could be due to stakeholder theory being an alternative for organisations opposing shareholder theory. The main difference of the two opposing theories is that shareholder theory allows managers to evaluate the organisation's performance positively or negatively; while, stakeholder theory allows managers to engage in self-dealing and defend their actions creating managerial opportunism (Parmar et al., 2010). Additionally, stakeholder theory incorporates the distribution of resources and who receives what. This can have consequences by the creation of disputes or tensions between stakeholders and shareholders, and whether stakeholders perceive the process to be fair. Phillips et al. (2003) highlighted that organisations looking at stakeholder theory must understand it is as a process and procedural justice, where stakeholders have a say in the distribution of all resources not just from the perspective of financial aids. Furthermore, Sternberg (1997) suggested that attempting to balance stakeholder benefits can be an unworkable and unachievable objective. As a result, stakeholder theory does not help to identify which divergent interests are more important or preferred and does not help to indicate how to balance conflicting interests. Yet, despite these limitations to stakeholder theory, organisations must acknowledge and understand it to be able to comprehend the processes of stakeholder identification. Therefore it is emphasised that, in a broader sense, organisations have the responsibility to not ignore any stakeholders' concerns or interests that can affect the long-term sustainability and value of the firm (Freeman, 1984; Sternberg, 1997).

3.2.1 Identification of stakeholders

Stakeholder identification is an important part of stakeholder management and project management. Harrison and Wicks (2013) stated that even a simple identification of stakeholders and their interests can produce lists of conflicting directions and viewpoints, particularly when looking at the organisation as a fixed pie of resources and players are fighting for as many resources as possible. Therefore, identification of legitimate stakeholders is a crucial process in a stakeholder approach.

Many business firms have shareholders that are invested into the organisation, giving them legal or economic interests. However, Freeman (1984) highlighted that these groups which are connected by different types of contracts are not the only legitimate groups to an organisation. Therefore, managers hold responsibility towards stakeholders as well as the traditional stance towards shareholders. As a result, organisations have the responsibility to lessen their focus on value maximisation (Khazaei et al., 2015), and examine the value of the organisation through the stakeholder perspective rather than focusing entirely on their economic value (Harrison and Wicks, 2013). Furthermore, managers utilising a stakeholder approach must identify and also integrate interests of all stakeholders involved rather than trying to maximise the interests of one particular or favoured stakeholder in order to have the opportunity at long-term success and survival (Freeman, 1984).

Many authors name groups of stakeholders differently; for instance, Walker et al. (2008) illustrated four groups: upstream, downstream, downstream supply chain, and external stakeholders. Although, typically stakeholders are identified as internal and external (also known as primary and secondary) this depends on how they are affected by the organisation (Freeman, 1984; Weiss, 2009; Carroll et al., 2018). Table 3.1 identifies the stakeholders that are included in these two main groups. Internal stakeholders are recognised as those who have a contractual or formal relationship to the organisation (Clarkson, 1998), therefore they have a direct stake and have influential power in the success of the firm (Carroll et al., 2018). Clarkson (1998) emphasised that without ongoing participation from internal or primary stakeholders the business would struggle to survive. Whereas, external stakeholders are acknowledged as those who affect/influence or are affected/influenced by actions of the organisation but do not directly engage, resulting in them not being essential for business survival (Clarkson, 1998). Carroll et al. (2018) stressed that these stakeholders can be hostile towards the organisation due to competing ideologies (i.e. different values, beliefs, attitudes) resulting in conflicting issues.

Across the scholarly literature, some authors regard managers as stakeholders while others view them as the embodiment of the organisation's actions and responsibilities (Friedman and Miles, 2006). Aoki (1984) suggested that managers are seen as an intermediary or referee between investors and employees resulting in them not being

stakeholders. Therefore, it could be deliberated that it is up to the organisation itself to acknowledge whether managers are stakeholders, or perhaps only certain levels or types of managers are stakeholders while others are not. For example, an organisation could regard a senior manager as an intermediary between stakeholders whilst lower level managers such as department managers are viewed as stakeholders.

Table 3.1: Internal and external stakeholders

Internal (primary)	External (secondary)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers (dependent on the organisation's standpoint) • Employees • Customers • Suppliers and business partners • Shareholders and investors • Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government and regulators • Civic institutions • Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) or activist groups • Media • Academic commentators • Trade bodies and stakeholder representatives • Competitors • Other financiers • General public • Past or future generations

Source: Author. Adapted from Friedman and Miles (2006) and Carroll et al. (2018).

The questions surrounding whether managers, terrorists, albeit an extreme case, and other groups are stakeholders relates back to the idea of legitimacy. The entity of legitimacy can be dependent upon values, principles, actions and behaviour of a stakeholder's claim (Santana, 2012). In addition, the perceived legitimacy of claims can change over time through dynamic interactions between stakeholders (Santana, 2012). It has been seen by some scholars that legitimacy is important to achieve influence with this being a long-term strategy for stakeholders; and therefore, it should not be regarded as a boundary condition to the stakeholder approach (Friedman and Miles, 2006). However, Mitchell et al. (1997) suggested that legitimacy is one of three essential attributes in stakeholder identification and salience; power and urgency being the other two. Power as an attribute has the ability to influence other parties' actions, objectives and relationships. This suggests that power can also influence the entity of other attributes. Power can be based on coercive, utilitarian and/or normative means which can work individually or in combination (Mitchell et al., 1997). With

regards to urgency, this attribute examines which stakeholder claims require immediate attention. Mitchell et al. (1997) identified that time sensitivity and level of importance of the relationship or claims are two conditions of urgency that must be considered. These attributes are commonly used for categorisation of stakeholders; however, all three attributes intersect creating different types and different behavioural patterns of stakeholders making categorisation complex. Therefore, rather than viewing the attributes as steady states they are viewed as variables, and as such a stakeholder must incorporate one of the attributes in order to have stakeholder salience (Mitchell et al., 1997).

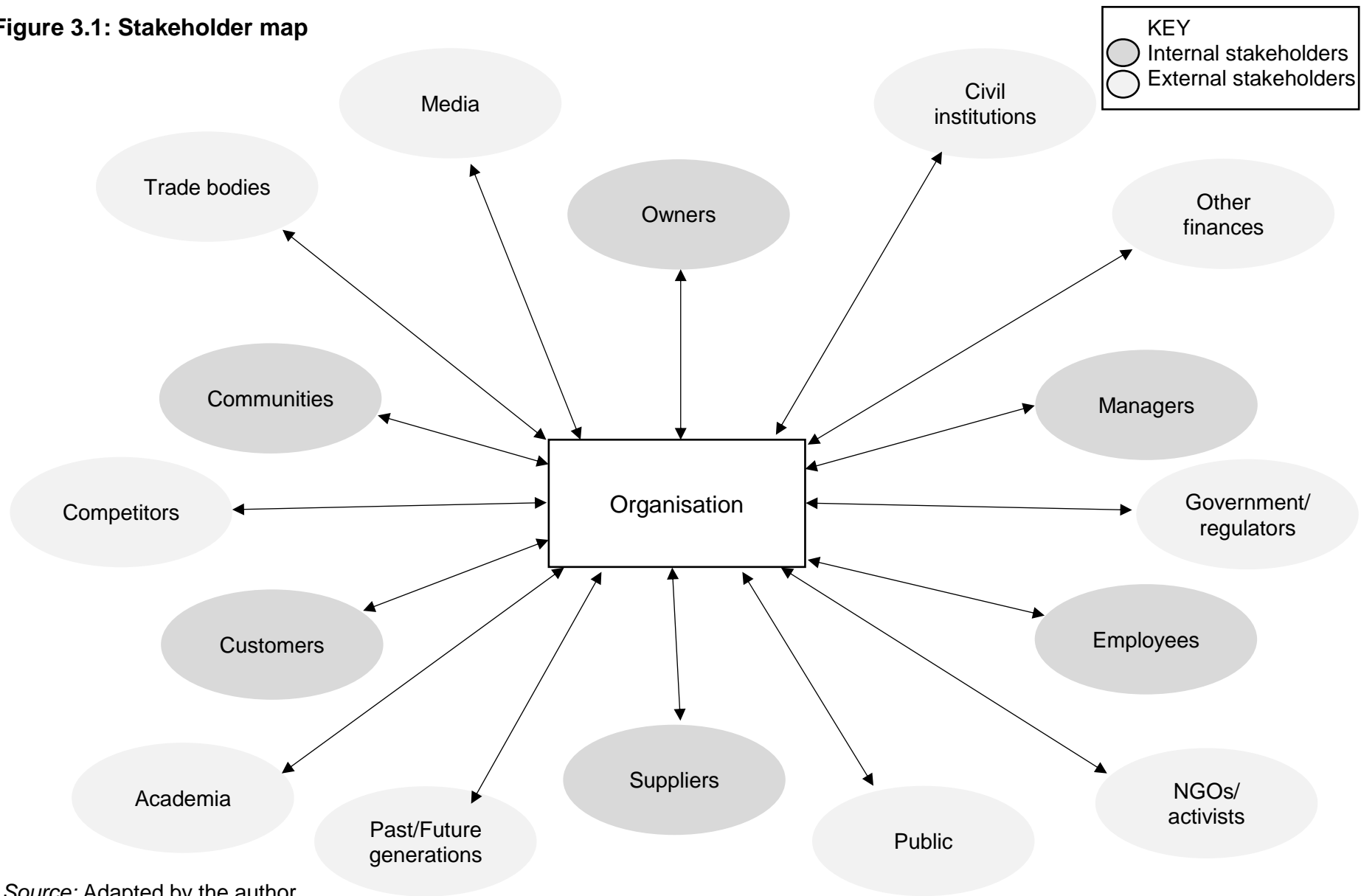
The foregoing discussion on stakeholders has been very business-oriented; this should not be surprising given the genesis of stakeholder thinking. In the context of this dissertation where stakeholders are viewed in a very different setting, namely in the context of national parks, some of the business thinking around stakeholder attributes as identified by Mitchell et al. (1997) has some salience. Mannetti et al. (2019) modified Mitchell et al. (1997) thinking and applied it to a national park setting. Their study explored combining identification and categorisation of primary and secondary stakeholders in a case relating to the expansion of the protected area network around the Etosha National Park in Namibia. Using a stakeholder analysis approach, the study identified three stakeholders' attributes: position, interest, and power. Position was described as examining stakeholders' level of support or opposition towards the expansion, interest considered the advantages and disadvantages of being incorporated into this type of landscape, whilst power related to the resources mobilised by stakeholders to express their position. All three attributes were intersected, and the researchers found that the park management, tourism facilities, and the State all have the highest stakeholder salience. However, individual attribute scores demonstrated that livestock farmers had the highest power score as they owned the land linked to the expansion of the protected area which resulted in a moderate interest score. Mannetti et al's. (2019) adaptation of stakeholder attributes and salience gives a dynamic, informed and applicable view to a stakeholder approach within protected area management and understanding stakeholder perspectives in NRM conflict studies; aspects of relevance to this dissertation. As such, this work provides a useful reference and map against which stakeholders and their attributes can be assessed and mapped.

3.2.2 Mapping stakeholders

Stakeholder mapping is common place within a stakeholder management approach, particularly in helping develop a list of stakeholders associated to an organisation or project. Stakeholder mapping is seen as “a basic tool for achieving an understanding of potential roles of the stakeholders and institutions involved, for identifying potential coalitions of support for the project, for scenario and strategy building and for assessing the relative risks entailed” (Aligica, 2006, p.80). However, there are many methods used for stakeholder mapping. The best known being Mitchell et al’s. (1997) three attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency. Others such as Fletcher et al. (2003) used key performance areas and value hierarchies for identification, whilst Turner et al. (1999) used a combination of different mapping elements, some of which included assessment of awareness, influence and stakeholder satisfaction.

There have been a number of steps to stakeholder mapping as identified in the extant literature (Bourne and Walker, 2005; Bourne and Weaver, 2010). The first important step is visualising and developing the categorisation of stakeholders. Figure 3.1 shows an example of a stakeholder map using the wide range of internal and external stakeholders listed in Table 3.1 previously. The map is relatively large; however, it can still increase as individual or sub-groups of each stakeholder category can be broken down further to different levels. For instance, a tertiary and even a quaternary level could be added. These sub-groups can be recognised as invisible groups, although their cooperation and connection are also crucial which can be identified after the initial stage of designing a stakeholder map (Bourne and Walker, 2005). Furthermore, as all interests from stakeholders and organisations must benefit both parties, the arrows run in both directions, and the size of the stakeholders are all equal as stakeholder relationships should not demonstrate prioritisation.

Figure 3.1: Stakeholder map



After the basic identification and mapping of stakeholders, the next step is to then place these stakeholders in a realistic timeframe for analysis purposes (Bourne and Weaver, 2010). The most common framework to do this is by using the power-interest matrix developed by Johnston and Scholes (1999) which was originally adapted from Mendelow (1991). The two dimension matrix shown as Figure 3.2 has been widely acknowledged in stakeholder mapping and analysis literature; however, it has been modified since Johnston and Scholes' version. These modifications have included Mitchell et al's. (1997) aspects of power, urgency and legitimacy and other elements such as proximity, influence and predictability have also been added (Newcombe, 2003; Bourne and Walker, 2006; Rajablu et al., 2015).

The matrix visually describes the strategy that may be pursued by an organisation in order to organise stakeholders in terms of the power they hold against the likelihood of supporting or opposing interests in a particular strategy (Bourne and Weaver, 2010). Therefore, the matrix can be a helpful tool in understanding the influence each stakeholder might have, resulting in the development of well-informed strategies. Figure 3.2 illustrates the power-interest matrix and four different positions that stakeholders can be placed into, showing the relationships which need to be established and maintained by managers and each stakeholder group (Newcombe, 2003).

Stakeholders in position D are seen to be the most important with high interests and high power. These 'key players' (e.g. investors) are relevant in all organisational developments and it is crucial they are involved or given a high degree of input when considering long-term plans. The power they hold has the ability to oppose and essentially block plans that are not in line with their agenda or interests. Stakeholders in position C identify as having high power with low interests and it is vital to 'keep satisfied' (e.g. shareholders). However, the importance and underestimation of their interests can create issues as these stakeholders have the ability to quickly reposition themselves as key players (position D). Position B are stakeholders with low power and high interests. These groups may have relatively little power to influence organisational plans but must be 'kept informed' as the high level of interest can influence more powerful stakeholders to change their behaviour. For example, communities have the aptitude to use their voice to express concerns through lobbying

or petitions which can affect the behaviour of powerful stakeholders in positions C and D. Lastly, stakeholders in position A encompass low power and low interest, therefore organisations should only invest minimal effort into them and only keep them informed when necessary.

Figure 3.2: Power-interest matrix

		Level of interest	
		Low	High
Power	Low	A Minimal effort	B Keep informed
	High	C Keep satisfied	D Key players

Source: Johnston et al. (2008), adapted from Mendelow (1991).

Canavan (2017) applied the matrix to results from interviews examining stakeholders' attitudes and involvement regarding impacts and management of tourism on the Isle of Man. The matrix showed a larger number of stakeholders, mostly local residents, tourism employees, special interest groups and accommodation managers, were placed in position B where they were interested and mainly agreed with planners and government but had low influence and power over the decisions being made. Whereas, stakeholders such as politicians, tourism planners and attractions managers were split across positions C and D, indicating the high levels of power and influence on the decision-making process and different levels of interest. Canavan's (2017) placement of stakeholders is interpreted loosely within the matrix as the model is described as dynamic as the positioning of stakeholders can change (Williams and Lewis, 2008). However, it is argued that the combination of power and influence should not determine a stakeholder's worth, and that engagement with stakeholders has a

valuable part to play in strategy development and endorsing sustainable changes in a project or organisation (Horton and Pilkington, 2017). Furthermore, it is supported that a wide array of stakeholders, including the powerless, is beneficial to projects and organisations (Bryson, 2004). The research involved in this dissertation will provide alternative cases where the power-interest matrix has utility to identify stakeholders within a NRM context and not the prevailing organisation/business one. This review now shifts from stakeholder identification and mapping toward their engagement.

3.2.3 Stakeholder engagement

Examination of extant literature on stakeholder engagement in this subsection is oriented toward a NRM perspective over a business/organisation one. This is made on the following basis; ecosystem and environmental management studies are viewed as a multiparty issue which are transboundary (Brody, 2003), meaning that engagement and participation with stakeholders is viewed as being crucial to the successful management of resources. Within environmental challenges, the issues can be complex and multi-scale, resulting in transparency demands during the decision-making process but also have degrees of flexibility and adaptability to changing conditions and settings (Reed, 2008). The process of stakeholder engagement has the ability to increase decision-makers' insight to the stakeholder's views and values in order to achieve sustainable participatory initiatives whilst producing more efficient and effect agreeable results (Lim and Spanger-Siegfried, 2004). For this reasoning it was inevitable that in recent years there has been an increasing demand to embed stakeholder engagement into environmental decision-making processes (Stringer et al., 2007).

Importantly, it is evident that under the wider umbrella of the stakeholder concept the terms 'engagement' and 'participation' are commonly interchangeable and retain similar meanings dependent upon the author's choice of simplicity. For instance, Reed (2008, p.2418) simply defined participation "as a process where individuals, groups and organisations choose to take an active role in making decisions that affect them", whilst Deverka et al. (2012, p.5) used a more complex definition regarding engagement. They defined engagement as "an iterative process of actively soliciting knowledge, experience, judgement and values of individuals selected to represent a

broad range of direct interest in a particular issue, for the dual purposes of creating a shared understanding; making relevant, transparent and effective decisions". In the context of this review and with specific reference to NRM, the two terms will be intertwined as stakeholder engagement involves active participation of those that have the ability to share and integrate their specialised knowledge, values and purpose to a particular project's decision-making efforts concerning public resources (Talley et al., 2016). Furthermore, conservationists typically focus on engaging parties that hold a stake rather than meaningfully and coherently engaging with the wider public (Reed, 2008). However, engagement with the public and increasing awareness for community participation is essential in community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) and protected area management, as local communities have the responsibility to manage and protect natural resources such as land, water, forests, in a pre-agreed manner for economic and environmental benefits (Andrade and Rhodes, 2012; Rao, 2013).

There are numerous typologies illustrating levels, methods and approaches towards stakeholder engagement. One of the first and most well-known typologies is that of Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation which demonstrates eight different degrees or rungs to which stakeholders engage. The lowest two rungs 'manipulation' and 'therapy' portray non-participation. This is where organisations do not enable stakeholders to engage in planning or decision-making processes and only interact with the powerless stakeholders when necessary. The next three middle rungs 'informing', 'consultation', and 'placation' demonstrate levels of tokenism. These three levels involve one-way communication where the powerless have restricted participation and interactions allowing them to be heard by the organisation, however the status quo is retained with the powerful stakeholders having decision-making rights. The top three rungs are 'partnership', 'delegated power' and 'citizen control'. These relate to the degrees of citizen power and enables the powerless stakeholders, typically local residents, to have decision-making rights and have the majority of control over the organisation. The highest level 'citizen control' indicates devolved community empowerment with active participation and passive information sharing (Tippett et al., 2007).

From Arnstein's typology, it is commonly acknowledged within the literature that the ideal rungs for engagement are the top levels being implemented to involve stakeholders. However, it is argued that the implementation of the different levels may be dependent upon the different contexts regarding the organisation's goals (Reed, 2008). Furthermore, since Arnstein first suggested a ladder of participation, other authors have modified the model into the 'wheel of participation' to promote appropriate levels of engagement and community involvement without emphasis being placed on climbing a ladder (Davidson, 1998). Yet, despite the body of research that has focused on typologies of participation, discussion of stakeholder engagement often remains theoretically-based with little evidence of application.

Other researchers have opted to discard typologies, favouring an approach that advocates learning from best practice. In particular, Reed (2008) argued from a grounded theory perspective that there was the need to replace the 'tool-kit' approach to stakeholder participation across all contexts, not just environment management and NRM, identifying eight key features of best practice of stakeholder participation (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Best practice for stakeholder participation

1	Underpinned by philosophy that emphasises empowerment, trust and learning
2	Participation considered as early as possible and throughout the process, where relevant
3	Relevant stakeholders need to be analysed and represented systematically
4	Clear objectives for the participatory process need to be agreed among stakeholders at the outset
5	Methods should be selected and tailored to the decision-making context
6	Highly skilled facilitation is essential
7	Local and scientific knowledges should be integrated
8	Participation needs to be institutionalised

Source: Reed (2008).

It is believed that all practitioners should consider each carefully before applying risky participation processes to engagement projects. Reed (2008) emphasised that the

quality of decisions made can be reliant on the process leading to them. Therefore, tailoring methods and approaches to the context, objectives, and participants involved is an important phase when conducting projects involving stakeholder engagement.

A drawback to Reed's eight features of stakeholder participation is the dilemma of stakeholders' willingness to trust and want to participate or engage in the process. Within NRM, local people are imperative to the management of resources; however, locals may not be explicitly interested in participating towards conservation or sustainability (Billgren and Holmen, 2008). Huyett (2013) examined the motivations for conservation in community-based participation in two valleys in Ladakh, India. The study investigated the local communities' incentives and reasons to participate in conservation initiatives set up by a local NGO. Interviews revealed that conservation was a low priority and not overly beneficial for locals to participate in any conservation programmes in both valleys. Furthermore, this can be evident within national parks where local people feel restricted to access of resources (Eneji et al., 2009).

A way to overcome any reluctant willingness to participate is by enhancing a sense of ownership in particular decision-making projects (Mathur et al., 2008). It is viewed that building accountability and ownership amongst stakeholders can have tangible outcomes and be a benefit from effective participation (Shindler and Cheek, 1999). However, ownership can be a dual phenomenon as it not only can incorporate legal aspects but also psychological aspects (Pierce and Rodgers, 2004). Psychological ownership refers to the feelings of ownership, where individuals have the feeling of 'it is mine' and manifest the rights to ownership of a resource (Pierce and Rodgers, 2004). For example, a community may have the feelings of ownership of a natural resource to access and use but do not necessarily have the legal rights to utilise or access the resource. A study by Matilaninen and Lahdesmaki (2014) examined the cooperation relationships between nature-based tourism entrepreneurs and private forest owners in Finland and explored the role of forest owners as stakeholders using four stakeholder management strategies. It was found that psychological ownership plays a part in how successful cooperation relationships between stakeholders can be long-term. The results demonstrated that two stakeholder management approaches, proactive and adaptive, considered legal and psychological ownership values as critical to the success of the relationships which enabled the forest owners to be

viewed as stakeholders with legitimacy claims, powerful and recognisable urgent needs. The other two approaches, negligence and community, disregarded legal and psychological ownership aspects by using social pressure and a broad interpretation of Finnish accessibility law, similar to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act in England and Wales; thereby disregarding the private forest owners as an essential stakeholder in cooperation relationships. Therefore, the aspect of psychological ownership may have a vital role in stakeholder engagement and NRM conflicts, especially in rural areas where locals feel that the natural resources are their own (Peltola et al., 2014).

Another challenge in conducting stakeholder engagement is stakeholder exclusion. It can be typical for stakeholders to be excluded deliberately or unintentionally in projects requiring engagement and participation (Idrissou et al., 2013). Therefore, it is recommended that stakeholder engagement is inclusive in decision-making processes (Caves et al., 2013; Talley et al., 2016). Furthermore, stakeholder management that is inclusive and effective is a necessity to attaining sustainable tourism development (Canavan, 2017). Bramwell and Sharman (1999) examined stakeholder participation and inclusion in Hope Valley in the Peak District National Park to develop a tourism plan. The study found that a collaborative approach was successful in the inclusion of many stakeholder representatives by the use of different participation techniques within a working group. However, this approach did not demonstrate a reduction in power imbalance among the stakeholders with the power distribution in the authorities' favour rather than the local residents'. Moreover, one interviewee highlighted that considerable resources were used to identify representatives of all relevant stakeholders and organisations with an interest in the area and the plan. As a result, it can be virtually impossible for total representation of stakeholders in projects resulting in certain perspectives being excluded from the process; therefore, organisers of stakeholder engagement must articulate and justify the reasoning behind inclusion and exclusion of certain stakeholders (Talley et al., 2016).

In addition, early engagement of stakeholders can be critical to the success of a particular project. This early engagement with key stakeholders allows for the planning of engagement timeframes and helps indicate the cost-benefits to local stakeholders for engaging (Sterling et al., 2017). Idrissou et al. (2013) found that participation in a

project has a lower chance of being sustainable long-term when all relevant stakeholders are not involved from the start or during all information, negotiation and engagement sessions. Therefore, stakeholder engagement organisers need to recognise the importance of early engagement with all legitimate and relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, there must be a continuing effect for engagement and participation to occur as “continuing stakeholder involvement means the planning can respond on an ongoing basis to stakeholder views on tourism issues, on proposals in plans, and on plan implementation” (Yuksel et al., 1999, p.351).

Lastly, an important advantage of stakeholder engagement is the opportunity to build a necessary degree of empowerment. Zimmerman (1984) stated that empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that nurtures an element of control and power in people’s lives for their own personal use or for their community or wider society. Empowerment is an outcome of successful relationship management between stakeholders where their needs have been valued and negotiated into tangible outcomes (Rowlinson and Cheung, 2008). Therefore, it is seen that the concept of empowerment is embedded particularly within community participation which Cole (2006) draws connections to using Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation. Cole (2006) argued that the top rung on the ladder demonstrates active community participation with high levels of empowerment to residents as they have the power to find solutions during decision-making and create change. It is recognised within sustainable tourism and adaptive NRM that without community empowerment the success of projects in these fields would be difficult to obtain (Scheyvens, 1999; Sofield, 2003). Whilst within protected area management, implementation of conservations policies or certain management strategies would be extremely difficult to enforce if local communities had a low level of empowerment and participation during policy making (Aswani and Weiant, 2004). Moreover, empowerment of local communities during the decision-making process can foster a sense of ownership of natural resources. In the Soloman Islands, women were frequently excluded from decision-making on fisheries management and development in a marine protected area, whilst the area was also mismanaged by other stakeholders involved, making the resources unsustainable for the future (Aswani and Weiant, 2004). A resource management project was introduced to the area which included the local women in the project. As a result of their inclusion during decision-making, the entire community

benefitted from greater empowerment and ownership to manage and monitor the resources whilst establishing their own rules to deal with an illegal activity in the marine protected area (Aswani and Weiant, 2004).

Although the concept of empowerment has been researched for many years, it is only in recent years that there has been increasing pressure to employ the idea within a national park systems context. For example, in 2009, the Norwegian government launched a reform toward community-based conservation which transferred authority decision-making to local protected area boards in the hope to reduce conflict with private property owners. Engen and Hausner (2018) studied this reform to understand the impacts it would have on local empowerment. Using a before-and-after design, the study's results showed that from the initial stages of the reform, the locals empowerment saw an increase with a higher acceptance of conservation practices and a reduction in the appeals made against conservation decisions. Furthermore, in Scotland, the government created a new law in 2015 called the 'Community Empowerment Act' to empower and integrate local communities' decision-making within rural land use and land management (Pound et al., 2016). This law has required the Scottish national parks to address this in their Act and include community empowerment as a core policy and strategy for the long-term vision and management of the parks.

A key aspect of empowerment is ensuring partnership developed across stakeholder groups is equal, and attention now shifts to examining this concept in more detail with particular reference to a NRM context.

3.2.4 Partnership

Partnerships between stakeholders have become a necessitated development towards the governance of protected areas in recent years. Tourism literature, in particular, has widely recognised the role of partnerships and collaborations (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Hall, 1999; Selin, 1999; Bramwell and Lane, 2000), especially in the context of promoting and developing tourism in protected area settings (Buckley and Sommer, 2001; Wilson et al., 2008; Jamal and Stronza, 2009). Within UK national parks, multilateral partnerships are becoming more common, involving several

partners from different backgrounds who come together to work towards management objectives. Austin et al. (2016) suggested that within contested national park spaces the sustainable development agenda is a common goal between partners, as well as being a current universal goal. One of the key areas that sustainable development and partnership attempts to manage effectively is recreation and tourism services (Eagles, 2009).

A body of scholarly thought over the years have advanced thinking around partnership models. For instance, Graham et al. (2003) proposed four models for institutional management of recreation and tourism within a protected areas context. This was followed up by the work of More (2005) who advocated five models. Eagles (2009) adapted these further and identified eight wider management models, namely national park model, parastatal model, non-profit organisation model, ecolodge model, public and for-profit organisation model, public and non-profit combination model, aboriginal and government model, and traditional community model. As such, these models can be viewed as governance approaches to protected areas, yet despite these adaptations by Eagles (2009) not one of the models fully represents or can be identified directly to the UK national park system. In addition, it is seen that old governance styles are unsustainable in creating interaction and engagement between local communities, various stakeholders and the natural environment (Austin et al., 2016). As a result, the introduction of partnership working, and in particular public-private partnerships also known as shared governance, has been an endeavouring new efficiency and effectiveness style of governance in national park management within decentralised countries (Ly and Zhang, 2019). Additionally, it must be emphasised that the type of governance employed by management authorities and responsible bodies does not correlate to the ownership of the protected area (IUCN, 2013); therefore, it only relates to the area's management functions.

Two concepts within partnerships which are commonly studied separately have been collaboration and cooperation. Partnership, collaboration and cooperation may be separated and closely interlinked (Hall, 1999) but collaboration and cooperation in some ways exist within partnerships (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996). As such, partners can collaborate and cooperate, whilst partners can cooperate when they collaborate (Oliver, 2002). Nissen et al. (2014) characterised collaboration and teamwork as being

similar as both have strong linkages to joint problem solving and common open tasking, while the authors characterised cooperation and taskwork as similar in nature as both have weak linkages to working on more defined, separated tasks. Consequently, the ideal approach would be a collaborative one within partnership working as it has the ability to enhance impact management, community cohesion, distribution of benefits and competitiveness in visitor destination branding (Go and Govers, 2000). However, as noted by Hall (1999) collaboration between public and private sectors can be difficult to achieve; therefore, mixing of the two concepts may benefit the effectiveness of partnerships as this allows for shared knowledge whilst ensuring innovative decision-making processes are materialising (Nissen et al., 2014).

In the UK, the development over the past two decades towards a partnership culture has been evident across different sectors and services (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). Partnership, collaboration and cooperation is viewed as being mandatory to organisations or destinations policies or strategies and recommended by the government as good practice (Paton 1999; Miller and Ahmad, 2000). Therefore, the idea of partnership, collaboration and cooperation could be seen as a legislation requirement which needs to be one of the central strategies to a policy or strategic documentation (Dowling et al., 2004). If this is the case, managers of tourism and protected areas would feel obligated to include partnership working as the key governance and management approach within planning documents.

An issue with partnerships, particularly between tourism, protected areas and local communities, is the reliance on science-orientated knowledge and often do not go beyond expert-led management (Sarkki et al., 2015; McCool, 2009). Another issue with partnerships is that the approach does not necessarily imply that there is equality in power, responsibilities and distribution of resources (Edgar et al., 2006). It does not mean that stakeholder perspectives are acknowledged with equal value either. A study by Darcy and Wearing (2009) looked at a proposed public-private partnership between the cultural heritage tourism industry of a contested development site within Royal national park, Sydney, Australia. Through a content analysis examining the media coverage of the project, it was found that the partnership would have failed in its effectiveness to give stakeholders equality. It was also found that there was a lack of communication, particularly from the government, during consultations with the local

community causing many residents within this stakeholder group to be inactively involved. Therefore, the ideal partnership scenario would include an equitable, well-structured approach which has the correct balance between top-down and bottom-up styles of management (Boyd and Timothy, 2001). However, this is rarely the case in many partnerships within NRM and the tourism sector.

With partnership working becoming increasingly recognised in protected areas as an arrangement to enter into dialogue with many groups and sectors, it's little wonder the lines are starting to blur between the ideal and non-ideal types of partnership. Boyd and Timothy (2001) examined four dimensions of partnerships within protected areas, focusing particularly on WHSs in natural and rural settings. They developed a partnership model to demonstrate four categories in terms of context and scale (Figure 3.3). The model features the type of partnership that exists in the dimension, the approach taken, and the cooperation characteristics.

Figure 3.3: Context and scale partnership model

		Context	
		Protected landscapes	Mixed-use landscapes
Scale	Local/ Regional	A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Type:</i> Mostly formal, with equal relationship • <i>Approach:</i> Grassroots-driven • <i>Cooperation:</i> High degree, involving both private and public sector 	B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Type:</i> Formal or informal, with unequal relationships • <i>Approach:</i> Agency-driven • <i>Cooperation:</i> Limited degree, greater between government as opposed to private versus public
	Bi-national/ International	C <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Type:</i> Mostly informal, with unequal relationships • <i>Approach:</i> Local-level agency-driven and grassroots-driven • <i>Cooperation:</i> Limited degree, mostly involves national government and responsible protected areas agencies 	D <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Type:</i> Informal, possibly none existing • <i>Approach:</i> Local-level agency-driven • <i>Cooperation:</i> Limited degree, if any

Source: Adapted from Boyd and Timothy (2001).

It could be interpreted that the ideal partnership is that demonstrating the characteristics in dimension A, where partnerships have equity but more importantly have a bottom-up approach to enable stakeholders a sense of ownership and empowerment with high levels of cooperation between the private and public sector parties. This cooperation between the two sectors has resulted in public-private partnerships (PPPs) emerging significantly more within tourism development and protected area settings (Buckley, 2002; Darcy and Wearing, 2009; Wilson et al., 2009; Zapata and Hall, 2012; Adams, 2020). This type of partnership is somewhat illustrated in dimension A in Figure 3.3. The partnership model was initially developed by looking at WHS protected areas, however, the model can also be construed to apply to a national park context. In UK national parks, the landscape is mixed-use, though, the partnerships that develop can occur from dimension A, B and C in some cases. Therefore, the partnership is dependent upon the circumstance with which stakeholders are involved, which then determines the type, approach and degree of cooperation in the working partnership. In addition, it is clear from the model that the non-ideal type of partnership is that demonstrated in dimension D where the relationship between stakeholders barely exists, but also in terms of cross international protected areas with mixed-use landscapes are unlikely to exist or be successful if they do exist.

Type, approach and cooperation are important dimensions to understand in partnerships, however, another vital dimension are the principles. Partnership principles are, in essence, what the partnership stands for and what the partnership needs to be able to function successfully. In order to try and achieve the ideal partnership scenario, the principles of a successful partnership have been highly debated. Edgar et al. (2006) suggested five principles of partnership should include legitimacy and voice, direction, performance, accountability, and fairness. While many authors identify trust, respect, transparency and accountability as key principles to successful partnerships (Malena, 1995; Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Horton et al, 2009; Gruber, 2010; Lockwood, 2010). Many other principles have been identified as being essential to organisational partnerships but also partnerships within protected areas, including shared benefits (Austin, 2000; Tennyson, 2011), shared management responsibilities (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996; Lockwood, 2010), shared goals with conservation goals (Gray, 1989; Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996; Horton et al,

2009), participatory decision making (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Campbell and Vainio-Mattila, 2003; Gruber, 2010), empowerment (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Graci, 2013), the understanding and knowledge of partnership and stakeholder views (Malena, 1995; Wildridge et al., 2004; Pfueller et al., 2011), influence and leadership (Moxley, 1999; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Gruber, 2010; Tennyson, 2011), pooling resources and equity (Oliver, 2002; Horton et al., 2009; Gruber, 2010), sustainability, innovation and development of the partnership and all other components (Tremblay, 2000; Pfueller et al., 2011; Graci, 2013), enhancement of tourism product (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Graci, 2013), and provides a contribution towards democratic society (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996; Bramwell and Lane, 2000). Some of these principles are evident in the work of Austin et al. (2016) which studied factors to understand partnership working in the Northumberland National Park in England. Interviews conducted with stakeholders indicated that there were six factors under two main themes that respondents felt were important to partnership working. One theme was governance factors including appointing actors and defining roles, shared priorities and pooling resources, government documents and evaluations; the other theme was behavioural factors including quality of leadership, effectiveness of actor interactions, and personality factors. Although, Austin et al. (2016) highlighted that the partnership working and relationships between the stakeholders were impeded as a result of reputation and history within organisations or individuals, which feasibly acts as an overarching dimension on the successfulness of partnership working.

Lastly, Gruber (2010, p.62) studied the key principles within CBNRM aligned with collaboration and suggested 'conflict resolution and cooperation' as a necessary principle. This justification is because working in partnership has the potential to tackle NRM challenges, create opportunities and have the ability to reduce future conflicts (Oliver, 2002; De Lacy et al., 2002). However, other strategies such as negotiation or mediation would need to be utilised within a partnership approach for this principle to be successful, and attention shifts to an examination of this in the next section of the chapter, positioning these strategies as possible options to overcome conflict and entrenched stakeholder positioning.

3.3 CONFLICT AS A CONCEPT

A 'conflict' can occur in any context in a magnitude of situations and disciplines. For instance, economically, a conflict could exist between a business and supplier; socially, a conflict can exist between a husband and wife; and politically, a conflict can exist between two politicians within the same political party. Hence, conflicts are diverse in substance, significance and style (Deutsch, 1991).

Generally, a conflict is defined as a serious disagreement or argument (Stevenson, 2010). However, conflicts are more complex than this simple definition. Conflict can arise in any social setting between or within groups, individuals, organisations and nations (Rubin, 1994), meaning they can exist between two or more parties (Nicholson, 1991). Johnston and Myers (2016, p.1) stated that in the context of heritage place management "conflict means a disagreement in which the involved parties perceive a threat to their interests, values, identities, or rights". Specifically within NRM studies, conflicts are defined as disagreements or disputes generated by the inappropriate distribution or access to natural resources, such as land, water, forests and biological resources (Glavovic, 1996; FAO, 2000). However, typically in the tourism literature, the word 'conflict' is used but rarely defined; viewed often as a crisis which is human-induced (Faulkner, 2001). Curcija et al. (2019) believes that the authors in tourism assume readers understand the meaning and context of the term. To this end, disagreement is commonly used in the definition of 'conflict'. However, a conflict is seen as more than just a disagreement and as such seen as a situation where people perceive an emotional, physical, power or status threat (Spangler, 2018).

The word 'conflict' can be perceived as a negative term (Susskind and Thomas-Larmer, 1999; Lee et al., 2015). This is understandable as conflicts can take time and energy out of managerial resources which can be costly and disruptive to other productive things (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). Communication breakdown may occur between parties (Khan et al., 2016), which can lead to intensifying conflicts lasting over a long period of time to result in emotional and physical effects on individuals (O'Connell, 2014). On the contrary, conflicts can have their advantages. A conflict can produce creative and innovative ideas for solutions which in doing so

increase individual's motivation to work harder to resolve the conflict (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). Moreover, conflicting situations can create an environment that discourages premature decision-making, therefore pushing individuals or parties to participate in the decision-making process to identify the issues and interests appropriately (O'Connell, 2014). Though, it must be noted that effects of conflicts can vary depending on the situation such as the type of conflict or the conflict topic (Jehn, 1995). However, most importantly, parties must perceive a conflict to exist for there to be a conflict, if no parties perceive a conflict then no conflict exists (Bercovitch, 1984; Katz et al., 2010).

Conflict is articulated through many forms, such as anger, frustration and discussion, particularly when people engage with one another and are incapable of seeing eye to eye. Although, conflict is not necessarily seen as a bad thing. Deutsch (1991) stated that most conflicts are commonly mixed-motive with each actor or party having cooperative and competitive interests. These interests can change the process and outcomes of the conflict by altering strategies and contradictory communication and attitudes. Okazaki (2008) highlighted that the concept of conflict can be both constructive and destructive. Constructive conflicts can be beneficial and productive whilst destructive conflicts can be detrimental and harmful (Kochan, 1974). Constructive conflict is the ideal type as this gives the opportunity to improve collaborative relations between stakeholders.

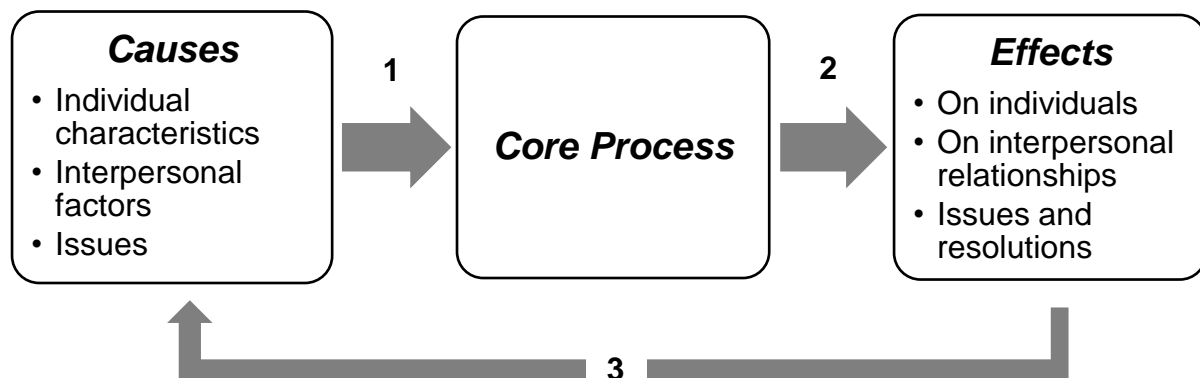
The altercation by conflicting actors or parties vary the course of conflict and is the main cause determining the outcomes of the conflict in relation to whether it is constructive or destructive in nature. Constructive and destructive conflicts are largely influenced by the cooperation-competition theory developed by Deutsch (1949). The theory stated that conflict is the mutual problem in connection to a constructive process of conflict resolution with a cooperative problem-solving process. Contrary to this, the conflicting parties acting in competition to determine who wins and who loses is connected to a destructive process of conflict resolution with a competitive process (Deutsch, 2000). Essentially, cooperation should lead to a win-win solution that is constructive to resolve conflicts. However, the balance of cooperative and competitive interests is one factor amongst an array of other influential elements steering the course of conflict, such as, power, abilities, and engagement levels (Deutsch, 1991).

Conversely, conflicts do not have a set course that is perfect for all involved and different factors come into play during the course of a conflict which are evident within the generalisation of conflicts of all types.

3.3.1 The conflict cycle

There are no two conflicts the same as they do not progress in a linear path. Through decades of scholarly research, it has been demonstrated that conflicts can have structures and dimensions that share similarities, such as the patterns and stages of development (Engel and Korf, 2005). Deutsch (1990) identified five levels of conflict: personal, inter-role, interpersonal, intergroup and interorganisational. However, the commonality at all levels is that there are causes, a core process and effects which feeds back to affect the causes creating a 'conflict cycle' (Wall and Callister, 1995) (Figure 3.4). The cycle determines a general loop that can be continuous and repetitive, although, every conflict must be studied individually or grouped with others at its same level (Wall and Callister, 1995).

Figure 3.4: The conflict cycle



Source: Adapted from Wall and Callister (1995).

Causes

There are three main causes of conflict as shown in Figure 3.4. Firstly, individual characteristics links to personal elements causing the disagreement, such as, an individual's personality, attitudes, goals, positioning or anger (Pondy, 1967). The position the party has taken can connect to goals depending on the commitment to that goal; the higher the goal is set, the higher the commitment to achieving that goal

and opposite to low set goals with low commitment (Wall and Callister, 1995). In addition, an individual's personality traits can determine the perception of a conflict adding to the cause of the conflict (De Jong et al., 2013; Ayub et al., 2017). Ayub et al. (2017) explored the role of personality traits in determining conflict and job performance in a large multinational company in Pakistan. The research analysed personality traits (extraversion, conscientious, agreeable, openness, emotional stability) against conflict management styles (integrating, obliging, avoiding, compromising, dominating). It was found that all personality traits effected the performance and interactions in the conflict; however, the only trait that perceived less conflict were individuals identified as agreeable and therefore were more likely to perform better than their counterparts.

Secondly, interpersonal factors causing a conflict refers to the perceptual interface, communication and behaviour between parties, structural relationships and preceding interactions (Wall and Callister, 1995). Perception of others can be a highly destructive feature in a conflict, whether the perception is correct or incorrect. Parties may perceive others to have higher goals, illegitimate intentions or misunderstand each other's positions (Vaaland and Hakansson, 2003), leading to a degree of distrust from the outset of the conflict. Communication and behaviour are closely interconnected with interpersonal factors but also relate the power struggles and imbalances that occur within conflicts. Imbalanced power effects the structural relationships as opposition and resistance will be evident from weaker parties who feel they have less influence, therefore causing tensions and leading to conflict (Wall and Callister, 1995).

Lastly, issues can be complex and rising tensions creating conflicting scenarios. Issues can easily become cloudy and misunderstood resulting in such conflicts being harder to resolve (Wall and Callister, 1995). The cause of issues can interchange, or one simple issue can manifest and build into new issues. Likewise, conflicts may occur due to multiple issues increasing the chances of disputes. Although, Wall and Callister (1995) stated that there are opportunities for trades and face-saving exits from parties involved in conflicts with multiple issues, in the case of multifaceted conflicts, issues can be a battle of principles and positions.

Core Process

In Figure 3.4, the core process refers to the conflict taking place. During this stage, it is believed to be “the interpersonal behaviour in which one or both disputants oppose the counterpart’s interests/goals” (Wall and Callister, 1995, p.523). It is at this time that the direction of the conflict can be constructive or destructive and begin to determine the outcomes of the conflict. In addition, the core process is described as cognitively-oriented (Thomas, 1992), meaning that the counterparts will respond to each other through a series of awareness, understanding and emotional experiences.

Effects

After the occurrence of the conflict’s core process, there are three main effects. These can affect individuals, interpersonal relationships, and the issues and resolutions. Effects on individuals is frequently the most evident and the first response from conflicts. These responses can be psychological, behavioural, and physiological (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). Individuals are likely to experience negative emotions, stress, anxiety, and possibly an overall decline in interest to resolve the conflict (Wall and Callister, 1995; Khan et al., 2016). Interpersonal relationships can be connected with effects on individuals as the emotions one party experiences can have a detrimental impact on the relationships in the process. Similar to the interpersonal factors discussed in *causes*, the perception, communications, behaviour and structural relationships can all suffer from negative responses from individuals. The effects on issues and resolution are reliant on the positive or negative experiences parties have during the conflict’s core process. Again, similar to *causes*, issues can be repeatedly be misunderstood over the duration of the conflict (Wall and Callister, 1995). As a result, resolution may or may not take place contingent to the positive or negative experiences. Consequently, dependent upon these effects the feedback loop represents the inability to resolve the conflict or if this one particular conflict is resolved it can create the beginning of a new conflict, creating the conflict cycle.

In a study by Khan et al. (2016) they suggested additional stages exist in the conflict cycle beyond the *effects* stage, namely *conflict management techniques* and *outcomes*, with the feedback loop continuing around all five stages. Conflict management techniques refers to the methods used to manage conflicts. The techniques utilised at this stage can determine the outcomes of the conflict, and similar

to *effects* the outcomes can be positive or negative in nature. This modified version of the conflict cycle provides a greater understanding and generalisation of conflict and its process.

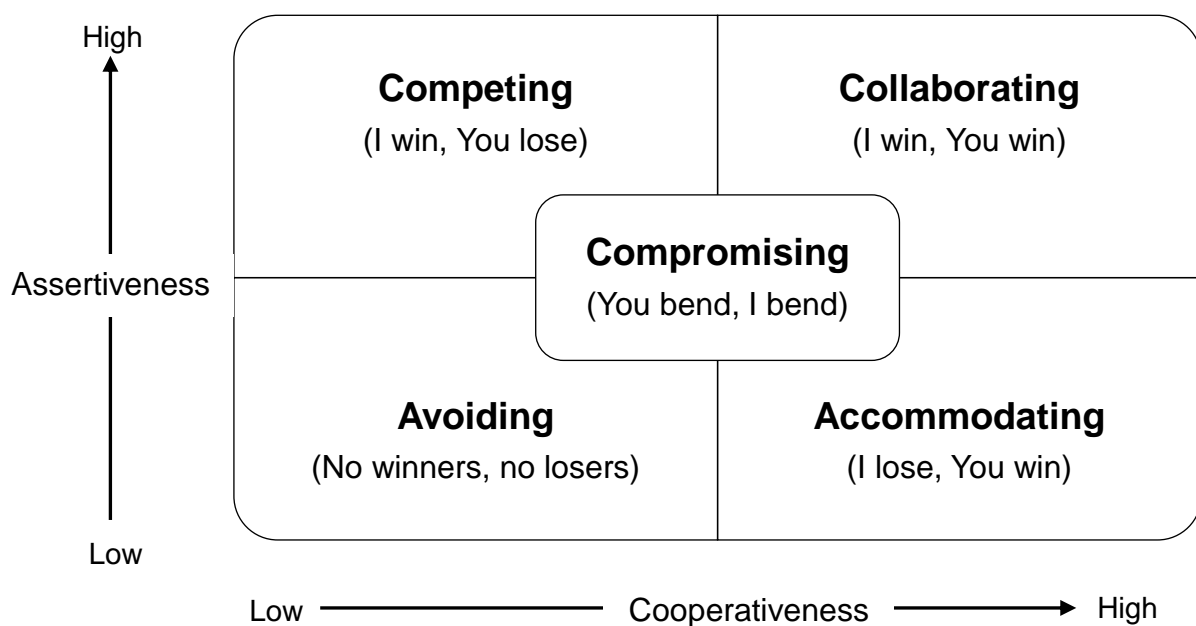
3.3.2 The process of conflict

From examining the basic cycle of conflict, it is also important to understand how conflicts work in order to have potential resolution. Individuals can identify and understand the conflict more effectively by recognising the different stages of a conflict from start to finish. Therefore, the process of a conflict is where one party stimulates their interests which are opposed by other parties (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). Typically, the conflict process is discussed in organisational behaviour literature. Although, the process is very much generalised to encompass all types of conflicts that occur, not solely internal organisations conflicts. The process comprises of five stages which show the evolution of how conflicts begin and develop amongst conflict parties with different goals, issues and positions. These stages in 'potential opposition or incompatibility', 'cognition and personalisation', 'intentions', 'behaviour' and 'outcomes'. Of these stages, 'intentions' is described as a distinct stage in the conflict process as it showcases the decisions to act in a certain way and showcases the intentions to intervene other's perceptions and emotion and other's overt behaviour (Robbins and Judge, 2019, p.671).

The 'intentions' were first developed by Thomas and Kilmann (1974) as different ways to handle conflict, known as the conflict-handling intentions (competing, collaborating, compromise, avoiding, and accommodating). These intentions were then measured against two dimensions: assertiveness and cooperativeness (Thomas, 1983). Figure 3.5 demonstrates the five intentions along the two dimensions for conflict handling. Assertive or unassertive behaviours refers to the measurement of an individual's appeal to fulfil their own needs, whilst cooperative or uncooperative behaviours refers to an individual's appeal to fulfil the other party's needs (Callanan et al., 2006). The diagram accounts for the process of conflict resolution but also the structure of moderately constant characteristics of an individual in a conflicting situational context (Percival et al., 1992).

Competing, also known as force, has the ability to resolve conflicts fast and is linked to power as one party will use this as a means to win irrespective of how its efforts damage relationships with the other party (Warner, 2000). Avoiding, also known as withdrawal, occurs when parties do not engage and would rather sidestep or withdraw from any confrontation instead of voicing their concerns or acknowledge their counterparts' concerns (Robbins and Judge, 2019). Accommodation is simply when one party accommodates the issues or concerns of their counterpart whilst placing less priority on their own concerns (Warner, 2000). Compromise looks for a mutual solution that is satisfactory to the all parties involved in the conflict, but usually at least one party must sacrifice to some degree. Compromise usually results in trade-offs to minimise a win-lose situation and therefore is the most common intention present within conflict resolution scenarios (Warner, 2000). Collaborating, also known as consensus, is when the conflicting parties both have a desire to satisfy the concerns of all involved, therefore each party is willing to concede something (Robbins and Judge, 2019). Warner (2000) highlighted that compromise can be present during consensus-building in the final stage of agreement towards conflict resolution, however consensus will avoid trade-offs and will seek a win-win solution. Notably, all five intentions need to be considered and adopted according to which one is the most practical to the conflict (Warner, 2000).

Figure 3.5: Five conflict-handling intentions



Source: Adapted from Thomas and Kilmann (1974) and Robbins and Judge (2019).

Furthermore, Figure 3.5 shows that avoiding and accommodating both have low assertiveness between the conflicting parties, whilst competing and collaborating have high levels. Low levels of cooperativeness are shown in competing and avoiding in conflicts, while collaborating and accommodating displays high levels of cooperativeness. Compromise is in the centre of assertiveness and cooperativeness as each party has incomplete satisfaction from the situation (Robbins and Judge, 2019). Each of these intentions demonstrate different scenarios of winning and losing. Ideally, the best way to overcome, resolve and manage conflicts is through a collaborating or consensus strategy.

3.3.3 Conflict resolution and management

As previously mentioned, a conflict is commonly seen as a disagreement or dispute created between parties with opposing interests, values and concerns. In an attempt to overcome conflicts, resolution tools are adopted to decrease tensions and manage the conflict as effectively as possible. The term 'resolution' is defined as making a firm decision to do or not to do something (Stevenson, 2010). In other words, it is the action of solving an issue or a problem. When it comes a conflict or dispute, the term 'conflict resolution' was developed in the late 1950s alongside an approach which facilitated meetings where groups in the conflict understand other parties' positions and views (Stern and Druckman, 2000). Therefore, "conflict resolution is the process of facilitating a solution where the actors no longer feel the need to indulge in conflict activity and feel that the distribution of benefits in the social system is acceptable" (Nicholson, 1991, p.59). Ideally, conflict resolution results in a win-win solution for all parties involved (Davidson and Wood, 2004). However, this unsurprisingly rarely happens and rarely resorts in all parties being satisfied with the end result.

In a study on land-use conflicts, Tudor et al. (2014) developed a complex framework to help towards the process of achieving conflict resolution in four conflicts in Switzerland and Romania. The two cases in Switzerland were in relation to construction of ski infrastructure, and residential development in an area with ecological value; whilst the two Romanian cases related to construction of ski track in a high level protection zone in a national park, and the development of residential infrastructure in a poorly facilitated urban area. The study measured the cases against

this framework with overarching criteria (consentaneity), other criteria (efficiency, equity, sustainability, compatibility) and sub-criteria (economic and social benefits, appropriate stakeholders' effective collaboration, environmental and economic sustainability, long lasting agreement, legal feasibility compliance with land-use regulations). The criteria were designed to determine the highest score showcasing the best performer for conflict resolution. The results emphasised that conflict resolution was difficult to achieve, particularly in the Romanian residential case where conflict resolution failed as local residents were not convinced to participate during the negotiation process. Furthermore, the process to get to conflict resolution took a long period of time with the two ski construction cases taking over 30 years to resolve. Finally, the study suggested from the framework measurements that conflict resolution was successful in the two Switzerland cases. This was due to the high levels of importance placed on equity in decision-making, sustainability and preservation, and the conflict methods that were utilised. Additionally, the two Romanian cases placed high priority on economic benefits over environmental sustainability and had poor equity with the public during the decision-making process.

Despite land use conflicts in Romania being more difficult to resolve there is a strong correlation between this case study and the case of attempted national park designation in the Mourne Mountains in Northern Ireland. Bell and Stockdale (2015) highlighted that proposals focused more on the economic prospect rather than the environmental concerns resulting in conflicts between stakeholders, particularly within the community and environmentalists, ending in the failure to designate a national park in the area. This proves that in land-use and NRM conflicts ecological sustainability for livelihoods must be the priority for all landscape spaces not just protected areas, but also the local community must have a willingness to participate in the conflict for any potential resolution to be reached.

The concept of conflict management is fairly self-explanatory as it is fundamentally methods that are employed to help manage and control conflict from escalating. The difficulties of reaching a decision through resolution can be complicated, therefore resulting in the favoured option being to manage the conflict by finding techniques that address the conflict and its short and long term causes (Castro and Nielson, 2003). Conflict management is described as being a desirable and feasible situation which

has the potential to resolve the conflict (Raitio, 2013, p.97). In addition, for managers in charge who view conflicts as a normal and positive challenge, recognise that conflicts cannot be completely eliminated through resolution, however they recognise that management of such conflicts can achieve change (Buckles and Rusnak, 1999). However, Wallensteen (1991) questioned whether conflicts are truly resolved or are they simply transformed. The transformation perhaps occurs due to continuous or repeated experience of struggle resulting in the contentions, interests and actions of the parties being transformed. As a result, there is the debate regarding terminology in the field of conflict literature. The terms 'conflict transformation', 'conflict management', 'conflict engagement', 'conflict prevention' have all developed in recent years after the term 'conflict resolution'. Ramsbotham et al. (2011) stated that regardless of which terminology is used they fall under the umbrella of conflict resolution, while Cheldelin et al. (2008) stated that conflict resolution is the ultimate aim of conflict transformation. Furthermore, Soliku and Schraml (2018) view conflict resolution and conflict management as two components that are interlinked and found that resolution frequently comes after the occurrence of a conflict resulting in management taking place before, during and after the conflict.

As conflicts occur over incompatible interests, goals and motives, conflict management is seen as a way to reframe individual's or parties' perceptions in the conflict but help them deal with strong emotions and behaviours, so the conflict can be dealt with in more effective ways (Engel and Korf, 2005). One effective way to enable appropriate conflict management is by conducting a prior analysis. This conflict analysis allows the assessment of stakeholders interests, positions, needs and issues, identifies the impact of the conflicts to detect the most suitable management or resolution strategies, and identifies the quality of relationships between stakeholders to gauge the capacity for negotiation (Engel and Korf, 2005; Wilmot and Hocker, 2011). Like most processes, conflict management changes forms over time dependent on what approach of management is required (Maoz, 2004). Some stages may require informal negotiations which are somewhat indirect, whilst at other stages direct negotiations are needed.

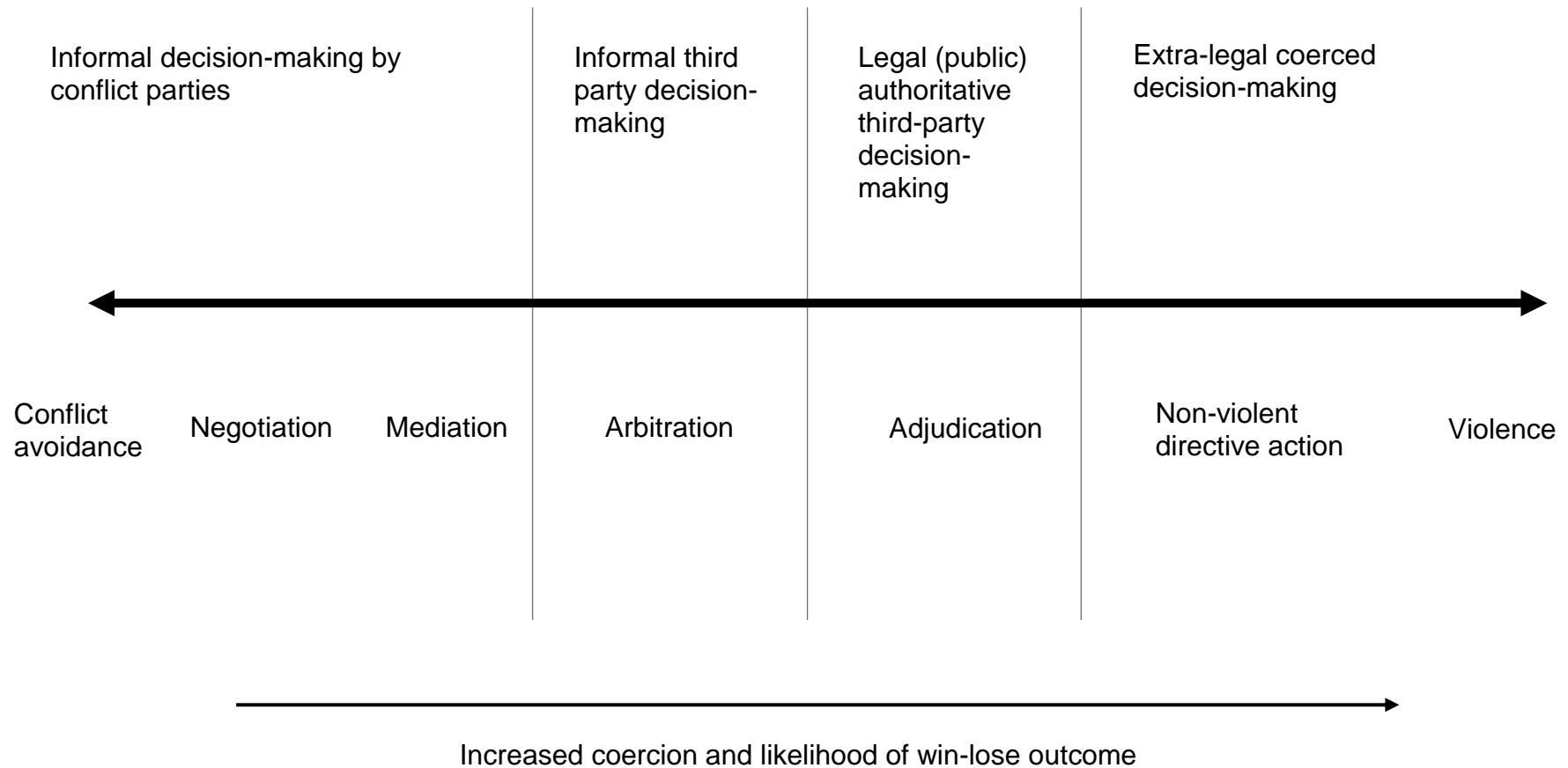
There are different options for managing conflict in many different situations meaning that individuals or parties have options. Moore (2003) illustrated a conflict

management continuum which shows two extreme ends of conflict and the range of approaches that could be used to manage or potentially resolve conflicts. Figure 3.6 demonstrates how the approaches progress from informal to coercive decision-making. On the extreme left is avoidance. This initial stage along the continuum happens when people first face a dispute. It is when this approach is no longer feasible that the conflict intensifies and resorts to using approaches such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration or adjudication.

Negotiation and mediation are the most common approaches to informal decision-making between conflicting parties (Engel and Korf, 2005). Negotiation involves bargaining amongst the opposing parties, whilst mediation involves a neutral third party to facilitate negotiations. Arbitration also involves a third party; however, they make the decision for the conflicting parties. The main issue with arbitration is if the arbitrator makes mistakes, parties have limited rights to appeal the decision and usually ends in a win-lose outcome (Fisher, 2016). This stage of the continuum ends the informal and private aspects of decision-making and moves into the formal, public domain with adjudication which involves hiring lawyers to act on the conflicting parties' behalf to argue their case out in front of judges. Although, the advantage of this method is that the decision is made by the judge making it binding and enforceable (Fisher, 2016).

On the right side of the continuum is non-violent directive action and violence. At these stages the managing of conflict is outside the remits of law and becomes extra-legal where force and coercion are utilised to drive opposing parties to surrender defeat. The most extreme approach to decision-making is through the use of violence where parties use physical coercion to force and threaten by imposing their position on opposing parties (Engel and Korf, 2005). Violent conflicts occur over political, economic, social and historical matters. In environmental studies, violence can occur, intensify and sustain itself over the competition for natural resources (USIP, 2007).

Figure 3.6: The conflict management continuum



Source: Moore, 2003.

The concept of conflict resolution does not appear on the conflict management continuum as conflict resolution is viewed as conflict that satisfies and encourages all parties to a win-win solution whilst conflict management tends to take an indefinite length of time to control and limit conflict. Conflict management is required in many cases of NRM as conflicts can be reoccurring or develop into other issues. Fisher et al. (2000) identified in forest management conflicts at eight different sites in Indonesia. Restrictions to access and control over the use of natural resources developed by central government created conflicts with the local community. Intervention methods such as mediation and negotiation were used to build collaborative approaches between the multi-stakeholders involved. In order to use these methods, community surveys and meetings were set up to gather information about the issues communities were experiencing. The study stressed the importance of community participation and involvement before implementation of policies from government and constant monitoring and evaluation of intervention methods was required for conflict management to have the chance of being successful long-term.

There is no one precise strategy for managing or resolving conflicts; a mix of strategies is a more advantageous approach to specific situations (Tacconi, 2000; Warner, 2000). As a result, it is important to understand the generalised cycle, process and the interconnection between conflict resolution and conflict management as these showcase some of the key elements with conflicts and mechanisms that are utilised by organisations and managers attempting to resolve and reduce conflicts amongst the various stakeholders that can be involved in these scenarios. The following subsection discusses the importance of trust and communication between conflicting parties in order for the conflict to be constructive and gain a basis for any form of resolution.

3.3.4 The importance of trust and communication

Trustworthiness is a key factor in any relationship, especially between stakeholders working in partnerships and between stakeholders and organisations. Greenwood and Van Buren (2010) stated that the trust in a stakeholder-organisation and the organisation's trustworthiness towards that relationship is a vital moral treatment to the

stakeholders. The breakdown in trust results in conflicts covering a variety of issues, especially within the field of NRM.

In scholarly literature, there are a wide range of trust definitions which can vary dependent upon the typology of trust. McAllister (1995, p.25) defines interpersonal trust as “the willingness to act on the basis of, the words, actions, and decisions of another”. While Van Dijk et al. (2017, p.71) defines deterrence-based trust as “the trust people have in others when they believe that for these others the costs for breaches of trust will outweigh the benefits of untrustworthiness”. For the purpose of this study, a wider definition of trust has been adopted by Mayer et al. (1995, p.712) who stated that trust is “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party”. This definition highlights that stakeholders involved in conflict that also have the appetite to resolve the conflict have a degree of vulnerability, but also have the willingness to take risk.

Trust is at the centre of conflict resolution (Idrissou et al., 2013) and in the ideal world helps towards resolving conflicts. However, it is clear that trust between conflicting parties or stakeholders will have low levels of trust and high levels of distrust. This was evident in a study by Idrissou et al. (2013). The study investigated trust issues and the relationship interactions between stakeholders involved in participatory management in Pendjari National Park in Benin. The study showcased that trust and distrust coexist but should be used strategically by all stakeholders involved. The study found that deterrence-based trust (distrust) existed between park authorities and eco-guards who run surveillance in the national park. Calculus-based trust (low real trust) was developed between the park authorities and local communities; however, distrust rose between both parties as an imbalance of empowerment grew leading to unresolved conflicts re-emerging and intensifying. A further attempt at conflict resolution was recognised to rebalance the power amongst stakeholders. The study highlighted that in circumstances where deterrence-based trust and calculus-based trust both exist, these two types need to be balanced and distrust needs to be managed. Furthermore, expectations of stakeholders need to be managed, and importantly during the initial stage of a conservation project expectations must be negotiated, shared and be realistic to build trust amongst all stakeholders to prevent any future conflicts (Idrissou

et al., 2013). The imbalance of power demonstrated in Idrissou et al's. (2013) study highlights a link between trust and power and found that a perceived empowerment of an authoritative stakeholder leads to distrust between them and the local community. Moreover, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012) found in their study on power, trust and community support that residents' power is a significant factor in the level of trust they have towards government actors and tourism development planners and support they will give to future endeavours.

Despite which typology of trust exists between different parties and stakeholders, Lewicki and Wiethoff (2000) stated seven points of advice are useful when attempting to manage trust and conflict effectively:

1. The existence of trust between individuals makes conflict resolution easier and more effective.
2. Trust is often the first casualty in conflict.
3. Creating trust in a relationship is initially a matter of building calculus-based trust (low real trust).
4. Relationships can be further strengthened if the parties are able to build identification-based trust (complete trust).
5. Relationships characterized by calculus-based or identification-based distrust are likely to be conflict laden, and eruption of conflict within that relationship is likely to feed and encourage further distrust.
6. Most relationships are not purely trust and distrust but contain elements of both.
7. It is possible to repair trust.

These points reinforce the importance of trust in conflicting circumstances and the need to understand the level of trust between stakeholders before trying to resolve the conflicting issues.

However, building trust can be a difficult task without the use of effective communication. Communication has a major role to play in addressing, managing and potentially resolving a conflict (Juneja, 2015) and can be one of the main impacts, positively or negatively, on trust building in conflicts (Wuthisatian et al., 2017). Buono et al. (2012) found from a study examining community participation in an Italian national park management system that park managers utilised two-way communication

activities to help resolve misunderstandings that occurred between managers and the local communities. In turn, these activities (e.g. public meetings) helped those involved share ideas and values which led to the building of trust. However, Eisenkopf and Bachtiger (2013) suggested that one party with perceived higher trustworthiness can result in greater ability for exploitation of resources and can influence the communication channels utilised in the relationship with opposing parties. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how the aspects of trust and communication are interconnected and how these two elements must have equal consideration during decision-making processes for any potential resolution in conflict scenarios.

Resolution of any type of conflict cannot take place without effective communication (Mitchell, 1989). Essentially, communication is the sharing and exchange of information which can be interactive or one-directional (Castells, 2013). As such there are many different ways to communicate to a single actor or to a mass audience. It is seen as an indispensable tool in conflict resolution as it represents the ground of how stakeholders understand and act concerning issues, problems and resolution opportunities (Krauss and Morsella, 2000; Aakhus and Bzdak, 2015).

A key component to effective communication is choosing the most appropriate form to employ when exchanging information with other parties to facilitate conflict resolution (Heile, 2001). This form must not be chosen with one single individual in mind but chosen for all parties to be performed on a common platform (Juneja, 2015). Heile (2001) viewed communication as a multi-tool approach to conflict resolution as parties can strategically debate the strengths and weaknesses of each type of communication. These forms of communication could be face-to-face, video conference calls, online, printed materials, and so on. Each of these forms have the advantages and disadvantages to influence the course of the conflict to be constructive or destructive, however, whichever form of communication is chosen it must be structurally balanced to be respectful and attentively listened to (Krauss and Morsella, 2000; Jeong, 2008). Essentially, it must be managed so that dialogue can be productive and beneficial for all conflicting parties involved (Heile, 2001). Ratner et al. (2018) conducted a study on multi-stakeholder dialogue in fisheries resource conflicts in three lake systems in three countries (Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania). Results demonstrated that effective dialogue between government agencies, community groups and NGOs reduced

conflict in all three areas with private investors. These stakeholders, particularly the community groups, found that dialogue processes supported local innovations, empowerment and the ability to influence national policy change on environmental resource management of fishing communities. Inherently, the use of dialogue and effective communication has the capability to improve governance and innovation whilst strengthening marginalised voices, however, this requires long-term commitment, engagement and flexibility for reduction in conflict to transpire (Ratner et al., 2018). The review now shifts to a brief examination of the practical methods, including negotiation, bargaining and mediation as mechanisms employed to resolve conflicts in many different contexts.

3.3.5 Negotiation, bargaining and mediation

Negotiation, bargaining and mediation are all techniques employed in scenarios where disputes occur between opposing parties in an attempt to resolve conflicts. Negotiation can take place in any given interaction between people, whether it is personal or business. It is an interpersonal decision-making process and also a process where two or more parties determine how each party will give and take in the relationship (Thompson, 2011). As such, negotiation is a form of bargaining resulting in both terms being viewed in scholarly literature as interchangeable.

The book '*Getting to Yes: Negotiation Agreement without Giving In*' by Fisher and Ury (1981) was a seminal work in relation to negotiation and bargaining. The authors identified two different styles of negotiating: hard or soft. Soft negotiations want the avoidance of personal conflict and aims for amicable resolution, while hard negotiations are seen as the parties in extreme positions and in competition for their own wills. Hard or soft negotiations are known as positional bargaining or distributive bargaining in the context of organisational management. Positional bargaining is a problematic strategy as it fails to achieve an amicable and wise settlement or deal (Fisher and Ury, 1981). In this style, parties entrench themselves in positions which do not resemble their interests. Consequently, stakeholders become entrenched in their positions making it difficult to reach common ground. This was at the forefront of the failure to designate a national park in the Mourne Mountains in Northern Ireland. The farming community were adamant against such designation and placed themselves

firmly in the opposition stance making it difficult to build consensus (Bell and Stockdale, 2016).

Fisher and Ury (1981) suggested that the answer to hard and soft negotiation positions was principled negotiation which is neither hard or soft, but instead involved integrative bargaining or interest-based bargaining. This form of bargaining is a common approach to negotiation as parties identify their interests and needs to find compromises or consensus that they consider to be in their best interests (Walkerden, 2006). Therefore, principled bargaining focuses on interests rather than positions. Focusing on interests and not positions is a way forward which gives parties the opportunity to reconcile interests. Each and every interest can be fulfilled by several positions (Engel and Korf, 2005), signifying that finding commonalities between each party's interests is better than compromising on positions (Fisher and Ury, 1981; Lewis and Spich, 1996). This aspect will be discussed further in the next section.

Despite the role negotiation plays in resolving conflicts, the method of mediation is seen as an effective mechanism which employs elements of negotiation to reach common ground between stakeholders in conflicting positions. Mediation is viewed as an extension and amplification of the negotiation process (Moore, 1986), and has the ability to be very successful and effective in resolving conflicts if approached correctly (Beer and Stief, 1997). However, in practical terms, the definite mediation process is scarcely demonstrated in NRM conflict studies.

Interventions using mediation can be informal (e.g. dispute with family members) or formal (e.g. using mediators, counsellors). However, no matter what the scenario is the ultimate aim of mediation is to resolve the dispute or conflict by advocating an agreement that has been developed by the parties themselves (Lewicki et al., 2015). Therefore, cooperation, compromise, communication and collaboration are emphasised upon during the mediation process (Lampe, 2001); and characteristically, the process has the ability to transform destructive conflicts into constructive dialogue (Okazaki, 2008). Jamal and Getz (1999) examined community-based roundtables in Canmore, a mountainous town adjacent to Banff National Park in Canada, experiencing a tourism-related development conflict linked to large-scale resort proposals. Local government feared that the community would become entrenched in

their positions and employed the method of mediation to build consensus. Apart from the mediation process, a multi-stakeholder collaborative approach was also utilised to address the issues expressed by local communities and environmentalists. However, this collaborative approach was seen as a concern by the government and private investors as it was viewed as a layer of bureaucracy in the decision-making structure. Results showed inter-organisational collaborations and roundtables may not be the most effective mechanisms where power and knowledge structures can influence the process of a conflict, but mediation in partnerships and collaborations in community-based conflicts can be more successful in the movement from destructive to constructive conflict.

At operational level within protected areas and national parks, conflict management is approached using mediation (Castro and Nielson, 2003). However, the process is rarely studied and discussed in literature in this context. In the field of NRM, mediation is practiced regularly to assist parties to reach common ground and consensus with mutual gains for all stakeholders involved (FAO, 2000). Commonly, these studies focus on natural resource conflicts relating to land-use, forestry, mining, and fisheries (Prins et al., 2003; Andrew, 2003; Muigua, 2016). Many of these studies recognise that each conflict has their own complexities in which mediation may still struggle to find resolution. However, it is argued that mediation is not a magic bullet when it comes to resolving conflicts (Kressel, 2000).

The review now shifts to examining the concept of moving stakeholders from positions to interests which is illustrated through a particular model.

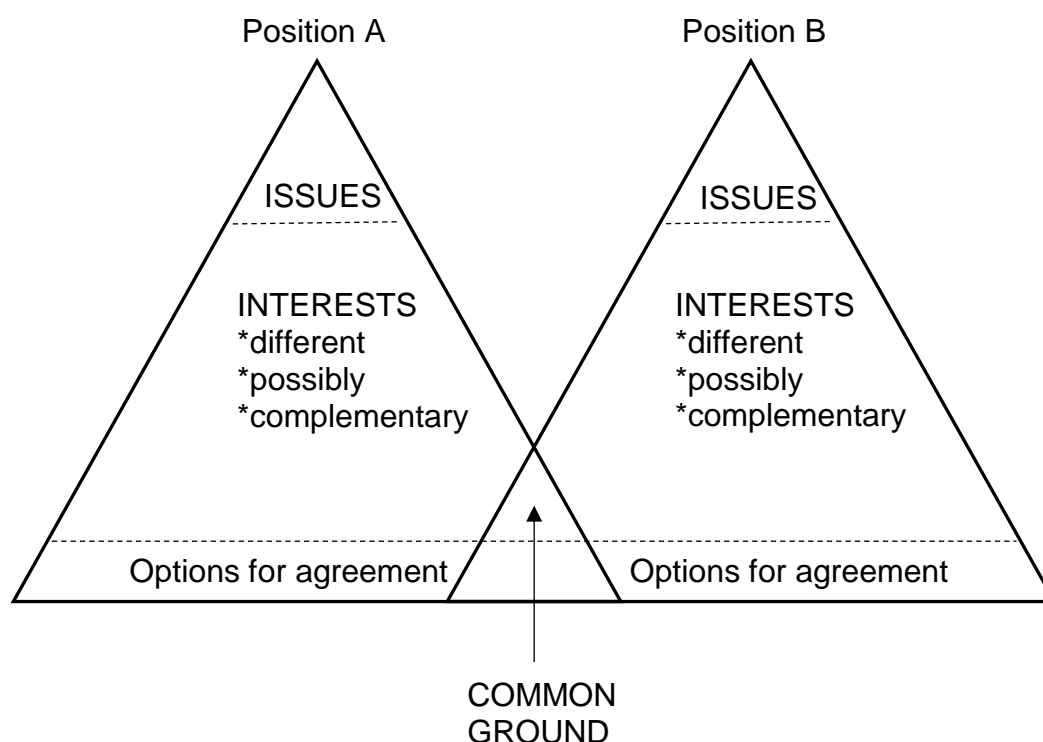
3.3.6 Moving from position to interests

Typically, parties will come to a conflict with their own working theory and positions having an overall consequence on resolution. McElroy and Mills (2000) identified five different levels of stakeholder positioning: active support, passive support, not committed, passive opposition, and active opposition. These positions often lie behind shared interests which need the chance to be identified but also the opportunity for conflicting interests are recognised (Fisher and Ury, 1981). Without the employment of conflict resolution techniques, such as negotiation and mediation, considerations can

be given to engage with stakeholders individually to understand entrenched positions and core interests (Lim and Spanger-Siegfried, 2004). Initial engagement in NRM initiatives offers stakeholders freedom and thinking space to openly converse positions and interests and possible shared visions before formal engagement methods are utilised (Idrissou et al., 2013).

Theoretically, the process of moving stakeholders from 'positions' to 'interests' is rarely presented within scholarly literature; however, one model exists. The 'positions of interest' pyramid, originally created by Grzybowski and Morris (1998) and adapted by Ritchie (2000), illustrates the concept of two competing positions with an overlap to acknowledge compatible interests as an area of common ground (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7: Position of interest pyramid



Source: Adapted from Ritchie (2000).

According to Engel and Korf (2005) once conflicting stakeholders have recognised their mutual interests within common ground, they can start the process of conflict resolution and towards the options for agreement. Ritchie (2000) examined a previous study conducted in the Banff-Bow Valley in Banff National Park in Canada which

sought to discover common ground between stakeholders conflicted over conservation and maintenance of ecological integrity against freedom of access for enjoyment purposes. A consensus-building approach with the utilisation of interest-based negotiations was employed to form collaborative planning and move stakeholders from positions to interests. Initially, interests statements were compiled from all stakeholders to identify a summary of complementary interests, common interests and interests which may become issues. This initial engagement identified common ground and potential agreements on key issues. Ritchie found that initial engagement with stakeholders benefitted the next stage of formal interest-based negotiation to aid consensus-building and broke down stakeholders entrenched in strongly held positions in order to seek a genuine commitment to shared agreement and decision-making in the follow up stages.

Despite the presence of the position of an interest pyramid, it is rarely presented in studies and has only been adapted once since developed by Grzybowski and Morris (1998). A drawback is that the model only represents two positions in a conflicting scenario meaning it could be difficult to employ the pyramid practically as conflicts usually involve an array of stakeholders with many entrenched positions. Furthermore, a difficulty in attempting to move stakeholders from positions is the resistance they may have toward change (Schuler, 2003). However, regardless of the reasons for resistance it is vital the resolution process listens, understands and comprehends how any changes will affect each stakeholder, their positions and their interests (Semeniuk, 2010).

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided critique of two key theoretical notions of this research, namely stakeholders and addressing conflict. What has emerged from the above critique is that stakeholder identification and engagement are crucial in any process to aid conflict resolution. However, when examined within a NRM context, stakeholder research has been somewhat limited. As for resolving conflict where stakeholder positions are often entrenched, and lack of consensus exists, the research presented in this chapter would suggest merit in searching for the 'common ground' accepting that the theoretical and practical workings behind the process of moving stakeholders

from positions to interests is multifaceted and difficult. Yet, the research behind this process is limited, undeveloped and lacks theoretical multi-stakeholder simulations that can be employed practically. There remains a lack of research of this process in protected area and national parks settings where scope exists toward stakeholders exhibiting movement from positions to shared interests in order to resolve conflicts. This research specifically focuses on stakeholder positions and interests in order to find common ground in a protected area context with the potential for upgrading to a national park status. The two concepts of stakeholder engagement and the search for 'common ground' and thereby avoiding stakeholder conflict underpin the potential development of a conceptual framework in this study. But before this framework can be developed, it necessary to justify the methodology and methods that are used to collect new data or analysis existing information to meet the first three objectives of this thesis. It is to this that the thesis now turns in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Attention now shifts toward the methodological considerations and methods used in this research. This chapter presents the research strategy designed to meet the study's overall aim and the first three objectives. The final objective is met through a synthesis of the findings of objectives 1 through to 3 and will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis. This chapter is structured as follows: the underpinnings of the philosophical approach and research design are presented in sections 4.2 and 4.3, respectively. Section 4.4 restates the research aim and objectives that were noted in the introductory chapter as it is important to link the methods to each of these respective objectives. Sections 4.5 through to 4.7 provide the detail of the methods used and, where relevant, the context in which the data collection was undertaken. Section 4.8 provides details on data analysis, including the use of coding where qualitative methods were used as well as content on the statistical analysis of data when quantitative methods were used. Section 4.9 offers discussion around key aspects of methodological justification, including validity, reliability and generalisability of the research before ethical considerations are addressed in section 4.10. The final section 4.11 offers a short summary to end the chapter.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The term paradigm is often referred to as the philosophical assumption that guides the worldview of the researcher (Lincoln et al., 2018). This philosophical worldview narrates the development and nature of knowledge which can influence the research strategy and methods chosen for the investigative study (Saunders et al., 2019). Business, management and social researchers must be mindful of their philosophical approach whilst choosing their research strategy as this can impact upon what happens and how it happens during the investigation (Johnson and Clark, 2006). There are several paradigms to research including positivism, interpretivism, constructivism, realism and pragmatism which all encompass common elements of axiology, ontology, epistemology and methodology (Saunders et al., 2019; Creswell, 2014). As such, each paradigm comprises of different perspectives on these elements.

Therefore, by understanding the different paradigms and elements within each allows the researcher to make informed assumptions and practical considerations (Saunders et al., 2019).

Philosophical worldview assumptions bring specific designs and approaches to a research study and allows the researcher to interpret these approaches into practice (Creswell, 2014). As a result, this research has taken a pragmatic view. Pragmatism argues that the most significant factor is the adoption of the research question(s) or objective(s) (Saunders et al., 2019), and is based on the intention that the methodological approach adopted best suits the identified research problem (Tashakkori and Teddie, 1998). Therefore, a pragmatic view "focuses on the outcomes of the research...rather than antecedent conditions" (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p.326). In essence, pragmatic research combines positivist and interpretivist research positions to address the study's research question(s) or objective(s). This viewpoint is critical to the research as it allows multiple realities as there may not be one single point of view to the research inquiry (Saunders et al., 2019). Furthermore, policy recommendations, environmental initiatives or social alteration can often result from the findings of a pragmatic study (Salkind, 2010).

Moreover, pragmatism underpins the acceptance that we are free to believe anything that is likely to achieve goals and needs (Morgan, 2014). This paradigm, unlike the others, accommodates towards solving problems in a practical manner in the real world. It is viewed as being effective only if the purpose of the investigation is achieved (Hothersall, 2019). In addition, pragmatism allows single methods or multiple methods to be utilised with a degree of flexibility to structural design (Saunders et al., 2019). Attention now shifts to setting out details associated with the research approach and design adopted for this study.

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The adoption of a pragmatic viewpoint facilitates the reasoning approach implemented for this research study. There are three reasonings which support research design: inductive, deductive and abductive. Inductive reasoning involves exploring a topic which leads to theory development of a conceptual framework (Saunders et al., 2019).

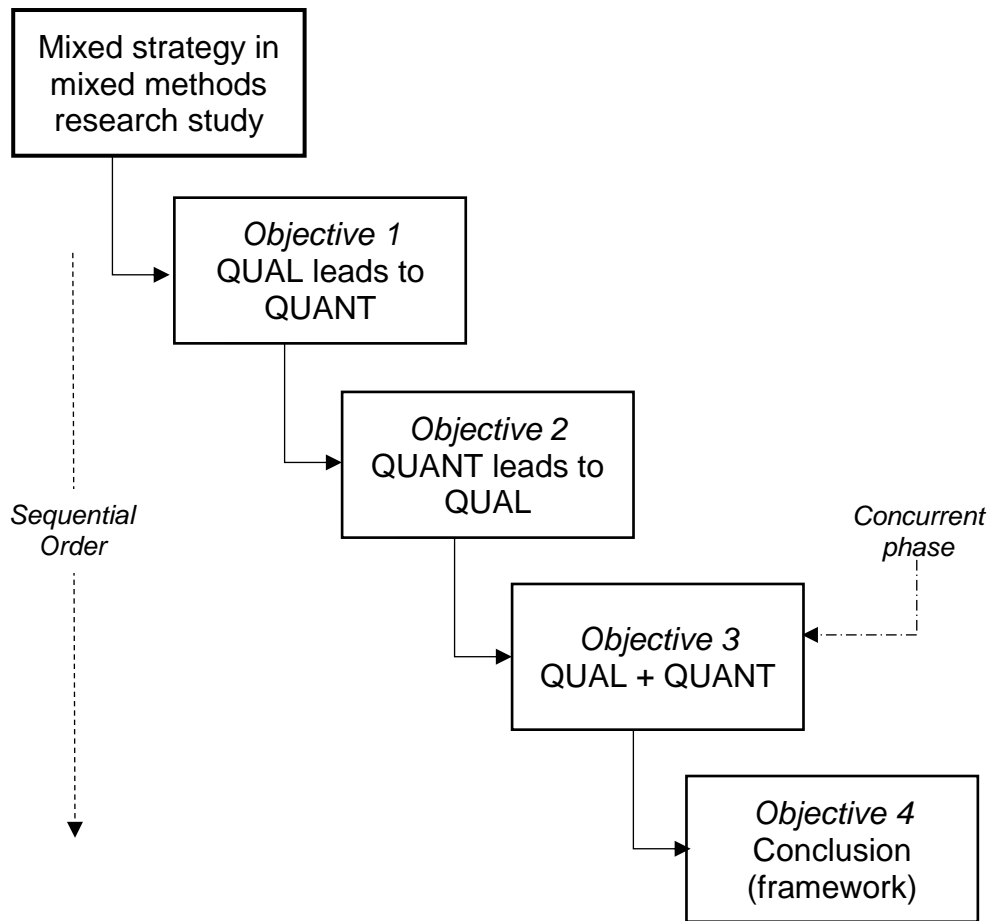
On the contrary, deductive reasoning involves development of theory through reading of academic literature which is then tested by a specific research design (Saunders et al., 2019). Abductive is viewed as a combination of both deductive and inductive reasoning. The reasoning involves exploring a topic which identifies themes and explanation of patterns which in turn develops a new theory or modifies an existing theory (Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, an abductive approach allows existing literature to be built upon through data findings to alter and modify existing theory into a new conceptual framework. Consequently, this research applied abductive reasoning as the research is intersubjective (Wheeldon and Ahlberg, 2012), whilst at the same time permits flexibility to move back and forth between theory and data (Suddaby, 2006).

With the adoption of abductive reasoning, this approach typically implies the use of mixed methods. As a result, qualitative and quantitative methods were harnessed as the most appropriate for data collection. Both these paradigms have the ability to find answers to research questions and objectives (Kumar, 2014). This approach will both understand the relationship amongst variables whilst exploring the research in further depth (Creswell, 2014). The mixed methods approach is central to the methods chosen for this study and allowed the researcher to experiment using different analysis strategies (Wheeldon and Ahlberg, 2012). The purpose of this mixed methods study is to understand the stance of the stakeholders towards consensus-building whilst acknowledging national park mandates in an attempt to gauge their perspective on national park establishment. A mixed methods approach to the research will offset weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative research permits the empowerment of participants to share their thoughts and opinions with the researcher which may not have been expected or previously read in literature (Creswell and Poth, 2018). However, qualitative research can lead to biases by the researcher (Mahmood, 2017). To counteract this weakness, quantitative research is used to give a statistical analysis to quantify the variables and measure the objectivity of the research (Kumar, 2014). Therefore, collection of quantitative data allows for generalisation of the research findings (Mahmood, 2017), which would otherwise not be possible if only qualitative research methods were used. This study, to some extent, focuses more on qualitative data over quantitative data; the latter is still important in meeting a specific objective which will be discussed later in the chapter.

In addition, the study has taken an objectives perspective with an exploratory standpoint in order to allow the multiple objectives to implement descriptive, correlational or explanatory positions. Kumar (2014) highlighted that good studies have the ability to employ a combination of all three positions. As the aim of this research is to gauge stakeholders' stances on national park establishment in Northern Ireland, this signifies a feasibility study is needed as this research will be an indication if it is worth carrying out a more detailed investigation in any of the candidate AONBs after completion. Furthermore, with multiple objectives identified, a multi-phase design was taken which included a sequential strategy regarding the study's objectives. In other words, the four objectives run in succession of each other providing a sequential ordering. Therefore, in order to achieve each objective and the overall aim, the combination of qualitative and quantitative procedures required a sequential ordering to enable each set of results to influence the next stage of the study and the requisite data collection methods. In addition, each objective is classified as one phase of the research, therefore certain objectives will have a sequential or concurrent design. This design occurs as mixed methods are utilised within one single phase or objective of the study (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Figure 4.1 maps out the sequential mixed methods research. This mind map showcases a simplistic view of the study whilst emphasising the complexity of the research.

A multi-phase design is an iterative and complex process which involves multiple phases to the data collection and analytical stages (Driscoll et al., 2007; Saunders et al., 2019). Adding more phases to the study increases the complexity with difficulties regarding project management (Morgan, 2014). However, by implementing this research design enables the data to be collected from selected and defined participants that will provide the best data against which results can be achieved (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Furthermore, this type of design allows for flexibility and adaptation of the research in order to address the interconnectedness of the research objectives in order to meet the overall research aim which are the focus of the next section.

Figure 4.1: Map of mixed methods research



4.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Following the review of the research philosophy and approaches, the research methods are discussed in a sequential order and combined they inform the research aim, which is to:

‘explore the potential of a national park in Northern Ireland, identifying suitable candidate areas, ensuring national park mandates are upheld and assessing the stance of key stakeholders’.

To achieve this aim, the following research objectives are set out and justified. They are as follows:

- To learn from best practice how other regions of the United Kingdom moved toward national park establishment.
- To comprehensively undertake an audit of a number of candidate regions across Northern Ireland based upon suitable attributes for national park establishment.
- To identify issues of 'common ground' between stakeholders in preferred regions that would facilitate dialogue toward national park establishment.
- To develop a 'common ground' model that aligns with national park mandates and has replicability for countries yet to establish a national park.

Attention now turns to the details of the data methods as they relate to objectives.

4.5 OBJECTIVE 1 DATA METHODS

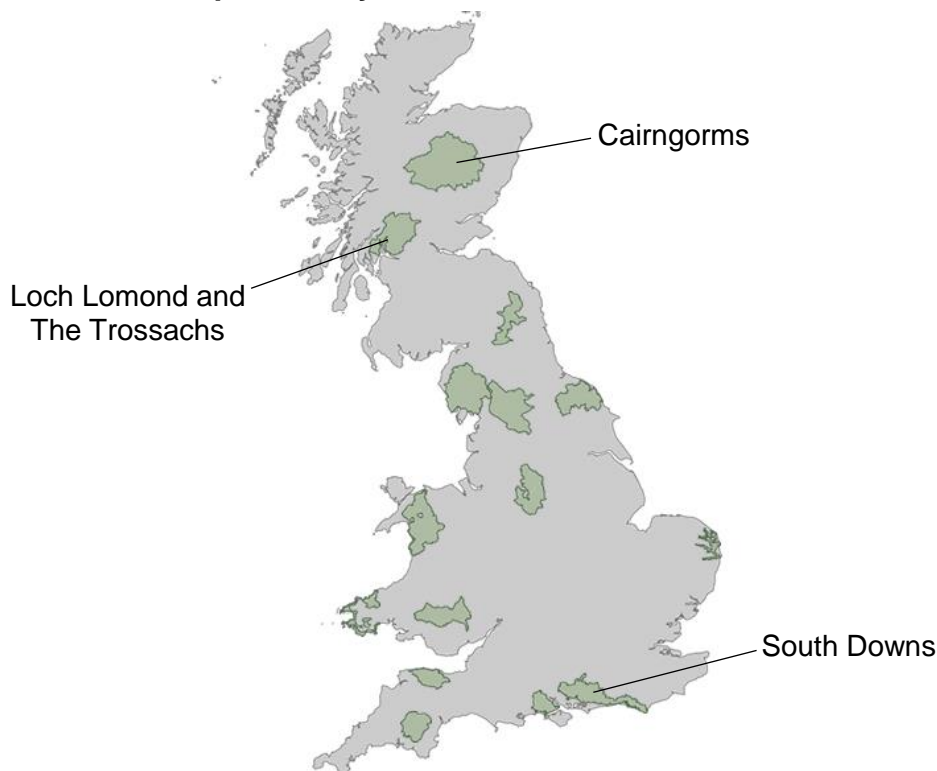
The intention of this objective was to learn from best practice from other UK regions in how they overcame stakeholder issues relating to establishing a national park and how they continue to resolve stakeholder conflicts post designation. *Best practice* has the ability to widen the range and variety of solutions to challenges and difficulties of a condition or situation (Bardach, 1994). Developing best practice permits identifying gaps in knowledge and attempting to fill these by employing innovative ideas, but also encourages transparency between organisations and wider disciplines in sharing best practice solutions.

This researcher made use of both secondary and primary data collection methods in order to address the first objective. The former involved undertaking a content analysis of existing documents, including park management plans and partnership documents relating to national parks that were selected as exemplars of best practice. Primary data collection was in the form of conducting in-depth interviews with the managers of these parks. Data collection was conducted in a sequential order to allow the interviews to help direct the focus of the content analysis. Prior to detailing the methods used for the first objective, the rationale for best practice parks is outlined including background details of each of those national parks.

4.5.1 Rationale for selected UK national parks

Three UK national parks were selected as appropriate regions to learn best practice, namely, Cairngorms National Park (CNP), Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) and South Downs National Park (SDNP). Figure 4.2 shows the geographic location of these parks in relation to the wider UK national park system. Historically, all three regions were established as national parks post the new millennium with LLTNP designated in 2002, CNP in 2003 and SDNP in 2010. They were selected as exemplars of best practice against which lessons can be learned for potential new park establishment as they are the most recent parks in a system that was dominated by park establishment in the 1950s and 1980s. Since then, governance, social and community empowerment as linked to park establishment has changed considerably resulting in having to overcome many challenges and difficulties. Local residents and communities increasingly now have a say in how land is managed and used. They have the ability to lobby or create challenging environments in which land development projects can end up being ditched by developers and planners. Today, this is the case in the attempts to establish new national parks in the UK due to the contested views from local communities. Given these difficulties, it is remarkable that four new national parks were designated across the UK since 2000. This researcher was therefore of the view that lessons could be learnt from the processes these recently established parks developed and followed and therefore they offer the opportunity to identify best practice which could be replicated and utilised in the possible designation of parks in Northern Ireland. As outlined in Chapter 2 (section 2.4.2), any additions to the existing UK national parks system would have to meet the IUCN's category V criteria of qualifying as 'protected landscape/seascape' areas, in other words 'working environments'; as such the AONBs across Northern Ireland match that requirement.

Figure 4.2: UK national park study sites



Source: National Parks UK (2018).

4.5.1.1 Cairngorms National Park (CNP)

Historically, as mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.4), the Cairngorms region was proposed as a national park area in 1945 alongside the designations proposed in England and Wales from the Ramsay report. However, full national park status was not given, instead the area was established as a 'National Park Direction Area' which in 1981 was renamed as a 'National Scenic Area'. It was not until the 1990s when the CCS placed pressure on maintaining heritage value that the campaigning began for the Cairngorms and other areas to be considered for national park status. The original designated area was extended by a fifth in the southern part of the park in 2010 as local communities felt the extended area would add further value to the park and this came about after a study was conducted on the Cairngorms economy since its establishment in 2003 (BBC Scotland, 2010).

The CNP is located in the northeast of Scotland and in the heart of the Scottish Highlands. It is the largest park within the UK national park system, totalling 4,528km² (452,800 hectares) and spans across five council areas encompassing a population

of 18,000 (Visit Cairngorms, 2019). Around 75 percent of the land is owned privately, with conservation charities owning 15 percent and public bodies owning 10 percent (Cairngorms Nature, 2020). This relatively small population creates a very low population density with the majority living in the larger towns such as Aviemore, Ballater and Grantown-on-Spey. The primary distinctive feature of the CNP is the mountainous landscape of the highlands which takes in five out of the six highest peaks in the UK and includes 55 Munros which are all over 3,000 feet. The mountains and surrounding hills showcase glacial landforms, unique plateaus and promotes snowscapes used commonly for skiing and other winter sports. Furthermore, the CNP boasts of large moorlands, forestry and woodlands, long glens with many waterways with some leading to lochs in the west of the park (Figure 4.3). Also, the CNP contains extensive natural landforms, natural vegetation with some parts holding other national and international importance, and an abundance of wildlife including approximately a quarter of the UK's endangered and rare species.

Figure 4.3: Photo of Cairngorms National Park



Source: Author. Photo taken of Loch Insh outside Kingussie.

Tourism is the main industry and employer in the park with approximately 43 percent of those living inside its boundary employed in the sector (CNPA, 2020). Businesses related to tourism contribute 30 percent to the Cairngorms economy (gross value

added) (CNPA, 2020). Since designation, the number of visitors has steadily increased over the years from 1.55 million in 2009 to 1.8 million in 2016, accounting for a 13.4 percent increase (CNPA, 2020), and rising to 1.9 million tourism visits in 2018 (GTS, 2019). Of these visitors, over half are from Scotland, 25 percent from other parts of the UK, while 21 percent are from international destinations (CNPA, 2015). In 2018, on average, visitors stay for 3.3 nights and spend £78 million on local accommodation (GTS, 2019). A visitor survey conducted in 2014/2015 showed that 63 percent of international visitors were influenced to visit the area because of its national park status, a figure that was reduced when domestic visitors are considered: 27 percent for Scottish visitors and 39 percent of other UK visitors (Visit Cairngorms, 2019).

4.5.1.2 Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP)

Similar to the CNP, the park history of Loch Lomond began in 1945 with mention in the Ramsay report but it was not until 1981 that the area was given the status of being a 'National Scenic Area'; it had the strange label of National Park Direction Area. The area was campaigned for alongside the CNP in the 1990s by the CCS and as a result was the first Scottish national park to be established. At the time, it was believed that national park status would allow existing conflicting interests towards the landscape and wildlife to be managed more effectively and for the better (BBC Scotland, 2002). The history associated with both the LLTNP and the CNP clearly demonstrates a long process was involved in the establishment of national parks in Scotland; debates which lasted over half a century.

The LLTNP is situated in southwest Scotland with close proximity to Scotland's main cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling and Dundee. Approximately 50 percent of Scotland's population are within an hour's drive of the park itself. It is the fourth largest national park in the UK covering an area of 1,865km² (186,500 hectares) with four council areas spanning over parts of the park, and encompassing a population of over 15,000 (LLTNPA, 2019). The majority of land is owned privately by a patchwork quilt of large estates, small farms, Forestry Commission, businesses, homeowners and conservation charities. After establishment, the park authority split the LLTNP into four sections (Breadalbane, Loch Lomond, The Trossachs, and Cowal) because of the distinctive landscapes of the areas. One of the main differences across the park

landscape is the change from lowland to highland, known as the Highland Boundary Fault, signifying a change in geology, topography and soil profiles. Mountainous terrain, including 21 Munros, lie to the north of the park, while Loch Lomond (UK's largest freshwater lake) and over 22 other significant lochs with islands span across southern parts of the park. The LLTNP boasts of many rivers, waterfalls (Figure 4.4), woodlands and forestry areas, including Argyll Forest, the UK's first forest park.

Figure 4.4: Photo of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park



Source: Author. Photo taken of Falls of Falloch.

Similar to the CNP, the LLTNP contains extensive nature and vegetation recognised as having national and international importance and is home to an array of endangered wildlife such as the red squirrel, black grouse and otters.

In 2017, the park welcomed 2.9 million visitors which was an increase of 5.4 percent on the previous year (GTS, 2018). Due to the close proximity to Scotland's main cities, day visitors account for 73 percent of all visitors while the rest account for overnight visitors which on average stay for 3.1 days (GTS, 2018). As a result, the tourism sector is one of the main industries within the park with expenditure and activity of visitors supporting over 6,700 full-time equivalent jobs. Tourism visits within the park contributed an economic impact of over £385 million in 2017 from day and staying visitors, a 13.5 percent increase on 2016 (GTS, 2018).

4.5.1.3 South Downs National Park (SDNP)

Historically, the inspiration for the SDNP began in the 1920s when local concern escalated over the impacts this scenic environment faced due to insensitive housing development being built along the iconic chalk cliffs on the coast. The South Downs was part of a wider review conducted in the 1940s on potential national park areas across England. The area was one of twelve suggested at the time. Over the decade that led up to the first English parks being established in the early 1950s, the South Downs area had experienced extensive cultivation damage making it no longer appropriate for national park status. The natural beauty of the area was still recognised in the 1960s with the creation of two AONBs, East Hampshire AONB and Sussex Downs AONB, which were split along a county boundary. The support for the designation of the SDNP was reignited in 1999 following a review on national parks by the government. Two public inquiries took place between 2003 and 2008. These were controversial due to proposed boundary reductions of the current AONB boundaries to form the proposed national park. The rejections of this reduction enabled the SDNP to be designated and essentially combined and elevated two AONBs into an internationally recognised status, namely a national park.

The SDNP is located in southern England, stretching 87 miles across three English counties with close proximity to London, only an hour's drive away. The park covers an area of 1,627km² (162,700 hectares) and is the most heavily populated of all of the UK national parks with approximately 110,000 people living within its boundary (SDNPA, 2018). This sizeable population denotes that the majority of the land is owned privately, including large privately owned estates that account for a quarter of

the park. Given the high population density of nearby areas, the park's boundary was carefully devised to exclude major towns and cities such as Brighton and Hove, Southampton, Portsmouth and Eastbourne. The main distinguished feature of the park is the chalk downland in the east to the white cliffs of the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head (Figure 4.5), also known as the Sussex Heritage Coast. In contrast the west section of the SDNP, known as the Western Weald, presents a separate physiographic region with wooded sandstone, greensands and clay hills. The park also encompasses rolling green pastures, ancient woodlands, heathland and river valleys giving the park a rich farming culture with many marketing towns and villages. As a result of the differing landscape, this formed the South Downs Way which is a national trail that spans the full length of the park and is the only trail that solely lies in a national park. Like many UK national parks, the SDNP is home to a variety of vegetation and wildlife including rare species of butterflies and the greater mouse-eared bat.

Figure 4.5: Photo of South Downs National Park



Source: Author. Photo taken of the Seven Sisters at Beachy Head.

In 2016, the SDNP attracted 18.8 million visits of which 78 percent were day visits and accounted to 20.1 million visitor days (TEAM, 2018). Due to the proximity and easy access from cities such as London and Southampton, this may account for why approximately 60 percent of all visitors are frequent (visiting once every six months)

(TEAM, 2018). Tourism was estimated to be worth approximately £342 million in 2016 (TEAM, 2018). However, tourism is not considered to be the largest sector of the park's economic performance with the professional, scientific and technical sector considered to be the largest contributor to its economy (SDNPA, 2018).

4.5.2 In-depth interviews

The method of interviewing is commonly described as ubiquitous which occur in everyday settings (Edwards and Holland, 2013), and accordingly, within a research context can provide rich detailed data in relation to a specific topic and an individual's perspective or experience (Braun and Clarke, 2013). In-depth interviews were conducted with national park management personnel to aid the researcher's knowledge of best practice in establishing national parks and managing such areas with numerous local stakeholders involved in decision-making. Ahead of the interviews, a semi-structured interview guide was formulated to identify topics for discussion which would help achieve the research objective (see Appendix 1 for example of interview schedule). The structure of the guide enabled interactional exchange between the interviewer and interviewee to produce knowledge, meaning and understanding which would be beneficial to both parties (Edward and Holland, 2013). Furthermore, the guide allowed a high level of flexibility to the interview where the structure could vary and allow the exclusion of irrelevant questions where the respondent has less knowledge or expertise (Veal, 2011). As a result, the format and length of interviews differ with each respondent. Jordan and Gibson (2004) highlighted that this can reduce replicability and increase credibility issues. However, in-depth interviews with a semi-structured guide can offer distinct knowledge and expertise within a specific context from a small number of respondents which are more insightful and exclusive compared to other interview approaches (Veal, 2011).

One primary advantage of conducting this style of interviewing is the opportunity for probing questions to enhance the interview experience and enrich purposeful conversation (Saunders et al., 2019). Consequently, a common feature of in-depth interviews is the use of open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were devised to encourage a developmental and extensive responses and allow for further probing questions where responses were seen to need further detail or clarity

(Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, this offers a degree of freedom to explore and gain greater understanding of the topics being discussed. In order for the interview and questions or probing questions to remain relevant, the interview guide was developed around key topics derived from this research objective and literature review. The five main topics for discussion were:

- General information and background of the respondents role within the national park authority
- History and establishment of the national park
- Stakeholder engagement within the park pre and post designation
- Conflict resolution techniques used pre and post designation
- Management and tourism impacts

The guide was used as a basis for each interview, however, each topic had varying amount of time for discussion dependent on the respondent's expertise on the subject. For example, the high-level managers in the authorities had less historical knowledge on how their national park was established and the challenges in the prior years to designation.

The interviews were carried out with senior-level and high-level national park authority managers who worked for the three most recently established national parks as discussed previously. Management personnel were identified as being key informants in terms of their knowledge and background and were deemed the best in terms of glean deep information of best practice. Furthermore, management personnel within national parks typically have strong personal and passionate connections to the national park they manage. Therefore, by asking general background questions at the start of the interview gave the opportunity to gain a greater insight into these connections, whilst also putting the interviewee at ease, encouraging openness and building trust with the researcher (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). Also, as the CNP, LLTNP and SDNP are all relevantly new UK national parks, it is highly probable that the senior and high level managers would have been involved in the establishment processes of the national park or would be knowledgeable in the history if not present during these years. Therefore, the decision to interview senior and high level national park authority managers resulted in a purposive sampling technique as these key

informants were best placed to discuss the key topics and add merit to the research (Saunders et al., 2019). Table 4.1 shows details of how these interviews were conducted.

Table 4.1: Interviewee's in UK national parks

<i>National Park</i>	<i>Managerial Position</i>	<i>Type of interview</i>
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	High-level manager	Face-to-face
Cairngorms	Senior-level manager	Telephone
South Downs	Senior-level manager High-level manager	Face-to-face Face-to-face

A total of four in-depth interviews were conducted across the three national parks and these took place across September and October 2018. Three of these interviews took place face-to-face, interviews being aligned to agreed visitation dates with the exception of the CNP. The face-to-face interviews were conducted on site in the respective national park headquarter offices. However, the senior-level manager for the CNP was not available for interview on the day agreed due to a large conference being held in the park. This resulted in a later telephone interview being conducted. A drawback to telephone interviews is the loss of non-verbal communication and the difficulties to build trust and develop openness with the interviewee (Saunders et al., 2019). Nevertheless, consistency was maintained as all four interviews were audio-recorded, offering this researcher the advantages of being able to replay responses and allow for detailed transcripts be produced for data analysis purposes (Saunders et al., 2019; Braun and Clarke, 2013).

The main limitation of these in-depth interviews was the sample size given the focus was only to interview top management. Yet, despite this small sample, the interviews conducted generated a significant amount of data at this early stage of the study. Ideally with this method, six interviews would have been conducted in total with one high-level manager and one senior-level manager in each national park, however this was not possible with respondents unavailable at the time or unwilling to participate in the study. Furthermore, it is important to note that the findings of the interviews may not be representative or generalised as views experienced by all national park

authority managers in all UK national parks. Although, the breadth of the research topics discussed in the interviews provided this researcher with a holistic view.

4.5.3 Content analysis

The popularity of using content analysis as a research method has increased in recent years in many disciplines. Traditionally, content analysis dealt mainly with newspaper articles (Krippendorff, 2013), fortunately the technique's development over time expanded the textual sources used. Content analysis is commonly conducted within media studies and social sciences and is only beginning to be widely used in leisure and tourism management studies (Veal, 2011; Margolis and Zunjarwad, 2018). A content analysis is characteristically undertaken for "making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2013, p.24). This systematic investigation of communicative material can include textbooks, novels, interview transcripts, company documents, audio-visual material and various other raw materials. A content analysis aims to allocate words, sentences or statements of content into a system of categories (Flick, 2015). In doing so, the technique primarily adopts a quantitative approach to count the occurrence of words or phrases; or text is coded into categories and described through statistical data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Schram, 2014). However, the fruition of the method facilitated qualitative practice, particularly as meanings and relationships of words and concepts demonstrated interpretations within the text (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). As a result, content analysis is now viewed as a "method for describing and interpreting written productions" (Marshall and Rossman, 2016, p.166), which can be approached in an inductive, deductive and mixed manner (Schram, 2014).

The documentary sources for the content analysis undertaken consisted of the management plans from the three selected UK national parks (CNP, LLTNP and SDNP). The content analysis was conducted on six park management plans, resulting in two plans from each national park being analysed. These plans were the 'partnership management plan' (PMP) as this is the main plan utilised by managers and stakeholders, and the 'local development plan' (LDP) which is utilised in collaboration with the main partnership plan and presents the strategies and policies of the park. Table 4.2 illustrates the size of each document by the number of pages

which had to be analysed. The content analysis was conducted between December 2018 and February 2019. The plans were in their finalised version, with the exception of the ‘South Downs National Park Local Plan’ which is the first local development plan for the national park and the finalised version was not due for release until late 2019, after the completion of the content analysis. For all three parks, the LDP is a larger document than the PMP. In the case of the SDNP, this was notably so; possibly explained by the number of settlements and policies the national park has compared to the CNP and the LLTNP.

Table 4.2: Park documents in content analysis

<i>National Park Plan</i>	<i>Number of pages</i>
Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022 (CNP PMP)	84
Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2015 (CNP LDP)	212
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2018-2023 (LLTNP PMP)	100
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Local Development Plan 2017-2021 (LLTNP LDP)	128
South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2014-2019 (SDNP PMP)	104
South Downs Local Plan (Pre-Submission) 2017 (SDNP LDP)	565
Total	1,193

The coding for the analysis was based on the concept of ‘partnership working’. Partnership became the focus of the content analysis due to the theoretical background examined in Chapter 3 and as the main documentary source directly names partnership within its title. Furthermore, as the study is sequential, the national park managerial interviews from the previous stage reinforced and highlighted partnership as best practice to overcome stakeholder issues pre and post national park establishment. This attention on partnership working allowed for a further detailed literature review to be conducted prior to the analysis which focused on the main principles for a successful partnership. The principles identified from this review are utilised as the coding variables for the analysis. As a result, this content analysis is

quantitative and deductive in its approach as a coding scheme was developed from theoretical reading in advance of conducting the analysis. This code scheme identified categories or themes and included definitions to each to ensure intercoder reliability, consistency and validity (Margolis and Zunjarwad, 2018). The details of the key terms associated with partnership are presented later when results of the analysis of objective 1 are presented.

The main value of conducting a content analysis is the observational and objectivity of the method which is unobtrusive with low costs whilst allowing the analysis to enrich the research objective by focusing on one specific concept or context (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Margolis and Zunjarwad, 2018). The nature of the approach enriches, supports and extends existing theory (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). However, understandably the language used in the plans were different and were not always clear in describing partnership thinking, therefore interpretation of the text from the researcher's perspective and knowledge of theory was required. This is a limitation to the content analysis method. Though, to tackle this drawback, the researcher developed definitions to each coding variable from theory to aid consistency and reliability in interpreting statements and different wording (Flick, 2015).

4.6 OBJECTIVE 2 DATA METHODS

The second stage of this research investigated the attractiveness of Northern Ireland's eight AONBs by conducting an audit of these areas concentrating on attributes regarded to be attractive within national park settings. Attractiveness refers to the features or characteristics of a specific destination (Ariya et al., 2017). By looking at the areas with the highest level of attractivity permits the initiative of which AONBs could be elevated to national park status. To do this, a criteria scorecard was created to score the AONBs' attractivity level. Furthermore, in-depth interviews with the AONB managers of the top ranked AONBs according to their 'attractivity' score were conducted in order to gauge wider opinion around potential national park establishment as well as their views on the process used to measure attractivity. Both are discussed in the next subsections.

4.6.1 Criteria scorecard

The scorecard developed for the purpose of this research draws upon the basic understanding of concepts such as suitability analysis, weighted scoring and ranking. Suitability analysis, also known as site selection, is often utilised to ascertain the best place for the topic being studied (Ade, 2015). This analysis is well known as a GIS procedure. Weighted scoring uses a prioritisation method through numerical scoring to rank prioritised features (Achimugu et al., 2014). This method is typically used in computing and business product initiatives to score cost versus benefits which is then ranked. In the context of this study, the nature of the scorecard is simplified and basic, therefore the use of software such as GIS is seen as redundant.

On a wider context, there is no set criteria for measuring attractiveness of tourist destinations or protected areas. Many authors have devised different attributes viewed to be weighty to tourism attractiveness. These attributes include climate, beaches, historic-cultural buildings, ecology, natural resources, events, recreation, and many more (Van Raaij, 1986; Laws, 1995; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2009). Page (2015) suggested a streamlined attraction categorisation which included natural environment, built environment and built environment designed for visitors. This categorisation influenced the three main classifications selected for this research to measure the attractiveness of Northern Ireland's AONBs. These were labelled as follows:

- Natural
- Built and other
- Tourism attractions

Many tourism destinations regard natural attributes as one of the main reasons for visitation (Witt and Moutinho, 1995), and recognisably national parks and protected areas possess high quantities and qualities of natural importance and resources. While the built classification includes cultural, heritage and historical aspects of a location. It is recognised that these aspects are an important indicator of attractiveness for visitors (Morozov and Morozov, 2018), thus in the context of national parks it is critical to conserve and preserve built heritage within the area. In addition to natural and built classifications, tourism attractions within any destination and any national parks are a major motivator to visiting such areas. Accordingly, all three categories

are made up of many different elements. These elements were developed as the sub-criteria and were as follows:

- Natural: water, landscape, coastal, other
- Built and other: Historical-cultural heritage, other
- Tourism attractions: tourism survey, visitor numbers, presence of world heritage site

It was envisioned that only AONB maps would be used to identify and map against the above named sub-criteria. However, within Northern Ireland there existed no detailed maps of all eight AONBs. The researcher also experienced difficulties in gathering suitable maps of all eight AONBs across Northern Ireland. In order to gain greater visual insight to accurately develop and score the criteria, ordnance survey maps and Northern Ireland's interactive natural environment map were utilised as a cross reference. Also, to ensure the correct wording and reliable scoring of the sub-criteria, further cross referencing was employed by cross checking natural and built elements against AONB dedicated websites showcasing special qualities and characteristics explaining why the area is protected by AONB status.

To meet the third criteria of 'tourism attractions', the number of recognised visitor attractions across each AONB were noted against the established list of visitor attractions according to recently published data on visitor attractions published by Tourism Northern Ireland. Using that database, the number of attractions and the level of visitor attraction combined to provide a 'tourism attractions' score value. Each attraction was assessed on their location and disregarded if they were based outside the AONB boundaries. Each attraction located within the AONBs had their visitor figures tallied together to create a ranked category score. A drawback to using Tourism Northern Ireland visitor numbers survey is that the figures recorded by the attractions themselves are not always accurate and can result in the figures being rounded up to the nearest thousand or hundred. Also, not all attractions report their figures to the tourism board for the survey, therefore some attractions within the boundaries of AONBs could be missing and not counted within this attractiveness criteria. However, the annual visitor attraction survey was deemed the only available resource with visitor

number information and includes attractions popular to both domestic and international tourists.

The sub-groups of each classifications were given a weighted score in order to rank the attractiveness of each AONB. The three main classifications were tallied together to showcase the final scores in ranking order of Northern Ireland AONBs. As a result, the top three areas with the highest level of attractiveness for national park status were viewed as the preferred candidate regions to go forward into the next stages of the study. The findings of this exercise are presented in detail in Chapter 6.

A drawback to using a criteria scorecard is the chance that for some of the sub-groups double scoring can occur. For instance, a historical-cultural heritage sub-grouping could also be counted within the tourism survey as a tourism attraction resulting in a double count. Therefore, further recommendations or possible modifications could involve removal of the attractions classification. However, tourism infrastructure should be considered in any future amendments as natural beauty, heritage and tourist infrastructure are critical to measuring attractiveness (Laws, 1995; Page, 2015). Additionally, this criteria scorecard has the potential to be advanced further for other destinations aspiring to measure attractiveness regarding protected areas where tourism is factored in.

4.6.2 In-depth interviews

The attractivity scorecard was designed to identify the top three AONB regions in Northern Ireland; it was unrealistic to see more than three regions being suitable for elevation to national park status. The scorecard 'desk top' exercise was followed up by in-depth interviews with their respective managers to gauge their views and opinions on national parks and how they saw their area has having suitability for this higher protected area status. If a national park was later to be designated within their area, it is probable they would become vital managers within the national park management body that would be set up to manage the park. The AONB managerial interviews were conducted across December 2019. Similar to that of objective 1 in-depth interviews, these interviews with AONB managers involved a semi-structured interview guide which formulated key discussion topics (see Appendix 2 for example

of interview schedule). This type of guide gave flexibility to the interview structure and allowed for open discussion (Veal, 2011). Furthermore, this style of interviewing provides distinct knowledge and expertise from the participants which typically contribute rich detailed data and allows for a small number of interviews (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Veal, 2011).

Within Northern Ireland, there is only four management teams across the eight AONBs, while one AONB has no dedicated management team. From the results of the criteria scorecard, two of the top three AONBs are managed by the same team. As a result, two in-depth interviews were conducted. One interview was conducted as a group interview with three participants from the same management team. The other interview was conducted with one participant; however this participant was a former manager of the AONB and was not the intended original interviewee. This was a drawback to this interview stage as the length of interview was significantly shorter due to time restraints compared to that of the group interview. However, the responses by the former manager were still insightful and in-depth. Although, the interviews varied in format and length, this reduced replicability and increased credibility issues (Jordan and Gibson, 2004). Moreover, open-ended questions were used to improve the interview experience and allow for further probing questions (Saunders et al., 2019). The interviews offered freedom to explore the topics and develop trust between the researcher and interviewee (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). Also, this freedom allowed the AONB managers to ask interesting questions to the researcher in order to gain a greater understanding of the study. Key topics were developed within the interview guide so that the discussion stayed relevant to the overall objective. These topics included:

- Criteria scorecard
- Stakeholders
- National park status
- Advice for objective 3

As the criteria scorecard was newly developed for measuring attractiveness of a protected area, it was important to reveal the results to the managers as to why their respective AONB was ranked in the top three. This provided the opportunity for

managers to offer their critique of the method used, but equally provided the researcher with essential data on the concept of attractiveness. Additionally, the interviews sought to understand the managers perspective on stakeholder engagement, stakeholder positioning and their opinion on their AONB having the potential to be elevated to national park status and why a national park has never been designated in Northern Ireland before now. Finally, the interviews were used to elicit advice and seek support for the follow-up stage of data collection that would involve roundtable meetings in the form of focus groups of key stakeholders within their respective AONB. AONB managers expressed concern over this data collection stage and also did not agree to assist the researcher in setting these up and justifying why they should take place and encourage key stakeholders to attend. Instead, managers suggested that instead of holding focus groups, in-depth interviews of different stakeholders would be more beneficial and less controversial. They also voiced concern that such an exercise, while it had merits of seeking areas of consensus, may also result in stakeholders taking further extreme entrenched position and possibly put the researcher at risk over possible conflicts emerging during the running of the focus groups. As such, the method adopted was changed to in-depth interviews with individual stakeholders as is presented in the next section.

4.7 OBJECTIVE 3 DATA METHODS

The final stage of the study examined the issues of common ground between stakeholder groups within the top three AONBs identified from the previous objective. This objective's intention was to gauge the attitude towards national park status and to understand which stakeholders may have opposing issues with others. By learning of areas of opposition, there is the opportunity to gauge levels of compromise between stakeholders on national park establishment and their issues. As a result, in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders which included a scoping position exercise which is discussed in more detail below.

4.7.1 In-depth interviews

Stakeholders are considered to be vital to the success or failure of any project, particularly those that can directly impact on their daily livelihoods. One of the primary

intentions of this objective was to obtain multiple perspectives and conducting interviews supports achieving this. Appropriately, interviews are viewed as the main road to recognising multiple realities (Brinkmann, 2018). This stage of in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholder groups which were identified to have a say in implementation of a national park in Northern Ireland in their respective AONB. Similar to that of the interviews conducted for objectives 1 and 2, a semi-structured interview guide was formulated of key topics designed to help steer discussions (Saunders et al., 2019) (see Appendix 3 for example of interview schedule). The discussion topics included:

- Relationship with AONB team and events
- Completion of 'stakeholder positioning exercise'
- Stakeholder commonalities and differences
- Views over national park establishment in Northern Ireland

The in-depth interview guide enabled the collection of insightful and purposeful raw data which produced knowledge and meaning (Edwards and Holland, 2013). As interviews were with stakeholders, it was appropriate to have an informal style of conversation that allows for flexibility and a degree of freedom in how the interviews were structured (Veal, 2011; Marshall and Rossman, 2016).

A legitimate stakeholder is regarded as any individual or interest group that is affected by a phenomenon (Freeman, 1984). In the context of UK national parks, it is fitting to acknowledge that every individual resident living within the boundaries are classed as individual stakeholders which have the opportunity to have a stake in decision-making. Therefore, identifying the relevant stakeholders and their interests is a crucial process which can produce perceptive and often conflicting viewpoints (Harrison and Wicks, 2013). For the purpose of this study, identifying interest groups as stakeholders was imperative to gaining those perspectives. Interviews with interest groups can be significantly more beneficial over the use of surveys with individuals as probing questions can be asked and allows the interviewee to express their interests in greater detail (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Therefore, the decision to identify interest groups resulted in using purposive sampling as these groups are key informants that add worth and value to the research (Saunders et al., 2019). Interest groups were identified

from examining publications, AONB meeting minutes and dedicated websites. From this, two overarching groupings were found. These included regional interest groups and local interest groups. Regional interest groups are organisations that work with environmental initiatives across Northern Ireland. These groups were identified as legitimate stakeholders that would have some degree of interest in the topic, however, the interviews would also test whether this type of stakeholder held a default position to the government's position on national parks or exhibited their own position. In contrast, local interest groups are organisations that are situated within the three candidate AONB regions identified from the results of objective 2. These local groups were subdivided into community-recreational groups, business-tourism groups and conservation-environmental groups as each of these encompass an array of individuals including local residents that could hold very contrasting viewpoints. Combined, interviews that involved representatives across the various stakeholder groups, offered the opportunity for as wide a range of viewpoints to emerge from this process.

In total, 18 stakeholders agreed to participate in the study in some capacity. It was envisioned that all interviews would be conducted face-to-face, however due to unforeseen circumstances caused by the coronavirus outbreak this phase of the study was delayed and then the process of actual administration was adapted. As a result, this stage of data collection took longer than anticipated with interviews running from March to October 2020. Some early interviews were conducted face-to-face with later ones being telephone interviews as well as some via audio-visual platforms such as Zoom and Skype. Of the 18 respondents, 16 agreed to complete a stakeholder 'positioning exercise' which is discussed next.

4.7.2 Stakeholder positioning exercise

The purpose of the exercise to be conducted with stakeholders as part of the interview was to enable the researcher to quantify the support or opposition toward national park status as well as to see where they aligned with established national park mandates. In essence, this would give an accurate and valuable illustration of stakeholder stance towards national park establishment in Northern Ireland and within the three candidate AONBs. Accordingly, likert-style scales were chosen as the best tool in the 'positioning

exercise' that was carried out with each stakeholder. Characteristically, likert scales are used to collect opinion data and use phrases such as 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree' to measure attitudinal value to each statement or item being asked to respondents (Saunders et al., 2019; Kumar, 2014). Moreover, it is typical that five points or seven points are employed on this type of scale with attitudinal phrases (Flick, 2015). It must be noted that likert scales do not measure attitude as such but helps show both intensity value as well as the difference of respondents attitude to a certain issue (Kumar, 2014).

In the context of this study, a range of 0-10 point scale was used without the use of attitudinal phrases. A distinctive feature of likert scales is the intervals between points are equal and linear which assumes the level of agreement or in this case position of each statement is also equal and linear (Krabbe, 2017). Recognisably, this style of scale is somewhat similar to that used for pain intensity (Correll, 2007). It was decisive that the end point of the scales used would reflect the terms 'fully support' to 'fully oppose' and in some cases, 'full protection' to 'full development'. As such, this terminology reflects natural resources and environmental initiatives and specifically aligns with some positions that accord with national park mandates. Therefore, these scales were developed loosely only stating extreme positions as opposed to likert scales commonly used in questionnaires that offer a range of possible responses. Furthermore, a number of key statements were developed for stakeholder response that drew upon the scholarly literature. The statements were as follows:

- Position of stakeholder on national park status (in general)
- Position taken by stakeholder and their willingness to compromise
- Position taken by stakeholder on elevating their AONB to a national park
- Position taken by stakeholder to accommodate the following in the context that a national park was established:
 - facilitating recreation and tourism
 - facilitating sustainable livelihoods
 - ensuring ecological integrity

Overall, the exercise permits a weighting numerical value achieved for each of the statements, reflecting stakeholder positions on each scenario set out above. Therefore, the main strength of using scales is the ability to examine one respondent's views against another (Kumar, 2014). This allows a comparison against the stakeholders groups within AONB regions but also to compare between AONBs. A benefit of the scales utilised for this research, is the prevention of an option where respondents 'sit on the fence' (Saunders et al., 2019). However, a criticism of likert scales is that statements or items may be more important than others and as such the scores of each statement contribute equally to the summation score (Krabbe, 2017). However, this can also be a positive where a balanced perspective of respondents is essential to the findings. In this case, the exercise was merged with the in-depth stakeholder interviews which aimed to give a balanced viewpoint.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis process was guided by the multi-phase design of this research. The analytical process contains multiple levels of analysis to allow interpretation of the results to answer each research objective which can contribute to the overall research aim (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Due to the complexity of the research approach and the three stages of in-depth interviews, the researcher felt it was important to provide an overview of all interviews analysed for the study. Table 4.3 collectively illustrates all interviews conducted with further details such as the type, length and when interviews took place.

As this study contains more in-depth qualitative data compared to that of quantitative data, the analytical process was mainly influenced by exploring concepts related to theory including understanding the similarities and differences to aid the identification of themes (Jackson and Mazzei, 2018). Patton (2015) stated that the challenge with qualitative analysis is comprehending the large volume of data and having the ability to reduce raw information from trivia into significant patterns.

Table 4.3: Details of participant interviews

Participant codename	Type of interview	Data Collected	Length of interview
CNP1	Telephone	Sept/Oct 2020	36:21
LLTNP1	Face-to-face	Sept/Oct 2020	1:01:37
SDNP1	Face-to-face	Sept/Oct 2020	56:58
SDNP2	Face-to-face	Sept/Oct 2020	40:31
AC1, AC2, AC3	Face-to-face; Group	Dec 2019	2:12:32
SLL1	Face-to-face	Dec 2019	24:02
S01	Written response	Mar 2020	-
S02	Face-to-face	Mar 2020	36:10
S03	Face-to-face	Mar 2020	37:03
S04	Face-to-face	Mar 2020	1:09:45
S05, S06	Face-to-face	Mar 2020	2:01:42
S07	Virtual online	June 2020	32:49
S08	Written response	June 2020	-
S09	Virtual online	Oct 2020	44:02
S10	Virtual online	Oct 2020	23:50
S11a, S11b	Virtual online; Group	Oct 2020	43:10
S12	Written response	Oct 2020	-
S13	Virtual online	Oct 2020	34:10
S14	Virtual online	Oct 2020	18:58
S15	Virtual online	Oct 2020	50:46
S16	Virtual online	Oct 2020	16:20
S17	Virtual online	Oct 2020	50:36
S18	Virtual online	Oct 2020	33:52

A common approach to qualitative data analysis is through the use of coding. A code is typically a word or phrase that is a symbolic attribute to a phenomenon, whilst coding is the process of identifying these words or phrases into pattern-based data that is relevant to your research question(s) (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Saldana, 2016). Coding can be utilised for all types of textual documents and enables the analysis to move beyond the individual document to understanding broader themes and issues across the data (Richards, 2015). In the context of this research, in-depth interviews took place across three stages which involved either deductive or inductive reasoning.

All three stages of interviews utilised deductive codes before utilising inductive codes. Deductive codes derive from the researcher from the interview guide which were developed from concepts in the scholarly literature. Whereas, inductive codes derive directly from the data from reading the data to understand the issues expressed by participants. Hennink et al. (2011) suggested that using both form of codes indicates new processes, explanations and meaning without losing any unique issues voiced by participants. In addition, deductive coding was used in the content analysis conducted in the first stage of the study as the analysis used predefined themes and phrases developed from the literature.

The analytic process of coding involved a 'first cycle' and 'second cycle' to allow recoding and re-categorising to occur, in order to reduce mistakes or misinterpretation of textual data (Saldana, 2016). The process of coding was undertaken through the use of the data software package, NVivo 12. There is a risk with the use of such packages that can result in key issues being missed. However, to reduce this interview transcripts and management plans for the content analysis were read over before coding commenced and were re-read on a number of occasions after the completion of coding to ensure key elements were not lost but also to ensure no additional codes were required.

In relation to the quantitative data within the research, the analysis of such methods was crucial and significant in adding meaning to the study, though it can be regarded as relevantly simple compared to that of quantitative or other mixed method studies. However, Saunders et al. (2019) highlighted that quantitative data when analysed and interpreted, even in simple tables or frequency counts, can be useful to meeting research objective(s) and aid the connotation from qualitative data. The process of statistical data was undertaken through Microsoft Excel and Nvivo 12. The coding process for the content analysis on Nvivo 12 enabled statistics to be developed and convey the effectiveness of partnership from predetermined coding. The criteria scorecard was developed using Microsoft Excel and used simple categorised data which was calculated and analysed into rank order to gauge the top three AONBs.

The analysis of each stage of the data collection were combined into appropriate themes. The results and discussion are provided across three chapters, each objective given over to a separate chapter.

4.9 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND GENERALISABILITY

Validity and reliability are closed linked in research. The concept of validity refers to whether the research conducted shows what it claims to demonstrate, and the measure accurately portrays reality (Saunders et al., 2019). It is viewed that it is dependent on the researcher and participants to build trustworthiness or validity into the different stages of the study through the data collection, data analysis and interpretation (Zohrabi, 2013). Reliability refers to the extent to which the findings generated from a study could be generated again using the same measures and different researchers (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Both concepts are characteristically applicable to positivist and quantitative research (Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, validity and reliability are viewed as problematic in qualitative research as these approaches recognise multiple realities or bound to specific context (Morse et al., 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2013; Zohrabi, 2013). Other authors such as Guba (1981) substituted validity and reliability within qualitative research to trustworthiness and authenticity. However, as this study utilised a sequential mixed methods research design, there is no agreed correct terminology in such an approach. Conversely, researchers may amend the concepts to best fit their mixed methods approach (Yin, 2009), or to create consistency in the field of research the terminology of validity and reliability may be generic for all research designs (Morse et al., 2002). Furthermore, it is believed that a mixed methods study minimizes the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methods to strengthen validity (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). To this end, reliability and validity was found to be the most appropriate terms as a practical way to consider the concepts is to address bias and error (Norris, 1997; Saunders et al., 2019).

Bias in research can occur deliberately or accidentally and concerns any “deviation from the truth in data collection, data analysis, interpretation and publication which can cause false conclusions” (Simundic, 2013). Bias is a recognised concept examined more so in qualitative research than quantitative, particularly in interviews as bias can

occur from the interviewer or participant. Error is typically linked to quantitative research as statistical data can be wrongly inputted, however, interpretation of qualitative data can be done in error also (Saunders et al., 2019). The researcher took credible action to minimise any potential risk of bias and error occurring in the study. With particular reference to the face-to-face in-depth interviews, the researcher used open-ended questions, minimised negative non-verbal behaviour and stereotyping, and opted for unobtrusive areas within the public locations utilised for meeting participants. In addition, to prevent any bias and error within the study's quantitative methods, the coding scheme aided the content analysis and prevented misinterpretation, whilst the development and scoring stage of the criteria scorecard was tested and verified by an individual who possessed mapping and landscape skills and was independent of this research.

This thesis does not attempt to generalise all findings from the methods employed. The research aims to contribute knowledge and understanding on establishing a national park in a location with an array of local stakeholders that have an interest or stake in decision-making. Flick (2015) suggested that the reference to an explicit context gives qualitative exploration its value and proceeding to generalise loses the significance of the definite research. Therefore, generalising to other regions attempting to designate a national park is something that will require further research and conceivably a comparable lens to help validate or refute this research. However, the theoretical contribution of a conceptual model has the potential to be generalised as it could be representative of wider NRM cases where certain stakeholder groupings are opposed to others on a local contextual project.

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were anticipated prior to commencing this mixed methods research with the aid of an 'ethical issues' table presented by Creswell (2014, p.93), in order to gain approval from Ulster University's Ethics Filter Committee. One of the main considerations was the confidentiality of the participants interviewed. Within qualitative methods it is difficult to ensure complete confidentiality as the findings include quotations from the participants' responses (Hennink et al., 2011). In order to ensure almost complete confidentiality, recordings and transcribes are only accessible

to researcher and supervisors (if required) (see Appendix 4 for example of an interview transcript). Anonymity is another ethical concern; however, this also helped to ensure confidentiality of the participants. In many cases, fake names, known as pseudonyms, are used to protect the identity of participants (Braun and Clarke, 2013), whilst in other cases code numbers are used (Graziano and Raulin, 2014). For this study, coded numbers were the preferred option. Managers interviewed in objective 1 and 2 were labelled using the abbreviated names of the national park or AONB along with a number. Also, stakeholder interviewees in objective 3 were labelled using 'S' for stakeholder along with a number. These permitted anonymity and privacy of the participants as requested.

In line with the ethical considerations, participants were fully informed about the research before giving consent to contribute towards the study and were aware of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time. In all cases, participants consented to audio recording and did not request a copy of their transcription. Instead, a few participants displayed interest in being informed of the final results of the study with the possible opportunity to read the thesis upon completion. These participants were noted by the researcher and their request will be obliged.

Lastly, minimisation of harm was an additional ethical consideration identified. This harm refers to physical, mental, social or economic aspects of undertaking the research (Hennink et al., 2011). To reduce the risks of harm, interviews with managers were conducted within the national park authority headquarters or AONB management offices, while face-to-face interviews with stakeholders were conducted in public locations (i.e. cafes) convenient to the participant as these acted as neutral spaces for both the researcher and participant.

4.11 CONCLUSION

Much of tourism research is dominated by quantitative methods, however mixed methods and the importance of qualitative methods is increasingly popular to the understanding of behavioural and social settings. Within the specific context of national parks it was vitally important to understand perspectives resulting in qualitative methods being deemed to be appropriate alongside implementation of

quantitative methods. When using mixed methods, the methodological choices need to be justified and sufficiently documented to offer a rigorous study. This chapter has sought to provide the clarity and reasoning behind the key decisions made during the course of the data collection stage.

This research adopted a multi-phase sequential approach which endeavoured to understand consensus-building between stakeholders within a national park setting. The study utilised primary and secondary data across different methods which included in-depth interviews, content analysis, and design and implementation of criteria scorecard and holding a number of likert scale measurement exercises. The benefits and limitations of each method have been discussed above. At the end of each phase of the study, the data were analysed through the use of coding and simple statistical analysis. This chapter has highlighted the suitability of the research approach and decisions taken. It must be noted that the research strategy was not perfect, and challenges occurred during the course of the study. However, the nature of sequential research designs enables researchers to be flexible and adapt their strategy when required. A vast amount of raw data was collected, primarily through in-depth interviews, which required relevant extracts to be pulled out and grouped into relevant themes before other method results were merged. This was undertaken on a phase by phase basis as each objective built on the results of the previous one. The next chapter sets out the results and wider discussion around the first objective. Separate chapters are then given over to objectives 2 and 3 with the final objective (development of a conceptual framework) addressed within the conclusion chapter.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS – BEST PRACTICE OF UK NATIONAL PARKS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Attention now shifts to the results and analysis of the objectives. This chapter presents the research findings for objective 1 which drew on the primary (in-depth interviews with park managers) and secondary data (park policy and planning documents) associated with three of the UK's newest established national parks, namely Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP), Cairngorms National Park (CNP), and South Downs National Park (SDNP). As stated earlier in the dissertation, these more recently established national parks have been selected as best case exemplars of overcoming stakeholder issues toward a possible national park establishment. As such, the focus of analysis was on aspects relevant to resolving stakeholder disputes (conflict) such as partnership; negotiation and mediation; communication, engagement and empowerment; dual mandates and alignment with national park designation. The findings relating to each of these, covering both the pre and post designation timeframe, is presented in section 5.2. Section 5.3 focuses specifically on the term 'conflict' and park managers' perception of it. Section 5.4 offers practical advice of the park managers interviewed to Northern Ireland AONB managers as to how best to move the process toward national park designation.

5.2 BEST PRACTICE

This section sets out the findings relating to partnership, negotiation and mediation, communication, engagement and empowerment, and national park mandate and alignment with national park designation. Each of these categories of 'best practice' is examined in turn, commencing with partnership.

5.2.1 Partnership

Of the three national parks involved with objective 1, all have the word 'partnership' within their title of their management plans. Therefore it is not surprising that 'partnership working' was emphasised as the main conflict resolution tool utilised. An understanding of what was meant by 'partnership' involved undertaking a content

analysis of park management plans and policies in order to identify the key variables considered by scholars as important to successful partnership working. Furthermore, all park managers interviewed supported partnership as the main management tool. Both Scottish respondents (CNP1 and LLTNP1) confirmed that partnership was used as their main approach. In addition, CNP1 highlighted the relationship between partnership and collaboration in the following way:

“we probably go with partnerships with organisations to collaborating with people on the ground and everything else in between” (CNP1).

In the SDNP, it was highlighted that a partnership approach is used. However, SDNP1 pointed out that the whole national park is an example of co-management due to the ownership of land being mainly private and the authority owning no land of its own. Regards to the planning system in the SDNP, a partnership model allows the local authorities in the park to look at the majority of small scale planning applications on the park authority's behalf. This ensured an assisted agreement between the park authority and local authorities, resulting in this being a method of buying-in the authorities that were opposed to national park designation during the pre-designation stage. Therefore, an argument could be made that a partnership planning model acted as a conflict resolution mechanism to pre-designation; a previously controversial issue.

Moreover, the PMPs were identified as being a tool to aid the management approach but also support conflict resolution, as the following statement implies:

“Ultimately, we're following the national park partnership plan...that plan really is our work programme...how we're getting that buy-in from other people as well that they've signed up to that plan...so we'll work in partnership with them to deliver that plans actions and outcomes” (LLTNP1).

Additionally, CNP1 highlighted these plans were useful mechanisms to bring people together and give them a say in what they want their area or community to do and be. Therefore, it could be suggested that a partnership approach involving partnership plans can be used as a tool to prevent future conflicts or disputes between all partners and stakeholders, guiding the management and direction of the park as a whole.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3 (section 3.2.4), partnerships are commonly used for governance in protected areas and within the tourism industry. However, the idea that a partnership culture becomes mandatory and a legal requirement within policies and strategies was also made evident (Miller and Ahmad, 2000; Dowling et al., 2004). Therefore, this approach impacts upon the development of the UK national park management plans which legally have to be prepared and published by the national park authorities every five years. This indicates that 'partnership working' as a park management approach, which is showcased in park documents, is heavily influenced by central government. The likelihood, however, exists that as an approach it may not necessarily reflect successfulness or effectiveness when involving all stakeholders or attempting to find common ground in conflicting scenarios.

The scholarly literature review on partnership, previously presented in this dissertation, identified 16 variables which were deemed to be important to successful partnership thinking and approaches. A deeper literature review of these variables was conducted before the content analysis and are reproduced in Table 5.1 with a brief description of their definition that formed the basis of identifying each through the content analysis of the PMPs and LDPs. It must be noted that some of these variables interlink with one another resulting in an overlap of how they were found to be present in the content analysis.

The below variables were selected on the basis of scholarly debate (see section 3.2.4) as to what were deemed key variables associated with partnership. A critique of scholarly thinking around these variables is offered ahead of detailing the presence or absence of each based on the content analysis exercise involving key management documentation associated with the three national parks that were involved at this stage of the dissertation.

Table 5.1: Partnership variables and descriptions

Variable	Brief Description
Mutual benefits	Benefits equal to all relevant stakeholders
Mutual respect	Evident between all relevant stakeholders
Mutual transparency	Shown in processes, communication, accessibility and participation methods
Mutual trust	Trust being built between stakeholders
Mutual influence and leadership	All partners have opportunity to influence processes and outcomes and leadership is supportive and shared
Mutual accountability	Feedback systems and aware of responsibility or who is accountable for decisions
Shared goals and integration of conservation	All involved share common goal(s) with objectives integrating conservation efforts/goals
Sharing management responsibilities	Effective and amongst all stakeholders involved to help empowerment and place less burden on agency in charge
Avoidance or minimisation of conflict	Strategies for conflict management and resolution identified and agreed
Enhancement of tourism product	Enhances tourism experience sustainably which involves stakeholders
Empowerment	Stakeholders empowered to participate and have ownership with decision-making rights
Participatory decision-making	Decision-making processes to engage multi-stakeholders with rights to facilitate in dialogue
Pooling resources and equity	Grouping together resources to maximise advantages and fair distribution of the benefits from resources
Contribution towards a democratic society	Reflects governance and linkage to relevant policies and laws
Sustainability, development and innovation	Achieve sustainability, development and stimulate innovation of resources for the future
Understanding and knowledge	Knowledge of all views and positions of stakeholders involved and are understood

Mutual trust, respect and transparency are commonly featured in scholarly literature as important elements for successful partnerships (Malena, 1995; Gruber, 2010; Lockwood, 2010). *Trust* and *respect* must be built between all relevant stakeholders involved in the decision-making process, whilst *transparency* refers to the visibility of decision-making and participation processes, the reasoning behind certain decisions, and accessibility to information and communication pathways (Lockwood, 2010). Borrini-Feyerabend (1996) identified *mutual benefits* and rights between stakeholders as vital to partnerships in protected area systems, particularly when the local communities and resource users are recognised as stakeholders. Additionally, each variable includes the concept of *mutuality* as this refers to mutual dependence and responsibilities by each party to seek joint objectives (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

Mutual influence refers to all stakeholders or partners having the opportunity to influence the objectives, vision, processes and outcomes of that organisation (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Therefore, *leadership* has been linked to this variable as it must be supportive and consistent towards all stakeholders involved in the organisational influence (Horton et al., 2009). Leadership in partnerships can be difficult “as partnering involves letting go of unilateral decision-making” (Horton et al., 2009, p.45). Furthermore, Moxley (1999) states that leadership in partnerships requires balanced *power, shared goals, responsibility, accountability and respect*; partnership variables that must be applied to all areas of organisational life. Hence, the interconnection with many of the other variables identified applied to the content analysis.

Shared goals are a commonly mentioned feature for the success of partnerships (Gray 1989; Wildridge et al., 2004). Brinkerhoff (2002) states that goals and objectives should be based on a mutual agreement through a shared understanding which each stakeholder sees as having fundamental value. However, Borrini-Feyerabend (1996) highlighted that partnerships and collaborative management in protected areas are unlikely to succeed if conservation goals are not *integrated* and agreed upon by stakeholders. Therefore, *shared goals* may relate to social, economic and cultural issues and must have a *degree of conservation incorporated*, especially as that is the core intention for national park and protected area designation. In addition, management responsibilities must also be shared (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996). These responsibilities are agreed between stakeholders and can be seen as a way to

empower those involved. Borrini-Feyerabend (1996) suggests this lessens the burden on the agency or authority in charge of the area. However, *shared management responsibilities* need to be considered as a separate variable as *shared goals* and *integration of conservation* does not inevitably result in *shared management responsibilities*.

A key part of partnership working is to attempt to build consensus with all parties involved to maximise benefits from that relationship. Understandably not all partnerships and organisations will run smoothly with multiple stakeholders included in decision-making processes. Therefore, conflict management strategies to enable resolution should be developed to allow for the *avoidance or the minimisation of conflict* (Gruber, 2010), and negotiating of collective decisions to help deal with conflicts (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996). In addition, the avoidance of adversarial conflicts through collaboration or partnerships could avoid long-term costs to those in charge (Bramwell and Lane, 2000).

The *enhancement of tourism product* is suggested by Bramwell and Lane (2000) as a growing interest in partnerships as this allows the multi-layer arrangement of stakeholders to have an opportunity to participate and express their own interests in decisions towards tourism development in their local area. As national parks are seen as tourism spaces (Boyd and Butler, 2000), the variable becomes a requirement in order for stakeholders to have a sense of ownership in the development of the tourism product and experience offered to residents and visitors (Graci, 2013).

A growing emphasis on the importance of stakeholder and community empowerment gives rise to *empowerment* being relevantly new to partnership success and effectiveness. It is perceived that if a partnership has unequal powers from the beginning then the least powerful partner will incur a larger burden of costs (Wildridge et al., 2004); this tends to be the community. Gruber (2010) suggests *empowerment* as part of the key principles to partnerships in CBNRM initiatives. It is advocated that true sharing of power, ownership and responsibilities between the stakeholders enhances decision-making, and therefore helps improve the overall outcomes.

As a result, *participatory decision-making* is linked closely to *empowerment*. Gruber (2010) places this variable as a separate principle, where participation can empower stakeholders, especially the community, as well as directly impact levels of knowledge of positions and interests whilst also directly building trust, confidence and legitimacy amongst the various stakeholders. Furthermore, participation must occur at all stages to be effective (Gruber, 2010) and allow communities not to be passive bystanders but to actively engage in negotiations in CBNRM and conservation projects (Campbell and Vainio-Mattila, 2003). In the national park context from the UK interviews, *empowerment* and *participation* came across as an essential component to succeed not only in working partnerships today but also in national park designation which is discussed later in this chapter (see section 5.2.3). In addition, the concept of engagement will be included in both these partnership variables as this is a key element in both empowerment and participatory decision-making.

Pooling resources together in partnership working has the opportunity to add value for stakeholders involved as they each have the prospect of gaining additional beneficial resources from one another whether this be knowledge, ideas or financial resources (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). However, for stakeholders to equally benefit from the resources being pooled there must be a fair distribution of the benefits from this process, therefore *equity* is closely linked in this partnership variable. Horton et al. (2009) stated that *equity* is seldom featured in definitions of partnership, however in many partnerships there is equity issues surrounding the sharing of benefits from resources socially or financially. Consequently, for partnerships to succeed these variables must work collectively together and also ensure equitable opportunities of participation for all those involved. Specifically, in protected areas and CBNRM initiatives, Gruber (2010) suggested regulated access to resources could help equity in long-term partnerships.

Borrini-Feyerabend (1996) suggested that partnerships and collaborative management should contribute towards *a more democratic and participatory society*. Therefore, relevant policies and laws must be reflected through the governance of the organisation but also through partnerships where stakeholders have the chance to develop these. Furthermore, Bramwell and Lane (2000) stated that stakeholders with the opportunity to participate and have ownership of policies have a sense of

democratic empowerment and that partnerships should be assessed on their wider policy effects. In light of the name of this variable, participation was excluded as it has its own variable related to partnership. Therefore, the variable *contribution towards a democratic society* reflects the governance and association to relevant policies and laws either internally or directly linked to the nation's government signifying this partnership.

Ultimately, NRM projects must contribute towards sustainability goals and this is no different for protected areas and national parks. The variable *sustainability, development and innovation* in a national park context directly links to the underpinning of the dual mandates of conserving and using the same area. These landscapes need to be sustainable but also innovative with opportunities for development. In a study by Pfueller et al. (2011), it was found that tourism partnerships place an importance to achieving sustainability goals. Moreover, this sustainability can provide suitable development in terms of resources and developing future partnership relationships. The sustainability and development of resources should stimulate innovation, not only in the destination for tourism and other industries but in partnership working and creativity of conflict solutions (Tremblay, 2000).

Understanding and knowledge is the last variable to be identified within scholarly debate as each stakeholder concerned will adopt a particular stance with their own incentives and motivations (Stott, 2009), meaning there must be understanding and knowledge of each other's views and positions (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996). Moreover, Borrini-Feyerabend (1996) suggested that this *understanding and knowledge* may prevent disputes and ultimately avoid the wastage of resources such as the use of personnel to resolve stakeholder's conflict or disputes.

In an ideal scenario all 16 partnership variables (Table 5.1) would be seen to be equally present within national park PMPs, however, this is not the case as is illustrated by Figure 5.1 which demonstrates the number of mentions for each variable across all park plans and documentation that underwent a content analysis involving these partnership variables. It is clear from the figure that *sustainability, development and innovation* had the highest number of mentions (66), accounting for 15.1% of all partnership mentions. This emphasises that the main intention of national parks in the

UK is to provide sustainable development to these respective areas. This is also reflected in the following statement taken from the SDNP PMP:

“the principles of sustainable development and ecosystem approach are for all involved with the National Park, not just the National Park Authority, and rely on partnership working throughout” (SDNP PMP, p.28).

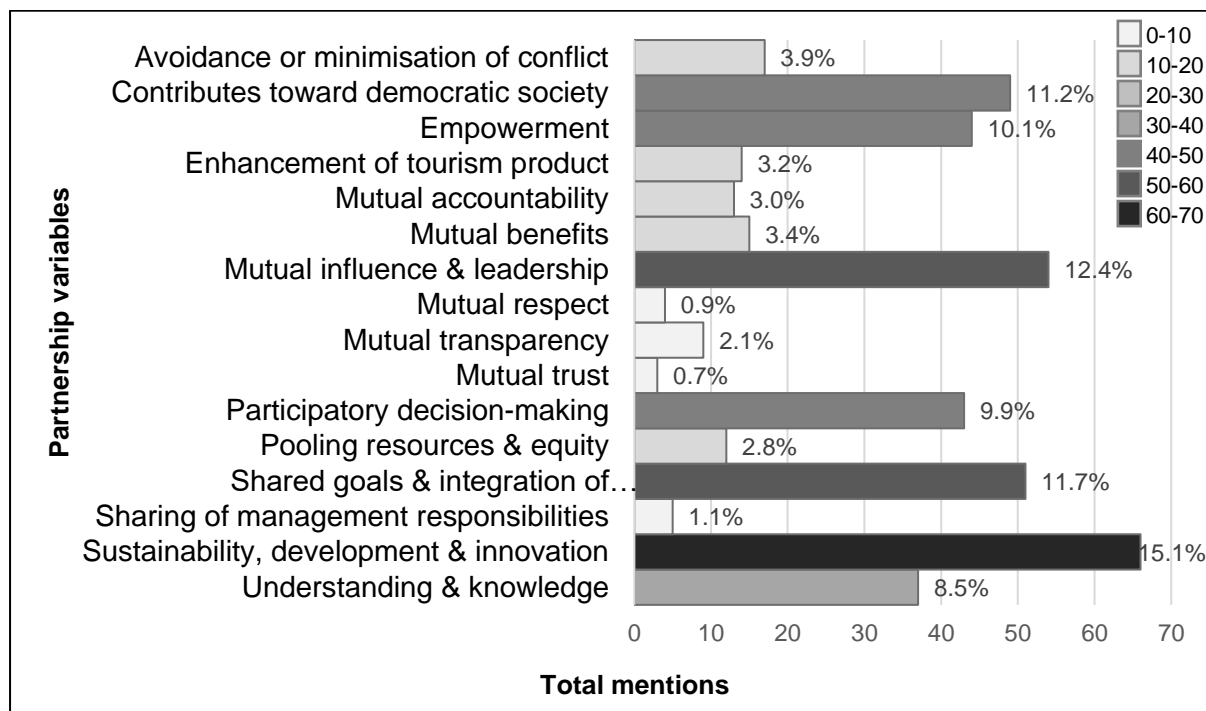
This implies the importance of interconnecting the parks partnership approach whilst placing an emphasis on meeting sustainability goals that are central to all NRM projects and future developments, including that of national parks and protected areas; a position that is supported in the scholarly literature (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996; Pfueller et al., 2011; Austin et al., 2016).

Mutual influence and leadership and *shared goals and integration of conservation* respectively, received 54 (12.4%) and 51 (11.7%) mentions relating to partnership thinking. Looking further at the mentions of the variable *mutual influence and leadership*, it is evident that more than half are linked to leadership. However, *mutual influence* is still particularly important in the plans in its entirety and is influenced by stakeholders as the following statement highlights:

“...our communities, businesses, landowners and partner organisations to get involved in a series of events, workshops and three formal consultations to help inform this Plan since 2011.” (LLTNP LDP, p.6).

This statement is similarly reflected in all the national park plans analysed, showcasing that creating the park plans is largely influenced equally by the stakeholders in partnership with the park authorities. It is reflective of scholarly thinking as it gives the stakeholders the opportunity to influence the processes, visions and objectives (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

Figure 5.1: Number of mentions to partnership variables



In terms of *leadership*, the park authority is viewed as the overarching leader of the national park as important decisions ultimately go through the organisational body. However, the mentions in this variable, particularly in the LLTNP LDP, used words such as ‘support’, ‘facilitating’, ‘promote’, ‘encouraging’ repeatedly throughout regarding the relationship between the authority and stakeholders or partners. These words gave a sense that the authority is in an open position to sharing leadership with future development decisions with stakeholders involved or interested in the processes, whilst showcasing its supportive stance (Horton et al., 2009). The park plan in its entirety also reflects this variable, as the following statement suggests:

“Delivery of this Plan is not something the National Park Authority can achieve alone; our role is to support landowners, communities, businesses, Local Authorities and developers to deliver the development identified.”
(LLTNP LDP, p.20).

In relation to *shared goals and integration of conservation*, all park plans stipulate their visions, aims, objectives and targets which incorporated conservation goals. The CNP PMP acknowledged this integration:

“Partners work under these priorities will help to meet the conservation challenges and deliver the relevant public interest land use priorities” (CNP PMP, p.24).

However, direct partnership mentions for this variable were slightly lower than expected; this may be explained on the basis of when viewing the plans in their entirety, goals and objectives are based on a mutual agreement between stakeholders (Brinkerhoff, 2002). It could be interpreted then that as the plans are put together as a result of stakeholder engagement and involvement, that they, as a whole, are a mutual agreement between stakeholders and the leading park authority.

Interestingly, *empowerment* and *participatory decision-making* had similar results with 44 (10.1%) and 43 (9.9%) mentions, respectively. This demonstrates that the plans recognise stakeholders or partners must have the ability to feel empowered but also have the opportunity to participate in future decisions whether that is in relation to their livelihood, communities, businesses, or other facilities. This supports the emphasis placed on these two variables from the UK managers responses (see section 5.2.3) and how they interconnect in partnership working (Gruber, 2010).

It was anticipated from the initial coding stage that the variable *avoidance or minimisation of conflict* would not be accredited with a high number of mentions from all the national park plans analysed. As suspected, this was the case as it only received a total of 17 mentions, accounting for 3.9% of all partnership mentions. Some of these references stated collaboration working with others as a mechanism to minimise conflicts as part of the partnership approach, as the following statement demonstrates:

“support collaboration across ownership boundaries and between interests to reduce conflicts in species and wildlife management” (CNP PMP, p.41).

In the case of the LLTNP, reference was made to a mechanism of balanced management through democratic laws to reduce conflicts, as the following excerpt implies:

“the well-established Loch Lomond Byelaws continue to work effectively, helping our Ranger Service to achieve balanced management of the loch in a way that enables a wide range of recreational activities, while minimising conflicts” (LLTNP PMP, p.52).

Although coding for the *avoidance or minimisation of conflict* variable was low, what was interesting was that UK managers referred to the park plans as a conflict resolution and management mechanism through a partnership approach between organisations and stakeholders; therefore it could be construed that the entire park documentations could be a reference to this variable.

The partnership variables with the lowest mentions from the content analysis of the park plans were *mutual trust*, *mutual transparency*, *mutual respect*, and *sharing management responsibilities*. *Trust* and *respect* are difficult to measure and to interpret from written documents and in a way are invisible elements. The measurement of trust and respect may only be possible through primary research when talking to communities and stakeholders about these elements regarding the relationship with the national park authorities and other partners. *Transparency* is also difficult to measure and fully interpret, however it is conceivable that the park plans in their entirety are perceived as having *transparency* towards all stakeholders involved. The PMPs state that the aims, objectives, priorities and vision are recognised as being for the whole park and everyone living within it. The LDPs aid the PMPs by stating the policies to achieve the aims and objectives, therefore the purpose of these policies is to be transparent to all partners and stakeholders. However, the policies may be perceived to be the authority's rules and therefore may not be seen as *mutual*. Similar to *mutual transparency*, the park plans can be construed in their entirety under the *sharing management responsibilities* variable. The plans are seen as a shared management approach between all stakeholders and partners, therefore are not necessarily directly mentioning who the responsibilities fall to within these wider plans but may be mentioned directly in supplementary plans in direct relation to that sector (i.e. strategic tourism plans).

From the combined mentions as shown in Figure 5.1, it was abundantly clear that each national park possessed different levels of mentions of each variable. Table 5.2

illustrates the top partnership variables with 10 mentions or more in ranked order for each national park. The percentage of mentions is shown, highlighting the amount of coverage that variable received in the documentation against all partnership mentions, and this exercise was undertaken for each park. The mentions were calculated by combining those from the PMPs and the LDPs; any partnership variable that received less than 10 mentions were deemed to be insignificant to the overall results and are not recorded in Table 5.2. It should be stated that park plans are designed to interconnect creating the entire embodiment of each park's ambitions, objectives and priorities together, hence why the mentions are combined for each park. Appendix 5 shows all 16 partnership variables in ranking ordering for each national park.

The results shown in Table 5.2 clearly demonstrate only 7 of the 16 partnership variables received 10 mentions or more, whilst there are 9 of the 16 variables that do not appear in the top ranking positions at all. The CNP had 7 variables which received a total of 148 mentions which account for 80% of all the mentions from all 16 variables, meaning the other 9 variables only account for 20% of the total mentions from the analysis. As for the LLTNP, there are 5 variables with 10 mentions or more accounting for 68.2% of the total partnership mentions. Lastly, the SDNP also had 5 variables with 10 mentions or more accounting for 66.7% of the total partnership mentions.

Notably, three partnership variables, *mutual influence and leadership*, *empowerment* and *contribution toward democratic society*, are present in all of the national park's top ranking positions. This indicates that these variables must have a considerable presence in partnership working in order to have the potential to be successful. Therefore, these variables are considered as the overall top three for partnership success and effectiveness in a national park context.

Table 5.2: Ranking of partnership variables in each park with 10 mentions or more

Ranking	Partnership Variable	Mentions	% of mentions
Cairngorms National Park			
1	Shared goals and integration of conservation	32	17.3
2	Sustainability, development and innovation	28	15.1
3	Contribution toward democratic society	25	13.5
4	Participatory decision-making	18	9.7
5	Understanding and knowledge	17	9.2
6	Empowerment	14	7.6
6	Mutual influence and leadership	14	7.6
Total against all partnership mentions:		148	80.0
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park			
1	Sustainability, development and innovation	26	20.6
2	Mutual influence and leadership	20	15.9
3	Empowerment	17	13.5
4	Contribution toward democratic society	13	10.3
5	Shared goals and integration of conservation	10	7.9
Total against all partnership mentions:		86	68.2
South Downs National Park			
1	Mutual influence and leadership	20	16.7
1	Understanding and knowledge	20	16.7
3	Participatory decision-making	16	13.3
4	Empowerment	13	10.8
5	Contribution toward democratic society	11	9.2
Total against all partnership mentions:		80	66.7

Of these three variables only one, *mutual influence and leadership*, ranked first in one of the three national parks, however it was joint first with the variable *understanding and knowledge*. Four other variables, *shared goals and integration of conservation*, *sustainability, development and innovation*, *participatory decision-making* and *understanding and knowledge*, are present in two of the three national parks top ranking positions.

The *mutual influence and leadership* variable was joint first in the SDNP with 20 mentions (16.7% of total mentions), second in the LLTNP with 20 mentions (15.9% of

total mentions) and further down in joint sixth in the CNP with 14 mentions (7.6% of total mentions). This variable appeared to be important to all the national parks. This may be due to each park understanding that stakeholder value as having an influence and opportunity to lead the development of the park and its plans. In terms of being joint first in the SDNP, this may be explained by the sizeable population living within the park, and therefore influence and leadership must be reflected in these plans to stakeholders. The plans, in particular the PMPs, highlight repeatedly the plan and park is influenced by everyone interested and is accomplished through partnership working. Additionally, the concept of *shared leadership* between the park authority and stakeholders is referred to in the following statement:

“The National Park Authority cannot and should not deliver the outcomes on its own. Positive progress will depend on close partnerships and collaboration between the many organisations and individuals that administer, manage and influence the National Park” (SDNP PMP, p.65).

This statement is evident in the LLTNP plans and less so in the CNP plans. Moreover, both the PMP and the LDP are the first published by the SDNP since designation in 2010 resulting in the importance of translating this variable in the documents for all stakeholders and partners to understand and recognise. Likewise, *understanding and knowledge* was joint first in the SDNP with *mutual influence and leadership* due to the recognition of this variable’s need to be communicated and conveyed to the large array of stakeholders and partners in this populated national park.

The variable *contribution toward democratic society* was ranked by all three national parks. The variable came third in the CNP with 25 mentions (13.5% of total mentions), fifth in the LLTNP with 13 mentions (10.3% of total mentions) and fourth in the SDNP with 11 mentions (9.2% of total mentions). This variable denotes the policies and laws which are developed and influenced by stakeholders (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996). This includes the influence from central government as a stakeholder. As a result, the mentions in this variable increased from policy development being affected by its need to recognise and contribute towards national outcomes from central government. From the plans it has been identified that the national parks are expected to contribute to national targets, particularly towards climate change and housing development. To

enable this, the park authorities and stakeholders embed these targets into the relevant policies to have a sense of democratic empowerment (Bramwell and Lane, 2000). Furthermore, the communities have engagement opportunities to contribute toward their own democratic society by designing and guiding their own policies, as shown in the SDNP:

“Local Plan policies have been formulated in consultation with local communities, building on extensive engagement...the views and input of the local community are vital to us and we have undertaken a considerable amount of public engagement” (SDNP LDP, p.7).

In addition, the variable *contribution towards democratic society* was also achieved through the stakeholder’s right to vote for representatives on the park authority boards and other institutions giving them a further sense of democratic empowerment.

Lastly, *empowerment* received mentions in documentation relating to all three national parks with its highest ranked position as third in the LLTNP with 17 mentions (13.5% of total mentions). The variable came fourth in the SDNP with 13 mentions (10.8% of total mentions) and joint sixth in the CNP with *mutual influence and leadership* showing a close connection and how each are equally represented in the CNP plans with 14 mentions each (7.6% of total mentions). It is not surprising that *empowerment* as a partnership variable is in the overall top three variables given the growing emphasis placed on this element within rural, NRM and protected area settings. It is evident that *empowerment* can be interlinked with *mutual influence and leadership* and *contribution toward democratic society* as the following statement from the LLTNP PMP showcases the relationship between these three variables:

“Engaging actively with planning will help our communities to benefit from the new powers contained in the Community Empowerment and Land Reform legislation, as well as the proposed changes to the Scottish Planning System” (LLTNP PMP, p.86).

This demonstrates how empowerment, particularly with regards to the community, has become imperative in the planning and management of national parks and part of this

empowerment is having the opportunity to contribute towards democratic society, influence and lead as a mutual stakeholder with equal and shared powers. However, new legislation, particularly within Scotland, pushing for more stakeholder and community empowerment that is headed by central government, could be debated to be in conflict here with this variable. Despite this, empowerment is now reflected in new legislation relating to Scottish national parks and the concept is given attention in the CNP PMP and LLTNP PMP documents. At the time of undertaking this research, the SDNP plans do not have a definite section on community empowerment. However, it was expected that the *empowerment* variable would receive a higher number of mentions in all the park plans than it did. This could be due to the current plans only beginning to place importance on empowerment; reflective of a relatively new shift from central government which is now filtering into the national park system. It is possible that *empowerment* will be reflected more prominently in future management plans.

It is significant that all three national parks examined using content analysis have a different top ranked variable. In the case of the CNP it was *shared goals and integration of conservation* with 32 mentions (17.3% of total mentions). As for the LLTNP it was *sustainability, development and innovation* which received 26 mentions (20.6% of total mentions), compared to the SDNP where the content analysis revealed that *mutual influence and leadership* and *understanding and knowledge* both received 20 mentions (16.7% of total mentions).

Overall, the findings arising from the content analysis demonstrate there to be no consistency when partnership variables are considered. The concept of partnership is placed as having high importance, particularly with interviewee responses and in the naming of the main park plans that have been published for stakeholders and residents living within and adjacent to the national park. However, the partnership tool is seen to be under-emphasised in park plans and this demonstrates the complexity and diversity of partnership working as a mechanism for conflict resolution and management. Moreover, when it comes to a partnership approach the LLTNP is aware that these need further investment in the future especially when trying to engage and attract a wider audience to the park as the following excerpt states:

“further partnerships could be developed to create more valuable opportunities to visit, enjoy and learn about the National Park” (LLTNP PMP, p.65).

5.2.2 Negotiation and mediation

Attention now shifts to examine negotiation and mediation as tools toward conflict resolution and achieving better understanding of stakeholder positioning. Chapter 3 provided detailed scholarly critique of these tools, and the focus of this section is to demonstrate the extent to which both were evident in the park management plans and in the responses of those park managers interviewed. The content analysis revealed limited evidence of these conflict resolution tools. Only two management plans (the SDNP LDP and the CNP LDP) made explicit reference twice to the concept of negotiation with reference to development and housing cases; where these were mentioned negotiation would be on a case-by-case basis. Response of CNP1 echoed this when they stated *“obviously we negotiate all the time”* regarding these techniques being commonly used in planning applications in the park.

The issue of the extent to which methods such as negotiation, bargaining or mediation are used to resolve conflicts or disputes between partners and stakeholders was raised as part of the in-depth interviews with park management. One respondent confirmed that negotiation and mediation was used during the pre-designation stage and was still used post-designation as the following excerpt from the interview reveals:

“we have used independent mediation and negotiators on our behalf and facilitators to help us and that’s another effective technique cause sometimes when you’re the park authority and you’re trying to work between two conflicting partners it’s better to have an independent person and actually enable you to be more engaging in the actual discussions...I think we’ve used all the negotiating tools that are available to us but mediation is obviously a very effective way of getting people to at least recognise that the pros and cons of each other’s side” (SDNP2).

The other managers interviewed were unsure if such methods were used during pre-designation stage. However, three out of the four respondents confirmed that negotiation or mediation is still used to help resolve conflicts or disagreements between partners post designation. The following response highlights the element of compromise involved with negotiation:

“we’ve had the advantage of understanding and learning from other’s mistakes but yeah I’d say our ability to negotiate and to find compromise between some of these conflicting partners have been very successful” (SDNP2).

The presence of compromise reinforces that it can be present within negotiation and mediation processes in order to reach agreement (Warner, 2000). However, there was no mention of trade-offs being involved in times of compromise; a key factor that Warner (2000) argues is necessary for successful conflict resolution.

Interestingly, SDNP2 (a high-level manager) confirmed the use of negotiation and mediation for conflict resolution but SDNP1 (senior-level manager) denied such methods being used, stating the following:

“No, we don’t. It’s not that, it’s not how it works, we get people together...negotiation or mediation immediately implies you’re sitting there and I’m sitting here, and I want one thing and you want another thing we don’t we get people in a room and say what we going to do next” (SDNP1).

However, when the same respondent was asked about methods being replicable in other parts of the UK or worldwide national parks, they highlighted their planning model was replicable but also revealed that it needs to be renegotiated yearly, so the park can seek value for money and facilitate their partnership approach to their planning system.

From all of the interviewees it was evident that the two that held senior-level managerial positions (SDNP1 and CNP1) came across as somewhat reluctant to admit their national parks use these methods to address conflicts or disputes between

stakeholders. In contrast, the two respondents who both held high-level managerial positions (SDNP2 and LLTNP1) but who work on the ground with stakeholders on a daily basis confirmed that mediation is regularly used.

5.2.3 Communication, engagement and empowerment

The third set of tools recognised for conflict resolution between stakeholders are those of communication, engagement and empowerment, and the responses of those interviewed revealed these to be equally important tools to resolve conflicts, both during pre-designation consultation styled events but also post-designation for stakeholder inclusion. Management across the three national parks mentioned the importance of communication between stakeholder as a method for conflict resolution. For instance SDNP2 stated:

“in my experience communication is the most effective tool in terms of managing these conflicts. Working with both sets of partners but not working with them independently working with them together sitting around and trying to find common ground. Almost always we do manage to establish there is some common ground” (SDNP2).

This statement showcased how the use of communication has the ability to aid stakeholder’s movement from their initial positions to held common ground and potential agreement regarding a conflicting issue. However, communication must be conducted in certain ways that is relevant to all partners and the public but a process that is also accessible (Krauss and Morsella, 2000). In particular, communication with communities as stakeholders is critical to avoid them feeling excluded from decision-making and updates made that may have an impact on the local area. As a tool it must be effective in how information gets communicated as the following quote suggests:

“keeping the public informed about what’s happening, also keep them, trying to keep the jargon free information...trying to really get a layman could pick it up...keep the communication style in a straightforward manner” (LLTNP1).

However, communication must start with the national park authority and others in leadership positions to demonstrate a transparency between both higher (management) and lower tiers (community) as noted by the following interview excerpt:

“you go out and you talk to people and you try and get the best way forward that the most people can agree with” (CNP1).

For communication to be an effective tool, the level of engagement and participation with stakeholders and partners needs to be tangible. Engagement was signposted as an imperative tool to facilitate communication, but also to help reduce and minimise potential conflicts on controversial topics or projects. The SDNP has been very successful in finding creative methods to engage stakeholders, as the following statement illustrates:

“we have our farmer’s breakfasts which is a good example of how we engage with farmers...we understand that farmers times, you know, they like to start very early in the morning get on and get stuff done so we’ve established a method for best reaching that group” (SDNP2).

This method of targeted engagement has worked in favour for a specific stakeholder group. Equally, by holding evening sessions, management have also established ways to engage with members on town and parish councils. In addition, residents within the park boundary receive newsletters that inform, update and promote public events of engagement. The park authority is extremely reliant upon working closely with town and parish councils to ensure that each resident as a stakeholder (often viewed as a lower-order stakeholder) is reached in order to understand locals’ needs and aspirations. These creative engagement strategies employed within the SDNP are necessary due to the sizeable population living in and adjacent to the park.

In terms of engagement methods, all three national parks have their own set-up of events to engage the relevant stakeholders whether that be public or private meetings, one-to-one meetings, generalised meetings, local forums, consultations, project events, roundtables and so on. However, the LLTNP manager mentioned being proactive on social media as an effective mode to communicate and engage with

communities, noting this forum allows for responding faster than a scheduled meeting. However, interviewee SDNP1 debated this method, stating that:

“the internet, social media and so on is a great tool but its overused, people think that they can send a copy list or send an email and they involve them, but they haven’t they have simply copied them something” (SDNP1).

There remains much scope for utilising social media as an engagement tool within a national park context, particularly as more and more people and businesses have these platforms for communication and social engagement purposes.

As a major stakeholder in a national park setting, the community must have opportunities for participating in engagement procedures, especially in decision-making processes relating to planning and managing of the park. However, for engagement to occur stakeholders (and that includes the community) must feel like their concerns and ideas are heard for them to attain a level of engagement that facilitates empowerment (Rowlinson and Cheug, 2008). Management for the SDNP have created unique creative ways to engage and empower communities and other stakeholders as the following excerpt from the interview reveals:

“when the national park was created the first thing we did was have a postcard writing campaign...we approached all the stakeholders and people wrote in what they value most and that is the basis of our special qualities not invented by us, invented by our stakeholders...those came from the people, all the people, stakeholders of all kinds” (SDNP1).

What emerged from the interviews was that communities within the three national parks have the opportunity and the power to elect local representatives that work with the national park authority or sit on the national park board itself. However, in Scotland, this has gone a step further where the government has pushed for policy around community empowerment in rural areas. This policy-making has resulted in the Scottish national parks giving the communities more power and one way that

communities are looking to develop and utilise this empowerment is through specific projects:

“communities are looking at potentially building more hydro schemes...we’re trying to support, think about land management and planning and community empowerment can be all interlinked” (LLTNP1).

This central government policy was introduced to have an impact on core policy-making and strategies with regard to both the national parks and their park management plans. In doing so, this demonstrates that national parks may attempt to use a bottom-up, partnership approach in their governance, recognising that they are also part of a top-down approach driven by central government. While governance approaches may alter between national parks and their stakeholder mix, the ideal scenario is to have the correct balance between a top-down and a bottom-up approach in managing partnership governance (Boyd and Timothy, 2001). Whatever mix of partnership governance is adopted, park managers must ensure that mandates against which designation initially took place are met, and it is this ‘tool’ of resolving conflict and issues between stakeholder that attention now turns to.

5.2.4 National park mandates and alignment with national park designation

As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, the dual or triple park mandates are important to dealing with conflicts between conservation, use and sustainability. In Scottish national parks these mandates are broken down into four aims: (1) conserve and enhance nature and culture, (2) promote sustainable use of natural resources, (3) promote understanding and enjoyment, and (4) promote sustainable economic and social development. In contrast, the English national parks mandates are represented by two aims: (1) conserve and enhance nature, wildlife and cultural heritage and, (2) promote understanding and enjoyment, and are known as the Sandford Principle, where priority lies with the first aim in the event of a conflict arising. From the analyses of the park management documents, four of the six management plans reviewed stated their mandates within the first ten of pages of the document. The LLTNP LDP and the SDNP PMP were the only two documents not to do so. However, of the four documents stating the mandates, they highlighted that if there is a conflict the first

mandate (Scotland's aim one; England's purpose one) has greater weight than the other mandates. The Scottish national park management plans give a reference to the exact section within the National Parks (Scotland) Act and the SDNP LDP gives a reference to the relevant section within the Environment Act of 1995. As a result, by law, conservation and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage takes precedence over use of natural resources.

Respondents CNP1 and LLTNP1 were asked if they adopted the use of the Sandford Principle in their respective national park similar to the rest of UK national parks. LLTNP1 confirmed the park now uses the Sandford Principle, whereas CNP1 stated that Scotland and the CNP does not use the Principle. However, CNP1 did state the following with regard to the four aims:

“fundamentally we're trying to deliver all the aims, there have been a couple of times where we've had to reference the aims in terms of planning cases...but in general it's not a sort of thing we go on a weekly basis” (CNP1).

Respondents SDNP1 and SDNP2 were asked a similar question regarding the Principle and if they employed it to resolve conflicts; again the response differed. The SDNP2, high-level manager, stated the following concerning the use of the Principle during conflicts:

“We do rely on the Sandford Principle quite regularly [gives conflict example between housing development on community sport pitches and natural habitat being damaged] ...we were quite reliant on the Sandford Principle then to help them [the community] understand why we were making that argument but it's a good example of negotiation cause in the end we had discussions and we came to a happy medium” (SDNP2).

This respondent went on to state that the example of conflict they mentioned took four years of discussion and negotiation to be resolved. In contrast, the SDNP1, senior-level manager, stated that the park did not use the Sandford Principle and personally thought the Principle was out of date with both purposes having equal importance. It

is interesting to note that the responses to this question were quite different across all managers interviewed. SDNP1 displayed personal bias toward the Sandford Principle; there may be a degree to which they were unwilling to admit the Principle is used in conflicts and perhaps perceived this as a weakness in the park's system and in the wider UK national park system. However, it begs the question on whether the Sandford Principle in modern times is out of date with the English national park system.

An interesting technique demonstrated within the CNP was the alignment and use of national park designation to resolve conflicts that were occurring for many years before any boundaries were put in place. CNP1 stated the following:

“there were lots of different controversial issues around the Cairngorms and lots of court cases over the years so that was one of the main reasons why a national park was brought into being so that was a way of trying to deal with those issues” (CNP1).

It is encouraging to comprehend that some controversial issues existing within an already contested landscape were not associated with national park designation. However, this mechanism, namely alignment to national park designation, based on manager responses is very much viewed as an anomaly, and may not be a viable conflict resolution tool that has replicability for other contested areas in the UK or elsewhere globally.

5.3 PERCEPTION TOWARD ‘CONFLICT’, ‘PARTNERSHIP’ AND ‘COLLABORATION’ AS TERMS

Attention shifts toward a more detailed understanding of how the managers interviewed viewed the term ‘conflict’. It was apparent during the interviews the usage of the word ‘conflict’ was an issue, particularly from the senior-level managers. Both CNP1 and SDNP1 demonstrated strong rejection towards it being used during the interviews but also strongly disagreed that any conflicts between stakeholders should not be aligned with the word ‘conflict’. For instance, SDNP1 stated the following:

“Firstly, we don’t do conflicts and secondly if we did, we would seek resolution...I think too often its cast in terms of conflict which is why I don’t like the wording” (SDNP1).

A number of issues, however, emerge from this quote, namely that for resolution to be sought a conflict must exist and be recognised, and that not all parties perceive a conflict to exist in the first instance. Such a position challenges scholarly thinking where there is a clear argument that parties must perceive a conflict to exist for resolution but also importantly to understand their positioning before pursuing some form of resolution (Pondy, 1967; Katz et al., 2010).

CNP1 stated the following regarding the word ‘conflict’:

“They aren’t really conflicts...it’s not conflicts it’s just, I think that’s too strong a wording actually, it’s just these are the things that come with managing a national park and trying to work out what the best way forward is, and it usually involves compromise more than anything else” (CNP1).

The connotation of perceiving the word ‘conflict’ to be too strong or a negative terminology is a position taken by some scholars (Susskind and Thomas-Larmer, 1999; Lee et al., 2015). Consequently, it could be understood that senior managerial personnel may want to cast a lighter perception on conflict or disputes between partners or stakeholders in order to try and gain consensus and attempt to lower tensions between the parties involved. However, it is interesting to find that respondents LLTNP1 and SDNP2 who both work closely with the communities and stakeholders on a daily basis have no issue with the wording and confirmed that conflicts were still occurring. Therefore, it is a possibility that senior-level managers are being oversensitive with regard to the use of the word ‘conflict’ or they have the justification for avoiding its use.

Given thinking on the term conflict from a managerial perspective, it was important to explore the degree of presence of the term within park management plans. Table 5.3 shows these results.

Table 5.3: ‘Conflict’ mentions in national park plans

Park Plans	‘Conflict’ frequency
CNP Partnership Plan and Local Development Plan	7
LLTNP Partnership Plan and Local Development Plan	6
SDNP Partnership Plan and Pre-Submission Local Plan	20

Out of all the respondents, SDNP1 was particularly against the term ‘conflict’. As shown in Table 5.3, the term, however, had greater frequency within the documentation associated with that national park compared to the other parks reviewed. In drilling down into conflict mentions, two in particular related to applying the Sandford Principle to address the conflicting park mandates of conservation versus use.

Issues also emerged with the terms ‘partnership’ and ‘collaboration’. In Chapter 3, it was established that the concepts of collaboration and cooperation exist within partnerships (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996), and that partnership is a contractual relationship whilst collaboration is typically not (Carnwell and Carson, 2009). However, when reviewing the park plans both terms occurred and sometimes in the same sentence, as shown by the following excerpt:

“...positive progress will depend on close partnerships and collaboration between the many organisations and individuals that administer, manage and influence the National Park” (SDNP PMP, p.65).

A frequency count of both terms within the park documentation reviewed was undertaken to ascertain which received the higher number of mentions (Table 5.4). Reasoning behind this exercise was to ascertain which national parks regard an element of collaboration being as imperative as partnerships. Furthermore, the managerial respondents emphasised the importance of the partnership approach as a mechanism to help resolve conflict but also as a management tool. Therefore, it is enlightening to reflect how often partnerships were mentioned in the park plans published for stakeholders and residents. An additional count was then added relating to ‘partnership’ as the initial query included a direct reference to the ‘national park

partnership management plan' repeatedly, therefore a recount was needed to exclude any direct references to the plans' name (this being labelled as '-direct ref'). After the exclusion of direct references, the CNP had a 58% reduction of mentions where the term partnership was referred to 63 times. As for the LLTNP, a 56% reduction resulted in 55 references to partnerships. The SDNP had the lowest reduction (17%), resulting in 120 partnership references. This frequency illustrated that the SDNP refers to their partnerships with other organisations, partners and stakeholders significantly more in their publications compared to the two Scottish national parks.

Table 5.4: Frequency of 'partnership' and 'collaboration' wording

Park Plans	Partnership (+direct ref)	Partnership (-direct ref)	Collaboration
Cairngorms Partnership Plan and Local Development Plan	149	63	33
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Partnership Plan and Local Development Plan	125	55	13
South Downs Partnership Plan and Pre-Submission Local Plan	145	120	11

'Collaboration' was also analysed, and the findings revealed that this term appears significantly less often in the park plans for the LLTNP (only 13 mentions) and the SDNP (11 mentions); frequency counts well below those recorded for 'partnership'. Only the CNP, recorded a level of mentions (33) double that of the other two parks, but at the same time half that of mentions for 'partnership' (63). This simple comparison of the two terms offers scope to support the relationship between partnership and collaboration that both are interlinked. Scholarly thinking is of the view that when operationalised within management, stakeholders can collaborate within the scope of partnerships (Hall, 1999; Oliver, 2002). Furthermore, respondent CNP1 endorsed this interconnection in the following statement regarding management approach:

“we probably go from partnerships with organisations to collaborating with people on the ground” (CNP1).

5.4 ADVICE

Scope existed at the end of the in-depth interviews of managers to garner thinking on the advice they would offer, from their own experiences, which would be beneficial for those seeking national park designation elsewhere. This resulted in a wide range of advice given by all the respondents. Table 5.5 presents an overview of the advice given.

Table 5.5: Summary of advice from UK respondents

Respondent	Advice
CNP1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and honest • Do what's right not to make everyone happy • Look at what the national park is for (reasoning) • Look at other examples • Involve – national park is for everyone • Get people past the national park label • People bought in from the start
LLTNP1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try and sell the benefits to people • Need bottom up approach for community empowerment
SDNP1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear understanding that the national park is for everyone • Engage and consult • Feedback loops to the people • Be prepared – long process • Need bottom-up approach • It's not cheap • Be aware of democratic deficit • Build consensus before making ambitious plans • Employ partnership, enhancement and strategic approach • Ask the big questions not the small questions
SDNP2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate early and engage from the beginning • Don't underestimate people • Look at interests and goals of all stakeholders and appeal to these • Don't expect it to happen overnight • Get help from other national parks

Some of the above comments are in line with scholarly thinking set out in Chapter 3, particularly advice on engaging stakeholders and having early engagement from the start of the process (Idrissou et al., 2013). The most thought-provoking points

illustrated the need for a bottom-up approach, looking at the interests and goals of all stakeholders and appealing to these, and getting past the national park label. Each of these are taken in turn and expanded on.

Firstly, the need to have a bottom-up approach received mentions by two respondents (LLTNP1 and SDNP1), the latter stating the following:

“it’s that trying to get a bottom-up approach, so it’s not seen as another designation being imposed upon them [the people]” (LLTNP1).

Inference may be taken here that both national parks have had difficulties in successfully implementing this type of governance structure. The bottom-up approach emphasises the need to move away from central government control. LLTNP1 suggested that this move away from centralisation is necessary for more community empowerment to be articulated. SDNP1 goes further by highlighting that if a national park is unable to employ a bottom-up approach to governance then nothing else will be effective.

Secondly, SDNP2 highlighted the importance of looking at the interests and goals of all stakeholders involved in national park designation. This advice correlates with Fisher and Ury’s (1981, p.7) concept of ‘principled bargaining’ where parties focus on interests, not positions. In addition, it draws on the theory of moving from positions to interests which Ritchie (2000) outlined in his conceptual model, as discussed in Chapter 3. In order to learn of stakeholders’ interests and goals, those involved with the designation of the SDNP undertook a process of assessing all corporate, council and community strategies and plans to understand what they were trying to achieve and from these develop ideas of how a national park could help meet these. LLTNP1 referred to trying to sell the benefits of national park establishment to the people living in the proposed area, which connects well with the advice from SDNP1 and CNP1 that a national park is for all the people and the management plans and strategies created are for everyone.

Lastly, getting past the national park label was mentioned by CNP1, in the following way:

“...I think it is about trying to get people past the label because a lot of the time people get hung up on...[that] national park is stated owned and conservation focused and that’s it...all national parks in the UK are focused on sustainable development really, trying to get that balance right between all the different bits so really get people to think of the realities of what goes on in the park” (CNP1).

This advice resonates with the issue of people feeling that it is more legislation imposed on their daily lives due to the name ‘national park’. This very issue emerged within the proposed Mourne Mountains National Park in Northern Ireland where people perceived the labelling as additional bureaucracy and legislation enforced on them and was a principle reason for why the region did not get national park designation (Bell and Stockdale, 2009).

Advice also drew attention to the idea of getting help from other areas who have experienced the processes and difficulties of establishing a national park previously. This supports the aim of this objective in attempting to gain an understanding of best practice from other relatively new national parks in the UK. Moreover, it is worth highlighting the following statement made by SDNP1 after they gave general advice:

“...you have to be very careful where you select national parks because there comes a point to which if too many landscapes are designated then they’re not that special. National parks depend upon being special” (SDNP1).

The above statement supports the need for careful selection of landscapes and that a designation of at least one national park in Northern Ireland in the future would have the element of speciality and uniqueness of its ecological, historical and cultural values.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the findings of the first objective of this thesis, drawing from both a content analysis of management plans as well as in-depth interviews of management associated with recently established mainland UK national parks. The chapter has offered a summary of four overall key aspects associated with conflict resolution; that of partnership; negotiation and mediation; communication, engagement and empowerment; as well as ensuring any designation meets and maintains park mandates, albeit often conflicting and challenging. Applied understanding of key terms such as 'conflict', 'partnership' and 'collaboration' has emerged both from the frequency of being mentioned in the management plans as well as from the view of park managers. The chapter concludes with very practical advice by managers regarding new park designation, including the importance of only establishing parks that represent a region's outstanding and universal values around nature, culture and history. Determining which AONBs across Northern Ireland offers this to both local people and tourists is the focus of objective 2 of this thesis which is addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH FINDINGS – ATTRACTIVITY OF AONBS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The attention of the dissertation now shifts to the results and analysis of the next research objective. This chapter presents the findings for objective 2 which drew on primary (in-depth interviews with AONB managers) and secondary (AONB maps and websites) data to create an attractivity scorecard. As previously stated in Chapter 4 (section 4.6), the results of the scorecard determined the most suitable AONBs in Northern Ireland which would influence which AONB management teams would be interviewed, which in turn would influence the direction of the third objective the findings of which are the focus of chapter 7. In addressing the second research objective it was necessary to set out key attractivity criteria and then apply its presence in each AONB across Northern Ireland by measuring attractivity using a scorecard. Section 6.2 details that desktop exercise. Based on the results of the scorecard, the top three AONB sites were selected for further study. Section 6.3 provides a brief description of these candidate AONBs. In-depth interviews with the top AONBs, as derived from the attractivity scorecard results, were undertaken and findings from these are set out in section 6.4; interviews addressed the following themes: views to the attractivity measurement exercise, stakeholder engagement, their views on national park designation, on promoting tourism and opinions on other designations and labels. Section 6.5 offers a short summary and conclusion regarding the second objective.

6.2 ATTRACTIVITY SCORECARD

Many studies on destination or tourism attractiveness concentrate largely on the attributes that makes a location attractive (Van Raaij, 1986; Laws, 1995; Dwyer et al., 2004; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2009). It is only in recent years that studies began to quantify the attributes associated with attractiveness. These studies focus on attractiveness from the tourists perspective and are often linked to tourism competitiveness and image (Formica and Uysal, 2006; Kresic and Prebezac, 2011; Islam et al., 2017). Potential national park landscapes often have to exude being examples of outstanding natural value and so any attractivity criteria must be linked to

the natural and cultural heritage as well as evidence that they are worthy of visitation. As such, the researcher based the attractivity scorecard around the following attributes: naturalness, built heritage and existing visitor and potential tourist interest. The scorecard is applied to all AONBs across Northern Ireland and the findings are set out in the next number of subsections.

6.2.1 Natural criteria

Of the numerous natural features detected across the eight Northern Ireland AONBs, it was clear there was four sub-groupings consisting of water, landscape, coastal and other elements. Water, landscape and coastal were given a weighted score of 1.5. All these natural elements are viewed as being equally significant to measuring attractiveness. While, the other sub-group incorporated the presence of other forms of protected area designations (e.g. ASSIs) which are typically declared for natural value and was given a weighted score of 1. Table 6.1 illustrates the results of the natural attractiveness criteria according the different attributes when applied to all AONBs.

Based on natural attributes, the results show that Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and Mourne AONB were joint first with a cumulative score of 26.5. Notably, there are only four elements that these two areas did not record a score. An advantage to the scoring of these two AONBs is their geographical size as they are the second and third largest AONBs in Northern Ireland. Causeway Coast AONB came third with a score of 23.5, while Binevenagh AONB and Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB scored 22, respectively. The last three AONBs had low scores of 14.5 and 10 based on their naturalness attributes. Lagan Valley is the smallest AONB by size and consequently reflects the lowest score. Interestingly, the Sperrins AONB is the largest by size and reflects a relatively low score. However, this could be explained as the three lowest scoring AONBs have no coastline or coastal features. Northern Ireland encompasses 334 miles of coastline and distinctive parts are key to the tourism industry promoted both domestically and internationally. Therefore, coastal elements cannot be discounted from the naturalness criteria as this type of landscape is very attractive and can make a destination characteristically unique. Additionally, coastal tourism has been a major activity for decades and continues to be one of the most popular tourism

forms from domestic and international visitors to many destinations (Hall, 2001; Van der Merwe et al., 2011).

Natural and landscape features of a destination comprise of the most basic components in attracting visitors and tourists to an area (Kim et al., 2012), and the protection of the special natural environment is the primary objective of any national park. Therefore, quantifying nature in terms of attractiveness is imperative and the measurement of each individual feature combines these values into an inclusive value. However, some of the elements listed in the natural attractiveness criteria from a research or tourist perspective would alone not possess a high motivation value to visit the area but when combined with other natural elements adds an overall equal value to the landscape. Whilst in terms of natural protection, all natural elements are valued equally. Furthermore, all the areas incorporate other forms of protected areas such as nature reserves which further quantify the importance of the natural attractiveness and protection.

Moreover, natural attractiveness is significant to Northern Ireland's tourism industry. The promotion of the destination's image to UK domestic and international visitors regularly endorses the natural scenery. A destination image refers to a person's beliefs, impressions and ideas of a destination (Crompton, 1979), which is reflected in the marketing of Northern Ireland's natural landscape and therefore shown within the results of this criteria. The top three AONBs based on natural attractiveness are commonly utilised within the Northern Ireland's tourist board campaigns proving the results are warranted. Additionally, the imagery of a location contributes to the 'brand' of natural attractiveness which typically is taken from AONB landscapes, therefore aids the concept of national park branding (Boyd, 2004; Wall-Reinius and Fredman, 2007).

Table 6.1: 'Natural' attractiveness criteria

<i>Criteria 1: Natural</i>		Antrim Coast and Glens	Binevenagh	Causeway Coast	Lagan Valley	Mourne	Ring of Gullion	Sperrin	Strangford and Lecale
<i>Water = 1.5</i>	Lake/lake islands	1.5			1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
	River/streams	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Estuaries		1.5						1.5
	Reservoir(s)/artificial lakes	1.5	1.5		1.5	1.5	1.5		
	Waterfalls/gorges/river valley	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	1.5
	Mountain pools/basins/dew ponds	1.5				1.5			
<i>Landscape = 1.5</i>	Mountains/hills/upland/cliffs/inland headlands/screes/plateau	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	1.5	1.5	
	Valleys/glens	1.5		1.5		1.5	1.5	1.5	
	Woodland/forest	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Grassland/meadows/marshland	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	1.5	1.5
	Moorland/bracken/heathland	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	1.5	1.5	
	Peatland/blanket bogs/mosses/mires	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	1.5	1.5	
<i>Coastal = 1.5</i>	Any coastline	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5			1.5
	Sea stacks	1.5		1.5					
	Islands	1.5		1.5					1.5
	Beaches/bays	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5			1.5
	Dunes		1.5	1.5		1.5			1.5
	Coves	1.5		1.5		1.5			1.5
	Headlands	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5			1.5
	Mudflats		1.5			1.5			1.5
Saltmarsh					1.5			1.5	
<i>Other = 1</i>	Other forms of protected area designations	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total:		26.5	22	23.5	10	26.5	14.5	14.5	22

6.2.2 Built and other criteria

Built features within the AONBs comprised a subgroup incorporating historic-cultural heritage. These elements were given a weighted score of 2 as cultural heritage assets are commonly identified as a primary attribute to attractiveness and tourism demand (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Formica and Uysal, 2006; Kresic and Prebezac, 2011; Mihalic, 2013). Heritage denotes entire landscapes which includes natural and cultural assets, the people and traditions as a collective identity, therefore influencing visitor experiences and adding attractiveness value (Boyd, 2016). The higher score assigned for this criteria ascribes with this collective identity of cultural heritage attractiveness.

A second subgroup referred to 'other criteria' was added to capture the presence of the following features of a landscape: waymarked routes and elements relating to legends, remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies. The legends and myths element can somewhat relate to natural and built elements of the area in terms of historical heritage which can be attractive in creating a mysterious landscape to provide a memorable experience to visitors (Perez-Aranda et al., 2015). Remoteness refers to an area that possess geographical inaccessibility (Caffyn and Prosser, 1998). Tranquillity relates to remoteness and naturalness but is mainly related to emotional reactions of peace, pleasantness and calmness (Watts and Pheasant, 2015). While, dark skies refers to protecting and preserving the night sky from artificial light pollution (IDA, 2019). In the context of protected areas and national parks, all these elements are mentioned within management plans, particularly remoteness and tranquillity, and can be a motivation to visit such landscapes (Haukeland et al., 2010). Therefore, they provide elements of attractiveness. As these elements can be interpretative and viewed as emotional or spiritual aspects, a weighted score of 0.5 was given as this value was appointed based on the interpretation of an urban dweller visiting rural AONB landscapes. Table 6.2 demonstrates the results of these built and other criteria as they applied to each of the AONBs.

Results show that Antrim Coast and Glens AONB came first with a cumulative score of 24.5. Consequently, there was only one element where this AONB did not record a score. Closely following behind this was Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB with a score of 23.5. Causeway Coast and Mourne AONBs received a cumulative score of

21.5 and 20.5, respectively, giving them a third and fourth ranking with regard to their attractiveness based on this criteria. The Ring of Gullion, Sperrin and Binevenagh AONBs received lower scores of 19.5, 18.5 and 17.5, respectively. Interestingly, when looking at their ranked order, only 4 points separated AONBs ranked third to seventh, showing there are only small margins between the AONBs when their attractiveness is based on built and other criteria. As with the natural criteria, Lagan Valley AONB ranked last with the lowest score of 14.5. One explanation here could be its size, but then an equally small AONB (Causeway Coast) scored much higher. One factor could be its location of being in close proximity to built-up urban areas.

Similar to the natural criteria, measuring some of the features individually (e.g. isolated farmhouse/farmsteads) would not provide a high level of attractiveness or visitor motivation but when these elements are combined with other built features can add an overall equivalent value to the attractiveness of the destination. As such, historic-cultural heritage provides places of interest that when quantified can be tangible and aid strategic development decisions (Morozov and Morozov, 2018). Moreover, the historic-cultural heritage features can be interlinked with the results of the other elements. For instance, castles can enhance the element of legends or myths, while historic gardens can give a sense of tranquillity to that environment. Furthermore, these other features are interconnected to the natural criteria. Of these other features, Lagan Valley had the lowest score mainly due to its urban location situated close to Belfast city. The largest AONBs by size performed the best with these elements as these areas possess mountainous terrain with community dwellings situated mainly to the boundaries of the AONBs. Finally, all the AONBs contain an element of waymarked routes promoting some degree of accessibility which is acknowledged as an important attribute to destination attractiveness (Kim, 1998; Reitsamer et al., 2016).

Table 6.2: 'Built and other' attractiveness criteria

<i>Criteria 2: Built and other</i>		Antrim Coast and Glens	Binevenagh	Causeway Coast	Lagan Valley	Mourne	Ring of Gullion	Sperrin	Strangford and Lecale
<i>Historic-cultural heritage = 2</i>	Castle (built or ruins)	2		2		2	2		2
	Historic monuments/sites	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Historic estates/gardens	2	2		2				2
	Churches (built or ruins)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Ancient graveyards/standing stones	2	2		2	2	2	2	2
	Notable old mills			2					2
	Isolated farmhouses/farmsteads	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Quarries (disused/developed on)	2		2		2	2	2	
	Sheltered/small harbours	2		2		2			2
	Dry walls/traditional hedgerows	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Distinctive/scattered settlements	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Hill fort	2	2	2			2	2	2	
<i>Other = 0.5</i>	Waymarked routes	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Legends and myths element	0.5	0.5	0.5		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Remoteness element	0.5				0.5		0.5	
	Tranquillity element	0.5	0.5	0.5		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Dark skies element	0.5				0.5		0.5	
Total:		24.5	17.5	21.5	14.5	20.5	19.5	18.5	23.5

6.2.3 Tourism attractions criteria

When looking at attractiveness of a destination, it is advisable to consider the tourism environment that has been either built or developed for visitors (Page, 2015). To identify the presence of tourism attraction within AONB boundaries, this researcher utilised the latest Tourism Northern Ireland visitor survey, recording the number of attractions and numbers who had visited them. Table 6.3 shows these results as they applied to each AONB.

As part of this criteria, attractions had to be located within the AONB boundaries to qualify, and given a weighted score of 2. It was deemed to give this criteria a higher individual weighted score as many of the attractions comprise of both natural and cultural features, and combined are places of interest to visitors. As such, 15 attraction sites were located within Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB producing a score of 30. Three AONBs tied with the presence of 7 attractions within their boundaries giving them each a cumulative score of 14. Interestingly, these top four based on having existing tourism attractions present are the four largest AONBs in Northern Ireland. Therefore, size played a role here in how this criterion scored. Only one AONB, namely the Ring of Gullion AONB failed to score based on existing tourism attraction presence as the criterion.

Table 6.3: 'Tourism attractions' attractiveness criteria

<i>Criteria 3: Tourism attractions</i>		Antrim Coast and Glens	Binevenagh	Causeway Coast	Lagan Valley	Mourne	Ring of Gullion	Sperrin	Strangford and Lecale
<i>Tourism Survey = 2</i>	Visitor sites	14	6	8	4	14		14	30
<i>*Tourism numbers = 0-5</i>	Visitor numbers	2	2	5	2	1		2	3
<i>WHS = 5</i>	Presence of WHS status			5					
	Total:	16	8	18	6	15	0	16	33

*Visitor numbers categories:

1 = 1 – 99,999

2 = 100,000 – 499,999

3 = 500,000 – 999,999

4 = 1,000,000 – 1,499,999

5 = 1,500,000 +

Existing tourism attractions were also scored on the number of visitors they received. It was important to not only measure the presence of tourism but also the extent to the size of that presence. To do this, a scaling factor was applied to all attractions and ranked according to the most recent visitation numbers as listed in the Tourism Northern Ireland visitor attractions survey. The highest value of 5 was given to any attraction that had received over 1.5 million visitors, and the lowest score of 1 for those that had received less than 100,000 visitors. Table 6.3 shows the breakdown of visitation for attractions given scores of 2, 3 and 4. The most common score based on visitor numbers was that of 2, with 4 AONBs welcoming between 100,000 and 499,999 visitors to their tourism attractions; Antrim Coast and Glens AONB (7 attractions) and Binevenagh AONB (3 attractions), Lagan Valley and Sperrin AONBs (2 attractions). The Causeway Coast AONB was the only one that scored 5 given the presence of the Giant's Causeway WHS and other leading tourism attractions within its boundaries. While Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB contained the highest number of tourism attractions, but combined visitation levels were lower which resulted in receiving a score of 3.

A third element was added to the 'tourism attractions' criterion, namely the presence of a WHS being located within an AONBs boundary. Scholarly literature has acknowledged that an influencing link exists between UNESCO WHS recognition and tourism attractiveness of destination regions (Patuelli et al., 2013; Su and Lin, 2014; Canale et al., 2019). It has been recognised that the presence of key archaeological and historical sites contribute to a destination's cultural attractiveness (Morozov and Morozov, 2018). In light of that, a decision was taken to add this element into the overall mix of measurement of how attractive AONBs were from a tourism perspective. The importance of such a unique and exclusive attraction is such that a decision was taken for it to be of equal value to the highest score (#5) that was assigned to the combined highest tourism visitation within an AONB. This added criterion benefitted the overall score for the Causeway Coast AONB alone as the Giant's Causeway is the only WHS that is present across the Northern Ireland landscape and is found within that AONBs boundary, combined with world-leading tourism attractions that receive over 1.5 million visitors per year. Moreover, the Giant's Causeway is one of only two natural WHSs recognised across both the UK and Ireland; natural WHS sites are significantly rarer with only 213 worldwide compared to 869 cultural sites and 39 mixed

sites (UNESCO, 2020). It was therefore recognised by this researcher that the Giant's Causeway WHS helps promote both natural attractivity whilst also offering an element of cultural and historical identity to the AONB region in question. It should also be pointed out that this WHS has helped shape the brand identity of Northern Ireland's tourism development over recent decades; in fact the hexagonal columns have featured as part of the logo for the national tourism body over the years since it was inscribed with WHS status in the early 1980s.

When all the aspects of 'tourism attractiveness' were combined, the Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB received the highest score (33); considerably more than many of the other AONBs across Northern Ireland. One possible reason to explain this outcome is the presence of a tourism trail that takes in lots of smaller tourism attractions with shorter dwell time. Another reason could be the decision in the past to merge two AONBs into one larger unit that takes in the shoreline region of Strangford Lough; one of the largest for Northern Ireland. The second ranked AONB was Causeway Coast (cumulative score of 18), followed closely by Antrim Coast and Sperrins (each received a score of 16). The area considered previously as a potential national park (Mournes AONB) only scored 15 when the presence of existing tourism attraction is measured. Smaller AONBs such as Lagan Valley and Binevenagh with potentially less attractions existing within them scored the lowest, 8 and 6, respectively.

6.2.4 Overall attractiveness results

The overall results based on attractiveness are the combination of natural, built and tourism attractions criteria as discussed previously. These final scores show that Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB recorded the highest attractiveness score (78.5); displaying attractivity across natural, built and tourism subcategories; the latter category helping the region gain top position. The second ranked AONB was the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB (cumulative score of 67) as it showed strong levels of attractivity across all three categories; it actually outperformed all AONBs when only natural and built criteria are factored in. In third and fourth place were Causeway Coast and Mourne AONBs, with scores of 63 and 62, respectively. The remaining four AONBs recorded scores that were considerably lower and as a result could easily be

eliminated from the next stage of this research. The final combined cumulative scores for each AONB are illustrated in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Overall attractiveness of AONBs

<i>AONB</i>	<i>Criteria 1 Natural</i>	<i>Criteria 2 Built and Other</i>	<i>Criteria 3 Attraction</i>	Overall Total
<i>Antrim Coast and Glens</i>	26.5	24.5	16	67
<i>Binevenagh</i>	22	17.5	8	47.5
<i>Causeway Coast</i>	23.5	21.5	18	63
<i>Lagan Valley</i>	10	14.5	6	30.5
<i>Mourne</i>	26.5	20.5	15	62
<i>Ring of Gullion</i>	14.5	19.5	0	34
<i>Sperrin</i>	14.5	18.5	16	49
<i>Strangford and Lecale</i>	22	23.5	33	78.5

From the overall attractiveness, it is evident that size does play somewhat of a role to how an AONB scored against certain criteria. However, this point needs to be made with a degree of caution as the Causeway Coast is a much smaller AONB compared to Mourne AONB; the former receiving the third highest cumulative score.

In terms of inbound tourism, locations are no longer distinguished by natural, cultural and ecological or environmental resources, but are a product of an overall appeal of these three elements (Buhalis, 2000). Therefore, the measurement of each AONBs attributes, as described above, has enabled an inventory of resources to be quantified against criteria to measure tangible attractiveness and therefore provide an end result of establishing an overall product appeal value to place. Furthermore, accessibility has been stated as an attractive quality of a destination which encourages visitors to spend more time and possibly form an attachment (Kim, 1998; Henkel et al., 2006; Reitsamer et al., 2016). Interestingly, the top four ranked AONBs are all quickly accessible from Northern Ireland's two main airports in Belfast and major road links run through these regions thereby making them accessible by private car or via public transport.

The above named 'measurement' exercise was necessary in order to reduce the number of AONB candidate sites to a manageable level for the next stage of data collection which would involve in-depth interviews with the managers of these sites. A decision was taken at the start by this researcher that only 3 possible candidate sites would be taken forward to this next stage of data collection. The scorecard revealed the top three but also helped to eliminate the Mourne AONB (ranked in 4th place) as this region has been considered in the past for national park status and was rejected; this researcher was of the opinion that another research exercise that involved this AONB would probably result in the same outcome. The fact that it was ranked fourth, justifies why it was removed from consideration as data collection would from now on only involve managers and stakeholders associated with the top 3 ranked AONBs according to their attractiveness score.

Prior to presenting the findings from the in-depth interviews of AONB managers for the top 3 areas, the next section offers the reader valuable contextual information and background content on each of these candidate sites.

6.3 DESCRIPTION OF CANDIDATE AONB SITES

Attention in this section now shifts to provide a brief description of the top three candidate AONBs showcased as possessing attractiveness values worthy of national park status. Description emphasises the distinct features of each AONB which is accompanied by photographic support to help visually exemplify the natural beauty and unique characteristics of these special areas.

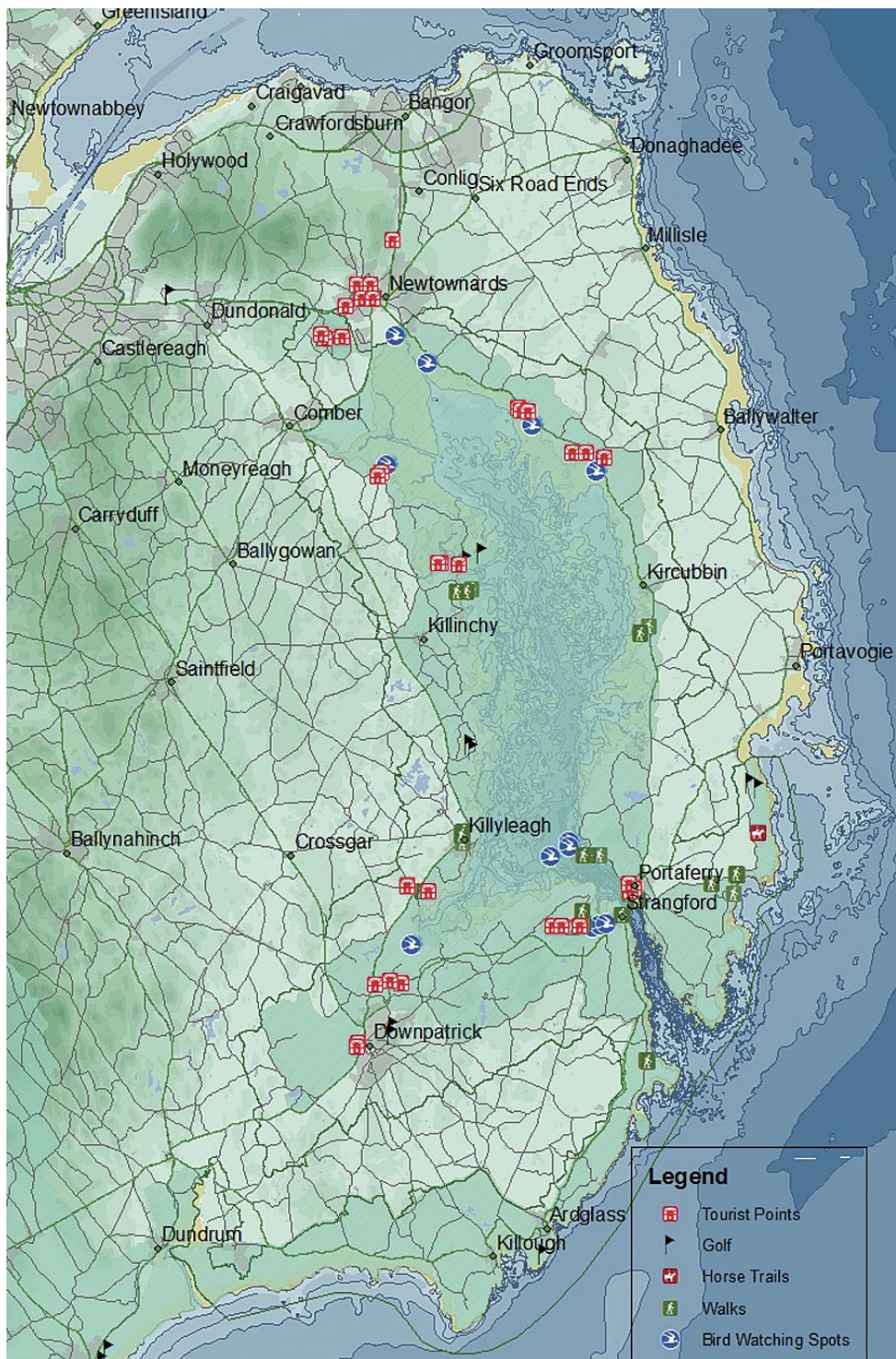
6.3.1 Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB

Historically, Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB were two separate areas with Strangford Lough AONB designated in 1972 and Lecale AONB designated in 1967, before being merged together in 2010. Intriguingly, the AONB shares a small boundary line with the Mourne AONB at Dundrum Bay which comprises of an extensive sand dune system. Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB is located in County Down of Northern Ireland and is a coastal area encompassing one of the largest shallow sea in-lets in the British Isles, covering an area of 150km² and is approximately 30 kms

long, meaning it is nearly completely enclosed by the Ards Peninsula (SLLP, 2018a). Figure 6.1 shows a map of Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB. The lough is regarded as one of the most environmentally important areas in Northern Ireland. Strangford Lough was Northern Ireland's first Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), formerly known as a Marine Nature Reserve (MNR). Additionally, the lough is recognised internationally for its marine biodiversity and environmental importance including designations such as Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EU Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive and Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar) (SLLP, 2018b). The whole of Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB coastline and certain inland areas are designated Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs). Furthermore, the AONB features a number of National Nature Reserves (NNRs). The magnitude of designations in this particular AONB demonstrates the ecological significance of the lough and its surrounding landscape. This mix of ecological integrity spaces alone makes it an area worthy of national park status, clearing meeting the first mandate required of national park regions.

The landscape and seascape of this particular AONB showcases Northern Ireland's glacial history with an abundance of drumlins and islets with many submerged during high tide (see Figure 6.2). Distinctive landscape characteristics that make up Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB include raised sandy beaches and bays, saltmarsh, extensive mudflats, headlands, natural rocky harbours, river valleys and surrounding low hills which meet the Mourne mountains. The land boasts very fertile soil resulting in this area of County Down being the most valuable and prolific agricultural land in Ulster. This diverse environment in turn creates a wealth of biodiversity and wildlife including marine life. Strangford Lough possesses thousands of different marine species including octopus, eels, muscles, seals and an array of fish species (SLLP, 2018c). One of the most important and spectacular sights is the influx of overwintering birds, particularly from Arctic Canada and Eastern Europe, every autumn to feast on the mudflats. Many other migratory birds arrive to nest on the islands during the spring and summer months, including some species from the Antarctic. Arguably, Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB is one of Northern Ireland's most substantial spaces that encapsulates the interaction between land and water.

Figure 6.1: Map of Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB



Source: ESRI (2013).

Figure 6.2: Photo of Strangford Lough

Source: Armstrong (2020)

Figure 6.3: Photo of Castle Ward

Source: Allan and Fanfan (2020)

The cultural and built heritage of the AONB hosts the account of Viking invaders, Anglo-Normans invaders and the arrival of Saint Patrick which resulted in the creation of Ireland's first Christian church at Saul in Downpatrick (SLLP, 2018d). The Christianity legacy spread from here creating a profusion of monastic churches and sites. In addition, it is believed that Saint Patrick was buried in Downpatrick which enabled the Saint Patrick's Trial to be created as part of the area's historical heritage. The AONB contains a number of small settlements which line the coastline and retain interesting maritime features and buildings. Across the landscape, there are grand estates (see Figure 6.3), castles, lighthouses and towers which showcase the remarkable heritage of the AONB which are now places of interest for domestic and international visitors alike.

6.3.2 Antrim Coast and Glens AONB

Designated in 1988, Antrim Coast and Glens AONB is one of the oldest and second largest AONBs in Northern Ireland. The AONB is a coastal and mountainous area which predominantly includes the whole of County Antrim's coastline and the Antrim Plateau which at its highest point is over 500 metres above sea level (1,600 feet) (CCGHT, 2019a). The area also comprises Rathlin Island which is the only inhabited

offshore island in Northern Ireland. Figure 6.4 shows a map of Antrim Coast and Glens AONB. Similar to Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB, this particular AONB encompasses many other protected area designations, including ASSIs and NNRs. However, much of the biodiversity and environmental importance in terms of designations given are for different features to that of Strangford such as blanket bogs, wetlands, peatlands and habitats for marine and birdlife on Rathlin Island.

The geological features of the AONB showcases the black basalt, red sandstone and white limestone from massive lava flow and the retreatment of glaciers from the last ice age (CCGHT, 2019b). As a result, the most distinguishing landscape features are the 'Nine Glens of Antrim' which are deep valleys which cut the Antrim Plateau by fast flowing rivers to create a dramatic coastal headlands and cliffs (see Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.6). Consequently, the AONB's coastline is regarded as the most beautiful, scenic and picturesque in Northern Ireland. Other distinctive landscape characteristics include gentle bays and sandy beaches, rolling hills, waterfalls and moorlands. Uniquely, the landscape of the AONB demonstrates a patchwork of dry stone wall and hedgerows of small fields, predominantly used for livestock farming. Additionally, a distinctive landmark of the AONB is Slemish Mountain which dramatically rises above miles of the surrounding plain and is the central core of an extinct volcano. Historically, it is believed to be Saint Patrick's first Irish home and as a shepherd tended to his sheep. To this day, celebrations and a pilgrimage is held on top of the mountain every Saint Patrick's Day.

Antrim Coast and Glens AONB boasts a long history of cultural and built heritage, dating back to Mesolithic times (7000-4000BC). This is showcased through an array of tombs and promontory forts dotted across the area. The AONB also holds a close association to Scotland which influenced place names, language, dance and music across this area (CCGHT, 2019c). Accordingly, castles were built along the coastline which to this day still stand or ruins remain, while certain hilled areas would be the settings for battles between these fortress neighbours. The Scottish influence steered the built heritage of small villages scattered along the coastline which possess many listed and historic buildings. The built heritage demonstrates a distinctive architecture and as a result the majority of these villages are 'Conservation Areas' designated by the Department of the Environment in the late 1970s and 1980s (Galway and

Figure 6.5: Photo of Antrim coastline

Source: Author.

Figure 6.6: Photo of Glenariff

Source: Author.

The discussion above again illustrates the mix of ecological uniqueness and as well as interesting places for visitation and so justifies it as a worthy candidate site for national park consideration. Again, there are qualities present across this AONB that embrace both national park mandates.

6.3.3 Causeway Coast AONB

The Causeway Coast AONB was designated in 1989 and can be viewed as a small extension to the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB as they share a short boundary in the vicinity of the town of Ballycastle. Consequentially, these two AONBs are located in close proximity to each other, and have similar landscape and heritage attributes. As a result, the areas are managed alongside the Binevenagh AONB (not taken forward here in this research for national park status consideration) under one overall AONB management body. Therefore, if a proposed national park proved best suited in either of these areas, there could be the opportunity to create one national park to cover all three AONBs under one national park authority. This would be comparable to

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park which covers four separate distinct sections under one national park authority.

The Causeway Coast AONB consists of a coastal area covering 18 miles of the north coast. Similar to Antrim Coast and Glens AONB, it encompasses spectacular and dramatic coastal headlands and cliffs. Figure 6.7 illustrates the narrow coastline of Causeway Coast AONB. Again, similar to the previous two AONBs, Causeway Coast AONB contains other protected areas designations including ASSIs, NNRs, SACs and a SPA. This national and international importance is primarily to protect the threatened habitats and vegetation on the cliff tops and the extensive sand dune systems in the area, while the SPA covers Sheep Island for its importance to overwintering, migratory and breeding birds including cormorants (CCGHT, 2019d).

Figure 6.7: Map of Causeway Coast AONB



Source: CCGHT (2010).

Geological heritage of this AONB showcases the uniqueness of the landscape including tertiary basalts and white limestone where fossils can be found. Significantly, the Giant's Causeway WHS is located within this AONB and is regarded as Northern Ireland's most important geological site. The site lies at the edge of the basalt cliffs and Antrim Plateau and is famous for its hexagonal columns (see Figure 6.8). As Causeway Coast AONB is a relatively narrow area, the main distinctive characteristics are the headlands, sandy beaches with dune land systems and small bays. Other features of the landscape include small rocky harbours, woodland and mixed farmland. However, the exposure of the coast creates a harsh environment resulting in trees only surviving on sheltered areas and further inland, while fertile soils for farming can vary between further inland and to the very edge of the cliffs. Additionally, this

environment has created a vast array of biodiversity with many rare species living in the area which boosts national and international importance of the area.

Figure 6.8: Photo of Giant's Causeway



Source: Author.

Figure 6.9: Photo of Ballintoy Harbour



Source: Author.

Similar to the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB, the history of the Causeway area dates back to the Mesolithic era and the influence from Scotland. Therefore, the AONB contains castle ruins and a wealth of archaeological heritage representing the built heritage of the past. Moreover, the natural landscape of the coastline lead to Viking raids and the destruction of many shipwrecks including the Girona which was part of the Spanish Armada and to this day legends, myths and festival events are held to celebrate the maritime history of the Causeway Coast (CCGHT, 2019e). Furthermore, the living and built heritage has influenced the places of interests across the AONB such as Bushmills village which operates the famous 'Old Bushmills Whiskey' distillery. The area also encompasses picturesque small rocky harbours which are dotted around the coastline including Ballintoy Harbour (see Figure 6.9) and Carrick-a-rede. Carrick-a-rede harbour is based on a tiny island which has a rope bridge linking to the mainland originally built by salmon fishermen. It is now disused, however Carrick-a-rede rope bridge is now one of the major tourist attractions in Northern

Ireland. A number of Game of Thrones locations (e.g. Ballintoy Harbour) are also found across this region; adding to the existing tourism appeal centred around natural and cultural heritage. Combined, the mix of both natural scenery and its uniqueness in terms of special protected designation along with established tourism attractions once again illustrates the suitability of this small AONB for national park consideration.

Having provided the necessary background to the three candidate sites, the next section shifts to the results and discussion of in-depths interviews held with the respective AONB management bodies. As documented previously, two of these three candidate AONBs are run by the same management body and so when interviewed their responses applied across both; as such Causeway Coast and Antrim Coast and Glens AONBs are taken as one area in these discussions that now follow.

6.4 AONB MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

This section illustrates the findings relating to the views of managers with regard to the criteria used to measure AONB attractiveness, stakeholder engagement, their stance on national park status for their AONB, their views on promoting tourism more and if other designations are more suitable for their region. Each are discussed in turn commencing with their views on the attractiveness measurement and scaling exercise that helped to reduce the candidate sites down to the best three.

6.4.1 Attractiveness criteria feedback

As the attractiveness criteria was explicitly developed for this research and adapted from attribute categories in scholarly literature, it was imperative to allow the AONB managers the opportunity to understand the ranking results and gain their feedback. Each manager expressed interest in the results and how their AONB ranked highly in attractiveness levels. Managers were asked if they felt the criteria was a fair way to measure attractiveness. All three Antrim and Causeway (AC) AONB managers and the Strangford Lough and Lecale (SLL) AONB manager agreed the criteria was a good starting point to measuring attractiveness. Response of AC1 echoed their initial thoughts when they stated *“initially yes because you’re covering built natural heritage”* regarding criteria 1 (natural) and criteria 2 (built and other). However, this respondent

questioned quantifiability and validity of culture and criteria 3 (tourism attractions) as the following excerpt highlights:

“Maybe the cultural sides of it are a bit too intangible...I see here you’ve given a score to the number of visitors, but I don’t necessarily think that the number of visitors is a fair reflection of the area’s attractiveness or potential given the different sizes of the areas, the different accessibility...the visitor numbers are extremely high here [referring to Causeway Coast AONB], Antrim Coast and Glens you have the coastal road which there’s no visitor numbers for specifically, so it would be very hard to track that in some ways” (AC1).

However, as reflected in Chapter 4 (section 4.6.1), this respondent was aware that the Tourism Northern Ireland survey has limitations regarding precise visitor numbers; they can only record what information individual attractions provide them, and so this respondent acknowledged that criteria 3 (tourism attractions) can only be as accurate as the data available. However, from the results of how criteria 3 was scored, there was only 2 points of difference between the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and Causeway Coast AONB demonstrating that the size of these areas is irrelevant. Furthermore, both AONBs experience the same level of accessibility in terms of road links and public transport with the Causeway Coastal Route running through both AONBs.

Another manager in the same management body was unsure of the fairness of using tourist numbers to measure attractivity, stating the following:

“I don’t think its major attractiveness to look at how many visitors are going to an area...like the Giants Causeway World Heritage Site is going to like throw Causeway Coast...and I mean is it fair to them to balance to something like Antrim Coast and Glens?” (AC2).

This statement highlighted the possible unfairness of using a measure that involves existing tourism interest in an area as tourist numbers and the presence of a WHS in one AONB conveys a clear advantage over other AONBs. Furthermore, the same

manager raised a concern over the actual attractiveness of the WHS as the following statement illustrates:

“...raises the question of like overtourism so it’s interesting the metrics for attractiveness. You know you’re viewing more visitor figures as a positive towards attractiveness when actually at the Giants Causeway it’s got such a high density of visitors it’s actually constitutes overtourism...it’s quite unsustainable...so it’s actually taking away the World Heritage Site designation, its arguably taking away from the AONB” (AC2).

This concern of overtourism is imperative to comprehend particularly with regard to the future sustainability of the site. However, WHS recognition is a prestigious status and presents a clear link to tourism attractiveness (Patuelli et al., 2013; Su and Lin, 2014; Canale et al., 2019). Therefore, this status must be accredited within the criteria that were used to measure attractivity. Although, this criticism by the managers is justifiable and showcases that the tourism attraction criterion for attractivity has scope to be adjusted for future use to increase its validity and robustness as an element in determining a region’s overall attractivity.

Respondents AC1 and AC3 articulated that listed buildings and artisan businesses that have been converted into tourist attractions can contribute to tourism numbers and AONB attractiveness which should be kept in mind if the criteria were to be modified. In addition, the attribute of communities and settlements was felt by all managers to be missing from the attractiveness criteria. One manager confirmed that overall the criteria was reasonable but expressed the need for community as the following excerpt suggests:

“The only thing I don’t see in there is people...I don’t see communities...obviously community and people is a huge part of any national park” (SLL1).

Whilst, manager AC1 suggested the following addition to the criteria:

“Another thing I would put in here is conservation areas. The towns are now conservation areas...that would tell you a lot about the built cause that again effects the planning so that might be something to put in that’s quantifiable” (AC1).

All these suggestions from the AONB managers for future adaptations to the criteria were welcomed, particularly regarding the inclusion of communities as they have the ability to enhance the natural and experiential resources, reflect local culture and increase a tourists’ emotional and behavioural response to a region (Kim et al., 2012; Reitsamer et al., 2016). Therefore, local communities could be included as put of criteria 2 (built and other) or criteria 3 (tourism attractions) as an attractivity attribute if this exercise was to be replicated elsewhere by future researchers.

6.4.2 Stakeholder engagement

Attention now shifts to examine the engagement of stakeholders including those who are challenging to engage with or difficult to move from fixed positions against wider management preference. As mentioned in the critique of scholarly literature in Chapter 3 and in the in-depth interview results in Chapter 5, engagement plays a major role in NRM settings including protected area designations. Similarly to the UK national parks, the AONB teams engage with stakeholders through annual management forums, one-to-one meetings, public consultations, projects, informal talks and community information days. All managers mentioned the importance of how communication with stakeholders is constant, for instance AC3 stated:

“we never work solely so even through public consultations we work with stakeholders or we’re meeting with stakeholders all the time, your phone, email...it’s constant” (AC3).

This communication was highlighted as being essential to help build relationships with stakeholders, as the following excerpt showcases:

“It’s very important for the officers...to have a personal relationship with these people as much as you can have, obviously given staff issues” (SLL1).

The issue of staffing and resourcing levels was emphasised by both management teams as being a major restriction to engaging more with stakeholders whilst working effectively as a team on all other administrative tasks and projects. Consequently, these issues interlink to funding issues for AONBs in Northern Ireland which in turn compels and encourages the teams to work in partnership with stakeholders and funders, as the following statement illustrates:

“any work we do is always in partnership...it’s very rare we can solely fund a project. We don’t own or operate any land, so we have to work in partnership...we’re always working in partnership with everyone and again that’s reflected in the fact that we have a mosaic of funding so no one funder funds us 100 percent for anything.” (AC1).

As shown in the results of Chapter 5, working in partnership with an array of stakeholders is a form of best practice within protected area settings. However, the AONB teams are in a unique position in that they act as secretariats and coordinators between stakeholders and funders with no statutory powers of their own. Moreover, this partnership approach, particularly with funders, connects to the idea that working in partnership is becoming a mandatory and legal requirement (Miller and Ahmad, 2000; Dowling et al., 2004). This is not to say that these partnerships are ineffective or unsuccessful in their approach, though it could be seen that the management teams in a sense have their hands tied behind their back with regards to what control or voice they possess to influence strategies or policies that directly impact the AONBs. However, AC1 highlighted that their management body tends to steer away from responding and contributing to policy consultation opportunities. This could mainly be due to their positioning as coordinators to enable them to work successfully with local landowners and stakeholders.

In relation to the most engaging stakeholders, Councils, Governmental Departments, Tourism Northern Ireland and local interest groups were all mentioned. The engagement with local interest and community groups is largely down to large projects organised to increase community engagement. AC2 underlined how this was difficult for many years with a level of reluctance from the groups but this is now starting to improve with community involvement becoming a priority for AONBs in Northern

Ireland. Alternatively, SSL1 informed that engagement levels from different stakeholders was highly dependent on any issue of controversy at any given time and highlighted the following:

“It’s usually a case of whether people feel that something is going to affect their livelihoods or where they live is often the reason why they become more engaged” (SLL1).

Therefore, when consulting on the topic of national parks which can be controversial, stakeholders which do not engage frequently with AONB events may feel the need to be more engaged to express their livelihood concerns.

All the managers illustrated that they work well with landowners and farmers but also recognised that in some cases it is very challenging. The management team for Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and Causeway Coast AONB highlighted that their relationships with landowners and farmers are usually successful as they are a *“friendly face that is not a government employee”* (AC1). Though, AC1 also acknowledged that sometimes engagement with certain stakeholders can be challenging as this can be down to personality clashes and groups falling in and out of momentum. Personality traits is reflective in scholarly thinking as it can cause conflicts, create toxic relationships between individuals or groups and have an impact on healthy working partnerships (De Jong et al., 2013; Austin et al., 2016; Robbins and Judge, 2019). Furthermore, generally another challenge to trying to engage stakeholders is time restraints. AC3 pointed out that the restructuring of Northern Ireland’s Councils resulted in less people being employed but the same amount of work to do and thus having a direct impact on people having less time to attend events and meetings. This was articulated further by AC1 highlighting that many farmers are not full time farmers as they operate private businesses also, therefore they have less time for engagement opportunities with this stakeholder group.

Both AONB management teams were asked if they have experienced fixed positions from any particular stakeholders which were challenging to move into a position of compromise. All respondents emphasised that this would be dependent upon certain issues at any given time and at that moment there was no major controversial issues.

The following response highlights the standpoint that local people that rely on the area tend to possess the most concern:

“those people who still make a livelihood from the lough...whether it be people involved in renewable energy technology or fishing, you know those aquaculture [people], those are the ones who are going to have the most, I won't say legitimate, but certainly they would have the most pressing concerns at any one time” (SLL1).

The dependency on land or water for livelihood in any industry reinforces the idea that local communities, landowners and stakeholders, particularly in the UK, have the largest stake with legitimate interests and values and as a result hold the highest stakeholder power (Mannetti et al., 2019). Additionally, this power was acknowledged in terms of compromising ability as is reflected with the following statement:

“Your biggest challenge is landowners because if a Department decides they want a national park everyone within that Department has to follow the Department mandate....so if you get it mandated at the highest level then there's no compromise...but private landowners don't have to [compromise]” (AC1).

In turn, this creates a challenge where if Governmental Departments agree a mandate for national park status, local stakeholders and landowners will feel the concept is a governmental enforcement, and so it was, therefore, pertinent to understand the stance that AONB management took regarding national park status.

6.4.3 Stance on national park status

It is evident from scholarly literature that NRM projects characteristically require support from local communities, particularly when such projects impact livelihoods. The history of Northern Ireland attempting to designate a national park is still a controversial issue from the AONB management bodies perspective. Both teams stated that they were not in the position to support or oppose the idea and that this is dependent upon the views of stakeholders and communities wants and needs.

Furthermore, it was informed that historically the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB had previously looked into national park status by having discussions with stakeholders during the national park legacy in the early 2010s. Currently, Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and Causeway Coast AONB management team are adamant that they no longer are aiming for national park status as the following excerpt showcases:

“we are in a difficult position with ‘national park’ and it was one of our objectives and as a Trust when we had eleven objectives...that would’ve been 2010...it’s no longer one of our objectives...so therefore we’ll run with this [AONB status] and we’ll use this as our sort of champion from the natural environment and recreation within it. And this in itself is a struggle. So I guess for us as a Trust we are not keen to be seen promoting national parks because the people of our AONB have rejected them” (AC1).

In addition to this, AC1 highlighted that the word ‘park’ has typically invoked a negative reaction from stakeholders as they have previously attempted to investigate other designations such as ‘Geopark’. Furthermore, SLL1 suggested that Strangford and Lecale AONB has close proximity to the Mourne AONB and historically opposition to the national park designation in the area brings a setback to the national park debate.

Both management teams acknowledged that the topic of a national park is a complex issue due to the number of small size farms and various landowners. SLL1 highlighted this issue by stating the following:

“The big issue is farmers and landholding and the belief that they will lose their rights to develop their land as they wish...I strongly suspect that if national park status were to come in some people would continue to take an entrenched position and in opposition to it. I think a lot of people would eventually support it...” (SLL1).

This manager went on to suggest that future generations may have a willingness to buy into the idea of national park if it is a ‘win’ to them regarding sustainable tourism and valuing their heritage. Moreover, SLL1 suggested that there is a future possibility

that planning permissions will not be the major issue with the protection of jobs and the local economy being the buy-in.

In addition, one manager highlighted that people do have a willingness to listen but are aware that people do not feel that the Government side of the audience are willing to listen. In turn, creating entrenched positions and conflicts with an unwillingness to negotiate or compromise. This positioning can be difficult to overcome and reflects McElroy and Mills (2000) stakeholder positions with stakeholders being in passive or active opposition due to the approach taken by Government. Stakeholders versus government can be a damaging relationship which may create hostility towards finding common ground. Therefore, the 'positions of interest' pyramid adapted by Ritchie (2000) (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.7) would position the two triangles far apart and create a substantial gap between the two. Furthermore, the AONB teams highlighted that many people do not fully understand enough on what a national park is, and do not understand the legislative set up behind their establishment. Therefore, this lack of understanding needs educational investment but also open communication where stakeholders are open-minded before taking entrenched positions.

Finally, each AONB manager was questioned whether they were surprised that Northern Ireland was the only region in the UK and Ireland to not have a national park. Three of the four managers reflected that they were not surprised by this scenario and felt that the fact the region had AONBs at all was somewhat astonishing. AC1 expressed that they were slightly surprised that a national park was not established post-war but unsurprised it has not been implemented since then. However, SLL1 articulated some surprise that the status was not been declared before now and expressed the following statement:

"I always think that the landscape is undervalued, and I think that's starting to change...there was more of an emphasis on having something like a Titanic Centre as the key thing but the development of access to the landscape and the increased interest that people now have in outdoor pursuits is a big asset too" (SLL1).

The point being made in this last statement is around the development of signature tourism built attractions. It was therefore important to ascertain management thinking around enhanced use and promotion of AONBs from a tourism perspective, which is the focus of the next subsection.

6.4.4 Tourism promotion

Tourism can be an imperative element of national parks in terms of their reputation, management and community livelihoods. In Northern Ireland, there can be a sense that the AONB status of areas is overlooked and many tourists may not even be aware they have been in such an area. Therefore, it was interesting to understand if the AONB management teams felt the areas were underpromoted from a tourism standpoint. SLL1 acknowledged that certain areas do receive more promotion compared to other areas which this excerpt highlights:

“Yeah [we are underpromoted]. I mean compared to say the Giant’s Causeway. Yes certainly. Yeah I think that the Councils and others are working hard to reverse that...there has been an effort to brand St. Patrick, but it doesn’t have the same appeal, I don’t think, as the Giant’s Causeway so therefore the marketing effort has to be slightly different, different approach” (SLL1).

Antrim Coast and Glens and Causeway Coast AONBs management team reiterated this further by stressing that the Binevenagh AONB which they also manage is severely underdeveloped which consequently leads to severe underpromotion of the area. AC1 flagged up that large initiatives result in a focus in one area for so many years to the detriment of other areas making it difficult for them to spread visitors and enhance sensible and sustainable tourism development. Butler and Boyd (2000) replicated these complexities of spreading visitors in a sustainable manner whilst developing protected landscapes for tourism. However, it is only in the past decade that Northern Ireland’s AONBs have set sustainability as a priority and it is only since 2019 that Tourism Northern Ireland set sustainability goals. The fact that the candidate AONB region possess within them a mix of unique and designated spaces means by default these regions are meeting some of the natural/environmental sustainability

goals. But if national park designation is not the preferred option to achieve a landscape that is sustainable, both in terms of ensuring ecological integrity as well as permitting use and facilitating sustainable livelihoods from the use (i.e. appropriate recreation and tourism types), do other designations offer that goal attainment?

6.4.5 Opinion on other designations

AONB status in the UK covers terrestrial landscape and therefore marine areas are typically given a different designation status. This is the case in Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB; the AONB covers the terrestrial landscape whilst the Lough itself is a marine nature reserve. SLL1 agreed that if the AONB was given national park status that this should include Strangford Lough which could be debated to be the first marine national park in the UK as this status is currently non-existent. The element of marine national parks was also discussed with the Antrim Coast and Glens and Causeway Coast AONBs management team. They highlighted that they now have their own marine division which is moving toward implementing more marine protected and conservation areas, known as MCZs, but otherwise do not know enough about marine protection currently to give an opinion on a marine national park offshore to their AONBs. However, the following statement indicates that the new marine division will be a vital Department to the AONBs team of marine environment:

“a new Department means there’s new understanding expiration designations of marine so therefore maybe using an old designation, old set up designations such as national park doesn’t reflect the modern context”
(AC1).

AC1 informed the researcher that their team has attempted to explore other designations across the three AONBs under their management. This included current investigations into a ‘Geopark’ for the combined Antrim Coast and Glens and Causeway Coast AONBs, and ‘Man and the Biosphere’ designation for Binevenagh AONB. It was highlighted that when investigations began regarding ‘Geopark’ that the word ‘park’ caused issues with committee stakeholders, but they found these people were willing to listen once they understood what the designation meant for the area and that it was a non-statutory and a non-planning policy designation. However, it was

emphasised that there are still challenges and such designations were purely investigative at this stage.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has exhibited the findings of the second objective for this research in a sequential format, drawing on maps and information of Northern Ireland's eight AONBs to score their level of 'attractiveness', as well as undertake in-depth interviews with those AONB management associated with scoring the highest values in terms of their attractiveness based on the scorecard that the researcher designed. The Antrim Coast and Glens AONB, Causeway Coast AONB, and Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB based on natural, built and tourism attractions criteria were found to have scored the highest in terms of their attractiveness and possible suitability as unique settings worthy of national park consideration. The interviews of managers shed interesting light on the utility of the scorecard as a tool that could be modified if taken forward and used by future researchers. The interview process also threw light on an array of topics including their support for a national park and their views as to the extent to which stakeholders are shown to offer compromise away from entrenched positions. AONB managers highlighted at the end of the interviews that an exercise of getting stakeholders around a table to discuss compromise and seeking common ground would be most challenging if practically very hard to establish and they stated they would not initiate the process in getting stakeholders together. Instead, they suggested a better course of action would be to undertake in-depth interviews across a set of different stakeholders and seek their views and possible willingness toward compromise. It is to this that the dissertation now turns in the next chapter to explore as the third objective sought to identify and assess stakeholder stance within the three candidate AONBs and the degree of movement they would be willing to take.

CHAPTER 7

RESEARCH FINDINGS – STAKEHOLDER POSITIONING

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Attention now shifts to the final set of results and analysis of the dissertation. This chapter presents the research findings for objective 3 which involved in-depth interviews with key stakeholders accompanied with the aid of a scoping position exercise to gauge the support or opposition to the concept of a national park in Northern Ireland. As previously highlighted in Chapter 4, these in-depth interviews focused on interest stakeholder groups, regionally and locally, found within the top three most attractive candidate AONBs for potential national park consideration. These areas include Antrim Coast and Glens AONB (ACG), Causeway Coast AONB (CC), and Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB (SLL). For the purpose of this chapter and to secure anonymity of the participants, each respondent is coded 'S' for stakeholder followed by a number. Section 7.2 presents findings on the different stakeholder groups and their positions and opinions they hold on national park establishment in Northern Ireland compared to the current AONB status the regions have been given. Section 7.3 outlines the degree to which stakeholders are willing to compromise to secure the varying mandates that are required of areas seeking to be established as national parks. Section 7.4 focuses specifically on the relationship stakeholders have with others. Finally, section 7.5 offers the views of stakeholders on the prospects of a national park being established in Northern Ireland.

7.2 POSITION ON NATIONAL PARK ESTABLISHMENT

The following section illustrates the findings on different stakeholders' stance regarding national park establishment in Northern Ireland; as well as their reasons and concerns for the stance taken. The section commences by illustrating the position held by stakeholders toward national park establishment against upgrading an existing AONB to a national park.

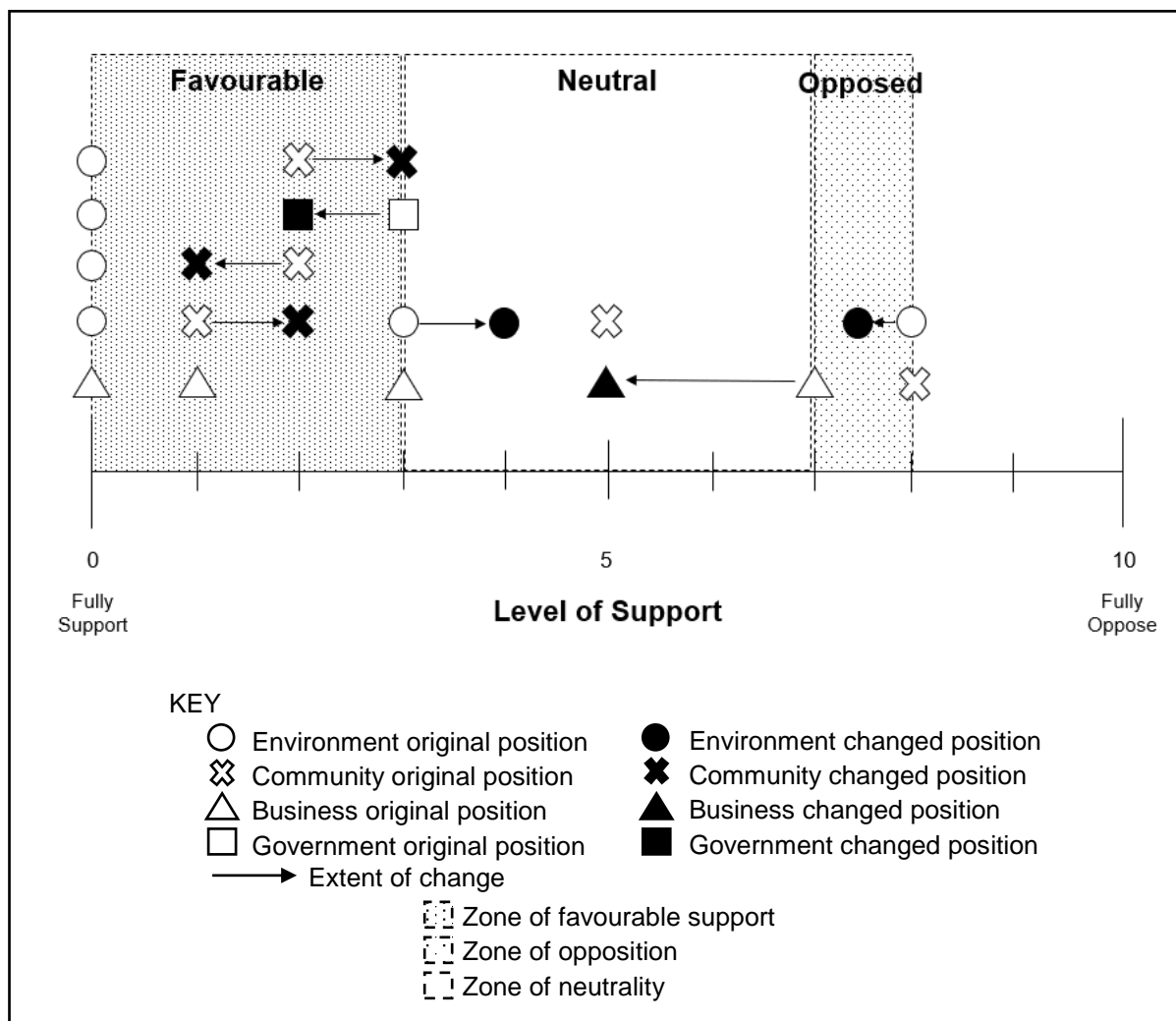
7.2.1 Northern Ireland compared to local AONB elevation

One of the central pillars of this research was to learn of stakeholders' stance on national park establishment in Northern Ireland, but also to learn if support or opposition existed regarding candidate AONBs being elevated to national park status which would directly impact on the livelihoods of local stakeholders. Of the 18 stakeholder responses, 16 completed the positioning exercise expressing their stance on national park designation. One of the two stakeholders who did not complete the positioning exercise stated that the local community group (S12) did not have a position on the matter and would struggle to find consensus amongst their members in order to state a collective stance on ACG being upgraded to a national park. Whilst, the other stakeholder (S01) stated that as a regional group they do not have an official input regarding the designation of a national park. However, S01 highlighted that they do consult within several 'Conservation Areas' based within AONBs and would welcome the idea if the additional protection aided historical architectural heritage.

Of the 16 stakeholders, 12 groups expressed interest in a national park in Northern Ireland and the idea of upgrading an AONB to higher status and therefore were fully or relatively supportive of the concept. In contrast, no stakeholders were fully opposed to the concept. However, 4 stakeholders positioned themselves in a neutral or relatively opposed stance. Figure 7.1 demonstrates the position of the 16 stakeholders on a national park in Northern Ireland compared to existing AONB designation. This comparative scale (fully support to fully oppose) showcases the movement, if any, of stakeholders. Of all the stakeholders, 9 (3 regional and 6 local) showed no willingness to move (illustrated by those stakeholders where no arrow is showing) with regard to the position they held on a national park in any area of Northern Ireland being established nor specifically on their respective AONB being evaluated to a national park. Figure 7.1 reveals a willingness of 7 of the stakeholders interviewed to change from their initial position across the scale. However, this movement is very limited with some participants only moving 0.5 or 1 increment along the scale either toward more support or more opposition. A business stakeholder associated with ACG AONB expressed the greatest willingness to move toward of a neutral ground position (2 increments across), suggesting a greater willingness to be more supportive of their AONB being given national park status. Appendix 6 maps out in detail each

stakeholder's position and movement associated with their codename (i.e. a business, community, environment, government stakeholder) and area (which AONB that they link to).

Figure 7.1: Original position and willingness of stakeholders to move regarding support or opposition toward national park establishment compared to the existing AONB designation



Interestingly when the positions taken by stakeholders by type are examined, the extent of change varied. The majority of environmental stakeholders were in full support of a national park; one fell on the margins of the 'favourable range' but one was clearly opposed with relatively limited movement (0.5 of an increment) in the direction of neutrality. Of the community stakeholders, the majority supported the concept of the national park, but one stakeholder took a neutral stance whereas another was very opposed to the idea of the region becoming a national park. As for

the business stakeholders, the majority interviewed were supportive with only one voicing opposition but when asked to consider compromise was willing to adopt a neutral stance. When all stakeholders are viewed together, what emerges is a wider level of support as opposed to opposition; this is clearly reflected in their positions as shown in Figure 7.1.

When examined at the scale of the individual AONB, an interesting pattern emerges; stakeholders in SLL and CC all exhibited a supportive view concerning the AONB being upgraded to national park status, the majority of stakeholders in ACG demonstrated a neutral or opposing position. At a wider regional scale, those stakeholders fully supported the establishment of a national park in Northern Ireland and elevation of an AONB to that higher status. Despite the moderately small sample size taken from each AONB, the initial analysis for this study demonstrates that the SLL and CC stakeholders are more in favour of national park creation in their area compared to those in ACG and confirms the assumption that environmental and business groups would be significantly in favour of the concept, while community groups would vary depending on their interests.

7.2.2 Reasonings and concerns surrounding national park creation

Alongside asking stakeholders to indicate their position across the fully support to fully oppose spectrum, during the interviews they were invited to give the reasoning behind the stance they had taken. Of those in support of the national park concept, many specified the importance of environmental protection as the foremost reason, as the following excerpt highlights:

“We would probably fully support it because it must be good for the environment” (S13).

Similarly, support arose from the perspective of greater protection of heritage, as expressed by the following statement:

“We see so many benefits of it and those benefits are everything from protection of the landscape and the cultural and the natural built heritage” (S02).

Whilst another stakeholder stated:

“We’re very interested in the protection of nature within the area...as well as the wildlife, you’ve got so much history” (S11a).

All these elements regarding natural landscape, biodiversity, heritage and cultural history were all mentioned by business, community, environment and government stakeholders. This was emphasised the most by S16, a local business based in SLL, who acknowledged they did not *“fully understand what a national park fully means”* but was in support of the establishment from an environmental perspective. However, this same stakeholder expressed the concern that if a national park led to a restriction on use, particularly for recreation, this would affect their business negatively resulting in a less supportive position towards their local AONB being elevated to national park status. This concern was echoed further in the following excerpt:

“if a national park status was to prevent outdoor recreation, if conservation was to win over recreation that we already have then we wouldn’t be supportive of it because we don’t want to lose anything that we already have but I think in this day in age there’s always solutions around those things” (S02).

This conflicting balance between use and conservation showcases the difficulties surrounding the national park mandates and attempting to meet the needs of all stakeholders with an array of different interests.

One of the main motives supporting national park establishment was linked to the tourism industry, as the following excerpt implies:

“The only reason I think you would have the parks [it] would be a seller in Northern Ireland from a tourism point of view” (S06).

Another stakeholder supported this further as follows:

“I would largely support the idea mainly for business reasons. I think it would provide more income with opportunities to expand my business. I could possibly create more employment” (S18).

This benefit from national parks was viewed as having the possibility of increasing tourism to local areas leading to better economic prospects:

“There was a factory that closed so a lot of people leave to go to work [elsewhere] and then there’s others who don’t have work. It seems that the most likely source of income would be tourism so bringing visitors in would be the most useful thing” (S03).

The connection between national parks, tourism and local communities has been well documented within scholarly literature (Butler and Boyd, 2000; Nepal, 2000; Eagles and McCool, 2002; Stone and Nyaupane, 2016). As a result, the stakeholder responses reinforce this interaction whilst also many endorse the impact the tourism industry would have on the local areas as a consequence from national park designation.

It was also acknowledged that the benefit of national park designation supported the underpinnings of ‘identity’. S02 recognised national park identity as a way to bring in tourists and highlighted the significance of the label to the Lake District, as the following excerpt indicates:

“When you’re thinking of going on your holiday around the water, you always think ‘oh I must go to the Lake District’, it’s a national park. Well there’s a reason it’s a national park, it’s a beautiful area, designated all the rest” (S02).

The stakeholder emphasised the natural beauty of many places of Northern Ireland, including many of the AONBs, which would benefit from national park status for not only brand identity, but also for quality of life and producing higher quality or

expectation with all initiatives undertaken in the park. A community stakeholder, S10, implied that the quality of life and identity of the Lake District National Park brings a “*nice, warm feeling*” and that “*something similar would be great*” for Northern Ireland. Additionally, S05 suggested that many visitors are unfamiliar with the AONB name and recognised that national park status from a tourist stance would be a good idea for international brand recognition. This labelling strengthens the perception that national parks are areas of attractiveness and help provide economic benefits to support local livelihoods (Palmer, 1999; Eagles, 2001; Weiler and Seidl, 2004).

Some other reasons given by stakeholders for their supportive positions included better education for visitors around wildlife and ecosystems, better coordination by all those involved in the national park, and better funding of resources. The following statement showcases the need for better coordination:

“They [national parks] seem to have a particular focus and obviously additional resources potentially and just something that would unify the area...there’s little pockets of everybody, lots of tiny little villages, everybody doing their own thing, and we think it would be good potential here [SLL] to bring in some uniformity to the area” (S11a).

The uniformity referred to in this excerpt resonates with the concept of working partnerships which not only provides mutual benefits for all but also has the potential to avoid or minimise adversarial conflicts during consultations and decision-making processes (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Gruber, 2010). Furthermore, this disconnect between stakeholders with a centralised body is emphasised in the following excerpt:

“The Northern Ireland Tourist Board needs to recognise stakeholders, build relationships, communicate and build trust, identifying projects and provide funding, empower community groups/clusters and ultimately create an environment where all stakeholders can debate a common sustainable future for the area and address the increased tourism traffic levels which are cited as one of the biggest local concerns” (S08).

The ability to identify, empower and allow participation from all stakeholders, particularly local communities, are central underpinnings to stakeholder management and NRM projects (Aswani and Weiant, 2004; Reed, 2008; Harrison and Wicks, 2013). Therefore, this lack of correlation and engagement between some of the primary stakeholders involved in Northern Ireland's tourism industry reinforces the need for better structure, communication and collaboration. Additionally, the excerpt suggests the lack of power and control AONB management teams possess in relation to tourism strategies, funding issues and unified sustainability goals, which in turn amplifies the inability of Northern Ireland's protected areas to be managed effectively and successfully. This is emphasised further with one government stakeholder stating the following:

"Until the proper resources are put into AONBs it is not a reasonable proposal to elevate to national park status" (S08).

Conversely, the issues surrounding national park designation that were stated by the stakeholders in relatively opposing and neutral positions were varied. One of the common issues encircled the tourism impact if a national park was established, such as overcrowding, overtourism and environmental damage. Some of the stakeholders felt that tourism can be a double-edged sword which provides economic advantages but can be detrimental to the natural beauty if destroyed from overcrowding. However, this mixed feeling towards tourism was recognised by some supportive stakeholders but also acknowledged that overtourism and overcrowding is already a major problem within certain AONBs, particularly CC and ACG, as the following excerpt reveals:

"... the AONBs are currently suffering from overtourism, which is down to our tourism organisations tourism strategies or lack of" (S08).

Whilst, it was highlighted that the AONBs may struggle to handle more visitors:

"as you may or not know tourism is a big problem here...the AONB would like to have more tourists but catering, there are no facilities, none whatsoever" (S14a).

Furthermore, another concern mentioned by a number of local stakeholders was the problem with littering in the AONBs. However, this was not a major concern linked directly to tourists but actually to locals. S05, S06 and S11a acknowledged walkers, cyclists and workmen mainly contributing to this issue. They each questioned whether this would improve after national park status or create a bigger problem if an influx of tourists occurred.

Environmental concerns raised by stakeholders also drew attention to the problem with landowners, particularly farmers, using poor farming practice which has been developed over the years and influenced under policies such as the slurry ban during certain months of the year, as the following statement reveals:

“if the date comes around in February which it does, the season opens up again and then every farmer has his tanks all full and they put out too much...putting out slurry on a regular basis every year for years and years that doesn't help the soakage...I remember on one particular occasion I walked down through it covered in slurry a few days beforehand and the worms were lying in this slurry on the surface of the ground...they were all dead in this slurry” (S05).

This issue is widespread across Northern Ireland. Although the issue may not directly be a concern from national park designation itself, this issue highlights the importance of changing poor farming practice to be sustainable and sympathetic which tie in with IUCN's category V objectives by adapting traditional management practices utilised by the farming community to be sustainable for future generations.

Moreover, accessibility and the right to roam was suggested as a concern in two different ways by two ACG stakeholders. In a relatively opposing position, S09 acknowledged the area was mostly agricultural and farmers would not want “*anything that encroaches on them*” and suggested that accessibility for recreation in the AONB was currently at a high level:

“This right to roam and freedom to roam, you know, able to walk over land, but you know that happens here. Now they don't go through a cornfield... if

you want to go into the mountains you can walk there, on Cushendun beach and around National Trust property you can walk so a lot of people would maybe say there's no need for that, there's no need to create this status" (S09).

On the other hand, S04 (community stakeholder) who took up a neutral position stated that a national park would not necessarily deeply affect the organisation, but the community group would not like the concept if it led to further recreational and walking restrictions. The concern surrounding accessibility and roaming rights is even now a controversial matter, particularly for landowners, within Northern Ireland and was previously accredited towards the failure to designate the proposed Mourne National Park. A former report highlighted that the current occupiers' liability legislation would be better than a formalised agreement (DOE, 2011), however this uncertainty for any future national park would need better clarity and brought up to date with open discussions taking place in order to find a balance that landowners and visitors can mutually benefit from.

Furthermore, a number of the stakeholders based in ACG informed the researcher that the AONB had previously discussed national park designation 7 or 8 years ago. A meeting took place in a community centre which was open to the public with a minister from the government invited to speak at the meeting. However, the minister did not show up. The opposition to national park designation, mainly farming unions, had invited people from the farming union in Wales to also speak. The following statement recognises the resistance by the farming community:

"those people [from the farmers unions] were up on the platform and they were saying 'don't touch it with a bargepole, you won't be allowed to do anything once a national park'. The attitude is civil servants would be saying what you can do and what you can't do, and it was absolutely adamant to local farmers" (S04).

S04 and S09 acknowledged that the meeting was destructive and was not an open or balanced discussion like originally intended. Nonetheless, the opposition won out with the idea of a national park being dropped and has not been discussed since. It is

evident from stakeholders based in ACG, if aware, that this small historical event has influenced the perception and positions on national park creation in this AONB.

The stakeholders taking a stance against national parks recalled they had preconceived perceptions on the designation. S05 recollected a story involving tenant farmers from an English national park who were unable to widen a small entrance gateway in a stone wall to fit a quadbike through as the national park authority prohibited any removal of stones. It was highlighted that the couple left the tenant farm mainly for the constraints and unworkable relationship with the national park authority. For this reason, S05 emphasised that they felt national parks were outdated and needed to be brought into the 21st century before their own perception of such areas could be changed. Moreover, the opposing stakeholders recognised that the word 'park' would be problematic with many people, especially farmers, as the word implies public place that is run by the Council. Interestingly, the wording 'national park' is perceived to being closely linked to a certain organisation which are also viewed as slightly out of touch and outdated, as the following excerpt reveals:

“we kind of associate National Trust with the [national] parks...the parks thing in many ways runs kind of parallel” (S05).

This stakeholder can be viewed as taking an entrenched position against national park establishment due to perceptions but also from experience of dealing with the National Trust. The reality is that many landowners, particularly farmers, in the AONBs would affirm these perceptions and hold entrenched positions.

Despite some stakeholders admitting they did not fully understand what a national park was they were still able to acknowledge various reasons and concerns supporting or opposing national park designation that are recognised within scholarly literature (Butler and Boyd, 2000; Colhoun, 2008; Hall, 2008; Selman, 2009). However, it is understood that NRM initiatives, such as national park establishment, experience positives and negatives which need to be examined in order to effectively manage and sustain their long-term effects (Reimann et al., 2011). Therefore, it is evident that any future national park proposals will need to give clear, informative details of the array

of impacts to allow all stakeholders, including local communities and landowners, to understand all aspects of national park creation.

7.3 POSITION OF COMPROMISE

Attention now shifts toward understanding stakeholders' compromise abilities. Firstly, stakeholders' original position on the scale with respect to an interest toward protection as well as development is set out before asked to reevaluate their position when mandates such as 'conservation', 'use' and 'sustainability' are to be factored in.

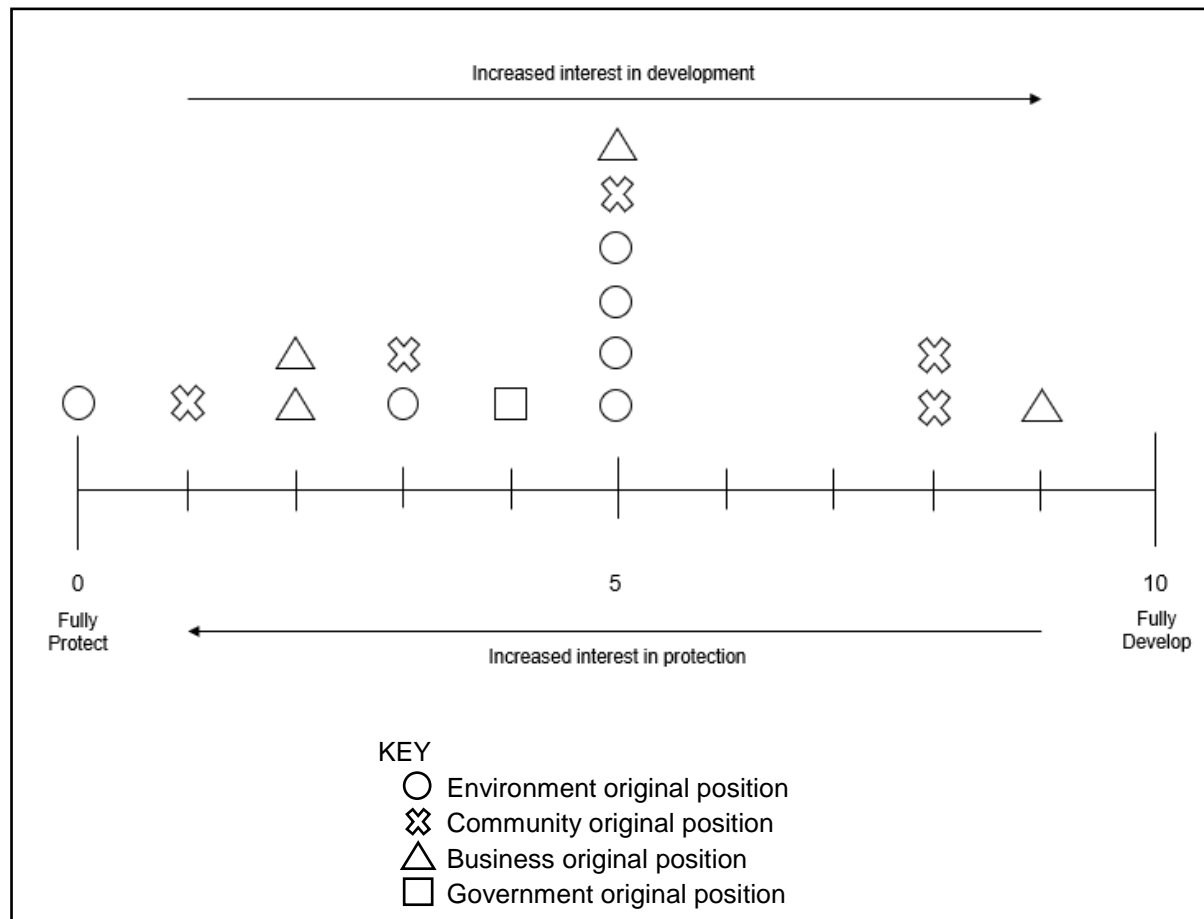
7.3.1 Original position of stakeholders

As one of the five conflict-handling intentions developed by Thomas and Kilmann (1974), compromise and collaborating, also known as consensus, are viewed as the ideal mechanisms. Both have the ability to create a win-win solution in which all parties see mutual benefits (Warner, 2000). However, compromise commonly involves at least one party conceding more to find a resolution, while consensus-building typically involves all parties conceding equally (Warner, 2000; Robbins and Judge, 2019). In reality, compromise is the most common sought after result which has the potential to lead to collaborating or consensus-building opportunities (Robbins and Judge, 2019). With this in mind, it was imperative to gauge an initial understanding of stakeholders' ability to compromise and seek out possible consensus with others to comprehend potential conflicts that may have the aptitude to occur during any future national park proposals.

Firstly, in order to gauge stakeholders' compromise ability and willingness to change, stakeholders were asked to indicate their original position. This was based on their interest regarding protection or development. Therefore, if a national park was designated in Northern Ireland or within the AONB in which the stakeholder resided would they compromise towards one particular extreme over the other. Figure 7.2 sets out each stakeholders' original position. The findings here reveal a mixture of positions held, however the majority of stakeholders placed themselves more toward the protection side of the scale or adopted a balanced stance locating themselves close

to the mid-point of the spectrum. A few stakeholders took up a more pro-development position.

Figure 7.2: Stakeholders' original compromise position based on interest of protection and development



With regard to stakeholders that positioned themselves on the left side of the spectrum, they all acknowledged that in the context of a national park, protection of the landscape was their main interest. One stakeholder stipulated their preference between the two extremes as the following:

“I’d say it’d be more towards protection and I would see protection as much more attractive than development...I’d be prepared to compromise if there were benefits for the community” (S09).

This attractiveness of protection was reflected by many stakeholders interested in conserving the natural assets of the AONB landscapes and wishing the wildlife and

nature was well maintained. On the contrary, those stakeholders positioned on the right side of the scale felt their ability to compromise would be governed by their interest in development taking place. One stakeholder suggested:

“I would compromise for protection of the environment in certain circumstances, but I think from a business perspective I would want development in a national park, so the area keeps up to date with modern initiatives and for businesses to continue to grow” (S18).

When the positioning across the scale as shown in Figure 7.2 is taken as a whole, there is no clear definitive stance; there are as many that adopt a neutral mid-point position as there are that are more on the protection side of the spectrum as opposed to the development end. One particular stakeholder suggested the following reason for their balanced position:

“We don’t want to be developing recreation facilities to then destroy the very landscape...it’s all about sustainability, but again it’s back to that if we thought that conservation was going to increase, and we were going to lose than we wouldn’t be happy” (S02).

This group’s remit is to increase recreation in all of Northern Ireland’s spaces, including AONBs, and prevent damage to the environment. As such, the organisation possesses the same conflicting relationship that emerges for national parks when required to meet often conflicting mandates. This recognition resulted in their compromise ability to balance protection with development and take up a balanced position mid-way across the spectrum. This mid-point/balanced thinking is evident by many stakeholders as shown in Figure 7.2.

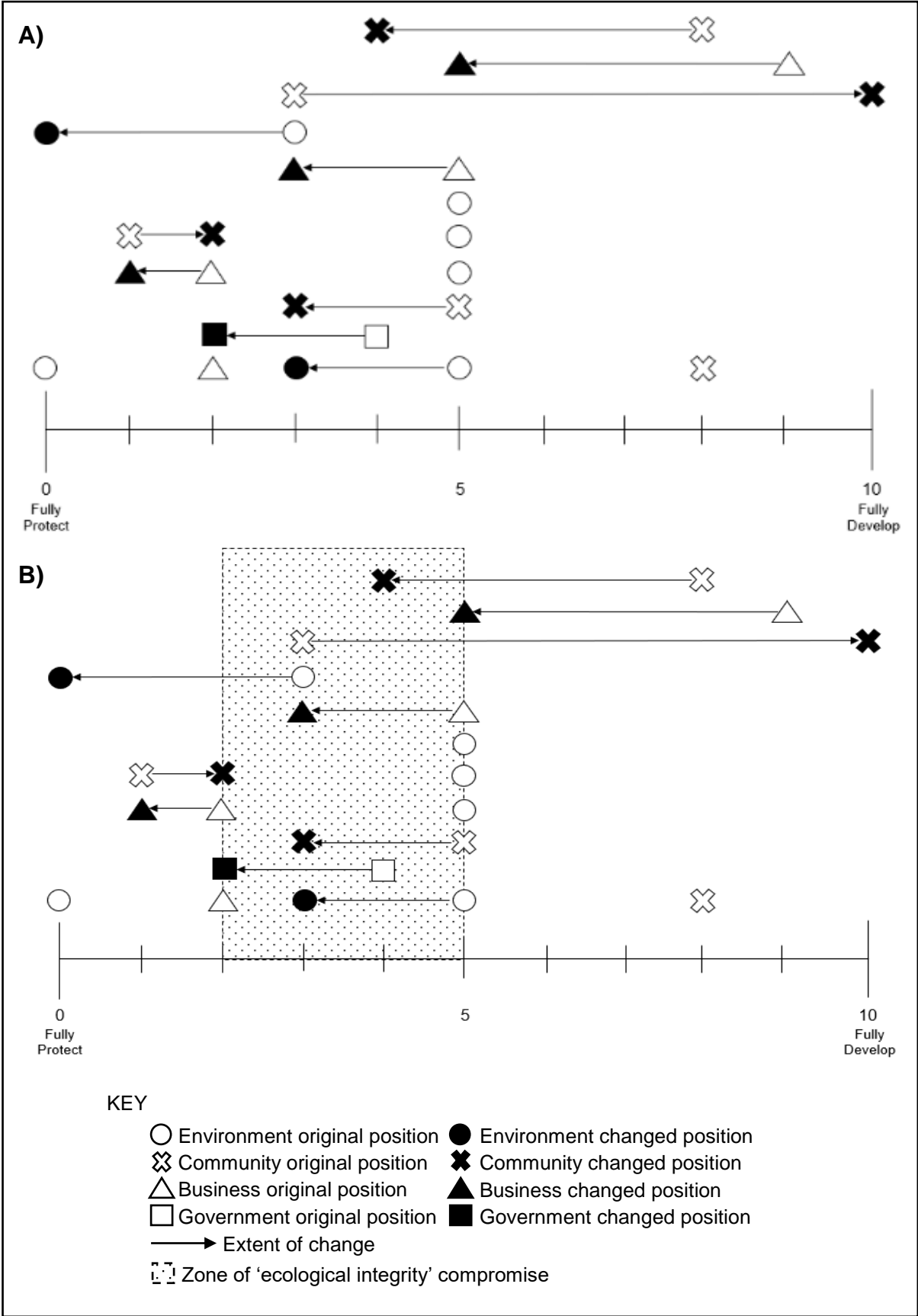
From this broad stance taken, stakeholders were asked to reflect where they would position themselves when different scenarios are considered; scenarios that echo the tri-mandate that national parks need to be seen to meet. The results of this exercise which charts degree of change are discussed in the next subsection.

7.3.2 Compromise needed to meet the 'ecological integrity' mandate

Attention now turns to the extent to which stakeholders showed a willingness to compromise on a fully protect-fully develop spectrum in order to ensure ecological integrity with national park designation. The reason for carrying out this exercise was to get stakeholders thinking about issues such as 'conservation' and 'protection', mandates most recognisable where national parks are concerned. Figure 7.3 graphically shows stakeholder positioning for ecological integrity, as well as suggesting where the best 'zone of compromise' in order to meet this mandate can be best found on the fully protect-fully develop spectrum. Not surprisingly the majority of stakeholders aligned themselves either at the mid-point of the spectrum or on the protect side with clear willingness for change.

Figure 7.3 (A) reveals that of the stakeholders interviewed 10 showed a willingness to change, the majority of which repositioned themselves further towards the protection side of the spectrum. The extent of movement of these stakeholders was considerable, where the cumulative movement (20 increments) was higher than the cumulative change that was noted for 'use' and 'sustainable livelihoods' (discussed in succeeding subsections). Not surprisingly the opposite change did not materialise; only one community stakeholder moved from a soft-protect to adopt a fully development stance when ecological integrity is concerned. The other movement away by another community stakeholder saw a very small (1 increment movement) in favour of slightly less protection. A number of stakeholders (#5) did not change from their initial position on the scale. Figure 7.3 (A) shows that the business-related stakeholders adopted, somewhat surprisingly, a strong protect stance; even one that initially was in favour of development agreed to compromise and changed to take up a position mid-point along the spectrum. As for environmental stakeholders, not surprisingly they adopted a more pro-protect stance when their changed positioning is factored in. It should however be also pointed out that several of these stakeholders held to their original thinking and maintained a mid-point positioning along the spectrum. Only community stakeholders reflected a mixed picture. Of the five interviewed, one did not change their thinking, two adopted a more pro-protect stance, whereas the remaining two moved away further away from protection; in one case that movement was extreme, adopting a full development stance.

Figure 7.3: (A) Original stakeholder position and willingness to change to facilitate the 'ecological integrity' park mandate and (B) the development of potential zone of compromise



Appendix 7 demonstrates in further detail each stakeholder's initial position and change of thinking to ensure that a mandate of protecting ecological integrity is met.

Figure 7.3 (B) charts a potential 'zone of stakeholder compromise' needed to ensure ecological integrity. The outlier stakeholder positions are discounted to arrive at a zone of compromise that extends back from a mid-point toward the pro-protect side of the spectrum. This narrow zone of compromise is based on the original positioning of the majority of stakeholders to be found on the pro-protect side of the mid-point of the scale. Even when stakeholder change is factored in most movements favoured greater protection offering scope for this zone of compromise to be even narrower in favour of great protection. The reason for why the zone extends to the mid-way point of the scale is to take into account the positioning of many stakeholders who did not alter their thinking when asked to do so.

Interestingly, the majority of stakeholders recognised that ecological integrity was considerably important and needed protection. This zone of compromise strengthens the importance of 'conservation' taking precedence over 'use' as communicated by the Sandford Principle in the UK national park system. Furthermore, this can be interpreted that stakeholders also put precedence on protection of the environment over the use of natural resources and therefore are not willing to compromise on the ecological integrity of an area.

Many of the stakeholders recognised that a national park typically increases visitor numbers as these spaces are regarded as being beautiful and special. This increase in visitors stimulated the stakeholders to acknowledge a concern for the potential negative impacts this would have on the environment. As such, stakeholders felt that a national park should accommodate and ultimately protect the ecological integrity as much as possible from any negative impacts. One particular concern conveyed was the impact on erosion in honeypot sites in particular natural and popular walking trails. A community stakeholder admitted this was already an issue in the Mourne and Sperrin mountains. The respondent in question highlighted that if a national park resulted in an increase in walkers and visitors, then the levels of erosion could intensify further. However, Andereck et al. (2005) suggested that a national park setting does not contribute towards the decline of ecological processes. This may be the case when

these particular settings employ IUCN's category V correctly and successfully place priority on the sustainability of in area in accordance to protection and use.

As noted previously, many of the environmental stakeholders adopted a mid-point stance of advocating 'balanced thinking' when landscapes such as national parks are considered. The following statement highlights this balanced thinking regarding ecological integrity:

"For us, we'd be very keen to see it heavily protected but also acknowledging that it's people's livelihoods that rely on the Lough [SLL] so it's making sure that agriculture, fisheries is sustainable" (S17).

The link between environmental protection and development for sustainable livelihoods is viewed as critically important in which a national park accommodates both elements. This puts into question whether a future national park in Northern Ireland should place any degree of precedence on protection over use. However, previous attempts for a national park in the Mourne identified that local stakeholders and communities disagreed with the aims of the park placing superiority on socio-economic development over conservation, resulting in one reason for the failure to create the designation (Bell and Stockdale, 2016). Consequently, any future national park in Northern Ireland would need to either follow the same priority in terms of mandates as is the case in existing parks in England and Wales or explore the possibility of placing equal precedence toward protection and development.

From the stakeholder interviews, another reason emerged in support of compromise to protect ecological integrity, namely, to prevent overdevelopment within special landscapes and therefore achieve the appropriate balance. The following excerpt showcases this thinking:

"I think we need to protect the area from overdevelopment and protect it from in a way that doesn't, that we protect it from the extremes of development...but not erase out opportunity to develop it and enjoy it in society" (S10).

This particular stakeholder altered their thinking away from a pro-develop stance to one that advocated the need for balance; in so doing their end position falling within the zone of compromise as shown in Figure 7.3 (B). Yet again, the statement highlights that ecological integrity should be protected with a balance that does not stop any development from occurring within a national park. Therefore, an effective integrated approach first acknowledged by Boyd (2004) is required in order to incorporate interests of all stakeholders, communities, businesses, conservationists and landowners (Eagles et al., 2002; Mose, 2007; Higham et al., 2016).

7.3.3 Compromise needed to meet the ‘recreation and tourism use’ mandate

The second comparative scale examines stakeholders position held with respect to national parks from a recreation and tourism perspective. These activities relate to the mandate of ‘use’ of natural resources for enjoyment purposes within national park settings. Figure 7.4 (A) charts both the initial position taken by stakeholders and the willingness to change in order to meet the ‘make use of’ mandate. The majority of stakeholders show willingness to shift toward a more pro-development position. Only one stakeholder (government body) adopted the opposite where they moved from a central position to favour a more pro-protect stance. Given the extent of stakeholder movement to meet the ‘use’ mandate, Figure 7.4 (B) illustrates that two potential zones exist across the spectrum where soft and hard infrastructure for recreation and tourism can be accommodated. Both zones imply the extent of change will vary; soft infrastructure facilitating higher level of protection, whereas hard infrastructure requiring a strong pro-development stance. Figure 7.4 charts each stakeholder’s thinking; most notable was one business stakeholder (SLL AONB) who shifted from a very pro-protect stance (position 2 on the scale) to one that was supportive of development (position 9 on the scale) where they were willing to be supportive of hard forms of recreation and tourism within a national park context as designation would develop the sector in a sustainable manner. Appendix 8 demonstrates in further detail each stakeholder’s position and extent to which they were willing to compromise in order to accommodate both recreation and tourism use.

Of the environmental stakeholders, 2 out of the 6 interviewed said they would change their position on the spectrum; 3 did not move from adopting a mid-way point on the

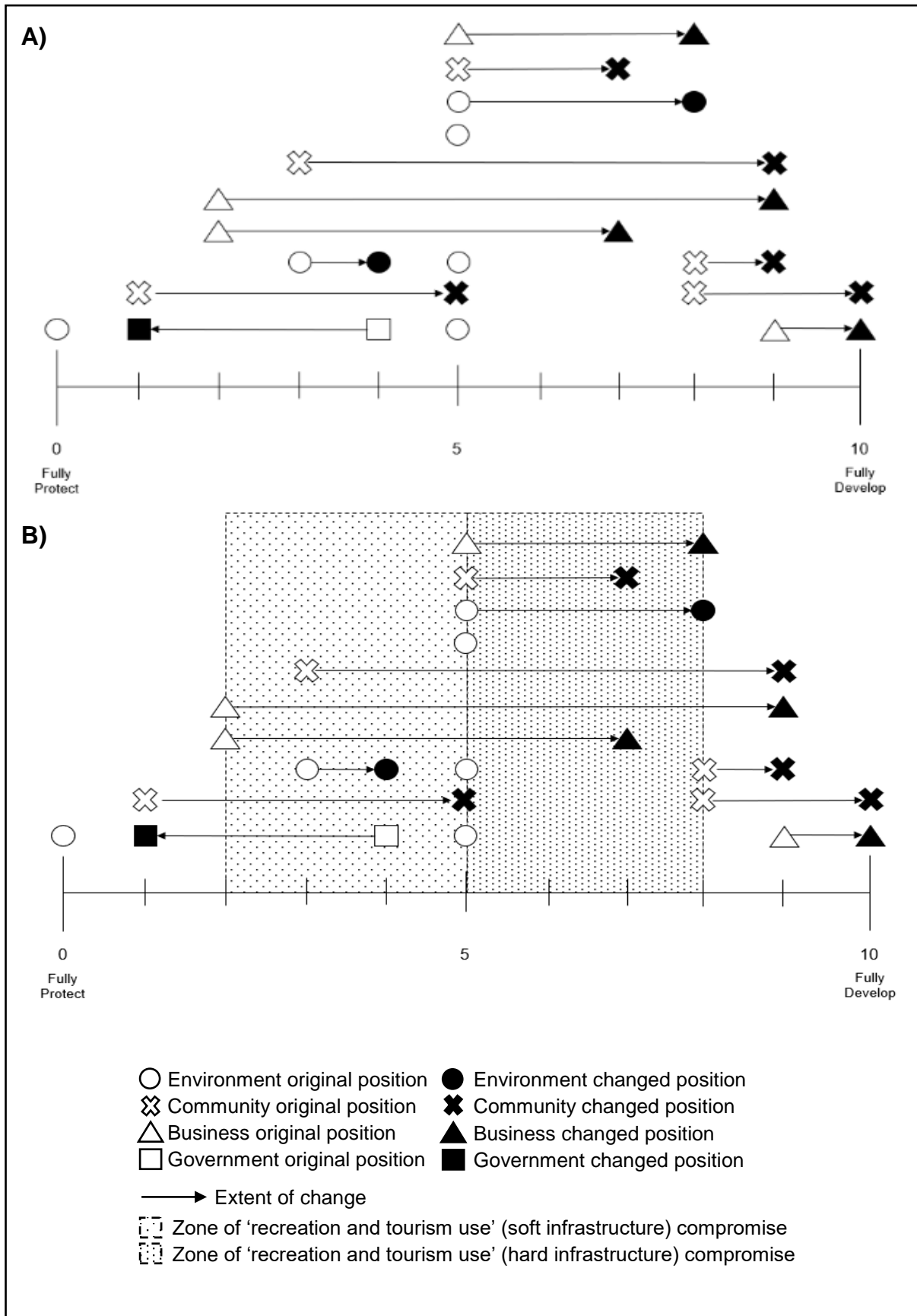
spectrum as they noted that there should be a balance between a national park accommodating protection as well as allowing for the development of recreation and tourism. One environmental stakeholder made the following point:

“we would want to see any national park being full of recreation...we have to be very conscious, we don't want to destroy...we want it to develop but we also have to protect it” (S02).

Only one stakeholder, a government stakeholder, moved further to the left toward full protection. The reasoning behind this movement echoes S02's desire not to destroy the area. In addition, the governmental stakeholder stated that although the increase in visitors would support tourism jobs, they recognised that these would be low paid and seasonal and that this indirect impact would also need a degree of protection.

The findings show a high degree of willingness to change or compromise for the purpose of recreation and tourism use. Scale B showcases this scope to span two potential zones, one that supports soft forms of recreation and tourism that require minimal hard infrastructure and one that advocates for harder forms of recreation and tourism requiring more extensive infrastructural development. The author takes the view that stakeholders positioned within in the hard infrastructure zone are more accepting of change in order to support more mechanistic forms of recreation and tourism activity, whereas stakeholders found in the soft infrastructural zone are more sympathetic to softer forms of recreation and tourism that allow for the ecological integrity mandate to be met and where minimal infrastructure is required. Stakeholders adopting a neutral stance (mid-way point on the scale) support a position of balance between hard and soft recreation and tourism infrastructure that is appropriate for the area in question.

Figure 7.4: (A) Original stakeholder position and willingness to change to facilitate the ‘recreation and tourism use’ park mandate and (B) development of potential zones of compromise



Increased recreation and tourism within the AONBs and the potential for greater employment opportunities emerged as a strong reason for stakeholder's willingness to compromise. For instance, the following excerpt recognises that national park designation would improve the current tourism market locally:

"We could handle in an area like this [ACG] a certain increase in visitors, particularly if it was one that would stay, contribute to the area, contribute financially in terms of, you know, the shops which gives employment in the area. I think that would be fine. It would be better than the coaches" (S07).

This statement showcases a current issue, particularly within ACG and CC, that many tourists are day-trippers travelling in by coach from the city hub of Belfast to visit honeypot sites with limited dwell time and offering limited financial benefit to the local communities. S09 also highlighted this issue and stated that locals have to be very tolerant of the coaches blocking the villages in the AONBs. This community stakeholder group (S09), expressed that if tourists spent money in the community, it would be more lenient in their thinking of increased tourism and more supportive of national park establishment. This opinion on increasing tourism within local areas which in turn has an impact on employment opportunities on the wider tourism and hospitality sector demonstrates the interconnections between national parks, tourism and community livelihoods. The recognition of economic and social benefits from a protected areas status, specifically a national park, is reinforced by the scholarly literature (Nepal, 2000; Eagles and McCool, 2002). The balancing of these three components provides the possibility of development that is within the interest of local livelihoods and is sustainable long term (Nepal, 2000). The willingness to compromise by the majority of stakeholders regarding tourism and recreational use indicates that they acknowledge that this balance between communities and tourism within a national park setting could be achievable in which it is perceived the benefits outweigh the negatives in this complex relationship.

National parks are often viewed as places for recreation and this thought was reiterated by many respondents. In the current AONB setting, a community group (stakeholder S04) highly interested in recreation emphasised that access to walking and hiking trails had declined in recent decades. The access to such routes could only

continue for the group through permission from private landowners which relied on personal connections to those individuals. This was illustrated in the willingness of this stakeholder to take a slightly more pro-development stance mainly to increase the recreational accessibility opportunities for local communities and visitors. This highlights the issue surrounding the occupiers' liability legislation (this was discussed at the start of this thesis) in Northern Ireland which favours landowners' insurance against visitors on their land. It could be debated that in recent years that landowners are starting to abuse the legislation were communities seeking recreation away from built-up areas are being disadvantaged. This underlines a need for updating the legislation now, not just if a national park is established in Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, national park status was considered as potentially beneficial to developing local areas as the following statement suggests:

“Our remit is outdoor recreation, so we just think the facilities, the outdoor facilities would be improved” (S02).

Another stakeholder stressed the following:

“The thing is if we did have a national park it would have to incorporate proper facilities for all the tourists and it would have to be useful things to have in the area” (S14a).

This stakeholder emphasised the popularity of Game of Thrones in certain areas, such as ACG and CC, and highlighted the lack of suitable infrastructure for the tourism industry and put emphasis on there being *“no facilities for a national park scale environment”* (S14a). However, one stakeholder (S11a) suggested that in SLL there was scope within the local villages to develop businesses and accommodation to cater for increased visitors to the AONB. Stakeholders S11a and S11b both emphasised the need for more accommodation but also stated this opportunity needed to be *“sympathetic tourist accommodation”* such as B&Bs, boutique hotels and traditional cottages as opposed to big hotels on the shoreline of Strangford Lough. The importance placed on sympathetic development resonates with the early Yellowstone model for national parks (see Table 2.1 in section 2.2.1) and the concept of

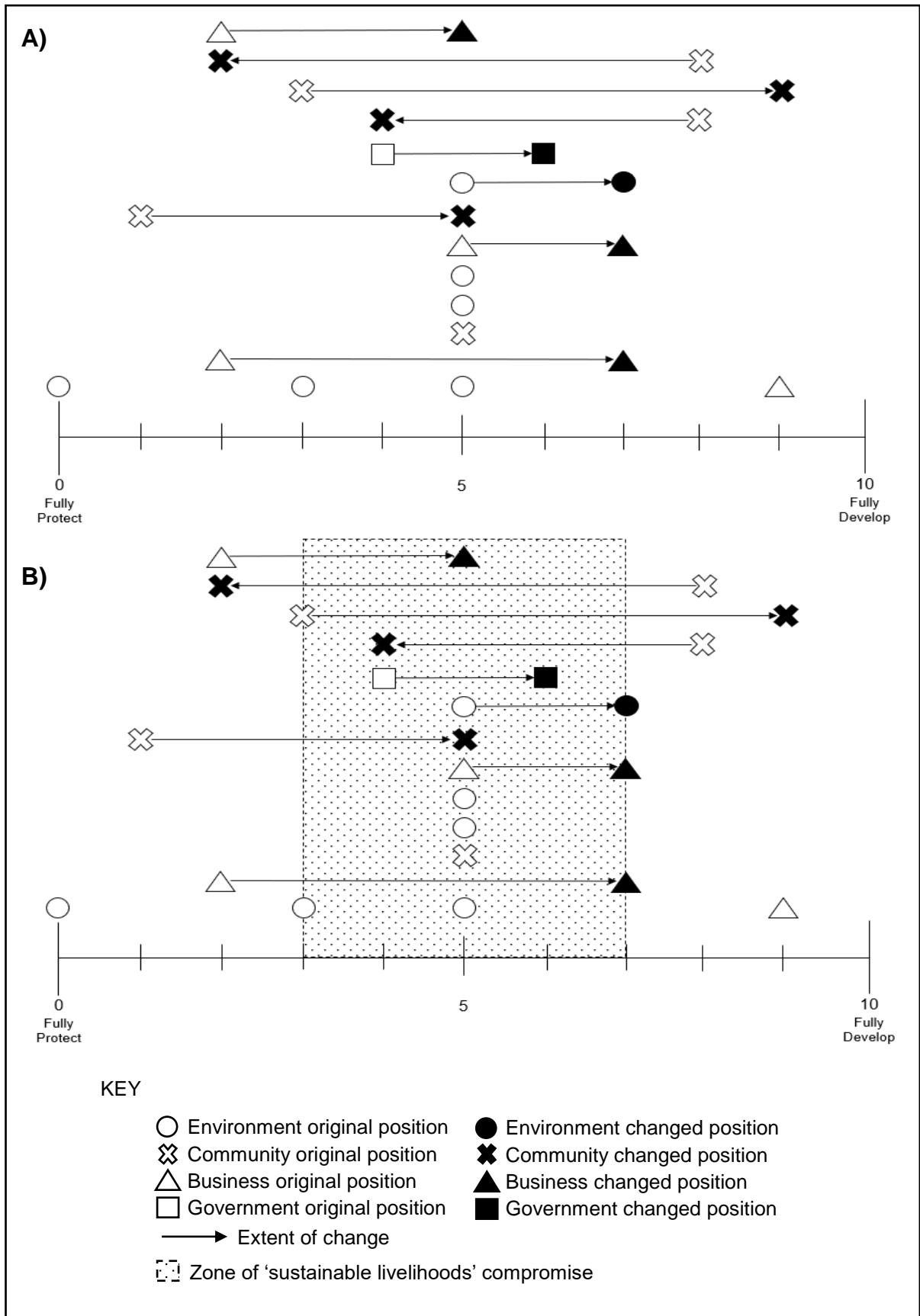
sustainability. Developing sympathetically and appropriately in a national park is a required objective in the IUCN category V which allow the special landscapes to become exemplars of wider sustainability models (IUCN, 2013).

7.3.4 Compromise needed to meet the ‘sustainable livelihoods’ mandate

The final exercise undertaken focused on stakeholders consideration to compromise between fully protect and fully develop in the case of the third mandate of national parks, that of enabling sustainable livelihoods. Figure 7.5 (A) plots their initial position on the scale and, if they were willing to change, the extent of that change. The mandate of ‘sustainability’ of one where a balance is required between conserving and using resources where local communities are the beneficiary.

Stakeholders (often representing certain groups) demonstrated a willingness to change where they took on a more pro-development over one that advocated greater support toward greater protection. This is reflected in the figure in both the numbers of stakeholders (#7) that recognised that if the ‘sustainable livelihood’ mandate is to be honoured would require a more pro-development stance be adopted. There is a smaller movement toward a more pro-protect stance, but the extent of that change is accounted for by only two stakeholders, both of which represent community interests; one of these is shown in the figure to have moved the most from an original pro-develop to a pro-protect position. Similar to stakeholder stance with regard to meeting the ‘use’ mandate from a recreation and tourism perspective, a notable number of stakeholders (#7) displayed no willingness to change from their original compromise position. If stakeholders are considered by type, those with a business interest modified their thinking to support a more pro-development stance. This is in contrast to environmental stakeholders that, with the exception of one stakeholder did not change from either a pro-protect position to one that fell mid-way on the protect-develop spectrum. Community stakeholders demonstrated no clear pattern, one remained mid-point on the spectrum whereas others shifted either way toward being in favour of development or protection. This mix is interesting given it would seem this stakeholder interest group would be in favour of change to facilitate sustainable community livelihoods. Appendix 9 sets out the extent of change of each stakeholder, noting the AONB they related to.

Figure 7.5: (A) Original stakeholder position and willingness to change to facilitate the 'sustainable livelihoods' park mandate and (B) the development of potential zone of compromise



Similar to the exercise carried out for the 'conservation' and 'use' mandates, Figure 7.5 (B) suggests that when outlier stakeholder positions are not factored in, a willingness to support the mandate of 'sustainable livelihoods' does not permit much movement away from the mid-point on the scale; the zone is of equal size both toward the protect end as it is to the develop end of the fully protect-fully develop spectrum. When compared to the extent of compromise stakeholders are prepared to accept in order to support recreation and tourism (Figure 7.4 (B)), the zone of sustainable livelihoods, as shown in Figure 7.5 (B), is considerably narrower with less willingness to accept movement further along the spectrum toward development. As such, it could be argued that stakeholders adopted a balanced viewpoint with respect to this national park mandate, supportive of equal emphasis on protection as well as development. This balanced thinking is supported in scholarly thinking regarding national parks that recognise the need to conserve cultural heritage and natural resources whilst also developing initiatives, typically through tourism, that are economically beneficial to communities (Eagles and McCool, 2002; Prato and Fagre, 2005; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Curcija et al., 2019).

In drilling down into the interview responses of stakeholders, employment emerged as a motive to support a position of compromise regarding the development of sustainable livelihoods against just protecting the natural environment, as the following excerpt reveals:

"I see national parks as a way of helping the area in a sustainable way, will actually benefit the local communities, so they see the benefits of looking after something like a special place, looking after the landscape, the environment, the special features and that benefits employment...I think there is opportunities to let something grow both in local use but also particularly tourism in the area" (S15).

This particular stakeholder was found to take a mid-point stance along the scale which comes across in the above statement evidently highlighting their desire to seek a balanced approach between protecting the environment but also allowing for opportunities for livelihood development. Furthermore, a business stakeholder acknowledged that they felt a national park would accommodate sustaining the

livelihoods of local artisans and traditional crafters, not only tourism and hospitality businesses. This stakeholder made the following suggestion to support development of their community:

“We think that at times there should be a collective hub for those people and not just a one-off here and a one-off there. Something to sustain them as well...you’ve got such a good range of artisan producers, again something like a national park could maybe give a building block to grow something...you need something in the national park that’s indoors [like a collective hub]” (S11a).

What emerges from the above statement is the opinion that local traders would have better prospects to improve and cultivate their businesses if a national park was designated, and that benefit alone justified compromise being made. Such thinking was echoed across other stakeholders where they recognised the potential employment gains to be sufficient enough for them to change their original thinking to adopt a more pro-develop stance as national park designation would also benefit communities both within and adjacent to its boundaries.

Employment was also mentioned in the context of the farming community. One stakeholder acknowledged that within CC the high protection level of the WHS and surrounding area is impacted by any development and in turn this development is only permitted when the community benefit immensely outweighs the harm to the WHS. As a result of limited development, young people within the farming community struggle to secure employment or build affordable housing on farmland. The lack of development for livelihoods is a concern by the farming community, as the following excerpt reveals:

“The fear within the farming community is that the elevation of the current AONBs to national parks would escalate this [no employment or affordable housing] throughout the farming community” (S08).

This concern motivated this stakeholder to alter their initial thinking and adopt a more pro-develop stance as they felt that, despite the perception of national park being

mainly for conservation, the area needs to allow some development so as the different communities within the landscape can afford to live and work locally and feel no further detrimental impacts on their livelihoods due to designation.

Conversely, a number of stakeholders representing environmental interests and groups adopted a middle ground perspective and emphasised that in order to sustain livelihoods within a potential national park, the local communities should not be subjected to increased house prices because of that newly acquired status. This was also reflected in the views of one government stakeholder (S08) who was willing to move slightly along the spectrum toward a more pro-develop viewpoint; a change possible because the organisation they represented acknowledged “*the likelihood that local people would be unable to afford to live within a national park*” and therefore a compromise was needed toward a more development stance but only if designation did not impact on local people still being able to live affordably in an area given national park status. This issue is commonly reflected within many other national parks across the UK and is a concern echoed in the scholarly literature (Colhoun, 2008; Selman, 2009).

The potential ‘zones of compromise’ to meet the different mandates of national parks are taken up and explored further in the conclusion chapter in the development of a conceptual model, but attention now shifts to present findings from the stakeholder interviews regarding their willingness to work with others to seek common ground.

7.4 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

This section sets out the findings relating to working with others by exploring commonalities and issues. This includes understanding the relationships with the AONB management teams and with other types of stakeholders, each are examined in turn.

7.4.1 Working with AONB management teams

The interviews offered scope to first investigate if stakeholder organisations worked with the AONB management teams or attended events set up by the teams. This

generated a mixed response from the various stakeholders. The majority of groups indicated that they had some involvement with the AONB management teams or their events as suggested by the following excerpt in reference to SLL:

“Sometimes, initially. They suggested we do a ‘course trainer’ with them, so we did that, and we’ve been to a few conferences and stuff like that so sometimes” (S16).

While, S03 reinforced this involvement and gave credit to the SLL management body, as noted in the following comment:

“we meet, we talk, we cooperate...there’s not been a lot but that’s not because we don’t get on well together, we do. They’re very good in that office. They’re quite an energetic bunch” (S03).

This credit towards personnel was also reflected towards the management body that oversees both ACG and CC. Furthermore, all regional groups highlighted they work with the AONBs to different capacities. For instance, S02 mainly works with the AONB bodies on strategies concerning outdoor recreation. In the past, the organisation would have attended management forums, advisory forums and other events, however due to a lack of funding and resources this has been drastically cut down in recent years.

Of the stakeholders who represented different groups that stated that they were not involved with AONB management bodies, 3 were community and 3 were business focused. However, the majority of these stakeholder interest groups were aware the management bodies existed. Though, a community stakeholder highlighted the following:

“We wouldn’t be aware of that...I wouldn’t even be aware they exist if there is a management team” (S09).

This result was unexpected given the management body representative of the AONB the respondent was referring to has attempted to promote a strong brand around the

naturalness features of the AONB. However, it was further supported as the following excerpt reveals:

“...an awful lot of people who live in the AONB no matter how much effort I would say that the team attempt to do, and they put out material...there would be a whole lot of people with not very much awareness of the AONB I don't think” (S07).

This statement acknowledges the difficulties of stakeholder engagement. Theoretically, this underpins the willingness and motivations of stakeholders to participate in NRM initiatives (Billgren and Holmen, 2008; Mathur et al., 2008; Huyett, 2013), but also reaffirms what AONB managers also highlighted (see details in section 6.4.2) and the consequences of being under-resourced and under-funded which can restrict their ability to engage with all stakeholders across all the AONBs they oversee. Moreover, a regional environmental stakeholder (S13) suggested that the AONB management bodies in some way have become their competitors as AONB bodies have taken areas of work this stakeholder use to do before the AONB teams existed, and they compete for the same funding from the Heritage Lottery. This competition for funding and resources by stakeholders aiming to achieve some of the same goals emphasises the lack of partnership, collaboration and uniformity between organisations. Consequently, this competition between organisations has led to inefficiencies and the overall detriment of Northern Ireland's protected area management system.

7.4.2 Working with other stakeholders

Establishing a national park within a living landscape presents many difficulties and as a result possible conflicts can occur between a large array of stakeholders. As conflicts typically occur due to the incompatibility of interests, understanding potentially conflicting relationships can aid the prospect of minimising or even preventing potential disputes in the future (Harrison and Wicks, 2013; Johnston and Myers, 2016). The in-depth stakeholder interviews gave the opportunity to gain initial insight and gauge commonalities and differences that existed between stakeholder groupings.

Initially, many stakeholders declared that they worked well with other stakeholders in their AONB area. This was particularly evident from responses of a stakeholder representing a regional group, as the following excerpt shows:

“we would work all the time with community groups, environmental groups, government groups across Northern Ireland, I mean we’re trying to work with community groups” (S02).

This statement implies that primarily the organisation engages in many successful working relationships in implementing and achieving their goals and objectives, however it suggests that the organisation undoubtedly faces difficulties with community groups. Whilst another stakeholder in SLL highlighted how their organisation and relationship with others was forced to change overtime:

“when the [organisation’s name] first got involved in the Lough in the 60s, it was commercial. It was a real concern and over the years we’ve gone from very much polar opposites to very much working in very close partnership...we have a reasonably good relationship with individuals, various interest groups, local communities around Strangford Lough” (S15).

The accountability of this organisation showcases how engagement and participation needs to have the ability to adapt and change with the purpose of minimising conflicts with others. Similar to many NRM scenarios, partnerships have been employed as a common instrument to increase participation, empowerment and to resolve or avoid conflicts amongst an array of stakeholders (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Campbell and Vainio-Mattila, 2008; Gruber, 2010). However, it is ambiguous to whether these partnerships, particularly with community groups, are effective or successful. It is undistinguishable if the partnerships possess equality of power with shared benefits and interests (Austin, 2000; Edgar et al., 2006).

Furthermore, many respondents from different stakeholder groups acknowledged no issues with business groups or community groups within their local AONB. One business stakeholder stated the following:

“Communities is a big thing for us, local community, the local schools here we advertise there a lot. We get feedback from them...we try to promote within our community” (S10).

The passionate responses regarding the local communities stresses the importance of these livelihoods and groups which showcase close-knit and high spirited communities within all three AONBs. This is highlighted further in the following excerpt:

“it’s all very local...if we can’t accommodate somebody through an inquiry we pass them on to others and they do the same to us” (S11a).

These statements evidently showcase that many community and business groups have amicable and mutually beneficial working relationships. Though, it could be argued that larger regional groups possess trickier and more problematic relationships with community groups due to different goals and levels of power which could link to their wider reputation. The following response indicates this difficulty:

“we’ve been down to meet them [a SLL community group] a number of times looking to see how we can improve access in the Greyabbey area. We haven’t been able to get a resolution on that” (S17).

This particular issue related to car parking rather than high street parking. In this case, traders in the area favour high street parking for increased footfall of customers, while the regional group argues that a car park would benefit people visiting to see the natural heritage which would in turn create customers. In this particular context, the small community, including traders, dominate the decision-making process. The level of empowerment retained by the local community encourages a sense of ownership of the local natural and built resources in the area. Theoretically, Cole (2006) suggested that active community participation and empowerment has the aptitude to find solutions and create change, however based on this local scenario, this does not support this claim.

Generally, the majority of stakeholders stated that they are not overly involved within environmental groups especially business groups. Of the stakeholders that do get

involved with environmental groups, they affirmed that they appreciate the work these groups do for the local areas, while some stakeholders participate in beach cleans and other events including raising money for some of the regional environmental organisations. In turn, this made local stakeholders feel they possessed many commonalities with environmental stakeholders. These stakeholders acknowledged that they understood the importance of conservation and therefore could not foresee major issues with these groups if a national park was to be established. However, S07 admitted that *“sometimes environmental groups can go too far”* in their conservation approach which can have a tendency to be off putting for local communities.

Interestingly, one of the main environmental groups mentioned by stakeholders was the National Trust. There were mixed views on this organisation with some stakeholders stating they have worked with the National Trust on previous projects within their AONB and had no issues. However, other local stakeholders described the organisation as *“the faceless people”*, *“very restricted”*, *“very conservative”*, and *“very money orientated”*. Two stakeholders in ACG spoke of the Trust owning most of Cushendun village resulting in development limitations of settlement with some projects never taking off as the organisation prohibited such matters. Furthermore, S16 went on to state that if something is not within their interest or organisational agenda they are not interested. While, S11 added *“National Trust is a corporate organisation, it’s not promoting the rest of the area”*. As a national and regional organisation, this statement about the Trust suggests that stakeholder management by this landowner can be ignored in some scenarios and that they mainly employ an instrumental model when needed. This approach to stakeholder management is common and is considered unethical as the stakeholders interests and values are only acknowledged when they align and benefit with the organisation’s goals and interests (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Crane and Matten, 2016).

In terms of working with governmental organisations, the majority of stakeholders pointed out negative experiences dealing with the array of government departmental institutes. A common issue faced by many of the stakeholders was the lack of coordination between government departments as the following excerpt reveals:

“the government bodies involved, the water board and NIEA, the environment crowd...proved very, very difficult to get those different organisations to pull together” (S05).

Though, it was pointed out that government departments need to collaborate more on the ground environmentally as highlighted in the below quote:

“I wish there was a bit more communication between the nature side, the fisheries and agriculture...so government will sign up to trying to tackle the issues and not see them as a silent problem” (S17).

This lack of coordination and cooperation between government departments and industries resonates with a partnership model by Boyd and Timothy (2001) (see section 3.2.4 for details). The local-regional mixed-use landscape scenario they suggested is often associated with a limited degree of cooperation which is government or agency-driven which produces unequal relationships. Consequently, achieving the ideal cooperation and partnership becomes increasingly challenging when communication is ineffective (Darcy and Wearing, 2009). As a result, finding commonalities may be more difficult within any scenario not only one that involves national park establishment. Additionally, it is clear from the stakeholder interviews that the positions of many will be entrenched as they may not want to display any commonalities with those groups that they have historically always struggled to work with.

The issues with the government also includes the planning department which many stakeholders believe is stopping any sensible development happening in Northern Ireland, particularly in the AONBs. A local stakeholder in SLL highlighted the following:

“they are very slow and we’re trying to develop a glamp site which is on a farm field, it won’t impact on the area...being an area of outstanding natural beauty we can’t develop which is nonsense” (S16).

Another stakeholder endorsed this fact further by stating that:

“very often their default position on all planning is ‘no’ rather than working to find solutions” (S02).

The default position by planners, and possibly other government departments, places Northern Ireland in a deprivation position regarding development opportunities which could aid tourism, recreation, and facilitate sustainable livelihoods. Moreover, some stakeholders mentioned working with District Councils with only a few stating that they work well with their local Council on projects, events or small grants. However, others mentioned having issues especially regarding development purposes. Conversely, this issue with local Councils could be influenced by the default position by planners and higher governmental departments which feeds into creating a top-down approach with regard to local development which in turn may create no development at all.

In addition, relationships with landowners, farmers and private developers mainly produced a negative response from stakeholders interviewed. The majority of stakeholders acknowledged that national park establishment would be challenging due to landowners, specifically farmers. One stakeholder mentioned a project that involved working with over 30 landowners. They highlighted that the bulk of landowners, mainly farmers, were happy to work with the organisation they represented, however there was a couple of farmers who caused confrontation and threw the project into disarray, as the following excerpt reveals:

“It’s very, very difficult...that example there, there’s 32, those 2 individuals just made something that would have been very, very useful, just made an absolute mess of it” (S05).

Furthermore, S05 remarked that farmers are very slow to change and struggle to see the bigger picture, whilst declaring that farmers will only be in favour of something if they get something out of it whether it be practical or financial.

Another stakeholder pointed out the idea of creating a greenway in Northern Ireland similar to that being developed in the Republic of Ireland. They emphasised their frustration with opposing types of stakeholders as the following quote reveals:

“some of them [landowners] to be honest are just thran and they don’t want you doing anything...but frustrating also for some of the farmers because they still see occupiers’ liability as the big thing...its infuriating” (S02).

S02 acknowledged that a greenway would be a great resource for tourism and local communities, but it would never happen due to opposition from landowners. In another case, S03 spoke of a project which was to establish a small green cemetery in SLL which caused *“furious rows, vocal, nearly reaching physical”* and encounters creating much animosity. This is illustrative of the conflict management continuum (previously discussed in Chapter 3, see section 3.3.3), where in this particular case, conflict went close to the extreme level of violence over the competition for natural resources (Moore, 2003; USIP, 2007). It is unclear whether conflict resolution techniques such as negotiation or mediation were utilised in any of these scenarios. Although, S03 stated that in this particular situation the groundwork had not been prepared well enough to stop conflict from occurring. These findings illustrate the importance of stakeholder inclusion, informative consultation and communication. Although, it can also be suggested that even with the employment of the best stakeholder approach, conflict resolution techniques may always be required in controversial NRM scenarios, particularly if the NRM project leads straight to non-violent directive action or violence.

Despite farmers and landowners being viewed by some stakeholders as ‘development stoppers’, there exists private developers which are on the contrary viewed as permitting extreme development. Some respondents emphasised their dislike for private developers and their ignorance for planning restrictions as the following statement implies:

“developers just want in very much, in my opinion, want a free hand. They don’t want any potential restrictions on them, so I wouldn’t have much sympathy for them really in relation to that” (S07).

Another stakeholder highlighted that within CC one private developer was completing work without planning permission and this was carried out illegally. While, on other occasions the same developer complies within restrictions which are unsympathetic to the area. In this particular case, the stakeholder was shocked that the private

developer had not faced legal consequences. The accounts of this private developer is not difficult to imagine being an issue elsewhere in Northern Ireland, however these actions within a protected area is deplorable. It exhibits a clear indication of the inefficiencies within Northern Ireland's planning authority and connection to legal enforcement.

From the analysis, it is unsurprising that difficulties of working with an array of stakeholders demonstrates the complexity of finding common ground. All the stakeholder organisations stated they had commonalities with numerous other types of stakeholders but could not reveal the exact details of their commonalities as they declared they had no issues. Therefore, naturally, the majority of stakeholders cited issues with others which in turn can expose areas to improve relationships and provide an insight into areas of common ground. However, the level of development between those wanting to stop development (i.e. farmers) against those wanting to fully develop (i.e. private developers) produces two extreme positions which may never have the ability to find common ground between those entrenched stances.

7.5 FUTURE PROSPECT

Scope existed at the end of the in-depth interviews with stakeholders to obtain personal opinions of the future prospect of an area in Northern Ireland potentially ever gaining national park status. The majority of stakeholders candidly revealed they did not think a national park would be designated anywhere in Northern Ireland, while many respondents stated that if the status did occur it would not happen within their lifetime mainly due to the possibility of the process taking too long. Of those doubtful of any future existence of a national park, various reasons were acknowledged which included the complexity of Northern Ireland's landownership, the opposition from the farming community, historical events surrounding national park proposals, the perceived association with the National Trust, and Northern Ireland being risk adverse with the inability to fully see the wider environmental damage from everyone's role in society. Interestingly, one reason emphasised by a stakeholder was the political setting within Northern Ireland, as the following statement demonstrates:

“The politics definitely strongly comes into it here, even for something like a national park...because that is why things like our access legislation has never changed...politicians here are scared of losing votes from the landowners...I don’t think people, or our politicians are prepared to stand up for the better good of Northern Ireland” (S02).

Despite many stakeholders taking the stance that Northern Ireland may never designate a national park status, a few took a more optimist stance. This optimism was directed toward a shift in attitude from communities regarding climate change, increased protection of Northern Ireland’s natural resources, increased tourism trade, and a hope that politics can be put to one side in order to benefit the country long-term. However, one stakeholder, representing a community group (S12) in ACG, had mixed feelings highlighting that there is very little awareness surrounding the implications, positive and negative, of establishing such a designation and therefore could not determine if Northern Ireland’s future included establishment of a national park.

In addition, stakeholders were invited to select an area in Northern Ireland which they thought was most suited for national park establishment. Interestingly, many could not decide between CC, ACG, and the Mourne Mountains. Many respondents acknowledged the historical friction and legacy associated with the national park proposals in the Mourne Mountains and recognised that past negative thinking had not dissipated over the past decade. However, based on natural attributes, stakeholders still thought the area would suit national park criteria equal to that found in CC and ACG. A few respondents felt that buy-in would possibly be better in CC and ACG, compared to the Mourne Mountains as these areas carried no ‘baggage’ from previously failed consultations associated with national park establishment.

7.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the findings of the third objective of this study, drawing upon in-depth interviews with local and regional stakeholders as well as reporting on the stakeholder positioning exercise that was carried out regarding the different mandates of national parks; ensuring ecological integrity, accommodating use in the

form of recreation and tourism and facilitating change that promoted sustainable livelihoods. Findings presented across this chapter reveals the diversity of opinion of different stakeholders regarding meeting each of these mandates, and the extent to which they showed willingness to change their initial thinking. The findings in the chapter therefore have helped to uncover the positions of stakeholders towards supporting or opposing national park establishment, as well as understanding their reasons and issues regarding such a designation occurring possibly within their local AONB. Applied understanding of the national park mandates assessed the degrees of movement in which stakeholders are willing to compromise in order to meet their interests and seek common ground in the form of a number of possible 'zones of compromise'. The chapter concluded with some insight into the working relationships with AONB management teams and other types of stakeholders and revealed the perceptions of those stakeholders interviewed as to a future prospect of national park establishment taking place in Northern Ireland. The next and concluding chapter provides the reader with a precis of the overall findings of the research including the development of a conceptual model based around the 'zone of compromise' thinking previously discussed and offers recommendations on areas for potential further research.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 SUMMARY OF STUDY

This thesis investigated the potential of national park establishment in Northern Ireland. This entailed looking at best practice from recently established national parks in the UK, identifying areas within Northern Ireland that proved suitable for this higher protection status, and gauging stakeholders' stance on the concept whilst safeguarding and meeting national park mandates of 'conservation', 'use' and 'sustainable livelihoods'. Ultimately, the study looked at, and contributed toward, finding potential common ground to build consensus between an array of stakeholder groups with interests regarding national park establishment.

Accordingly, the thesis examined the historical context and categorisation system for national park establishment globally and within Northern Ireland's counterparts, the UK and Republic of Ireland. Within the IUCN categorisation system, it was determined early on within the thesis that Category V (protected landscape/seascape) best fitted any potential national park established within Northern Ireland mainly due to the region's AONBs encompassing a working landscape which aims to protect and sustain natural heritage. These special landscapes are a haven for recreation and tourism creating a complex relationship between protected areas, local communities and the wider tourism industry. As such, the thesis examined this relationship and potential impacts in line with the national park mandates and the role that sustainability plays within protected areas. Consequently, these living landscapes comprise of an array of stakeholders with their own interests and therefore topics such as stakeholder engagement, partnership and conflict resolution were considered as critical in the examination of scholarly literature. Each of these areas of scholarly endeavour aids toward building understanding of stakeholder movement away from entrenched positions, focused on set 'issues', toward realignment around 'interests' which supports consensus-building.

The pragmatic standpoint of the research facilitated a mixed methods study which applied a multi-phase sequential strategy. The exploratory and sequential nature of the research allowed the data collection methods to be designed and adapted to best

meet the next objective. In-depth interviews were utilised in all three data collection phases. These were conducted with selected UK national park management personnel, candidate AONB management teams in Northern Ireland, and key stakeholder groups within candidate AONBs which were deemed best suited for elevation to national park status. Alongside in-depth interviews, other methods were employed in order to meet the objectives. These consisted of a content analysis conducted on selected UK national park management plans (objective 1), an attractivity scorecard constructed to determine the suitability of Northern Ireland's AONBs for national park status (objective 2), and a stakeholder positioning exercise (objective 3) designed to ascertain the support or opposition toward the special designation and willingness to compromise in order to find potential common ground that meets established mandates if a national park were to be established in Northern Ireland.

8.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This section offers the reader a precis of the key findings associated with the first three objectives of this study. The multi-phased sequential approach adopted by the researcher facilitates here a summation of key findings. Objectives 1, 2 and 3 involved primary and secondary data collection and analysis that led to the development of a conceptual model which is the fourth and final objective of this research and will be addressed in the next section of this concluding chapter, and provides the major theoretical contribution of this thesis. Prior to that, the key findings of objectives 1, 2 and 3 are set out below.

Objective 1: To learn from best practice how other regions of the United Kingdom moved toward national park establishment.

Best practice learnings from best case exemplars were determined through the analysis of in-depth interviews with UK park management personnel and their park management plans. The findings revealed that partnership was heavily emphasised on, not only as a management approach within the parks, but also acted as the main method to resolving conflicts. The methods of negotiation and mediation were referred to as playing a role in resolving conflicts, however, park managers positioned in senior

management levels were hesitant in showcasing the usage of such methods. Other mechanisms stated in aiding conflict resolution included communication, engagement, empowerment, adhering to recognised national park mandates and the reality of achieving national park status for their region in question. The park plans reviewed focused on the concept of partnership principles that had been identified through an extensive literature review. This analysis indicated that there were three main elements deemed to be crucial for good working partnership: 'mutual influence and leadership', 'empowerment', and 'contribution towards a democratic society'. Evidently, all three elements fed into each other allowing all stakeholders to influence policies and law with shared supportive leadership giving a sense of empowerment for all involved and in turn contributing positively both locally and nationally to democratic society. Although, this is not to say that all of the other elements are insignificant. It is understood that this web of partnership principles are interconnected in many ways and therefore all aspects need to be embedded within partnership working to be effective as a management and conflict resolution technique. Furthermore, the findings have showcased that the partnership principles are inconsistently translated within published management plans despite the emphasis placed on them as a mechanism by park managers.

Overall, it may be concluded that objective 1 has been met in what was learnt from best practice with respect to national park establishment. Interestingly, the main aspects of best practice are all comprised within wider scholarly literature associated with national park settings. Yet, the majority of best practice features as part of stakeholder management literature as opposed to understanding around conflict resolution. However, those aspects cited from conflict resolution studies were typically relied upon in the aftermaths of NRM initiatives such as national park establishment.

Objective 2: To comprehensively undertake an audit of a number of candidate regions across Northern Ireland based upon suitable attributes for national park establishment.

The audit produced an criteria scorecard based on attractiveness regarding natural, built and other features, including the existing presence of tourism attractions within AONB boundaries. This audit was completed using detailed maps of all eight AONBs

in Northern Ireland. The AONBs with the highest attractivity score were deemed to be the most suitable as potential national parks. As a result, Antrim Coast and Glens, Causeway Coast and Strangford Lough and Lecale AONBs generated the highest aggregate scores. With the sequential design applied across this study, the management teams of these top three AONBs were selected for in-depth interviews. The key finding from AONB managers was their position to stay neutral with regard to national park establishment and currently do not want to be seen by stakeholders to support the idea; albeit they did not oppose the idea either. The discussions drew on AONB teams ability to engage with stakeholders which confirmed that landowners, particularly within the farming community, possess many challenges to find agreement or have amicable relationships with other stakeholder interests. This acknowledgement became very clear through the examination of the complexities of the relationships existing between local communities, tourism and national parks, but also in with respect to wider NRM projects.

The goal of objective 2 was to find areas of suitability within Northern Ireland for national park establishment and this was achieved through the design and application of the attractivity criteria scorecard. Attractivity scorecards are a majorly unexplored area within scholarly literature and even more so in the context of protected areas and national parks. As such, this type of scorecard offers a major contribution from a methodological point of view. The study at this stage was further aided through the select AONB management interviews that gave valuable insight regarding the 'on the ground' situation within the AONBs currently before preceding to the next stage of the research. It was deemed impractical to approach the third objective from seeking consensus between stakeholder groups and their interests by holding focus groups for each of the selected AONBs.

Objective 3: To identify issues of 'common ground' between stakeholders in preferred regions that would facilitate dialogue toward national park establishment.

Common ground was sought after between stakeholders, on a one-to-one basis as opposed to group interviews (focus groups) where they were asked to consider the different mandates recognisable with areas that have received national park status. In-depth interviews accompanied with a scoping position exercise determined the

positioning held by stakeholders on national park establishment and their willingness to make some degree of compromise in order to meet each respective park mandate. The majority of stakeholders interviewed were favourable of the concept of establishing a national park with few opposed or in a neutral position to the idea. The findings from the stakeholder positioning exercise indicated that stakeholders willingness to compromise for protection or development purposes was different for each national park mandate. The largest degree of change and willingness to compromise emerged around recreation and tourism use opportunities, reasoning for this featuring employment opportunities, local development of tourism facilities and achieving better access for enjoyment of recreational trails. The 'sustainable livelihoods' mandate witnessed some compromise offered, which was ultimately balanced, with common ground focusing on employment, sustaining current business, and sustaining heritage and local traditions. The least change emerged when compromise was applied to meeting the mandate of the protection of the regions ecological integrity as the majority of stakeholders had initially adopted a strong pro-protect stance than they had done for the other two mandates. The common ground that fell clearly on the protection side of the spectrum resulted in stakeholders recognition of the need to minimise negative environmental impacts but also balancing this with sustaining livelihoods. Stakeholders demonstrated a clear position recognising that environmental protection takes precedence over the use of natural resources, however where use of resources occurs it needs to be sustainable for all those living within the area.

The above summary of stakeholders positioning and identifying what this researcher calls 'zones of compromise'; for all three mandates as they apply to the 3 candidate regions across Northern Ireland demonstrates that the third objective has been met. It is around this idea of 'zones of compromise' where 'common ground' can potentially be identified that a conceptual model is advanced as the final and concluding objective of this research. Attention in the next section turns to discussing this conceptual model in depth.

8.3 TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The creation of a conceptual model contributed toward meeting objective 4 as follows:

Objective 4: To develop a 'common ground' model that aligns with national park mandates and has replicability for countries yet to establish a national park.

It became clear during the analysis of the positioning exercise, as part of objective 3, that the degrees of movement by stakeholders generated zones of compromise based on the national park mandates, as was revealed in Chapter 7. The findings determined that stakeholders were willing to compromise to a wider extent in which a scenario involving recreation and tourism use within the boundaries of a potential national park was reached. This willingness to compromise also emerged where the mandate of facilitating sustainable livelihoods was concerned which recognised balance was required between protection and development. A more pro-protect picture emerged for the mandate of ensuring that the ecological integrity within a potential national park was reached. Figure 8.1 illustrates the three mandates 'zones of compromise' for ecological integrity (A), recreation and tourism use (B) and facilitating sustainable livelihoods (C). What is being inferred by this author, is that when these zones of compromise for scenarios A through to C are considered, a 'combined mandate zone' emerges (D).

The model acknowledges there is potential common ground between stakeholders when considering the complexity of the national park mandates of 'conservation', 'use' and 'sustainable livelihoods'. The zone of 'common ground' for the three mandates combined (D) is a relatively narrow zone which favours protection over development; the latter recognised as a zone boundary reaches the mid-point of the fully-protect fully-develop spectrum and potential balance between protection and development. In theory it may be argued that establishing this, albeit narrow 'combined mandate zone' which places more emphasis on protection over development supports the Sandford Principle in UK national parks where conservation outweighs use. This is encouraging as in practice use of resources for financial gain has had a tendency to be favoured over ecological integrity and environmental protection within national park settings.

Boyd (2004) discusses how despite the need to meet ecological integrity where national parks are concerned, support for increasing levels of use in the form of recreation and tourism has been the norm since the concept of the national park was first mentioned and when the first parks were established. Park policies have wrestled with often seen to be conflicting mandates, addressing them from a management plan perspective where only in recent years has ecological integrity been given priority over parks being used for recreation and tourism. The situation becomes even more challenging when 'working environment' national parks (IUCN category V) advocate that livelihoods of those residing within their boundaries have to be sustainable; that sustainability is often riding on employment that is closely linked to their potential recreation and tourism offer. What scenario D in the conceptual model proposed here is that stakeholders do in fact favour the protection of ecological integrity over the use of natural and cultural resources.

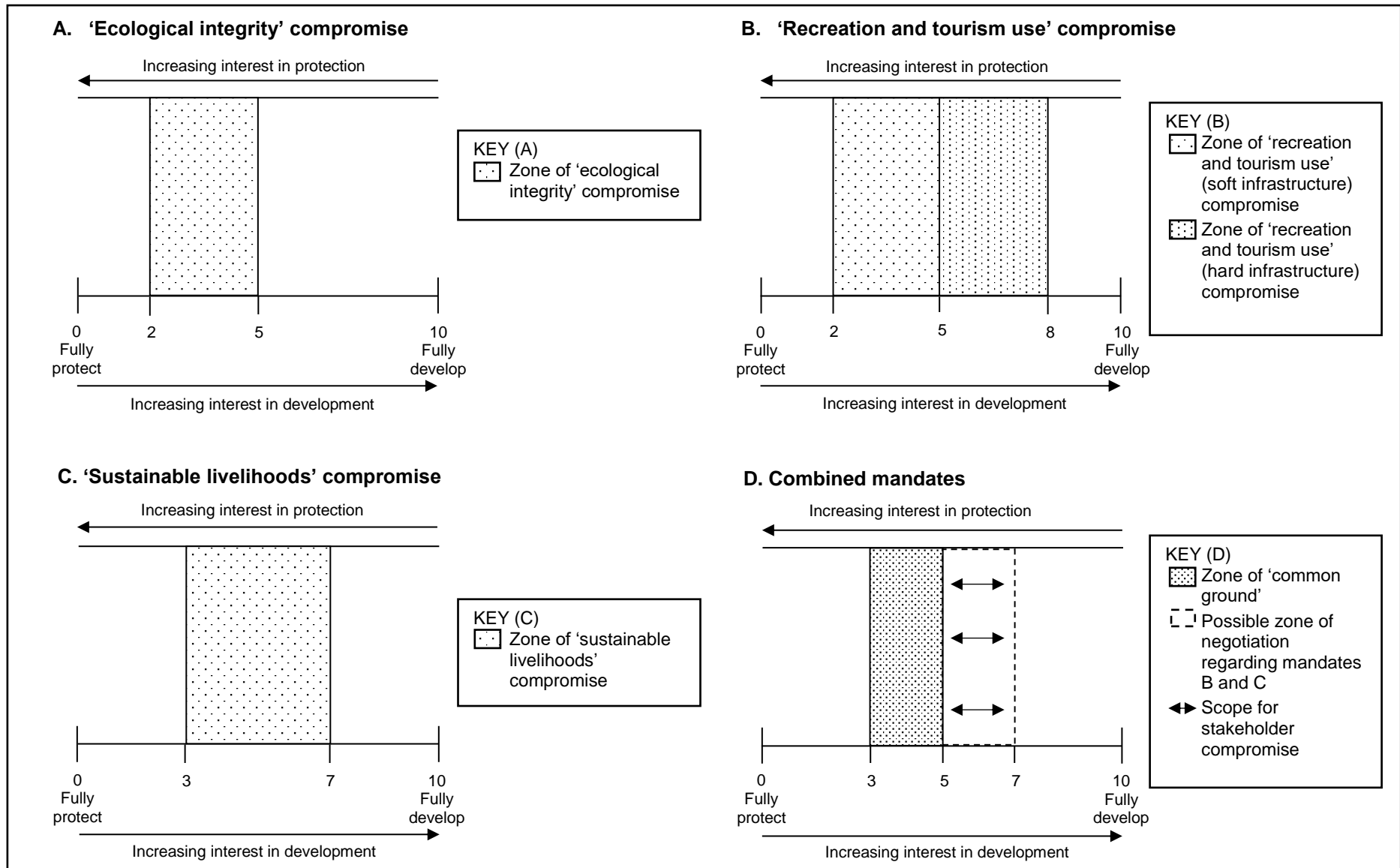
In addition, the conceptual model indicates there is a possible zone of negotiation in which stakeholders demonstrate flexibility in the degree to which they are willing to compromise. A potential wider common ground may exist where the interests of those stakeholders that support both use and ensuring sustainable livelihoods can be accommodated. The findings emerging from the stakeholder interviews linked to the three candidate AONB areas for national park consideration (see Chapter 7) acknowledged that any national park set up in Northern Ireland would have to allow for some development which is sympathetic and in keeping with the local communities, therefore possible negotiations to find consensus would be required pre and post national park establishment.

The ability and willingness to compromise in projects, particularly controversial schemes involving natural resources, can be difficult. However, research has shown there is aptitude to find common ground between opposing parties and this is often commonly found within consensus-building scenarios and typically involves trade-offs between conflicting parties (Thomas and Kilmann, 1974; Warner, 2000; Robbins and Judge, 2019). As such, this conceptual model drew on the theory of conflict-handling intentions, mainly compromise, in order to seek common ground and build consensus between stakeholders involving the problematic relationships associated with meeting national park mandates. Subsequently, the model determines that the 'possible zone

of negotiation' could result in trade-offs being made to satisfy harder forms of recreation and tourism as well as facilitate development that ensures sustainable livelihoods of those residents residing in a potential national park. In this possible 'negotiation', the protection of ecological integrity and natural resources maintains priority in any potential trade-offs that are made. Furthermore, by understanding the compromise that stakeholders are willing to accept, the extent of movement from their initial position this may entail to gain consensus, helps one to comprehend areas of common ground that exist that may offer recourse to prevent extremely conflicting entrenched positions emerging in the future.

Moreover, the conceptual model contributes significantly towards the thinking of triple mandates in national park settings. The concept of 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable livelihoods' as a potential mandate alongside 'protection' and 'use' was first introduced by Boyd (2000). Since then, the potential mandate has never officially become part of the traditional national park dual mandate (i.e. the UK Sandford Principle). This research is the first time the triple mandate thinking has been investigated with stakeholders as a possible mechanism to resolve the problematic and often conflicting dual mandate. The model showcases that sustainable thinking has the potential to unlock this conflict by encompassing a balanced approach which satisfies all stakeholders involved in national park pre and post designation. It is evident that national park authorities, including protected area management teams and wider government interested in NRM, could utilise the model to understand this balanced sustainable thinking in order to protect natural resources whilst allowing for some development in order to provide sustainable livelihoods that aid the prevention of entrenched conflicting positions.

Figure 8.1: Zones of compromise and finding potential common ground in line with the national park mandates



In light of the above discussion, objective 4 of developing a 'common ground' model that aligns with the national park mandates to aid national park establishment has therefore been met.

8.4 CONTRIBUTIONS

The conceptual model outlined in the previous section provides the main theoretical contribution of this thesis. In theory, stakeholders often entrench themselves into positions rather than focusing on their interests creating major obstacles in finding consensus or common ground (Fisher and Ury, 1981; Engel and Korf, 2005). However, this research has shown that this is not always the case and highlights that stakeholders are realistic and possess the ability to move. The model identified a credible common ground zone with possible flexibility to negotiate which focuses on interests and seeks solutions that satisfies the array of stakeholder groupings involved in national park establishment. Previous attempts towards national park establishment, particularly within Northern Ireland, placed a priority on economic and social development over conservation and protection leading to one reason for the failure to designate (Bell and Stockdale, 2016). As such, the stakeholders in this study reciprocated this stance and distinguished that precedence should be given to ecological integrity which is clearly demonstrated in this conceptual model. As common ground lies toward the protection of ecological integrity, the recognition by stakeholders that compromise has to occur to find resolutions underpins the theory that compromise requires trade-offs to meet the interests and needs through the use of negotiation, bargaining or mediation (Fisher and Ury, 1981; Warner, 2000; Lampe, 2001; Walkerden, 2006; Robbins and Judge, 2019). Moreover, the conceptual model offers a robust framework for other countries which are yet to establish a national park. It identifies that stakeholders are realistic in recognising the importance of ecological integrity and environmental protection whilst also recognising the need to be flexible within negotiations for the purposes of use and development needed to ensure sustainable livelihoods is reached. Therefore, within this specific context, any potential successful trade-offs would have to encompass the reality that while national park mandates need to be met, some are clearly given greater priority over others.

The research involved in this study, in particular to meet the second objective required an attractiveness score card be developed. This alone is a second contribution of this thesis as a major lacunae exists where scorecards involving natural resources management is concerned. The methodology developed in the design and application of the scorecard adds to the limited knowledge of quantifying attractiveness attributes within the wider tourism literature which mainly has focused on competitiveness and imaging of a tourism destination and not on the attractiveness of a region (Formica and Uysal, 2006; Kresic and Prebezac, 2011; Islam et al., 2017). As discussed previously in this thesis, the attractiveness scorecard attempted to quantify an areas 'suitability' for a protected areas setting. The criteria drew upon natural features, built and other features, including the existing presence of a tourism offer (based on existing tourist attractions) which all exclusively linked to establishing the naturalness qualities of areas but at the same time recognising the need for certain aspects within a natural built environment to exist that also adds to an area's overall attractiveness.

Discussion with AONB management teams both understood the value of such a scorecard and agreed it was a credible method by which to quantify attractiveness of potential protected areas. Undertaking the exercise revealed there was scope to add new aspects to the scorecard. In particular, the absence of inclusion of small communities and villages was an omission noted by managers. Equally they voiced some concern over adding existing tourism into the overall attractiveness criteria. However, it should be recognised that AONBs are more recognised for their recreational potential as opposed to tourism and that when national parks environments are considered few if any discount their tourism potential; in reality it is often the income they receive from tourism that allows for ecological integrity to be met by park management bodies. On saying that, this researcher recognises that a modified attractiveness scorecard could be applied by other researchers, where different environments may exist, but cautions on the exclusion of tourism attributes for any overall attractiveness measurement.

In a practical sense, this research has contributed toward opening up the debate surrounding national park establishment in Northern Ireland. By quantifying attractiveness for all eight AONBs across Northern Ireland has allowed other areas to be considered on an equal footing, and therefore has allowed for debate to consider other locations

that would never have previously been viewed as having potential to be considered for national park designation. One such area was Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB, which in all previous discussions on national park creation had never been considered by government. Given this AONB straddles a Lough, there is scope for the region to be set up as a combined national and marine national park which would be a first in all of the UK. Furthermore, the overall study has explored preliminary settings in which stakeholders are willing to compromise on the ground if a national park status was ever to be implemented, showcasing current potential common ground between stakeholders living within existing protected areas. In turn, creating a scenario in which further research can build on. This research has also shed a light upon the current situation and difficulties that AONBs in Northern Ireland face due to inadequate funding and poor resources. For Northern Ireland's protected areas to be fully appropriated and successful in their management and sustainability, the Northern Ireland Executive and tourism board need to acknowledge the key role in which these areas are central to tourism and the wider economy which also aid the new sustainability goals set in late 2019. It would not be a massive step then to recognise one of these AONBs as having potential to be given a higher status and named as Northern Ireland's first national park.

8.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research has identified some limitations throughout the course of it being undertaken. Firstly, with a sequential multi-phase research approach, the data collected at each individual stage can be perceived as producing small numbers particularly regarding those that were selected for interviews. In defence, many were targeted interviews, so it would have been difficult to gain higher numbers of interviews. Furthermore, these consisted of in-depth interviews providing enriched data and prevented a high degree of repetitiveness from the respondents. The in-depth stakeholders interviews targeted particular stakeholder groups in order to provide a range of opinions rather than saturate the stance on one specific stakeholder group. However, the attitudes provided from the stakeholders in this study will not fully represent the views of that particular group. As a result, the findings are subjective and cannot generalise the stance of the wider stakeholder group they represented. Furthermore, it would have been advantageous to have all stakeholder in-depth

interviews conducted in face-to-face settings in order to allow for both openness and trustworthiness to grow naturally between the respondent and the researcher. This was not possible due to the coronavirus disruptions which occurred early on in undertaking data collection of this stage (objective 3) of the overall research.

In addition, the content analysis of the UK national park management plans using premediated codes aligned to partnership principles can be viewed as being subjective as the researcher was the only coder. Therefore, these could be interpreted differently by others. In an attempt to counteract this, the codes were accompanied with definitions established in the scholarly literature in order to aid consistency, reliability and validity of the results.

Finally, as mentioned previously, the attractivity scorecard was specifically created to quantify the natural and built environment of Northern Ireland's AONB landscapes. The feedback from AONB managers themselves proved that the criteria may not meet the needs for wider application beyond those types of protected settings. However, this simplistic workable scorecard enables future researchers to adapt it to suit their setting and the extent to which existing presence of tourism and recreation adds to or detracts from its attractivity qualities.

8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is significant scope for further research directly leading on from this thesis. Given the preliminary manner of this study to explore the potential of establishing a national park in Northern Ireland, the research comes short of getting stakeholders around a table together to facilitate discussion on the topic. In doing so, the dimensions of exploring common ground with stakeholders in a mutual setting could offer insight into actually establishing that common ground. It would be beneficial to utilise other research methods such as focus groups within the most suitable AONBs in order to openly discuss common ground and possible interests which could in the future create conflicts between the array of stakeholders and would need some actioned methods to resolve them. Enabling stakeholders to get around the table would provide the opportunity to investigate the mechanisms of negotiation, bargaining and mediation in a practical sense and provide further theoretical contribution to this research area of

looking at the complexities involved in national park establishment. Also, it would be useful to extend the sample of interviews to more stakeholders such as individuals, not just stakeholder interest groups. This would further enrich the data regarding interests and issues expressed by local stakeholders. This research did not take into account the detailed background of stakeholders within their interest groups. Therefore, it may be useful to explore the demographics within any future research as responses from individual stakeholders may vary between different generations and various upbringings which in turn influence their position on national park establishment.

The study offered an insight into partnership working and its principles as applied to UK national parks. The content analysis expanded the knowledge on key partnership principles and highlighted that these are often inconsistency translated within park management plans. This analysis gives UK national park authorities the opportunity to use these partnership principles in a practical way that is interpreted within their park plans. However, further research would enhance stakeholders perception of partnership working within a national park setting and whether these principles are being translated to local communities. Furthermore, further research would endorse whether these large management documents are utilised by stakeholders and local communities which could signify if such plans are effective in aiding successful partnerships.

Lastly, further recommendations relate to the conceptual model that emerged from this research. Scope exists for the model to be utilised in further study in regions or countries yet to establish a national park. Whilst the model is purposefully applied within a Northern Ireland context, scope exists to consider its applicability in other destinations and may offer new approach to assist planners and managers within NRM settings. As a result, the model and the process by which a potential 'compromised mandate zone' can be reached and understood could be tested within other countries to determine if stakeholders elsewhere place priority on ecological integrity and environmental protection over the use and development of natural resources for recreation, tourism and the betterment of local livelihoods. As such the 'compromised mandate zone' may vary in its dimension depending on how that relationship is played out between these three mandates.

8.7 ENDNOTE

This summary chapter and discussion of a conceptual model to seek common ground aligning with the national park mandates draws this thesis to a close. This research presented considerations, both theoretical and practical, which have not previously existed within this context of Northern Ireland. The findings reinforce the importance that ecological integrity and the protection of our natural resources should take priority over the use, enjoyment and development of these same resources. It has been showcased that stakeholders are realistic in their ability to compromise over interests and concerns in order to find consensus and common ground. The future aspiration of a national park in Northern Ireland has a long way to go, however, there is a possibility of such a designation occurring providing that stakeholders continue to focus on interests over positions. As such, this reconciliation over shared and differing but complementary interests, not positions (as applied to national parks being set up), evokes the prospect of an informed and resolved outcome in the future (Fisher and Ury, 1981). National parks have had a long history in their development and in the present era most places can and do boast of their presence. It would be disappointing that Northern Ireland fails to grasp that opportunity and it is hoped that this research has shed new light here and offers a blueprint for how possible areas may be recognised and discussion moved forward with stakeholders involved to see that become a reality.

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APPENDIX 1

Example of interview schedule - UK national park managers

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK (CNP)

Topic A – General information/background and CNP authority

- 1) What is your role in the CNP and what does it consist of?
- 2) What was your background before being appointed to this role?
- 3) Are you originally from the national park area?
- 4) Have you always had an interest in our landscape's protection and the role it plays with regards to tourism, community, development and conservation?
- 5) How involved is the CNP authority running of the park on a day to day basis?
- 6) Does the authority have regular meetings to discuss matters regarding the park?
- 7) Approximately, how many people live within the national park today?

Topic B – History and establishment of the park

- 1) Before designation, was the park any other form of protected area? (i.e. National Scenic Area)
- 2) What was the process and the history to get to designation of the park?
- 3) What are the main landscape attributes which helped towards achieving national park status? (i.e. unique mountainous feature, particular protection of species of flora or fauna, etc.)
- 4) How long did the proposal or consultation period take before national park status was given?
- 5) Who were the stakeholders that were involved in the proposal and consultation stage? (i.e. community, business, farmers, representatives, etc.)
- 6) With regards to the community, what were their main issues with designation of the national park?

Topic C – Stakeholder engagement

- 1) The stakeholders you mentioned that were involved in the consultation stage of the establishment of the CNP, are these stakeholders still involved today?

- 2) What are the stakeholders involved in during consultation? (i.e. decision-making, planning, etc.)
- 3) Do you think it's best to involve stakeholders from the beginning or later in the process and why?
- 4) How are stakeholders involved today and how often are they involved?
- 5) Do these stakeholders have the opportunity to voice their concerns and are aware of who to voice these to?
- 6) Is there a high level of participation from stakeholders?
- 7) With regards to the community, would you say there is an overall positive or negative attitude towards the park authority and the park itself? Why?

Topic D – Conflict resolution (in the beginning and today)

- 1) Before the park was designated during the public consultation or proposal, were there any conflicts between the stakeholders you mentioned that were involved at this stage?
- 2) What were the main issues expressed causing the conflicts?
- 3) How were these conflicts overcome? (i.e. strategies – town meetings, etc.)
- 4) Were approaches such as negotiation, bargaining or mediation used during this stage in an attempt to resolve the issues and conflict?
- 5) Would you say that with the approaches or strategies that were used towards resolving the issues and conflict helped reach a position of common ground between the stakeholders and therefore worked successfully?
- 6) Are there any existing issues, concerns or conflicts which continue within CNP today? And if so, what are these?
- 7) Is there continued conflict between the relationship of preservation and use in the park?

Topic E – Management and impacts

- 1) What practices or techniques are employed today to balance protection of the natural resources and the use for tourism and recreation?
- 2) Is there a partnership or co-management or collaboration approach used with landowners within the park? (Such as with farmers, etc.)

- 3) Since the designation for the CNP, what are the main impacts (positive and negative) the local communities living within the boundaries have experienced?
- 4) Since designation of the CNP, has visitor numbers increased to the park annually? (increase/decrease/no change)
- 5) Is tourism development continued since designation of the park?
- 6) Would you say the tourism industry and the park have a sustained thriving relationship?
- 7) Looking to the future, do you think Brexit will have an impact on our national parks and how?
- 8) Finally, if you were part of a team to help a region toward national park establishment, what advice would you give? Would it be a good or bad idea? What would your advice be in terms of approaches and how to go about it?

APPENDIX 2

Example of interview schedule – AONB management team (Northern Ireland)

STRANGFORD LOUGH AND LECALE AONB

Topic A – Criteria

Explanation of criteria to managers

- criteria created through examination of AONB maps, UK national park special features and AONB special features mentioned through AONB websites

- 1) Do you think this is a fair way to map or measure attractivity?
- 2) Do you think it is important to look at attractivity which your AONB is measured against, in terms of the area, to be potentially considered for national park status in the future?

Topic B – Stakeholders

- 1) How do you engage with stakeholders and the community, the best methods you think are employed?
- 2) Who do you see as the main stakeholders?
- 3) Which of these stakeholders are the most engaging? Do some engage better than others? Which are more challenging?
- 4) In personal management opinion, do any of these stakeholders have fixed positions?
- 5) Are there any difficulties in moving stakeholders from their positions to see interests of common ground with others?

Topic C – national park status

- 1) From a management perspective, would you support or oppose the designation of a national park in this AONB area or elsewhere in Northern Ireland?

**alternative question if answered 'opposed' – why would you be happy to stick with the AONB model or status?*

- 2) From a management perspective, would the stakeholders in this area suppose or oppose designation of a national park?

**if oppose – main reasons why?*

- 3) Lecale AONB established in 1967; Strangford Lough and Lecale merge in 2010 – little over a decade after the Good Friday Agreement, why do you think the merging of the two areas did not assess national park status instead of a merged AONB?
- 4) It's nearly a decade since establishment of the merged AONB, what do you think is in the next decade for the AONB? Could it include potential upgrade to national park status?
- 5) In the last decade in Northern Ireland we have seen a huge increase in tourism infrastructure with the opening of the Titanic Quarter (2012), the new Giants Causeway visitor centre (2012), development of Games of Thrones and golf tourism – do you find it surprising that in the current environment of tourism there has been no progress toward designation of a national park which could contribute to Northern Ireland's international brand?

END OF FORMAL QUESTIONS

Advice for objective 3

Explain intentions for objective 3 – conducting focus groups (6-8 participants and 2 focus groups in each AONB) with stakeholder representatives

- Advice on holding such event
- Who to invite; who to contact
- Possible venue

APPENDIX 3

Example of interview schedule – regional and local stakeholders

LOCAL STAKEHOLDER GROUP

- 1) Tell me a little bit about your organisation
- 2) Do you do any work with the AONB and their management team? Is your organisation involved in local events or formal events set up by the AONB management team?
- 3) Scoping position exercise (*complete with stakeholder*)
 - A) Position on status of national park (in general) - why this position?
 - B) Position taken and willingness to compromise (in protection or development terms) – why this position?
 - C) Position on elevation of the AONB to national park status – why this position?
 - D) Position a national park would have to accommodate (why these positions?):
 - 1) making use of recreation/tourism
 - 2) sustainable livelihoods
 - 3) ecological integrity
- 4) Which category do you think best suits your organisation?
 - e.g. business, community, environmental, governmental or other
- 5) Which stakeholder groups would your organisation experience differences or issues with? Why do you have these differences?
- 6) Is there any commonalities your organisation would have with the stakeholder groups just mentioned?
- 7) We are aware the process to establishing a national park is very long (in some cases over 30 years), with this in mind, could you ever see a national park being established in Northern Ireland anywhere?
 - If yes, where and why?
 - If no, why?

APPENDIX 4

Example of stakeholder interview transcript

S02.m4a

Interviewer: Okay so if you want to start off by telling me a little bit about your organisation, do you any work with the AONB management teams or anything like that?

S02: Okay so we are a not-for-profit organisation. We probably if someone had to ask us we would define ourselves as an environmental NGO, non-government organisation. Having said that we are...I'll come back to that cause we aren't strictly environmental. We are outdoor recreation that is the focus off our job, of our work. So our remit is to develop outdoor recreation, develop it, manage it and promote it across the whole of Northern Ireland, alright, so we are a Northern Ireland strategic body. We don't own any land so therefore we have to work with multiple stakeholders across Northern Ireland. So that is everything from central government, local government, AONB management bodies, people like National Trust, big private estates who might allow us to do recreation, private landowners, farmers, so we work, community groups, so we work with everyone. Everyone. But our core of what we are trying to do is basically make it easier for people to get out and enjoy Northern Ireland's outdoor countryside so the natural assets that we have. So obviously AONBs are keen to that because that is where a lot of people want to go and do outdoor recreation facilities. So that, so for AONB management bodies, the sorts of things we would do, so most recently we had done an outdoor recreation strategy for the Binevenagh AONB, coastal lowlands. We've done an outdoor recreation strategy for the Mourne AONB, we've done it for Strangford Lough AONB, Strangford Lough and Lecale. We've done a lot of work up on the Causeway Coast in the past. Then we also develop facilities in those outdoor areas so that might be anything from developing community trails, walking trails, mountain biking trails, canoe trails, horse riding trails, any of those things. And then we work with AONB bodies in terms of we deliver lots of training so lots of seminars and good practice and things like quality outdoor recreation products or trail design or we run conferences every year, so we have a training role as well for those AONBs and everybody else, but they are a key part of it. So that's probably what we do most for the management bodies.

Interviewer: And do you attend any of their like sort of local events, maybe not local events with just the local stakeholders but you know more of the ones that are like a consulting sort of thing, event?

S02: So we use to sit on, so all of those AONBs have management forums and we, or advisory groups or whatever they are called they have a whole range, so we use to sit on those. We don't get resourced to sit on those because years and years ago we were 100 percent funded by government, so we attended all of those groups. We don't attend any of those groups now because we don't, we lost all our funding for all of that work. Therefore, but what we say to all of those groups like the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust and Mourne Heritage Trust if there is something that

you need advice on in terms of outdoor recreation and you think we will be useful of course we will turn up to that meeting, but we don't have the time to sit and listen about everything within those management bodies.

Interviewer: Well that's understandable, definitely understandable.

S02: So that has changed.

Interviewer: Yeah.

S02: You know from the past.

Interviewer: Suppose yeah from that time.

S02: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay fair enough. So I'll just move onto the scoping exercise. So it's goes from a one, from a zero to a ten. This is just in general for you as in Northern Ireland as a whole. So what would your position be on a national park status be in general?

S02: So our organisation would fully support a national park.

Interviewer: Fully support okay.

S02: Yeah. So back in the days when there was all this stuff about the Mourne National Park and then a few years after that DOE were looking at policy changes and governance structures for national parks again, our communication back to all those organisations was we fully support a national park.

Interviewer: Okay.

S02: So that's our position.

Interviewer: Okay. And why is that position, just out of curiosity?

S02: Just because we see so many benefits of it and those benefits are everything from protection of the landscape and the cultural and the natural and built heritage. We also think national park brings with it an identity, a brand identity, which is good. We also think, if you get national park status then someone has to fund you properly. The AONB management groups are not resourced at all to do the work that they are expected to do so if it would help them get in more resources, we believe that it actually would then, once you get that national park status it means that everything you do within those national parks there's a much greater quality or expectation, a higher expectation, and obviously our remit is outdoor recreation so we just think the facilities, the outdoor facilities, would be improved. We think it would be good for tourism within those areas, bring more people to them. We think it would be good for the quality of life of the people in those areas. So everything I suppose from social, economic, tourism, we just see that as good for those areas. We probably have a couple of concerns and I suppose this might fit into one of the matrixes if a national park status was to prevent outdoor recreation if conservation was to win over recreation that we already have then we wouldn't be supportive of it because we don't want it to, we don't want to lose anything that we already have but I think in this day in age there's always solutions area around those things. So I think we would support it definitely but at the same time we wouldn't want to lose,

we wouldn't want controls put on it that would lose access or lose facilities through development or constrain us anymore than we already are constrained in doing things like that. So, yeah, and also just think if there was a national park there's better coordination, all the bodies together. So I mean.

Interviewer: And currently that's not the way it is.

S02: Not really, no, you know. I look at people like Mourne Heritage Trust and the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust and Strangford Lough and Lecale and all other guys, you know that managers of those bodies, those guys are working their butts off, they have no resources, you know, an awful lots expected out of them and you know...

Interviewer: Yeah there's not a lot of award really.

S02: No, it would be very frustrating for them.

Interviewer: So if we move onto the position taken and your willingness to compromise so that's in terms of protection and development. Would you be more wanting more development purposes or wanting more protection purposes?

S02: So...well everything we do we always say it has to be sustainable recreation, sustainable outdoor recreation. So in many ways we would always see the balance.

Interviewer: So the middle yeah.

S02: Because we don't want to be developing recreation facilities to then destroy the very landscapes on which that is the reason we go to the Mourne to walk or to climb or whatever or go to Strangford or Causeway Coast, you know, it's a beautiful asset, it's a beautiful landscape so we don't want to destroy that so it's all about sustainability but again its back to that if we thought that conservation was going to increase and we were going to lose than we wouldn't be happy. You know.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's always trying to get that balance.

S02: Yes striking the right balance. It has to be. It has to be with that balance.

Interviewer: I suppose that's what sustainability really is just getting that balance between the two. So this one [third scale of exercise] is more to do with actual AONBs stakeholders within the actual AONBs but your position on elevation of AONB status to national park you would fully support...

S02: Yeap we would.

Interviewer: Is there any particular AONB that you would see more beneficial to an AONB, to a national park status than others?

S02: Well I just think in Northern Ireland somewhere much more developed, you know, I mean the Mourne has always been cited as the big one, but I think the Glens of Antrim is stunning. I think it has so much to offer.

Interviewer: I think I'm bias towards that one too.

S02: I do think the Glens are just stunning and have so much to offer up there that it is just often neglected, completely neglected. So to me, I mean. Even Binevenagh, we

did, I didn't know Binevenagh AONB that well until I did the recreation strategy two years ago and again that is a stunning area of Northern Ireland completely unsold, underdeveloped, now they've got landscape partnership money to help it to do that. I suppose the Mourne are more established in terms of Mourne Heritage Trust has been there for over 21 year, Causeway the Glens is now the Heritage Trust for years their more established so I suppose those two are more at a better stage but then you take the Sperrins which doesn't even have an AONB status and yet the area is beautiful, it is just, the more time I spend in the Sperrins the more I realise how beautiful it is, totally underdeveloped, totally undersold.

Interviewer: Well it has AONB status, it just doesn't have a management body.

S02: No management body right.

Interviewer: No team. No management structure.

S02: And that's been going on for 15 years.

Interviewer: No documents to try and sustain the area.

S02: No.

Interviewer: No nothing.

S02: No. And they keep, they had a great big huge conference there is it about two years ago when the Councils all joined together.

Interviewer: Yes.

S02: To see with the could get AONB team and that has been talked about for years and yet still there is no management body for the Sperrins. So I mean.

Interviewer: I think the problem with it is there are nearly four Councils areas come into one then they all completely....

S02: Yes that's right.

Interviewer: ...turns into a fight of who takes the lead for it.

S02: Yes its who takes the lead.

Interviewer: But I think. National parks don't take into consideration necessarily Council areas.

S02: No, no.

Interviewer: And I think that would probably benefit it you know they would need to take a step back and say you know what the four Council areas don't matter at all.

S02: And the side of it is because there's been so much negative publicity with the national park in the Mourne in many ways I think they'd be safer, the first national park in Northern Ireland would almost be safer not being the Mourne because you're not there's so much baggage with it attached to legacy there that honestly like if you went to somewhere like the Glens of Antrim you might get a much better buy in to it, you know, and if you could get one areas bought into it. In fact I would probably leave the Mourne now purely for that reason. Just too much baggage. There's too much anti-national park in the Mourne. You know if they were going

back they would just be going over old ground, but you know and again Fermanagh, it's not, it's a Geopark, but again they tried it years and years ago as a national park but again it's another lovely area.

Interviewer: I know, there's so many lovely areas that are just underestimated.

S02: There are, I know.

Interviewer: So then if we go from a position of a national park, how would it go to accommodate number one as making use for recreation or tourism would that be more for protection or development?

S02: So what, so you're asking us if there was a national park would we [unsure].

Interviewer: Would it accommodate recreation and tourism, the use of.

S02: Definitely. For us, it would definitely have it.

Interviewer: So do you want, where do you want to [looking at fourth scale] put number one?

S02: Well, we would want to see any national park being full of recreation, so I mean I don't, but at the same time its back to that thing we have to be very conscious we don't want to destroy so I'm not really too sure now where we go.

Interviewer: Yeah where you want to put it.

S02: You know because...

Interviewer: You want it to develop but also want to protect at the same time.

S02: ...we want it to develop but we also have to protect it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you want to maybe put it in the middle?

S02: Put it in the middle yeah. Sustainable livelihoods...

Interviewer: Sustainable livelihoods.

S02: Well to me a national park has to sustain the livelihoods and it has to make sure that it's not, that the local communities aren't being affected by the house prices going up and up and up and all of that. To me, they need, they need people who live there and born and bred there need to be able to afford homes there with national park status, that shouldn't become just for holiday makers and that and not forcing the local people out. To me that's really important as well.

Interviewer: Okay.

S02: And so is ecological integrity of the place. Just put them all in the middle because to me they are all important.

Interviewer: They are all equally important?

S02: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay that's fine. So then if I move on. So you've said already that you're an environmentally NGO as best suits?

S02: Yes probably out of those ones [points to few listed on question schedule].

- Interviewer: Yes. Well obviously you could be a combination of a few.
- S02: Yes we are a combination. We are really, our core purpose is outdoor recreation. We work with businesses, communities, environmental, government organisations but if someone was to say to us what are we, I suppose we probably are an NGO.
- Interviewer: Okay. So then what groups would your organisation have difficulties working sort of with and if you have issues with any what would these be?
- S02: So some of the barriers I suppose we face in our day to day work I suppose maybe that's how I'll approach it is, so, when we are, it's very, very difficult to create recreation on private land in Northern Ireland, that is one of the biggest obstacles. That comes up for all sorts of reasons but purely from the landowners and the farmers because they are worried that if somebody fall on their land they would be suited, so the whole issue over occupiers liability comes up time and time again so.
- Interviewer: Do you think that should change? The whole roaming rights and so on if a national park was established.
- S02: So, in Northern Ireland we would never push for a right to roam what they have in Scotland because we will never get that, we will never get that, so we would never push for that. What we want to see, and we are pushing for is a new outdoor recreation bill for Northern Ireland which will improve access onto private land but at the same time protect the farmers and protecting the farmers is either through new legislation on occupiers liability or somebody like government coming in and indemnifying those landowners against people suing them because that is our landowners biggest fears. What that means in practical terms on the ground is there are many places in Northern Ireland we would love to say to develop a community walk or community trail for the community and we cannot get permission from the private landowners and that really all comes back down to this fear of somebody suing them. So that is, so, now, we can't force a landowner to do that, of course we can't. We have actually tried in the past to actually change the legislation by lobbying government, they came back to us and said they will not change existing legislation on occupiers liability because there never has actually been a case in Northern Ireland ever against a farmer from a recreational user that's gone to court.
- Interviewer: That may change now cause my father has just informed me cause he does Duke of Edinburgh. So there's a woman, I don't know where she was, I can't remember the name of the path but anyway. I think part of the land is Greenmount's and the woman got hurt by a cow, I don't know how severe, I don't think she ended up in hospital or anything and now she's taking Greenmount to court.
- S02: To court. Well there has never been...
- Interviewer: So that's now, obviously...
- S02: From an insurance. Now. So she is, she will be suing Greenmount Agriculture College which is an educational institute. There has never been against a private individual.
- Interviewer: Aw okay.
- S02: Never. Never. And we've done the Sport NI, Sport Northern Ireland actually did, they did research about maybe 7 years ago to look at that and then they've redid it a

couple of years ago to see if anything had changed and was there still any claims against private and there still wasn't. But there are definitely claims against the Forest Service, National Trust.

Interviewer: Yeah and now Greenmount.

S02: Greenmount, you know. But we couldn't and in fact the Ulster Farmers Union we worked with them and their insurance company said nobody in Northern Ireland had ever sued against an individual.

Interviewer: Very good.

S02: Never got to court ever. But that doesn't matter, it's the farmers perception and their perception is...

Interviewer: Yes that's the problem now, the ramification is, so Dad he was putting through routes for Duke of Ed, he has all the connections and now they are just like 'no I don't want these kids going through my land'.

S02: See and that's terrible.

Interviewer: It is terrible cause now their probably not going to get to do their Duke of Ed.

S02: Yeah and not get that experience. So, so, for us I suppose it's more frustrations, and it's not even, sometimes its frustrations with the landowners because some of them to be honest are just thran and they don't want you doing, walking on their fields or building trails even though we would cover them you know and that will never change that's a landowners sort of thing but frustrating also for some of the farmers because they still see occupiers liability as the big thing you know when in reality there's never been a case against them but that's just, we have to deal with so that's frustrating for us. Suppose some of the other barriers to our own work in those areas is I think more and more sometimes NIEA environment agency, the planners so NED the Natural Environment Division, and HED the Historic Environment Division I would say are very often their default position on all planning is 'no' rather than working with us to find solutions. So, for instance, you know, when we're trying to build a trail alongside a river, yes it might be designated, have designations along it, but instead of trying to work with us to find solutions to that it's just 'its designated you're not getting to build a path'. That is so frustrating because to me it just seems more and more like NED, Natural Environment Division in the planners are just saying 'no' to everything. My fear with that is we need more access and more increased opportunities and if there was a national park we certainly need them cause we don't have that public right of way network that they have across the water. So that's so frustrating for us. It's almost like, it's almost like there's tunnel vision in the planners to say 'no, designated sites you can't so anything'. That's not right.

Interviewer: Yeah. You see and that stops development.

S02: And that stops development.

Interviewer: And that gives that perception that a national park in Northern Ireland would stop development.

- S02: Exactly.
- Interviewer: But if you go over to England or wherever they know that a national park does not stop development.
- S02: No its doesn't stop it.
- Interviewer: but you couldn't tell that [to everyone over here]...
- S02: I can understand that now having worked with the planners for the past two years because most of our work in the past we didn't need planning for putting trails in the ground then they changed the planning legislation and we do, so we're now everything we do needs planning. I could actually understand why local people in a national park area say that because we're coming up against it every day too.
- Interviewer: That's even outside a designated area.
- S02: Yeap, and that's outside. So I could understand that from their perspective.
- Interviewer: Yeah. See I think a lot, I went over to South Downs National Park with regards to planning and we talked about that as part of the PhD and he said that they actually have a really good system in place for their planning so they have local planners and they decide on like the small cases and they don't go to any city centre building, they have their own planners and if a farmer say wants to build a conservatory or something they will have a local officer that goes to the farmer and sit down, sits with them, fills in the application form and everything with them, tells them what they can and can't really do and where there is a work around and I think that's a really good practice and I think, I would love Northern Ireland to take that on...
- S02: Yeah, to see that. Whereas I remember...
- Interviewer: ...where you're not looking at a brick wall just saying 'no'.
- S02: No. No, but that's, that is what we are finding definitely in here, it is that it's almost their default position is no.
- Interviewer: Yeah cause they don't want anything to change.
- S02: No they don't want anything to change and they don't want to find solutions cause that's not actually what they are being paid for, you know, and I've spoken to NIEA, our liaison officer in there recently about this to say if you want us to continue to develop communities trails for health and wellbeing now, which is the big thing for us you know where people live, see off-road walking, I said you are going to have to educate the planners in your organisation because right now they are stopping everything.
- Interviewer: Yeah I would very much agree, yeah.
- S02: Stopping everything. Which is just, just so infuriating. It really is and then as you say Nikki you take that back to people who are already anti-national park and they start to hear that too and I can understand that.

Interviewer: Yeah it's very hard to change their mindset then cause they are so caught up in what they've already heard previously in that so to try and change someone's opinion on that is ridiculously hard.

S02: Yeah. I can understand that.

Interviewer: And that's what I'm trying to do [laughs], probably going to get to too many brick walls. So is there any other differences you want to cover with any other stakeholders?

S02: District Councils we would work with a lot, in terms again of development, so again I mean if we take for example greenways right? We would love to a network of greenways across Northern Ireland like they're building in the south of Ireland now. Fantastic for tourism if they are in scenic areas. We find that our District Councils will not invest land, again that's contentious, that means they would have to buy land off the landowners but DFI who build our roads go in and invest lands to get strategic roads, you know. Sometimes its infuriating, you think to yourself you know, like there was a proposed greenway up from was it Ballymena right up to the North Coast and in Glenarm, I mean some of the scenery in there is just fantastic, what a great resource I think for tourism but most importantly for communities but that will never happen cause the landowners will never agree to that. Whereas if a Council was more proactive in maybe investing some of that land, we're not talking a big strip of land, then what a wonderful asset local people would have and so we're always very risk adverse in Northern Ireland.

Interviewer: Yes.

S02: Always, never prepared to challenge or take a wee bit of a risk and that's all down to, I just think that comes down to our local politicians, to be honest it does.

Interviewer: Yeah, very much agree. That's the thing though trying not to bring politics into it, but politics will always come into everything to do with Northern Ireland which is a real problem.

S02: Yeah.

Interviewer: It really is frustrating.

S02: I mean your last question about national parks do I ever see that, my answer is purely I don't think we will and the reason we will not have that is because our, if agriculture has a DUP minister, the DUP vote comes from the farmers and the landowners, they will not I would say stick, our ministers for DAREA will not stick their heads up because they will lose votes from those farmers and landowning community so therefore I don't think they will ever, ever push through a national park, I really don't. And that, I just think that's the way it's going to be in Northern Ireland, but you know.

Interviewer: Yeah that politics strongly comes into it.

S02: Its politics. The politics definitely strongly comes into it here even for something like a national park without, without doubt. Because that is why things like our access legislation has never changed. Our access legislation has never changed because the politicians here are scared of losing votes from the landowner community, problem

in Northern Ireland is there are thousands of landowners, all landowners, it's not like Scotland when they changed their legislation they were working with big estates who own hundreds of thousands of kilometres of land up there, do you know what I mean. I just don't think Northern Ireland's politicians are strong enough and I honestly don't believe it. I'm sorry to say that but I don't.

Interviewer: [laughs] I know.

S02: I don't. I don't think they are. I don't think we will ever get to that stage.

Interviewer: No probably won't ever see it in my lifetime and I'm only 27 [laughs].

S02: I know. Honestly when I was back at your age I was still involved in access, the countryside and outdoor recreation and you know back then, in fact the access legislation there was push trying to change it 25 years ago and 25 years later it's never changed.

Interviewer: No. We aren't a nation to change much.

S02: No. And I do think it is political in Northern Ireland, I do. I just don't think, I don't think people, or our politicians are prepared to stand up for the better good of Northern Ireland, PCL, I think they have become so embroiled in local politics and 'what does that mean for me losing a vote' and that comes right down to local councillors on Councils as well because, you know, if you live in the Glens of Antrim and you say there is going to be a national park and then all the local landowners who are worried about planning and all rest come to you, well as a councillor you know you'll lose votes if you don't support the anti-national park brigade so I can't see it. I hate to say that but honestly I can't, I can't, I cannot see it, just the way our local politics and especially if you continue to have DUP ministers in charge of DAERA which we always seem to have in charge of DAERA and the environment for as long as I can remember its always been DUP and that is their biggest vote which is the landowners and the farmers. So maybe, maybe they'll have changed their minds now with Brexit cause they all voted but I don't know.

Interviewer: So then if we go to commonalities, do you have any commonalities with certain groups? Stakeholder groups.

S02: We would work all the time with community groups, environmental groups, government groups across Northern Ireland I mean we're trying to work with community groups, trying to develop community trails in the areas so places have safe off-road working, put in facilities so that some of them can develop tourism around that, you know, you put in a lovely long distance walk you know then on the back of that you'll have people coming in setting up pods or wee coffee shops or whatever so in terms of that side we work with all of those groups. But I don't know in terms in relation to a national park or anything what their feelings are but, because at the end of the day whether there's a national park or not in Northern Ireland, we are one our core purpose is still to try and make it easy for people to get out and enjoy the outdoors. So whether there is any designations of AONBs or national parks or anything we will try to continue to do that work and you know if, if that work continues and develops that, not having that label of national park or AONB is not still is not going to stop those private sector people opening up pods or

glamping or cafes or whatever, but I think certainly what I said at the beginning for us you know a national park identity brings something, it brings tourists in, it does.

Interviewer: Yeah.

S02: It does, there's no doubt about it. You know when you're thinking of going on your holidays around the water, you know, you always think 'oh I must go to the Lake District', it's a national park. Well there's a reason it's a national park, it's a beautiful area, designated all the rest. So yeah, that's where we would be so.

Interviewer: Okay. So that's the end of the official questions.

S02: Alright.

Interviewer: Do you have any questions or anything for me?

S02: No. I mean I'm happy to answer anything Nicola, anything even off record.

[End 30.19 of audio file]

[Casual chat continues to 36.10 of audio file]

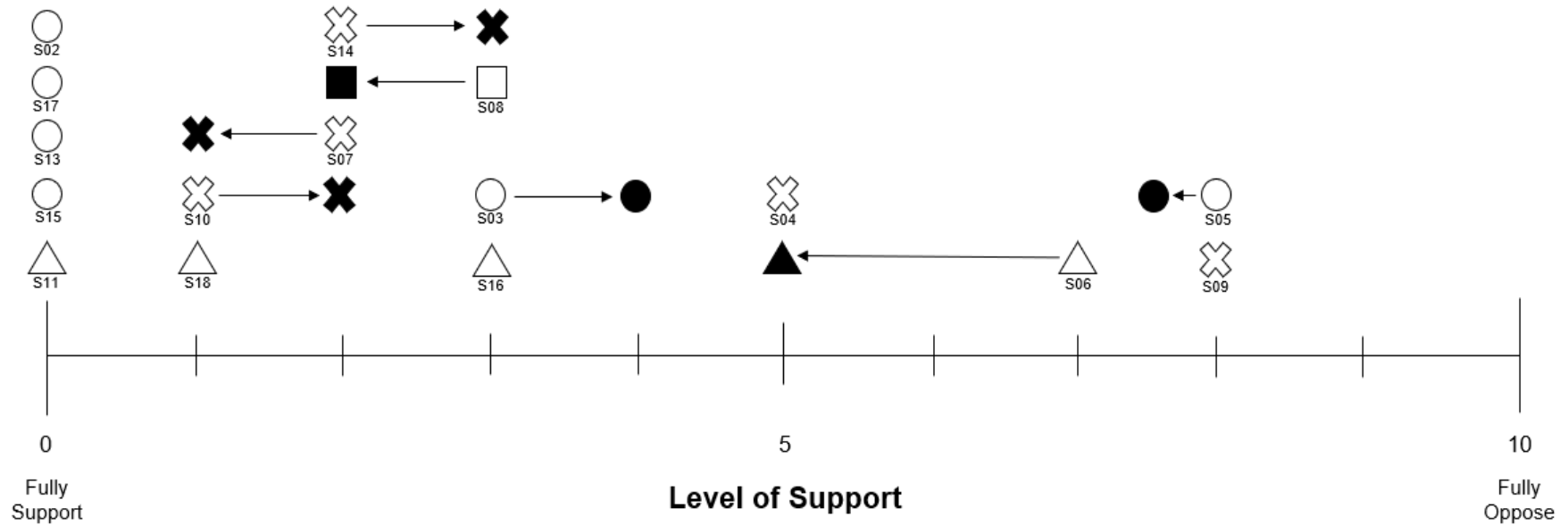
APPENDIX 5

Ranking of partnership variables to each UK national park

Ranking	Partnership variable to each national park		
	Cairngorms National Park	Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park	South Downs National Park
1	Shared goals and integration of conservation	Sustainability, development and innovation	Mutual influence and leadership
2	Sustainability, development and innovation	Mutual influence and leadership	Understanding and knowledge
3	Contribution toward democratic society	Empowerment	Participatory decision-making
4	Participatory decision-making	Contribution toward democratic society	Empowerment
5	Understanding and knowledge	Shared goals and integration of conservation	Contribution toward democratic society
6	Mutual influence and leadership	Participatory decision-making	Shared goals and integration of conservation
7	Empowerment	Mutual benefits	Sustainability, development and innovation
8	Avoidance or minimisation of conflict	Mutual transparency	Mutual accountability
9	Pooling resources and equity	Enhancement of tourism product	Avoidance or minimisation of conflict
10	Mutual benefits	Mutual respect	Enhancement of tourism product
11	Sharing of management responsibilities	Avoidance or minimisation of conflict	Pooling resources and equity
12	Enhancement of tourism product	Pooling resources and equity	Mutual transparency
13	Mutual accountability	Mutual trust	Mutual benefits
14	Mutual trust	Mutual accountability	Mutual respect
15	Mutual transparency	Understanding and knowledge	Mutual trust
16	Mutual respect	Sharing of management responsibilities	Sharing of management responsibilities

APPENDIX 6

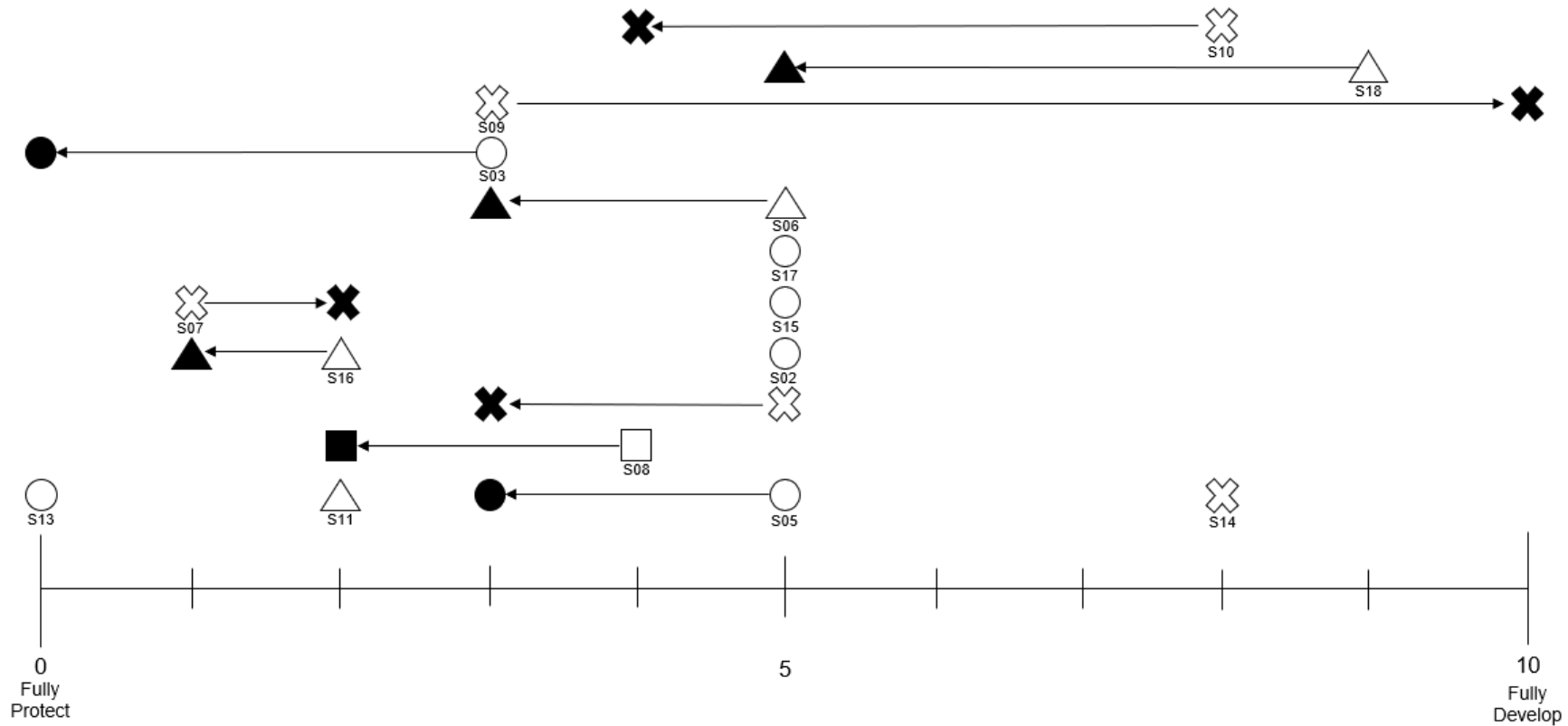
Stakeholder positions on national park status in Northern Ireland against AONB elevation with their identifiable codename



<p>KEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environment original position ⊗ Community original position △ Business original position □ Government original position ● Environment changed position ⊗ Community changed position ▲ Business changed position ■ Government changed position → Extent of change 		<p>STAKEHOLDER CODE TO AONB <i>(Stakeholder codename below type on scale)</i></p> <p>Antrim (ACG) = S04, S05, S06, S07, S08 (in ACG and CC), S09, S12 (no position)</p> <p>Causeway (CC) = S08 (in ACG and CC), S14, S18</p> <p>Strangford (SLL) = S03, S10, S11, S16, S17</p> <p>Regional (R) = S01 (no position), S02, S13, S15</p>
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APPENDIX 7

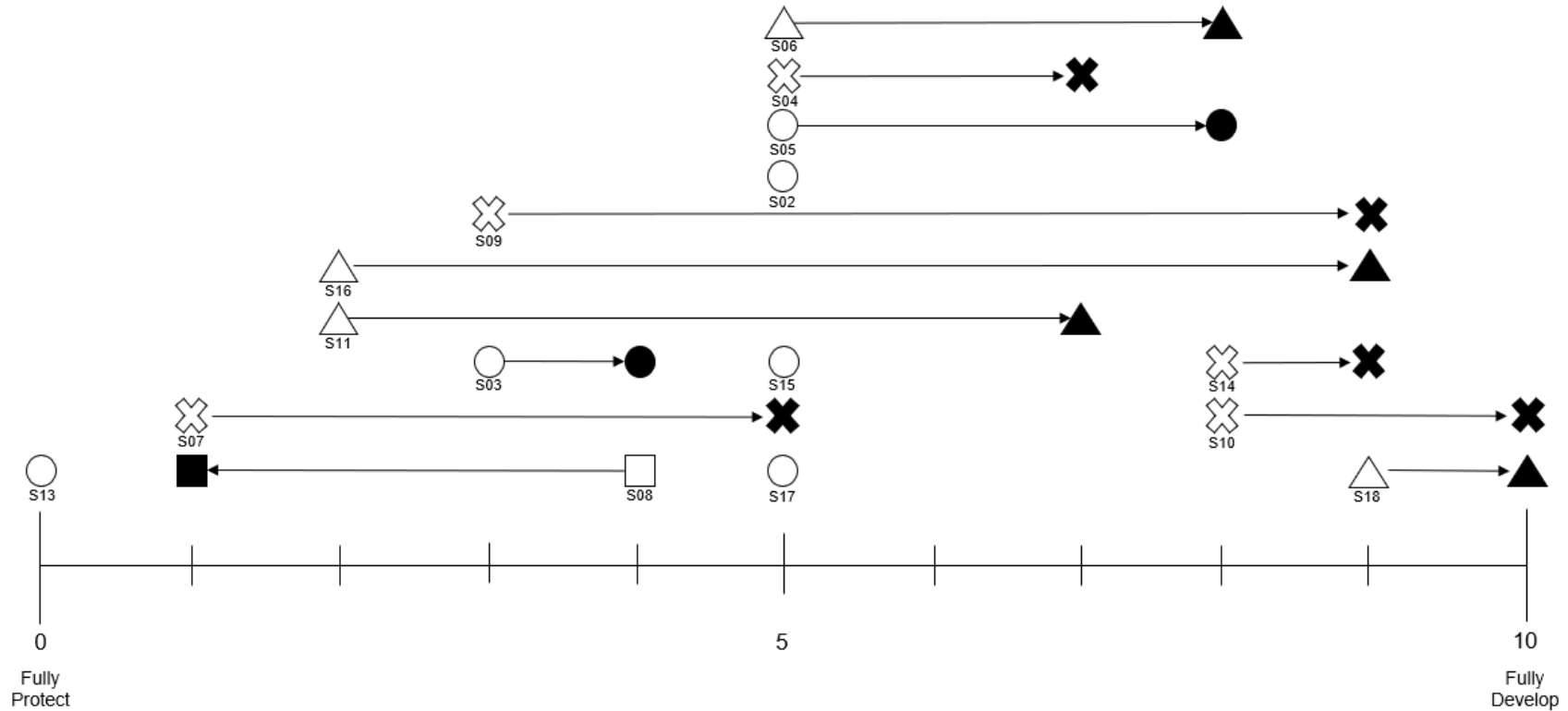
Stakeholder positions in relation to compromising toward meeting the 'ecological integrity' mandate with their identifiable codename



KEY		STAKEHOLDER CODE TO AONB	
○ Environment changed position	● Environment original position	<i>(Stakeholder codename below type on scale)</i>	
⊗ Community changed position	⊗ Community original position	Antrim (ACG) = S04, S05, S06, S07, S08 (in ACG and CC), S09, S12 (no position)	
△ Business changed position	▲ Business original position	Causeway (CC) = S08 (in ACG and CC), S14, S18	
□ Government changed position	■ Government original position	Strangford (SLL) = S03, S10, S11, S16, S17	
→ Extent of change		Regional (R) = S01 (no position), S02, S13, S15	

APPENDIX 8

Stakeholder positions in relation to compromising toward meeting the ‘recreation and tourism use’ mandate with their identifiable codename



KEY

○ Environment original position	● Environment changed position
⊗ Community original position	⊗ Community changed position
△ Business original position	▲ Business changed position
□ Government original position	■ Government changed position
→ Extent of change	

STAKEHOLDER CODE TO AONB
(Stakeholder codename below type on scale)

Antrim (ACG) = S04, S05, S06, S07, S08 (in ACG and CC), S09, S12 (no position)

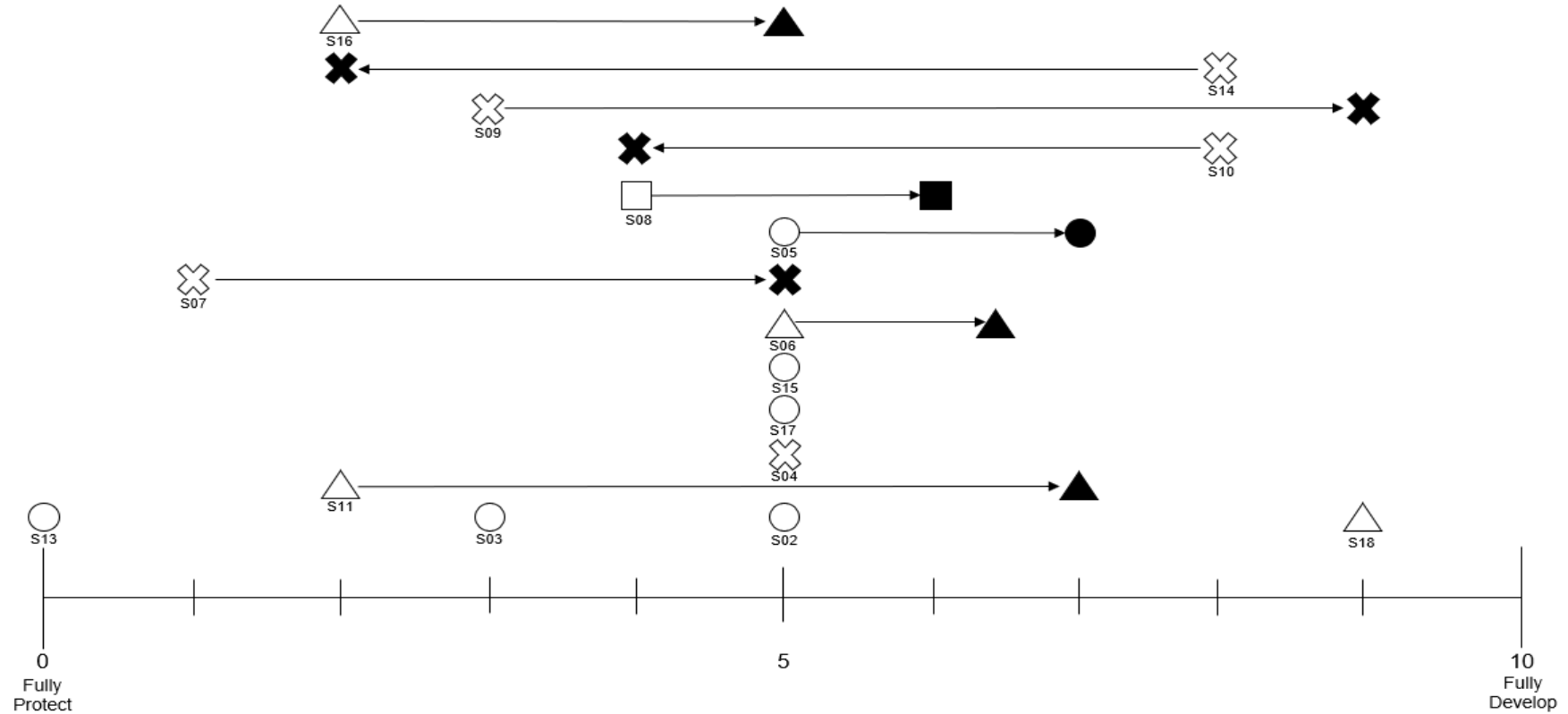
Causeway (CC) = S08 (in ACG and CC), S14, S18

Strangford (SLL) = S03, S10, S11, S16, S17

Regional (R) = S01 (no position), S02, S13, S15

APPENDIX 9

Stakeholder positions in relation to compromising toward meeting the ‘sustainable livelihoods’ mandate with their identifiable codename



KEY	
○ Environment original position	● Environment changed position
⊗ Community original position	⊗ Community changed position
△ Business original position	▲ Business changed position
□ Government original position	■ Government changed position
→ Extent of change	

STAKEHOLDER CODE TO AONB	
<i>(Stakeholder codename below type on scale)</i>	
Antrim (ACG) =	S04, S05, S06, S07, S08 (in ACG and CC), S09, S12 (no position)
Causeway (CC) =	S08 (in ACG and CC), S14, S18
Strangford (SLL) =	S03, S10, S11, S16, S17
Regional (R) =	S01 (no position), S02, S13, S15