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SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF NATIONAL PARKS: A CASE STUDY FROM THE NORTH-EAST OF ENGLAND[1]

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ABSTRACT: Socioeconomic impacts of National Parks: A case study from the North-East of England

Enforcement of rural policy measures within National Parks may have a particular importance as they may contribute to reach socioeconomic objectives devised for such areas. So this paper approaches as case study the application of a relevant rural development measure in the Northumberland National Park (NNP) –England, North East— over the period 2000-2008 in order to explore whether NNP makes any difference in terms of enforcing rural policy measures. The main research findings indicate that NNP may have some sort of positive impact on rural development, but support relying on *tourism monoculture* may be a background reason for undesired negative consequences.

Key Words: socioeconomic impacts, National Parks, rural policy, England, North-East region.

RESUMEN: Impacto socioeconómico de los Parques Nacionales: un caso de estudio del Noreste de Inglaterra

La aplicación de medidas de política rural en los Parques Nacionales puede ser de especial relevancia en la medida en que contribuyen a lograr los objetivos socioeconómicos establecidos en estas áreas. El artículo analiza un caso de estudio centrado en la aplicación de una determinada medida de desarrollo rural en el Parque Nacional de Northumberland (PNN) –Inglaterra, Noreste— durante el periodo 2000-2008. Su propósito es conocer si el propio PNN diferencia en algún modo la aplicación de la política rural. Los resultados indican que el PNN podría generar impactos positivos en el desarrollo socioeconómico de su entorno, pero que un apoyo basado en el *monocultivo del turismo* podría ser un factor de peso en la consecución de efectos negativos.

Palabras Clave: impacto socioeconómico, Parques Nacionales, política rural, Inglaterra, Región Noreste.

1 A previous version of this paper was presented in the *Regional Studies Association Annual International Conference* (Prague, May 2008).

LABURPENA: Parke Nazionalen eragin sozioekonomikoa: Ingalaterrako Ipar-ekialdeko azterlan kasu bat

Parke Nazionaletan aplikatzen diren landa-garapen politikako neurriek garrantzi handia izan dezakete gune horiei egotzitako helburu sozioekonomikoak betetzen dituzten heinean. Artikulu honek Northumberland-eko Parke Nazionalean (NPN) –Ingalaterra, Ipar-ekialdea— 2000-2008 denboraldian aplikatutako landa-inguru politikako neurri jakin baten aplikazioa du aztergai. Ikerlanaren helburua NPNak era horretako neurrien aplikazioan nolabaiteko diferentziarik eragiten duen jakitea da. Parkeak landa-garapenean eragin positiboa izan dezakeela adierazten dute emaitzek, baina era berean *turismo monolaborantzan* oinarritutako laguntzek ondorio negatiboak ekar ditzaketela azpimarratzen da.

Gako-hitzak: eragin sozioekonomikoa, Parke Nazionalak, landa-inguruko politika, Ingalaterra, Ipar-ekialde eskualdea.

1 INTRODUCTION

The conception of English National Parks has evolved over the last few decades. National Parks used to be seen as just natural reserves for contemplation and conservation, but have been gradually considered as sites which to some extent may contribute to development and enhancement of local communities. The former conception was spread at the time that the first National Park was declared in Yellowstone (U.S.) in 1872. However, that idea of intrinsic natural beauty for which Parks served has been slowly replaced by the perception of an indisputable human-natural relationship within these areas. Hence, a new vision about natural protected areas, including National Parks, has emerged through which local community participation has been reinforced insofar as it is necessary for conservation purposes as well as for local development (Mac Ewen and Mac Ewen, 1981; Rojas-Briales, 2000; Thompson, 1999; Wells *et al*., 1992). Thus, the designation and management of these sites have been increasingly inserted into the rural policy framework, since it has been seen as a factor able to foster the rural development of the areas where protected areas are located (Buller, 2000). Furthermore, the application of rural policy measures within National Parks may have a particular importance as they may contribute to reach objectives devised for such areas.

Within this context the existence of positive socioeconomic impacts consequent on the establishment of National Parks are assumed, such as revenues derived from tourism and brand-driven identity, creation of local employment, and targeted aids for farming and rural development projects. In this sense several pieces of work have valued socioeconomic impacts of protected areas in terms of wealth and employment, both from the local perspective (Mills, 2002) and from the regional scale (Duffi-Deno, 1997; Getzner and Jungmeier, 2002; SQW Limited, 2004). Attempts to achieve the economic value of environmental assets located within National Parks have also been undertaken (see e.g., White and Lovett, 1999; Lee and Han, 2002). However, up to our knowledge no pieces of research focused on the impact of a particular measure within the rural policy framework have been undertaken.

So enforcement of Rural Enterprise Scheme (RES) in the Northumberland National Park (NNP) –England, Norh East region— has been approached in this paper. Due to the distinctiveness of a particular National Park such as NNP contains, the influence that a

relevant rural policy measure (i.e. RES) may have on the site and its immediate environs over the 2000-2008 period has been assessed. The RES is a measure which was encapsulated within the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) 2000-2006, but as some of the projects were planned to run longer than this period funding was extended until 2008.

A wide range of projects may be eligible within the RES, which was devised drawing on a combination of sub-measures under Article 33 of Rural Development Regulation (CE) 1257/1999. The scheme could have assisted projects that "support the development of more sustainable, diversified and enterprising rural economies and communities" (DEFRA, 2004:5). In terms of budgeting, approximately £145 million were allocated to the RES and over 3,000 projects were approved all across England, creating of safeguarding over 14,500 jobs[2]. In the North East, some 80% of the ERDP regional budget was allocated to the RES, which reveals the potentiality of this scheme as rural development tool for the region.

In regard to the text outline, firstly the evolution of the National Park policy in England is described from a historical point of view. Section 3 contains research objective and methodology employed. Main socioeconomic features of the case study are detailed in section 4 along with the data in regard to the enforcement of the RES in the area analysed. Section 5 explains results of the research and then, principal outcomes and issues highlighted are brought into discussion. Finally, principal ideas are synthesized as conclusions.

2 NATIONAL PARK POLICY IN ENGLAND

The creation of National Parks can be seen as a means of protecting the countryside. This is done by altering the systems of property rights, which determine whether or not certain activities can be undertaken in a given area (Garrod and Whitby, 2005). In this sense, the principal aim of the National Parks has historically been the preservation of the natural environment contained in them through limiting and avoiding both activities and uses. However, socioeconomic aims have been recently incorporated to the range of objectives pursued by National Parks.

The legal framework supporting the creation of National Parks in England and Wales relies on the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. This piece of law was mainly based on the *Dower Report* (1945), which served as blueprint of the forthcoming Act. The creation of 22 potential Parks was recommended in the report, although not all of them would be finally designated. On the basis of report's rationale lies that public enjoyment would give ample justification for wildlife and nature conservation, so did not differentiate between parks for conservation and for recreation (Curry, 1994). Instead, National Parks should be:

> "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 preserved, (b) access and facilities for public open air enjoyment are amply provided, (c) wildlife and buildings and places of historical and architectural interest are suitably protected, while (d) established farming use is effectively maintained".[3]

In this manner, following recommendations given by Dower and Hobhouse Committee the 1949 Act was passed, providing the legal framework for designating National Parks. In regard to requirements that a National Park should contain, paragraph 35 of the 1949 Act sets out that: "essential requirements of a National Park are that it should have a great

2 Available from the web page of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA): http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/erdp/schemes/project-based.htm#res

3 Extracted from Mac Ewen and Mac Ewen (1982:13), drawing on Dower, J. (1945): *National Parks in England and Wales*. Cmnd 6628. His Majesty's Stationery Office, London.

natural beauty, a high value for open-air recreation and substantial continuous extant"[4]. In fact, those areas designated as National Park draw on a valuable environment, which has been indeed the first reason for such a protection. However, as noted above recreational uses have been closely linked with National Parks in England since their conception. In this sense, implementation of the legislation concerned must be contextualized in the post-war era, when hopes of an increasing wealth and leisure time were gaining *momentum*.

Following the implementation of 1949 Act, 7 new National Parks were designated during the 1950s (Table 1). It seems that much effort and commitment was devoted to the development of the legal aspects of the Act in this period. Nonetheless, over some 30 years no new National Parks were created, and it was not until 1989 when the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Park was designated. The New Forest was created in 2005 and the last National Park that has been created in England is the South Downs (2010).

Table 1. General data of National Parks in England

National Park	Designation Year	Area (ha)	Population	Population density (inh./Km^2)	Visitors a years (millions)
Peak District	1951	143,833	38,000	26.4	10.1
Lake District	1951	229,198	42,200	18.4	8.3
Dartmoor	1951	95,570	34,000	35.6	2.5
North York Moors	1952	143,603	25,000	17.4	6.3
Yorkshire Dales	1954	176,869	19,654	11.1	9.5
Exmoor	1954	69,280	10,600	15.3	1.4
Northumberland	1956	104,947	2,200	2.1	1.7
The Broads	1989	30,292	5,721	18.9	5.8
New Forest	2005	57,086	34,400	60.3	n/a
South Downs	2010	165,300	120,000	72.6	n/a
Total		**1,215,978**	**331,775**	**27.3**	**45.6**

Source: author drawing on Council for National Parks (www.cnp.org.uk) and Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA) (www.nationalparks.gov.uk).

The *Sandford Report* (1974) published the results of the National Parks Policy Review Committee. The report made a series of findings and recommendations, highlighting that in some cases conflicts between conservation and recreation had become irreconcilable (Gilg, 1996). This led the Government to endorse priority of conservation over recreation, which has been known as the 'Sandford Principle'. However, this policy was not consolidated until 1991, when the Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 was released. This document stipulates that, in a number of protected areas in which National Parks are included, conservation should always take priority over recreation (Garrod and Whitby, 2005).

The conservation-recreation concern also involved both population living and activities undertaken in National Parks. The Countryside Commission took part in the debate positioning its view in favour of encouraging agriculture activities within the Parks. Furthermore, the

4 Extracted from Garrod and Whitby (2005:224).

need to protect farmers from recreation pressures was highlighted, underlining the need to ensure that "the recreational use of the National Parks will not be at the farmers' expense"[5]. However, the effective maintenance of farming was an argument made in 1945 by Dower, who considered a priority the well-being of those who live and work within the National Parks.

In fact, unlike in many countries (e.g. Canada, Australia) National Parks in England are highly populated as around 330,000 people live in them, leading to relatively high population density (Table 1). Such areas have been inhabited for hundred of years in which the territory has been highly modulated by human activities. This means local population is an indispensable actor in managing the landscape (Harmon, 1991; Dower, 1992). But, on the other hand, English Parks receive millions of visitors per year (Table 1). This sometimes results in undesirable pressure over the environment and leads to conflicts between recreation and conservation[6], but it has also fuelled a nature-based tourism as source of income for local communities.

However, at the same time as the Sandford Report was published a fundamental reorganisation of National Parks was taking place. The Local Government Acts of 1972 and 1974 made major changes involving National Parks from 1974: (a) each Park had to have a permanent staff in charge leaded by a National Park Officer; (b) a 5-years management plan had to be produced by each Park staff; and (c) all this would be achieved by doubling National Parks' budgets and allocating 75% of it from Central Government.

2.1 Incorporating socio-economic aims for National Parks

Further re-arrangements in National Parks' organisational background were undertaken in the 1990s. The *Edwards Report* (1991) reviewed the National Parks and contributed with a number of recommendations (Gilg, 1996): (a) a new National Park Act to redefine the two aims, i.e. conserving the environment and promoting quiet enjoyment; (b) a new farm-support system based on managing the landscape via individual farm plans; and (c) the formation of independent National Park Authorities (NPAs) with more planning powers. Moreover, National Parks should add a new function to conservation and recreational purposes (Dower, 1992): promotion of the socioeconomic well-being of local communities. Furthermore, inter-dependence between the 3 purposes should be sought, shifting away from measures devised to prevent conflicts towards programmes to achieve inter-dependence between aims.

The 1990s also witnessed an important contribution as regards legal framework in the matter: the 1995 Environmental Act redefined the conservation and recreational roles of National Parks (Garrod and Whitby, 2005). It also led to the formation of independent NPAs. Each of the 10 National Parks existing in England is run by their own Park Authority. In regard to the update of roles, Section 61 of the 1995 Act establishes purposes of designation as follows:

a) "Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park;

b) promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of (the) areas by the public".[7]

In cases of conflict between these two, following the *Sandford Principle*, the first of these objectives takes priority. This means conservation is still obviously the first purpose of National Parks but socioeconomic development of local areas has been brought onto the agenda.

5 Extracted from Harmon (1991:36), drawing on Countryside Commission (1977): *Ninth Report, 1976-1977*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London.

6 Evidence of conflicts between recreation and conservation in National Parks has been reported by The Countryside Agency (2005). These regard, for instance, impacts of continuing traffic growth, promotion of motorised sports, and use of National Parks for organised events.

7 Extracted from Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) (2003:11).

Section 62 of 1995 Act places duty on the NPAs to "seek to foster the social and economic well-being of the local communities". However, Circular 12/96 explains this is not an explicit purpose and it must be done only in pursuit of the twin purposes, co-operating with those who themselves have a rural development aim, and without significant expenditure (NNPA, 2003). Thus, despite being second tier objectives, socioeconomic aims have been finally incorporated into the National Parks policy framework.

3 OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

According to the National Park policy framework described the rural development policy measures undertaken in such a singular areas it may bring into discussion some further concerns. The distinctiveness involved in a National Park may indeed determine the application of rural development measures (e.g. the RES). In this way, the following questions have arisen as regards issues concerned: What differences does a National Park designation make in terms of enforcement of rural development measures? What are the implications of this in regard to the advantages and constraints for businesses located in or near to a particular National Park? To what extent can the special features of a National Park (e.g. landscape, environmental quality, branding) be exploited in positive way to assist application to such measure? And what is the perception of the recipients of the funding about the organisations in charge of applying rural development measures in a National Park?

Within this context the main aim of this piece of work is to explore whether or not a particular National Park (i.e. NNP) makes any difference in terms of the application of a particular rural development measures such the RES. Jointly, the exploration of possible advantages and constraints of applying the RES in the NNP for businesses is also pursued.

The methodology employed has relied on a qualitative approach according to the research objective established; in particular, a questionnaire survey has been employed. Questionnaires have been used in order to, on the one hand, approach the applicant's opinion of both the RES and the NNP; on the other hand, to obtain more detailed information about projects. In fact, questionnaires are valuable as means of eliciting different sorts of information from a target population (Parfitt, 2005). In this case, the target population has consisted of all applicants for the RES in the NNP and its immediate environs[8] over the period 2000-2008, successful and otherwise.

The key to the evaluation process was the questionnaire design[9] as "the success of a survey will depend on the questions that are asked, the ways in which they are phrased and the order in which they are placed" (Simmons, 2001:86). Thus, the questionnaire was divided in 5 different parts through which information regarding respondents' attributes, behaviour, and attitudes on the one hand, and opinions and beliefs on the other have been collected (Simmons, 2001; Parfitt, 2005). The usage of both closed questions and open-ended questions was employed where appropriate.

A limitation that may have influenced both the research progress and outcomes is the questionnaire survey response rate. A response rate of 42% was attained from the 43 projects that had applied for the RES funding. Considering that 25% of applicants could not be contacted during the two weeks period field work, questionnaires answered accounts for over 56% of those applicants contacted. However, despite the response rate attained in this

8 The criterion employed to consider applicants "in the NNP and its immediate environs" has consisted of including all applicants in the Park and those located 1 Km within the Park border.

9 Contact the author in case having the questionnaire is desired.

research it should not be deemed poor at all considering both resources and time available. It is believed that two reasons may have influenced the number of respondents: first, a few applicants apparently were not willing to be interviewed because their projects had not been awarded; and secondly, those who had applied at the beginning of the funding period were not as willing to be interviewed as those who applied more recently.

However, it must be borne in mind that the information obtained through the questionnaire survey is complementary with the information derived from descriptive data. Thus, the combination of these two has allowed to approach a multi-method and multi-level analysis (Hoggart *et al*., 2002). In this sense, a complementary methodological approach has been devised to address a well-covered understanding of the issue concerned.

4 CASE STUDY

The NNP was designated in 1956 so it has been running over the last 50 years. It is located in the North East of England and covers a surface of around 1,050 Km^2, which approximately signifies a fifth of the county of Northumberland (NNPA, 2003)[10]. With only a few settlements in it and a population of circa 2,200 people, NNP is by far the least densely populated National Park in England with 2.1 inhabitants per Km^2 (Table 1). However, the few market towns located just outside the Park's border (i.e. Wooler, Rothbury, Otterburn, Bellingham, and Haltwhistle) maintain a significant relationship with all that the Park involves.

In regard to land use, over 55% of the Park is considered 'open country'. Almost 17% of land is 'woodland', predominantly coniferous (16% of the total surface), and over the 21% 'agricultural land'. Sheep farming continues to be an important activity in the NNP; four-fifths of the Park is farmed, of which around 90% is heather moorland and grass (NNPA, 2003). The distribution of land occupation may have contributed to keep farming as over 56% of the land is private, as it happens in many English National Parks where most of the land is privately owned (Harmon, 1991). On the other hand, public bodies own about 42% of the NNP: the Forestry Commission owns nearly 20% of the land and the Ministry of Defence over the 22%. Military activities and uses undertaken within the Park have been source of conflicts over the recent years (see e.g. Woodward, 1997). However, the NNPA reveals a quite accepting point of view in this regard as the presence of the training area in the Park would have been apparently fully assumed (NNPA, 2003).

Although farming is still an important activity within the NNP it has undergone a significant decline over the last few decades in terms of both workforce and income (NNPA, undated), as well as in the county of Northumberland (Ward and Lowe, 1999). According to data gathered in 1999/2000 in a farm survey appointed by the NNPA (164 farmers were interviewed), the workforce of the farms represented almost 30% of the resident workforce in the Park. Average farm size was 561 ha and almost 57% of the land managed was rented, a distinctive pattern of land tenure in Northumberland. There has been an increase in sheep number since the early 1970s, leading to an average stocking density of 0.44 Livestock Units per ha in 1999/2000 (i.e. about 22% higher than in 1972/73). In terms of income there is no doubt that public subsidies have generally become an important component of farm income. Regarding the NNP, 75% of farmers interviewed in 1999/2000 estimated subsidies contributed at least half of their overall farming income (NNPA, undated). Hence, not surprisingly two-thirds of farms had at least one source of non-agricultural income; and for half of these, non-farming income made up at least a third of total household income. Moreover, most on-farm

10 For further information in this regard, check Northumberland National Park interactive map: http://northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk/parklive/maps

diversification was relatively modest in scale and conventional in scope, including bed and breakfast, holiday cottages, and caravan or camping sites.

In fact, tourism is also an important activity in the NNP. The NNP is more heavily dependent on tourism and agriculture than other protected areas in the North East (SQL Limited, 2004). The total number of visitor days was slightly over 2 million in 2002, including both estimated day visitors and overnight visitors. It has been also estimated that 33% of day visitors come from the North East and 15% from elsewhere in the United Kingdom (UK). Moreover, on average a day visitor spends £11.41 in the Park area and an overnight visitor £37.97. Thus, the tourism expenditure in the NNP has been estimated to be over £42.8 million per year (*Ibid*.).

The NNPA's view has indeed relied on the incorporation of socioeconomic aims into the Park's purposes. This is shown by the Management Plan launched in 2003 (NNPA, 2003). This "new approach for managing NNP" regards the recognition of the need of human-natural interaction for both conservation and development purposes. Furthermore, the Authority's vision relies on an economic perspective of the environment contained within the Park since its landscape (e.g. scenery, vegetation, wildlife, and cultural heritage) is considered an economic asset. Besides, NNPA believes this view is applicable for either local or regional level, as it is thought that "the National Park is also a regional asset" (*Ibid*.:5). In addition, the NNPA makes its own particular contribution to employment in the North East as 55 jobs are supported with an expenditure of £2,738,008 (SQW Limited, 2004).

4.1 Enforcement of the RES in the NNP[11]

The number of projects that applied for the RES funding in the NNP and its immediate environs over the 2000-2008 period reached 43. Although projects[12] were encapsulated within the ERDP 2000-2006, as some of them were planned to run longer funding was until 2008. According to official data from the RDS over £3.8 millions were budgeted for these projects, from which around 52% was public investment. This amount was provided by both the European Union (EU) and DEFRA with 50% each. By contrast, the private sector was responsible for the 48% of the total amount (i.e. over £1.8 million).

Total investment breakdown by measures reveals an uneven distribution of the RES funding. Projects within measure 'encouragement for tourism and craft activities' have absorbed 68% of total investment (Table 2), which clearly shows a strong unbalanced orientation of the RES within the NNP and its environs. In other words, £2.6 million (i.e. over £1.2 million of public investment) were assigned only to encourage rural tourism in the area. Far from the latter, projects aimed to improve marketing of quality products were allocated 16% of funds, and those directed at diversification of non-agricultural activities 10%. So the cited three measures acquired some 95% of the total funding (i.e. the sum of public and private investments) over the nine-year period. By contrast, insignificant amount was budgeted for a few measures. Nobody applied for neither 'farm relief and farm management services' nor 'agricultural water resource management' measures; and none of measures comprising basic services for rural economy, development of infrastructure for agriculture, and environmental protection and animal welfare reached 1% of total funding.

11 Information has drawn on secondary data provided by the Rural Development Service (RDS) within the North East region office of DEFRA.

12 Projects' purposes go from improvements in businesses kitchen in order to offer a higher standard service to provision of a new borehole aimed to provide clean drinking water to the residents of a village. Likewise, depending on the nature of projects they may run for several years, as it is the case that around half of them have run through two or more financial years.

Despite the unbalanced orientation of funding towards rural tourism it must be emphasised that private sector had a remarkable participation on this as a quite large amount of money was invested by private entrepreneurs (Table 2). While 53% of the total investment came from the private sector within the latter measure, a few measures were mainly funded by public sector, such as 'basic services for the rural economy and population' (78%), 'marketing of quality agricultural products' (77%), 'renovation of villages and conservation of the rural heritage' (59%) and 'diversification of alternative agricultural activities' (58%).

Table 2. RES funding by measures and by body, 2001-2008.

Measure[a]	Total RES funding (%)	Pub Invest		Priv Invest	
		Amount	(%)	Amount	(%)
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	16	479,783	77	142,129	23
3	1	16,424	78	4,590	22
4	3	75,590	59	51,474	41
5 (i)	1	28,375	58	20,605	42
5 (ii)	10	163,465	42	229,197	58
6	0	0	0	0	0
7	1	15,116	50	15,116	50
8	68	1,222,093	47	1,388,230	53
9	0	7,473	50	7,473	50
Total	**100**	**2,008,319**	**52**	**1,858,814**	**48**

[a]: Identification of measures:
1 Farm relief and farm management services
2 Marketing of quality agricultural products
3 Basic services for the rural economy and population
4 Renovation of villages and conservation of the rural heritage
5 (i) Diversification alternative agricultural activities
5 (ii) Diversification non-agricultural activities
6 Agricultural water resource management
7 Development of infrastructure for agriculture
8 Encouragement for tourism and craft activities
9 Environment protection and improvement of animal welfare
Source: author drawing on data from RDS (DEFRA).

According to data provided by the RDS, over 52 full-time jobs[13] were created by projects funded within the RES (Table 3). The 29 projects aimed to encourage rural tourism (67% of total number) generated two-thirds of total jobs, revealing again dominance of this measure over the rest. Both measures directed to encourage marketing of quality products and agricultural diversification produced jobs as well (18), but 4 measures for which projects were applied for did not create any job.

13 Note that jobs created totals 52.7 as both full-time and part-time are accounted. A full-time job accounts for "1" job and part-time jobs account for less than "1" job depending on involvement. So it makes possible to obtain decimals through the final account.

Table 3. RES projects, investment by project and jobs created, 2001-2008.

		Funding		Jobs		
Measure[a]	No projects	Total Invest by project	Total Invest by project by year[b]	Jobs created	Pub Invest by job created	Tot Invest by job created
1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
2	3	207,304	25,913	3.8	126,259	163,661
3	1	21,014	21,014	0.0	0	0
4	2	63,532	21,177	0.0	0	0
5 (i)	2	24,490	12,245	2.5	11,350	19,592
5 (ii)	4	98,166	10,907	11.7	13,947	33,504
6	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
7	1	30,231	15,116	0.0	0	0
8	29	90,011	2,093	34.7	35,209	75,204
9	1	14,947	14,947	0.0	0	0
Total	**43**	**89,933**	**1,303**	**52.7**	**38,087**	**73,338**

[a]: Identification of measures:
1 Farm relief and farm management services
2 Marketing of quality agricultural products
3 Basic services for the rural economy and population
4 Renovation of villages and conservation of the rural heritage
5 (i) Diversification alternative agricultural activities
5 (ii) Diversification non-agricultural activities
6 Agricultural water resource management
7 Development of infrastructure for agriculture
8 Encouragement for tourism and craft activities
9 Environment protection and improvement of animal welfare

[b]: Note that the term 'year' in this case represents the number of years through which the project was running.

Source: author drawing on data from RDS (DEFRA).

Furthermore, analysis undertaken in terms of investment by job created allows us to approach some sort of efficiency measure. According to this measurement differences among the RES measures are remarkable (Table 3). It is so that public investment per job aimed to improve marketing of quality products (£126,000) is significantly higher than that directed at agricultural diversification (around £11,000 and £14,000 depending on the measure). By contrast, investments in rural tourism projects do not differ significantly from average. It means investment in marketing is relatively inefficient compared with other measures, which reveals difficulty of obtaining economies of scale through projects within such a measure. Moreover, inefficiency is still more emphasised in this case as public investment accounts for 77% of total funding within this measure. Nonetheless, in projects regarding marketing an assessment of intangible assets (such as image and brand) in addition to an analysis of revenues derived from the investment would be required in order to obtain a full assessment of investment carried out.

Funding breakdown by project shows that those regarding rural tourism reach again the average as some £90,000 investment per project was allocated within this measure (Table 3). Far from this figure, it is still remarkable the relatively high amount of investment per project

aimed to improve marketing of quality products (£207,000). It reveals again the important financial effort undertaken within the latter measure. However, projects circumscribed within marketing measure generally spanned more years than others as it is indicated when number of years through which projects ran is considered (Table 3). This fact obviously mitigates in some way the relatively high costs of these projects as total costs must be split per project year.

5 RESULTS

The principal outcome derived from the analysis undertaken probably is the fact that respondents believe the Park makes some difference in terms of both being funded by the RES and promoting socioeconomic development. When applicants were queried whether the fact of being in or near the Park makes any difference in terms of being awarded by the RES almost 40% answered it was so, and a third of them thought it was "possibly". In both cases reasons generally relied on the opinion that the scheme would bring tourism to the Park; however, it is believed that NNPA may have had any influence in facilitating funding to the area, even though funds come from DEFRA. In fact, one interviewee argued that the NNPA "had a huge input and helped to get the grant" (Q3)[14]. By contrast, 4 applicants indicated the Park should not make any difference in being awarded by the RES. So it may not surprise that 3 of them were funded by the RES but were located outside the Park, and the fourth one was not awarded.

The majority of respondents also believe that having the Park makes some difference in terms of socioeconomic development. The principal argument exposed by respondents again regards tourism as "it helps tourism" (Q14). Around 60% of them think the Park has a positive impact on tourism, mainly because of advertisement the Park makes and infrastructure it provides for tourists (maps, car parks, tracks, etc.) – according to one interviewee "everything is kept tidy up" (Q12). However, on the other hand, some 20% of respondents argue that the Park restricts building, which in some cases may go against local people as "extra housing is needed in the area" (Q1). From this perspective, it is believed the Park may hamper socioeconomic development since many respondents have identified building with local development.

Furthermore, both tourism and building are respectively related to the advantages and disadvantages derived from the Park, as respondents identified. Environmental protection was obviously the advantage most considered along with the natural beauty that the Park contains; secondly, advertisement released regarding the Park and tourism involved in the area was mentioned; thirdly, the role the NNPA plays as fundraiser and adviser both for local people and projects; and finally, 3 respondents (two of them located outside the Park) did not identify any advantages.

But, on the other hand, 27% of respondents did not appreciate any disadvantages and a further 27% did not either answer or know what to answer. Thus, "planning restrictions" was the most cited disadvantage by respondents (33%). In fact, as it was pointed out by a few respondents building restrictions are the counterpart of preserving the environment and landscape – e.g. "this is the other side of advantages" (Q7). In this sense, restrictions in planning were considered by a few respondents as an advantage as they keep the area free from unwanted development.

Another remarkable conclusion derived from questionnaire analysis is the importance that the RES grant has for respondents in terms of safeguarding the future of the business, since all of them rated it as 'important' or 'very important'. Moreover, 43% of respondents indicated

14 "Q" indicates questionnaire number.

revenues were 'more' than expected before starting the project while a fifth was unable to assess this as their projects still were in progress. Only in one case revenues were less than expected. Hence, it seems that the RES valuably contributed to guarantee to great extent the future of the businesses involved.

However, experience of applying for the RES was graded by a third of applicants as 'poor' or 'very poor', whilst some 40% assessed it as 'average'. Moreover, half of applicants indicated the experience of applying for the RES was 'more difficult' than applying to other funding sources, and generally described it as a long and difficult process. There was one interviewee who defined the application process as "a pain" (Q7) and another who viewed the paperwork the application involves as "a nightmare" (Q3). The main reasons given regarded the bureaucratic nature of the process in terms of length and information required, and complexity and preparation work of the business project. A few respondents also complained about the conditions required for receiving funding, including the necessity of applicants having to advance the investment.

Nonetheless, when they applied most applicants (77%) found advice offered by DEFRA helpful; this advice was given to every project. But advice was not always given while projects were running, and in cases it was given some applicants found it unsatisfactory. On the other hand, NNPA did not advise all projects – it was not their duty as the RES is run by DEFRA. In the cases where NNPA had given advice (over a half of respondents) the vast majority (90%) indicated it was 'useful'. Even two applicants of projects placed outside the Park emphasised Authority's approachable help. One interviewee thought the Park Authority not only helps tourism, but "it should do and it needs to do" (Q16). However, many of the respondents focused on the person in charge about advising them, whatever the organisation which the adviser belonged to. Adviser's ability and skills at the time the application is being made make a huge difference in terms of both project reliability and resource usefulness. Nevertheless, when respondents were interrogated about how the Authority could improve their working 45% of them did not either know or answer, and a further 16% had no suggestions. Most of respondents had a good opinion about the Authority. However, criticism of the NNPA included the need to develop a "more sympathetic" (Q9) approach to businesses and the assertion that "NNPA is not about supporting communities; it is about balancing conservation with tourism" (Q5).

6 DISCUSSION

An integrated approach recognising the human-natural intrinsic relationship (see, e.g. Mac Ewen and Mac Ewen, 1981; Rojas-Briales, 2000; Thompson, 1999; Wells *et al*., 1992) is the most plausible and effective view within both the English National Parks framework and the NNP. In addition the potentiality of the NNP to bring positive socioeconomic impacts to the area must be also highlighted. In regard to the application of the RES in the NNP, it seems that it may help to safeguard the future of the businesses interviewed as it has been revealed that over 52 jobs were created. Hence, according to this the RES had a remarkable contribution to the rural economy in the NNP and its environs. In this regard, following Harmon (1991:35) the NNP can be viewed as a successful example since "the success of the Parks is measured by how well they invigorate the economy – and particularly the farm economy – within them".

It is widely acknowledged that impacts of protected areas go beyond their borders (DeFries *et al*., 2010; Duffy-Deno, 1997). In regard to this case study, it seems that potential benefits derived from the NNP must be definitely exploited within the regional context. In fact, as it has been argued by Lowe (2006:40) "the focus of intervention to promote rural development

and employment should be the rural and regional economy and not the agricultural sector". It is not less true that agricultural activity should be preserved in such a singular area as the NNP, but a view which relies on the regional approach of both the rural development and the National Parks framework is definitely desired.

Drawing on the analysis undertaken it seems that having the NNP makes some sort of difference in both being awarded by the RES and promoting socioeconomic development. According to this, it may be concluded that the Park provides some sort of differentiation to the area, which may be on the basis of further rural development. Therefore, any effort directed at preserving the Park's distinctiveness will be worthwhile insofar as both natural environment and development strategies are looked after. In this sense, the respondents' opinion regarding the NNPA is also a remarkable point as shows that applicants generally believe the Authority to be a powerful organisation capable of interfering in funding, even in those grants which are not managed by the Authority (e.g. RES). So from this point of view the Authority can also have an influential impact on rural development insofar as it has a key partner role (Carroll and Phillipson, 2002). However, this role has been partially restricted as the NNPA has particular commitments (limits on what it can do) and is constrained by external budgeting. In this sense, the Review of English National Park Authorities (2002) committed Government to review the expenditure constraint that NPAs may have in order to promote rural development within the Parks (DEFRA, 2002).

Furthermore, it can be concluded that advantages derived from the NNP are greater than disadvantages. In fact, this general perception obtained from respondents' opinion may be endorsed with outcomes derived from other research focused on the NNP but regarding agricultural issues. According to the Farm Survey 1999/2000, more farmers believed that the advantages of farming in a National Park outweighed the disadvantages. However, they also felt that those advantages come out as a consequence of general qualities of the area rather than resulting from National Park status *per se* (NNPA, undated).

It seems disadvantages underwent by local people are not in the analysed case as important as in other cases (Ezebilo and Mattsson, 2010). The only significant one claimed by respondents was restrictions in planning, but this is in some manner a way to preserve the natural environment too. Thus, interest conflicts may be faced when: on the one hand, new buildings and infrastructures are needed by local communities either to keep a way of life in such an environment or to improve local accessibility and economy; and on the other, environmental and landscape protection is required along with preserving local settlements' essence and nature. When such a conflict arises each particular case should be analysed and studied, but always within the parameters that a National Park involves. So in these cases NNPA's role is crucial as they manage to advice and help local people to arrange issues related to building permissions. In fact, according to the overall opinion revealed by respondents the NNPA generally plays this role satisfactorily.

A main outcome arising from the analysis undertaken is the emphasis on support for rural tourism in the area. Not only quantitative data but applicants' opinion point out the importance of tourism for the area. In this sense, tourism encouragement is a reasonable approach within a National Park as revenues derived from tourism is one of the principal benefits regarding National Parks. In fact, seeking tourism enhancement as a strategy for development has been employed within natural protected areas policy framework, for instance, in France (Buller, 2000) and in Nepal (Nepal, 2000).

In regard to the NNP it must be highlighted that Hadrian's Wall area, which is located in the South of the Park, is where more tourists are received. This attraction of tourists is due to both (a) the ancient remains of wall and settlements and (b) the existence of a trail for walkers and tracks for cyclists. So the employment of such a resource is a valuable tool for

the tourism development in the area as it is apparently well exploited. In fact, 17 out of the 43 projects analysed are located in the Hadrian's Wall surroundings. Besides, projects driven experimentally within the Park have probably contributed to encouraging tourism activities (ANPA, undated). For example the *Environmental and Economic Development of Hadrian's Wall Corridor*, a project which ran in the second half of the 1990s and was aimed to develop local land-using businesses while environmental quality was being improved. Outcomes reveal that environmental goals were obtained, but results in the business area are unclear, though "jobs were safeguarded and one full-time job created" (*Ibid*.: 23). Furthermore, the *People and Place* project in addition to objectives associated with environment and tourism sought to provide training to local businesses. Driven by the NNPA, this project was allocated a budget of £143,800 for a 3 years scheme, from 1999 to 2001.

However, two concerns arise regarding the *tourism monoculture* developed around the Hadrian's Wall. First, over supporting the southern area of the Park compared to other areas may lead to an uneven geography in terms of tourism development within the Park. In this context, there exists the risk of an unbalanced contribution of funding in favour of the southern area. Secondly, and more important, there are risks associated with over reliance on tourism. This may lead, on the one hand, to overcrowding the southern area which would become it spoiled and busy, and therefore, negative impacts may appear as it has happened in other cases (see e.g., Cunha, 2010); and on the other, as one of the respondents argued the point is "what happens when the Wall trail is superseded by another new premier trail" (Q5).

Weaknesses have been also detected regarding some of the measures within the RES. On the one hand, the apparent inefficiency associated with 'marketing of agricultural products' suggests some sort of precaution in funding distribution. A more in-depth economic analysis would be probably required in this regard. On the other, it seems that a few measures have failed in their purpose as they were not able to attract any project in the area. Therefore, the 'success' of the RES may be associated with the measure regarding tourism (and craft activities). Furthermore, the RES did not particularly help farm oriented measures within the NNP, unlike the general trend of the RES enforcement all across the country until 2001 (Ward, 2002).

Moreover, it is thought the RES contributed significantly to development in the area. In particular, it has been emphasised the high importance of the RES for safeguarding the future of the businesses, which highlights its role as successful rural development tool. Nonetheless, the RES enforcement in the area was at the expense of a £2 million public investment, which may be considered a relatively high amount of funding. It is true that this amount encouraged further private investment as complement funding for projects that otherwise would have not probably been undertaken in such conditions by private entrepreneurs. But it is not less true that in some cases public investment was not efficient enough contrasted with jobs created (e.g. marketing measure). However, further research focused on economic revenues derived from the application of the RES would be necessary to build a more consistent opinion in this respect.

Finally, although the RES seems to be a prominent rural policy tool its application process generally did not please applicants. Both the long bureaucratic process and advancing money before receiving public funds have been the principal complaints. However, this view must be contrasted with DEFRA's point of view. In order to use resources rationally DEFRA needs to be sure to who is offering the grant and for what purpose, for which a thorough process was devised (see DEFRA, 2004).

7 CONCLUSIONS

According to respondents' general opinion, having the NNP makes some sort of difference in favour of the application of the RES. The main reasons given are both the opinion that the scheme would bring tourism to the area and the belief that the Authority can have influence on the facilitation of funding. Furthermore, the majority of respondents also argue that the Park makes some difference in terms of local development, having a positive effect particularly on tourism.

In addition to environmental protection and natural beauty other advantages identified by respondents are both advertisement and support for tourism and the NNPA's role as fundraiser and adviser. By contrast, when mentioned, the most cited disadvantage was planning restrictions. However, these restrictions can also be understood as way to preserve the environment from further undesired development.

The respondents' general opinion supports the importance of the RES as rural development tool since in their view it played an important role in safeguarding the future of businesses. Nevertheless, weaknesses have been also detected in this regard as follows. First, a number of measures under the RES were under exploited and apparently one particular measure (i.e. marketing of quality agricultural products) was inefficiently employed. Secondly, the RES enforcement over the 2000-2008 period in the NNP and its environs was clearly biased towards rural tourism. 68% of allocated funding in this period was aimed to encourage tourism, i.e. over £1.2 million of public investment. Moreover, tourism development through the RES has been mostly focused on the Hadrian's Wall area. It seems a reasonable usage of such a resource for tourism, but at the same time risks derived from this tourism monoculture may be faced in the future.

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