

Analysis of attitudes of local communities towards the creation of protected areas on the example of national parks in Austria and Germany

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Abstract. The aim of this study was to present the attitudes of local communities in the process of creating a national park – a precious natural area with a high protection regime. The study takes into account the actions of the authorities and legal regulations concerning, among other things, the possibility of agricultural and economic activities in the park.

The considerations were based on the presentation of the cases of the establishment of the Nationalpark Donau-Auen in Austria and the Nationalpark Schwarzwald in Germany. Among others, official documents, publications, reports, studies, online information (e.g. on websites) and legal acts concerning nature conservation and national parks were analysed.

The factor that mobilised communities in the process of establishing the two national parks was the decisions of the public authorities. The Donau-Auen Nationalpark is an example of effective community action in defence of nature. Its creation was preceded, among other things, by the ‘Hainburg Aubsetz’ campaign, a community initiative demonstrating the importance of nature conservation in Austria. The creation of the Schwarzwald Nationalpark, on the other hand, is an example of the NIMBY (not in my back yard) phenomenon, where the local community accepts nature conservation but opposes it when its rights are curtailed. The dialogue between the authorities and the public has shown in both cases that awareness-raising activities on decisions related to the creation of a protected area are necessary. The approval of local communities in the creation of protected areas is linked to the expectation that these areas will provide social and economic benefits. The creation of a protected area can mean profits for businesses in the area or a worsening of the living situation of landowners excluded from production, indicating a link between nature conservation and living standards and poverty. In the cases discussed, there is no data on the level of poverty and its impact on the attitudes of local communities towards protected areas. It seems important to carry out relevant research in this regard in the future.

Keywords: precious natural areas, national park, conflicts in precious natural areas

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INTRODUCTION

Protecting biodiversity and the cultural landscape, limiting the negative impact of economic (including agricultural) activities on the environment and preserving the natural heritage for future generations are the objectives of designating environmentally valuable areas (Musiał, 2017). The establishment of an environmentally valuable area (also known as a protected area) often concerns agricultural and forest properties. Areas used for agricultural purposes are characterised by their natural wealth, and the valuable habitats and species found there are the basis for the protection of nature resources.

The aim of this article is to present the attitudes of local communities towards the idea of creating a national park. It was hypothesised that decisions of the authorities mobilise local communities to act when local interests are threatened. The basic problem to be solved is the preparation of legal regulations related to nature protection and information activities addressed to local communities concerning decisions related to the creation of a protected area.

A national park is an area under legal protection for its special natural values. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a national park is included in management category II of protected areas and is defined as “Large natural or near-natural areas protecting large-scale ecological processes with characteristic species and ecosystems, which also have environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities” (Mitchell et al., 2022). The local community may accept nature conservation in the national park, but does not agree with restrictions on their rights. In contrast, it does not see obstacles to restrictions on, for example, investors who are not members of the community. This attitude is called the NIMBY (‘not in my back yard’) phenomenon (Bednarek, Dmochowska-Dudek, 2016). The literature points out that due to restrictions on economic and agricultural activities

in a national park, there may be a conflict of stakeholders and a restriction of property rights (Hibszer, 2013; Walas et al., 2019). Naturally valuable areas are then perceived by local communities (including farmers and local authorities) as sources of conflict and obstacles to local development (Bołtromiuk, 2003; Szczepańska, 2018; Zawilińska, 2011). Habuda (2014, cited after Kocowski, 2009) pointed out that “the rationing of economic activities in protected areas is an important function performed by state bodies towards the economy, the essence of which is:

- the introduction of a public law regulation containing legal norms creating a system of requirements, restrictions (prohibitions and orders), where the motivation for the introduction of restrictions is always related to the need for state authorities to achieve a public purpose related to the environment (nature);
- the public purpose relating to the environment is pursued at the expense of sacrificing individual goals and interests to some extent;
- compliance by the economic agents with the content of the said restrictions conditions the possibility of the effective realisation of their public subjective rights and subjective rights, known as freedoms¹.

These constraints do not always determine the perception of protected areas exclusively as a source of contradiction between nature conservation and human activities, including, farming. These areas combine environmental functions (preservation of nature resources, climate protection) with economic and social functions, including the preservation of extensive agricultural production, organic farming, tourism, protection of the cultural landscape, a friendly living environment for local communities, the use of the services of local entrepreneurs and the sale of local materials and products (Bański, 2019; Mika et al., 2015). One of the elements of multifunctional rural development is rural tourism. As pointed out by Ferens (2013), rural tourism is „any form of tourism that takes place in a rural environment and uses the qualities of the countryside as its main attraction. Its domain is space, communing with nature and freedom of movement, so that it does not disrupt the agricultural function of the area and harmonises with the environment without changing the natural

character of the landscape². This type of entrepreneurship (often associated with agro-tourism) is important for local communities in rural areas where protected areas, such as a national park, have been designated. Providing access to a national park is „one of the basic, social tasks, as it enables the fulfilment of the elementary needs of human contact with nature, and is a form of acquiring knowledge about nature and the landscape³” (Partyka, 2010). In addition to this, a national park can be a workplace for local people, a source of income from additional services (e.g. excursions) or an inspiration for local crafts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The discussion is based on the presentation of cases of the establishment of national parks in Austria and Germany against the background of environmental, cultural and economic conditions. The Nationalpark Donau-Auen and the Nationalpark Schwarzwald, the first national park in Baden-Württemberg, were taken into account. A desk research method was used. Official documents, publications, reports, online information (e.g. websites, scientific studies and articles) and legal acts concerning the establishment and functioning of national parks and nature protection in Germany and Austria were analysed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 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” (Mitchell et al., 2022). The IUCN protected area management categories, on the other hand, are the recommended standards for planning, designation and management of protected areas for States Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Konwencja o różnorodności biologicznej).

In the context of local communities’ attitudes towards the idea of creating protected areas, it seems important to distinguish between the terms ‘nature conservation’ and ‘environmental protection’. In the statutory understanding, “nature protection consists in the preservation, sustainable

¹ in original: „Reglamentacja działalności gospodarczej na obszarach chronionych jest to istotna funkcja organów państwowych wykonywana przez organy państwa wobec gospodarki, której istotą jest: – wprowadzenie regulacji publicznoprawnej zawierającej normy prawne tworzące system wymogów, ograniczeń (zakazów i nakazów), przy czym motywacja wprowadzenia ograniczeń związana jest zawsze z koniecznością realizacji przez organy państwa celu publicznego związanego ze środowiskiem (przyrodą); – cel publiczny związany ze środowiskiem realizowany jest kosztem poświęcenia w jakiejś mierze celów i interesów indywidualnych; – zastosowanie się przez podmioty gospodarujące do treści wspomnianych ograniczeń warunkuje możliwość skutecznej realizacji ich publicznych praw podmiotowych i praw podmiotowych, zwanych wolnościami” (translation – Agnieszka Wojdat)

² in original: „każda forma turystyki, która odbywa się w środowisku wiejskim i wykorzystuje walory wsi jako główną atrakcję. Jej domeną jest przestrzeń, obcowanie z naturą i swoboda poruszania się, przez co nie zaburza ona funkcji rolniczej obszaru i harmonizuje ze środowiskiem naturalnym, nie zmieniając naturalnego charakteru krajobrazu” (translation – Agnieszka Wojdat)

³ in original: „jest to jedno z podstawowych, społecznych zadań, umożliwia bowiem zaspokojenie elementarnych potrzeb kontaktu człowieka z przyrodą, stanowi formę zdobywania wiedzy przyrodniczej i krajoznawczej” (translation – Agnieszka Wojdat)

use and restoration of resources, formations and components of nature: 1) wildly occurring plants, animals and fungi; 2) plants, animals and fungi under species protection; 3) animals leading a migratory lifestyle; 4) natural habitats; 5) endangered habitats, rare and protected species of plants, animals and fungi; 6) creations of living and inanimate nature and fossil remains of plants and animals; 7) landscapes; 8) greenery in towns and villages; 9) woodlots⁴ (Ustawa o ochronie przyrody, 2004, art. 2.1). Environmental protection, on the other hand, is understood as “undertaking or abandoning activities that make it possible to maintain or restore the natural balance; this protection consists in particular in: a) the rational shaping of the environment and management of environmental resources in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, b) counteracting pollution, c) restoring natural elements to their proper state”⁵ (Ustawa – Prawo ochrony środowiska, 2001, art. 3.13). Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, nature conservation aims to protect biodiversity, while environmental protection aims to use and restore environmental elements appropriately. Nature conservation and environmental protection are linked by the attitude of humans towards nature, which, among other things, has an impact on the actions of local communities towards plans to establish protected areas.

The forms of nature conservation in Austria and Germany are designated by law. The provisions of the respective Länder (administrative units in Austria and Germany) laws also regulate agricultural and forestry land use within the scope of their activities. For example, in Lower Austria, according to the Nature Conservation Act of Lower Austria, forms of nature conservation include national park, nature reserve, natural park (nature park), landscape conservation area, nature monument and protected areas in Europe within the Natura 2000 network (NÖ Naturschutzgesetz 2000... III. §8–§14). Agricultural and forestry land use in the course of an activity is also regulated by the provisions of the above law. Agricultural and forestry use is considered sustainable if the agricultural or forestry activity serves production, is adapted to the natural condi-

tions and ensures long-term productivity without depleting the production base and overburdening nature and the landscape (NÖ Naturschutzgesetz 2000..., III. §21).

In Germany, the Federal Nature Conservation Act defines forms of nature protection which include, among others, a national park, a nature reserve, a biosphere reserve, a landscape park, a national nature monument, a landscape conservation area, protected habitats, a nature monument, a protected landscape fragment, legally protected biotopes (e.g. bogs, marshes, open inland dunes, swamp and riparian forests, caves and cliffs) and Natura 2000 areas (Gesetz über Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege..., §20–§30). In agricultural activities, in addition to the requirements of the agricultural regulations and the Federal Soil Conservation Act (Gesetz zum Schutz vor schädlichen Bodenveränderungen..., §17.2), the principles of good practice must be observed, including, among others, the following: ensure the fertility of the soil and the usability of the land, preserve the natural features of the usable area (soil, water, flora, fauna) and the landscape elements necessary for the combination of biotopes, do not plough grassland on slopes at risk of erosion, on floodplains, with high groundwater levels and on peat bogs, rear animals in a balanced relationship with crop production without harmful effects on the environment, and use fertilisers and pesticides in accordance with agricultural law. In the case of forest management, the aim is to develop and manage near-natural forests in a sustainable manner, without cutting down logging, while preserving native forest plants (Gesetz über Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege..., §5).

DONAU-AUEN NATIONAL PARK – AN EXAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ACTION IN DEFENCE OF NATURE

The Nationalpark Donau-Auen is one of the largest, mostly natural riparian areas in Central Europe, located between Vienna and Bratislava (Figure 1). The park meets IUCN Category II criteria.

The establishment of the park was preceded by the ‘Siege of Hainburger Au’ (‘Hainburger Aubesetzung’) action pointed to as an example of the development of democracy in Austria (Hainburg: 35 Jahre ..., 2022). The immediate reason for the action was the plans to build the Hainburg hydroelectric power station on the wetlands of the Hainburger Au floodplain in 1984. The construction threatened to destroy the last free-flowing stretch of the Danube with riparian forests (Der Weg zum..., 2023). In 1983, the Austrian branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) launched a campaign under the slogan ‘Rettet die Auen’ to protect the Hainburger Au. However, there was little interest from local communities in the planned building of the power plant. In 1984, a campaign was launched for a referendum on the protection of Hainburger Au and the creation of a national park. Support was given by Kon-

⁴ in original: „ochrona przyrody, w rozumieniu ustawy, polega na zachowaniu, zrównoważonym użytkowaniu oraz odnawianiu zasobów, tworów i składników przyrody: 1) dziko występujących roślin, zwierząt i grzybów; 2) roślin, zwierząt i grzybów objętych ochroną gatunkową; 3) zwierząt prowadzących wędrowny tryb życia; 4) siedlisk przyrodniczych; 5) siedlisk zagrożonych wyginięciem, rzadkich i chronionych gatunków roślin, zwierząt i grzybów; 6) tworów przyrody żywej i nieożywionej oraz kopalnych szczątków roślin i zwierząt; 7) krajobrazu; 8) zieleni w miastach i wsiach; 9) zadrzewień” (translation – Agnieszka Wojdat)

⁵ in original: „podjęcie lub zaniechanie działań, umożliwiające zachowanie lub przywracanie równowagi przyrodniczej; ochrona ta polega w szczególności na: a) racjonalnym kształtowaniu środowiska i gospodarowaniu zasobami środowiska zgodnie z zasadą zrównoważonego rozwoju, b) przeciwdziałaniu zanieczyszczeniom, c) przywracaniu elementów przyrodniczych do stanu właściwego” (translation – Agnieszka Wojdat)

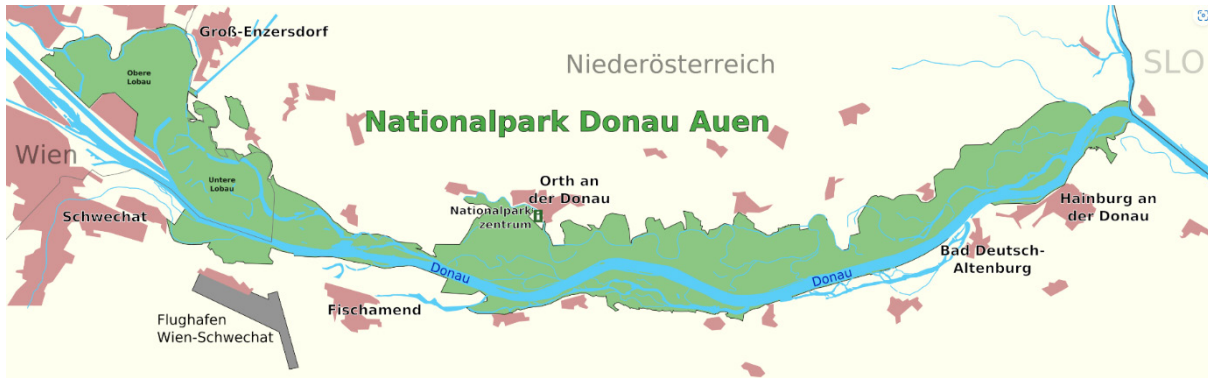


Figure 1. Nationalpark Donau-Auen

Source: Anitagraser, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Karte_nationalpark_donau_auen.png (accessed 05.06.2023)

rad Lorenz, Austrian zoologist and ornithologist, winner of the 1973 Nobel Prize. Building work began in 1984. At that time, supporters of the Hainburger Au conservation initiated the ‘Hainburg Aubsetz’ campaign in the forests near Stopfenreuth, forcing the developer to halt the work. After police intervention, in which several people were injured, demonstrations of several thousand people were organised in the streets of Vienna in protest against the building of the power plant. At the beginning of 1985, the Supreme Court banned further work until the dispute was resolved, ending the ‘Hainburg Aubsetz’ action. In the following years, studies were carried out, the results of which indicated that a national park should be established in the Danube floodplain in and around Vienna. In 1990, an agreement was drawn up between the government of the Republic of Austria and the Länder of Lower Austria and Vienna concerning the preparation for the establishment of a national park (Der Weg zum..., 2023). The Donau-Auen National Park was established in 1996, “(...) in the area of the Danube floodplain in Vienna and east of Vienna, preserving the function of the Danube as an international waterway and safeguarding groundwater resources for drinking water supply”⁶ (Vereinbarung gemäß Artikel 15a B-VG..., Art. I). According to the agreement between the Federal Government and the Länder of Lower Austria and Vienna on the establishment and maintenance of the Donau-Auen National Park, the park was initially to cover areas of approximately 9,300 ha (including: Wetlands in Vienna and Lower Austria, in the forest administrations of Lobau and Eckartsau and the Auen-Zentrum Petronell association, the municipalities of Hainburg ad Donau and Danube). The target area of the park was to be around 11,500 ha in the areas of more than twenty cadastral communities (Aspern, Landjägermeisteramt, Essling, Kaiserebersdorf Herrschaft, GroßEnzersdorf,

Mühlleiten, Schönau a. d. Donau, Mannsdorf, Orth a. d. Donau, Eckartsau, Witzelsdorf, Stopfenreuth, Markthof, Mannswörth, Fischamend Dorf, Fischamend Markt, Maria Ellend, Haslau a. d. Donau, Regelsbrunn, Wildungsmauer, Petronell, Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, Hainburg a. d. Donau, Wolfsthal) and the Danube, including paths along the banks (Vereinbarung gemäß Artikel 15a B-VG..., Art. II). The park currently covers an area of 9,600 hectares, of which approximately 65% is riparian forest, 15% meadows and 20% water areas.

The ‘Hainburg Aubsetz’ action pointed out the importance of nature conservation in Austria, particularly in the implementation of projects with significant environmental impacts. This is reflected, inter alia, in the laws on nature protection and the establishment and operation of national parks, e.g. the Lower Austrian Nature Conservation Act (NÖ Naturschutzgesetz 2000) and the Lower Austrian National Park Act (NÖ Nationalparkgesetz). The park consists of zones:

- natural: areas unchanged or insignificantly altered by man, where economic activities and interference with nature and the landscape are prohibited;
- natural with management measures: areas where interference with nature and the landscape is prohibited, except for activities serving nature conservation purposes (e.g. mowing of meadows);
- external: protected historical, tourist and administrative zones and special areas, e.g. watercourses, artificial canals and fields (NÖ Nationalparkgesetz, §3).

Contracts (Vereinbarung gemäß Artikel 15a B-VG..., Art. II) have been provided for with the owners of private buildings and facilities in the Donau-Auen park area used for park purposes.

The management and conservation of nature in the park is handled by the park administration. In addition to this, the government may enter into contracts with other parties, e.g. for the maintenance and care of natural or semi-natural standing water bodies and dry and wet meadows. The National Park Advisory Council and the Local National Park Advisory Council work together with the park

⁶ in original: „im Bereich der Donau-Auen in und östlich von Wien unter Wahrung der Funktion der Donau als internationale Wasserstraße und der Sicherung der Grundwasservorkommen für die Trinkwasserversorgung” (translation – Małgorzata Szalast-Piwińska, Agnieszka Wojdat)

administration (NÖ Nationalparkgesetz, §11 and §12). The National Park Advisory Council is appointed by the Lower Austrian government. The members are representatives of municipalities, landowners who have at least 115 ha of property in the national park or less than 115 ha of property, designated by the National Chamber of Agriculture of Lower Austria, experts from the chambers of agriculture, hunting and fishing and nature conservation associations. A local National Park Advisory Board may be appointed by the municipality. Members include representatives of the municipality, landowners in the park and experts. The Local Advisory Board of the National Park is responsible for making recommendations to the National Park Advisory Board or the National Park Administration on matters of local interest. Since the founding of the Donau-Auen National Park, there has been an Orth an der Donau Advisory Council (Nationalpark-Beirat).

Municipalities on whose territory a national park has been designated are entitled to use the term “National Park Municipality”. Local communities, including residents, farmers, landowners and forest owners, form a “national park region” (NÖ Nationalparkgesetz, §3). The municipalities are obliged to take into account the objectives of the National Park Act (NÖ Nationalparkgesetz, §2) in their activities, including, inter alia, the preservation of an area of natural value for future generations; the use of the area for scientific research, education and recreational purposes; and the protection of groundwater in the Danube floodplains. Agricultural activities should be adapted to the natural conditions and ensure that production is possible without depleting natural resources and overburdening nature and the landscape (NÖ Naturschutzgesetz 2000, §21). In the event that a decree or decision is issued (on the basis of nature conservation law) that causes a significant reduction in income from the property (or installation), a permanent hindrance to the management or use of the property, the owner is entitled to compensation. In the absence of an agreement with the owner on compensation, the government shall issue a decision on the claim and the amount of compensation based on the market value of the property before the ordinance or decision was issued. If the property (or installation) loses its usefulness as a result of the aforementioned decree or decision, the government (at the owner’s request) may buy it back to secure the protected area (NÖ Naturschutzgesetz 2000, §23 and §30).

BLACK FOREST NATIONAL PARK – A PROJECT IN DIALOGUE WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The idea of a Black Forest National Park (German: Nationalpark Schwarzwald) in Baden-Württemberg was met with reluctance from the local community. In 2011. The Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection sent out an information leaflet to 120,000 households in the area of the planned national park (or bor-

dering it) about the project and the possibility to submit opinions and questions. A public conference was also held in 2011 to discuss contentious issues and collect further questions and suggestions. In addition, among other things, lectures on the national park and guided tours were organised on behalf of districts and municipalities. In 2012, free telephone consultations were launched. Local communities were able to use an online platform to comment on the results of the working groups (Bürgerbeteiligung, 2013).

Despite the measures taken, the establishment of the national park continued to arouse opposition from local communities. As Hoffmann (2015) pointed out, perceptions of nature varied according to the interests of the different groups: supporters emphasised the ecological benefits and the contribution to biodiversity and habitat conservation, while opponents feared the consequences for daily life, the economy and livelihoods, among others. In the conflicts around the establishment of the national park, in addition to emotional factors, cultural factors and communication barriers, among others, came into play (Hoffmann, 2015). Local referendums were held in seven municipalities, in which the majority of votes (ranging from 63–87%, with turnout averaging over 60%) were cast against the establishment of a national park (Hoffmann, 2015). In view of the opposition of the local communities, the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection of Baden-Württemberg commissioned an expert study (PricewaterhouseCoopers& ö:konzept:..., 2013), which included an analysis of the natural resources of the planned park area (half of the area was occupied by mixed forests with an economic function, predominantly spruce) and an assessment of the socio-economic effects concerning, among other things, the such as the reduction of forest management and timber supply to residents and sawmills, the impact of the park on tourism, and an assessment of the losses caused by bark beetles as a result of the inability to isolate forests outside the park boundaries and the reduction in the use of protective measures.

The expert report emphasises that the exclusion of a large undivided forest area from its current use will contribute to the fulfilment of European nature conservation obligations. It was pointed out that the creation of a national park could provide a boost for tourism (benefiting, among others, agriculture, manufacturing industry and service companies), improved quality of life and increased environmental awareness among the public. The park was intended to be a brand that would fit in with the need to connect with nature and be a source of income for the tourism industry in the Black Forest region. However, an increase in property value and property tax revenue was not foreseen (PricewaterhouseCoopers& ö: konzept:..., 2013). Compensation was provided for the ForstBW (Forst Baden-Württemberg) for losses from abandoned timber harvesting in the protected area zones. An area between Seebach and Schönmünzach was also excluded for the con-

struction of a municipal wind turbine, adapting the park's boundaries to this investment; the operation of the existing Rudolf-Fettweis-Werk hydroelectric power station in Forbach was safeguarded (Gesetz zur Errichtung..., 2013). On the basis of an expert opinion, a draft law for the establishment of the Black Forest National Park was presented in 2013, which again met with protests from local communities. In view of this, a platform was launched through which residents and community organisations were able to submit opinions on the draft (Bürgerbeteiligung, 2013).

The councils of four (of the seven) municipalities in the area where the park's boundaries were planned passed resolutions in support of the creation of the Black Forest National Park. The Central Upper Rhine and Southern Upper Rhine associations were also in favour of the park. As the result of the previously held referendum was not legally binding, the Baden-Württemberg parliament passed a law in 2013 on the establishment of the Black For-

est National Park, which came into force in 2014 (Gesetz zur Errichtung des Nationalparks Schwarzwald). The park currently covers approximately 10,100 ha and consists of two parts, approximately 3,500 km apart (Ruhestein perimeter – 7,600 ha and Hoher Ochsenkopf/Plättig perimeter – 2,400 ha) – Figure 2.

The area includes parts of towns and municipalities in the districts: Freudenstadt (municipality of Baiersbronn); Ortenau (town of Oppenau, municipality of Ottenhöfen im Schwarzwald and municipality of Seebach); Rastatt (town of Bühl, municipality of Forbach) and in the district town of Baden-Baden (Gesetz zur Errichtung des Nationalparks Schwarzwald, §1). The park is dominated by forests with spruce (over 60%) and fir (14%). The park is completely surrounded by another protected area, the Black Forest Central/North Nature Park. The park was divided into zones with different degrees of protection and a 30-year transitional period was introduced for the implementation of the protection regulations (Gesetz zur Errichtung des Nationalparks Schwarzwald, §6). The zone was distinguished:

- core area – for which the highest level of protection has been adopted with the motto “Let nature be nature”. It covers mainly forested areas. In 30 years (in 2044), the zone will cover an area of 3/4 of the park and the natural processes of nature will not be disturbed here;
- development – includes forest areas prepared for inclusion in the core zone (the zone will cease to exist after 30 years);
- management – includes an area where maintenance activities are carried out to protect species and prevent the spread of the bark beetle.

Decisions on park matters are made by the National Park Council (representatives of municipalities and counties in the park area or where the facilities of the national park association and administration are located) and the National Park Advisory Council (representatives of forestry, business, churches and science) (Gesetz zur Errichtung des Nationalparks Schwarzwald, §14 and §15).

In 2014, a study (telephone interviews using a questionnaire) was conducted on perceptions of the Black Forest National Park (Blinkert, 2015). A randomly selected 1,000 people from Baden-Württemberg and 500 people from municipalities in the park area took part in the survey. The results indicated that the interest of Baden-Württemberg's citizens in the park was high (60%), and even higher among regional residents (70%). Nearly 63% of the people surveyed in Baden-Württemberg viewed the creation of the park positively, while 7% had the opposite opinion. In the villages in the park area, the assessment was lower (50% positive and 14% negative). Respondents identified advantages and disadvantages associated with a national park (Blinkert, 2015). Among the advantages, the following were mentioned: protection of nature (almost 3/4 of the respondents), increase in tourism (2/3 of the respondents),



Figure 2. Nationalpark Schwarzwald

Source: https://www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/fileadmin/Mediendatenbank_Nationalpark/06_Karten_und_Broschueren/Karten/Nationalpark_Wald_Hoehenlage.pdf (accessed:05.06.2023)

leisure opportunities, creation of new jobs in the park (almost half of the respondents). Among the disadvantages: increased motorised traffic (57%), restricted access to the park (40%), and mass tourism (25%).

In some cases, the creation of a protected area contributes to an increase in poverty levels and in others to a decrease in poverty (Dudley et al., 2008). The creation of a protected area, for example, results in the exclusion of land from use, with potentially significant opportunity costs and violation of property rights. As a result, this can have a negative impact on local communities and, among other things, exacerbate poverty (Adams et al., 2004).

The literature points to a multifaceted relationship between the establishment of a protected area and the degree of community poverty (Adams et al., 2004; Lechwar, 2004; Agrawal, Redford, 2006; Dudley et al., 2008; Barrett et al., 2011). The concept of poverty needs to be considered not only in economic terms, such as per capita income, but also in social terms, such as health (Adams et al., 2004). Protected areas are now expected to provide social and economic benefits. These benefits are often fundamental in gaining community approval for the creation of protected areas. However, as noted by Gurney et al. (2014) the social impacts of creating protected areas are poorly understood. Sustainable development is not only about conserving nature's resources, but also about eliminating or reducing production and consumption, reducing the gap in people's living standards and eradicating poverty (Miłostan, 2014). At the same time, questions are being raised about, among other things, the extent of the benefits of creating protected areas, the relationship with poverty reduction strategies, and whether protected areas actually reduce poverty and increase well-being (Dudley et al., 2008).

Research and analysis presented in the WWF report indicates that the announcement of greater benefits than costs following the creation of protected areas changes local communities' perceptions of these areas (Dudley et al., 2008). However, it is not always the case that all members of local communities share in the benefits, even though they bear the costs of creating protected areas. For some groups, the benefits of a protected area outweigh the costs (e.g. a tourism company making a profit but paying little to local workers). For others, on the other hand, the creation of protected areas may mean a worsening of their livelihoods, e.g. due to loss of resources or damage to crops (Dudley et al., 2008).

CONCLUSIONS

A common feature of the presented attitudes of local communities towards plans to create national parks was the 'top-down' decisions of public authorities and the initial lack of effective communication between stakeholders. However, the two cases differed in the way the public approached the idea of creating a protected area with a high

protection regime. Behind the idea of creating a National-park Donau-Auen was the public's desire to protect valuable natural resources. In the case of the creation of the Black Forest National Park (Nationalpark Schwarzwald), the project was supported by the authorities (as originators) and the public protested. This confirms the hypothesis adopted at the outset that government decisions mobilise local communities to act when local interests are threatened.

The initial rather passive attitude of local communities towards an investment with a significant environmental impact in the Danube Valley (resembling of the NIMBY syndrome) turned into an action that could not be ignored by the public authorities. The leaders involved in the information campaign and the 'Hainburger Aubesetzung' action, the support of scientific authority and the activities of environmental organisations (including the WWF) played a not insignificant role in the creation of the Danube Riparian National Park.

The process of establishing the Black Forest National Park is an example of evolving attitudes between authorities and local communities. The authorities' plans were perceived by local communities as a threat to their interests and provoked strong opposition (NIMBY syndrome). The authorities took action based on public consultation and community participation in the decision-making process. The opportunity to express opinions on the project to create the park and the establishment of transition periods in the protection zones allowed *consensus to be reached*.

A significant role in the acceptance of environmentally valuable areas by local communities (both at the stage of their designation and operation) was played by information activities concerning the decisions of the authorities. In both cases, an important step in the process of establishing a national park was the adoption of appropriate legal regulations related to nature protection and (where possible) the indication of the possibility of economic and agricultural activities. The dialogue of the authorities with the public showed in both cases that, in addition to the possibility of participation of local communities in the decision-making process, information activities on decisions related to the creation of a protected area are necessary. The above conclusions may be helpful in understanding and perceiving the role of the authorities in the process of designation and management of environmentally valuable areas.

Local communities' positive perceptions of naturally valuable areas are influenced by information about the potential benefits that outweigh the costs of creating these areas. However, not all members of local communities always benefit from protected areas, although they bear the costs of creating these areas. The creation of a protected area can either increase the level of poverty (e.g. when land is taken out of use and property rights are violated) or decrease it. For some, the creation of protected areas may mean a gain in business, for others, a worsening of their

livelihoods. With regard to the cases in question, there is a lack of data on the level of poverty and its impact on the attitudes of local communities. In order to gain a deeper understanding of these relationships, it would seem important to conduct relevant research in this area in the future.

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