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### Strategic Governance in the Marina Sector in The Context of Marine Tourism Cluster<sup>1</sup>

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#### ABSTRACT

This research aims to discuss strategic governance activities in the marina sector operating in Muđla Marine Tourism Cluster. Qualitative research methodology was preferred to identify the strategic governance practices from marina managers' perspective. In-dept semi-structured interview was preferred in order to illuminate the case specific management approaches and applications. Six marina managers were interviewed, and the managers' opinions were analysed by content analysis under five main themes namely, vision, participation, coordination, transparency, and efficiency. The findings revealed that the strategic governance practices are not strictly implemented because of the top-down-centralized approach which is preferred in the sector.

**Keywords:** Strategic governance; Marine tourism; Marine tourism cluster; Marina sector

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## Introduction

In recent years, people have started to take an interest in different forms of tourism in order to try various tourism experiences. The changing preferences of tourists have led to the emergence and rapid development of marine tourism and an increase in the demand for services offered in the sector. Although there is no clear information about how many visitors attend marine tourism events, some researches (Harriot, 2002; Douglas-Westwood, 2005; Diakomihalis, 2007; Lii, 2010) estimated that millions of tourists benefit from the services offered. Diakomihalis (2007) claims that in 2005, it is evaluated that the global volume of marine tourism was 174 million € and this volume made 10.5 % of tourism expenditures. In this regard, it is possible to state that marine tourism activities are carried out in a highly competitive environment.

Organizations operating in highly competitive environments use various techniques to gain the ability to compete, by taking a competitive position and making this position sustainable. One of these techniques is clustering. Krugman (1998) expresses that the agglomeration of firms in a specific area makes it easier to reach the local markets and decreases the cost of transportation. Erkek and Öselmiş (2011) assert that enterprises operating in a cluster improve and increase their market shares thanks to clusters formation of technological partnerships, creation of a specialized employee pool and the cooperation developed between enterprises. Thus, one of the important strategic tools used for taking a competitive position in the national or international scale, ensuring local and regional development is clustering.

The cultural, political, social and technical advances and changes have led to the rise of new ideas and approaches in management activities (Sobacı, 2007). The structural, economic and macro-political developments since the late 1980s have culminated in a radical reorganization of management systems and activities in organizations around the world (van der Walt and Ingley, 2000). In recent years, neoliberal policies have triggered modifications in both the developed and developing countries' economies (Erkuş-Öztürk, 2011). Hall (2011) stated that governments' positions have changed because of the supremacy of neo-liberal policy in many developed and developing countries. One of those changes revealed a new management technique which is governance (Sobacı, 2007).

Governance, basically, is the governing action (Hall, 2011). The government has no role or has little role in governance which covers all forms of control, jurisdiction, and law that protect order (Bramwell, 2011). Governments need to collaborate with stakeholders to make the most of their strengths, and resources to achieve mutual objectives more effectually (Wan and Bramwell, 2015).

Nowadays, governance is a new phenomenon for the sectors where a large number of actors operate together. One of these sectors is tourism. In tourism management, all stakeholders are an inseparable part of the tourism system (Freeman, 2010). Cizel, Ajanovic and Cakar (2016) indicate that reaching a mutual objective needs immediate close joint actions and collaborative approaches, particularly in setting goals and in the decision-making process.

There are some researchers (see Beaumont and Dredge, 2010; Bramwell and Cox, 2009; Bramwell and Pomfret, 2007; Dredge and Thomas, 2009; Dredge, 2010) who have highlighted the governance practices in the tourism industry (Dredge and Whitford, 2011). These researchers focused on destination governance practices. The researchers (Erkuş-Öztürk and Terhorst, 2010; Erkuş-Öztürk, 2011; Cizel et al., 2016) examining the governance practices in Turkish tourism industry mainly focused on destination governance. However, there is a lack of studies examining the governance practices in specific forms of the tourism industry, such as marine tourism. Cheong (2002) expressed that the marine tourism industry generates foreign currency earnings especially in developing countries and it makes a positive contribution to these countries' balance of payments. Since Turkey is a developing country and marine tourism is one of the significant parts in the economy like other types of tourism, investigating the governance activities in marina sector in the context of marine tourism industry is considered to be important.

Destinations can be chosen by visitors according to their features of attractions, accommodations, entertainments, etc. Thus, destinations are one of strategic focuses for a successful tourism management (Scott, 2012). Muğla province is one of the leading tourism destinations in Turkey. It has also a high potential for marine tourism activities in the context of geography, climate, infrastructure, etc. According to research carried out in the region, there is an agglomeration of marinas (Muğla Governership, 2010a). This agglomeration of marinas is the first step of cluster lifecycle (Andersson, Serger, Sörvik, and Hansson, 2004). It can be suggested that there is a marine tourism cluster in Muğla. Thus, the current study seeks to examine strategic governance activities in the marina sector operating in Muğla Marine Tourism Cluster. Thus, it is aimed to contribute to the related literature.

## 1. Literature Review

Governance is similar to government, but it possesses a different and broader concept than that of government (Rhodes, 1996; Graham, Amos, and Pumptre, 2003; Karns and Mingst, 2004). Governance can be described as the process of joint management (Dunsire, 1993; Rhodes, 1996; Weiss, 2000), as being a newly developed governing style which asserts the public-private sector frontiers that are blurred (Stoker, 1998). Accordingly, governance means governing, organizing and coordinating the actions of all shareholders to achieve the mutual goals (Scott and Marzano, 2015).

Public organizations and other actors are participated in decision-making and planning processes in governance (Weiss, 2000; Bramwell and Lane, 2011; Farmaki, 2015; Scott and Marzano, 2015). Governance, therefore, requires interactive relations between these governmental agencies and the civil society (Weiss, 2000). Governance implies harmonization and cooperation of processes based on horizontal relations, while government means fulfillment of planned activities prior to strict hierarchical relations (Sohal and Fitzpatrick, 2002). The approach suggests less government control and no given hierarchy (Farmaki, 2015).

Governance has become an important position for the organizations (Farmaki, 2015). Thus, some different modes were derived on the concepts such as good governance, regional and local governance (Bramwell and Lane, 2011; Scott and Marzano, 2015). Nanda (as cited in Wesley and Pforr, 2010) suggested that good governance comprises of all features that represent good governing actions to control cases linked to malpractice such as transparency, accountability, political stability and the rule of law. Farmaki (2015) asserted that good governance is a prerequisite to achieve sustainability through economic, political and administrative dimensions. Regional governance means generating the laws for a region in various policy fields, thus helping solve regional problems and gain shared benefits (Nolte, 2016). Local governance emphasizes the local public agencies' direct and indirect roles and the roles of networks, civil society organizations, related associations in performing common activity at local levels (Shah and Shah, 2006). These different modes of governance could also be applied in governance of tourism.

Governance has not been discussed thoroughly yet in studies on tourism (Erkuş-Öztürk, 2011). Governance in the tourism industry is not an easy task due to its various stakeholders (Scott and Marzano, 2015). dos Anjos and Kennell (2019) indicated that the governance of tourism is not only the act of governing or activities related to the government, national tourism offices, destination management organizations, relationships between the public and private sectors etc., it also brings together local communities, tourists, and all public and private institutions related to the tourism industry. However, Scott and Marzano (2015) asserted that the governance activities within the tourism industry is a challenging task due to the large number of stakeholders. For instance, airline companies, tour operators, hotels, and companies providing tourism services may have different interests (Erkuş-Öztürk, 2011). But collaboration among these stakeholders with different interests in the industry is generally necessary for governments to reach the collective goals since each actor has a level of power, resources, and access to networks (Wan and Bramwell, 2015). Governance of tourism is a complicated and multidimensional area where the government and non-governmental institutions are mutually related (Borges, Eusebio, and Carvalho, 2014), although having different interests (Nordin and Svensson, 2007; Erkuş-Öztürk, 2011).

Tourism governance can be described in terms of top-down and bottom-up approach (Ruhanen, Scott, Ritchie and Tkaczynski, 2010; Scott and Marzano, 2015). In the top-down approach, governments and public institutions provide infrastructure, marketing, and promotion activities in order to attain for the public good. In the bottom-up approach, local communities and private institutions are involved in decision-making process to support public organizations for better management (Ruhanen et al., 2010; Scott and Marzano, 2015).

Ramzy (2017) described tourism governance in connection with centralized, decentralized, and shared governance. The centralized governance is comprised of top-down structures, hierarchy, authority and control. The decentralized governance includes transferring of some tasks from governments to other public organizations. The shared governance means sharing of liability and power among states, non-governmental institutions, and local communities (Ramzy, 2017; Della Corte et al., 2018). Participation of regional or local sector representatives and local community in the tourism policy making is crucial since tourism policies affect these actors. (Scott, 2012;

Hatipoglu, Alvarez, and Ertuna, 2016). Moreover, interacting with important industry actors, such as airline companies, hotels, tour operators, and travel agencies, is both necessary and beneficial for national governments aiming to develop tourism activities at a destination (Scott, 2012). In this context, it can be stated that the decentralization of authority and responsibility brings decision-making process closer to local communities and can thus enhance the efficiency of services offered at a destination (Yüksel, Bramwell, and Yüksel, 2005). Decentralized governance has been adapted by developed countries in tourism industry, while developing countries tend to prefer to centralize governance (Ndivo and Okech, 2019). Yüksel et al. (2005) stated that developing countries are highly centralized because national governments decide policies, provide infrastructure, and services needed. Therefore, the bureaucracy is quite intense in these countries and this is one of the major obstacles to effective governance. Besides, destination governance can be defined as a procedure which coordinates all stakeholders and institutions operating in the destination to reach mutual objectives (Della Corte et al., 2018). Destination governance is fulfilling the governance procedure in tourism destinations, which plans to enhance destination competitiveness through promoting and guiding collective actions (Pechlaner, Volgger, and Herntrei, 2012). Coordination of multi stakeholders is essential and every stakeholder at a destination should have an explicit role and understandable and clear information for managing destinations more effectively (Ramzy, 2017). Therefore, the formal and informal relations between the local or regional governments and the industry actors, and the coordination between stakeholders that are very crucial for the development of a destination, can be established through the destination governance (Nordin and Svensson, 2007).

A strategic perspective to governance activities could change an organization through integrating activities and tasks performed by actors with a clear vision and an understandable mission (Vagadia, 2014). In this context a new concept has emerged as a different way of evaluating governance activities and focusing on those activities and that is strategic governance (Ratnatunga and Alam, 2011). The main purpose of strategic governance is establishing guidance for an organization to reach its goals within the acceptableness as determined by the management team (Vagadia, 2014). Mulgan (as cited in Ochrana, Placek, and Pucek, 2016) stated that the main features of strategic governance involve strategies developed by government, a clear vision, realistic short-term and long-term objectives, and incorporation of strategic ideas into every level of government.

Strategic governance is a prerequisite either at global level or at local level for successful development because it operates by enabling empowerment and adopting appropriate instruments of governance (Pouw and De Bruijine, 2015). In this way, strategic governance can minimize the risk of strategic irrelevance. Therefore, it is important to perform effective strategic governance activities (Community Business Bureau, 2019) because companies or destinations may gain competitive advantages through the strategic governance (van der Walt and Ingley, 2000).

Although the top-down management approach is used for the governance of tourism in Turkey, the role of local authorities is increasing. This situation may provide beneficial developments for country's tourism industry in future (Duman and Tosun, 2010). Yüksel et al. (2005) stated that tourism governance in Belek, which is the Turkish coastal resort

of the city of Antalya, was centralized because the national governance was highly influential. According to a research conducted in Thrace region of Turkey, which intended to determine the particular obstacles that hinder the participation of stakeholders in policy-making process, the lack of organizational structures for successful cooperation, the leadership and strategic orientation, the financial focus based on self-interest may hinder the involvement of stakeholders and local community in the policy-making process in the region (Hatipoglu et al., 2016). Another research conducted in Antalya region, which aimed to determine the key components for destination governance, revealed that shared vision among the stakeholders, a goal congruence developed with the participation of all stakeholders, and interaction are necessary for sustainable tourism governance. However, the results of the same research showed that stakeholders in the region have a tendency to operate independently from each other and they shared vision, goal congruence. But an interaction level among stakeholders do not exist for establishing sustainable and good governance (Cizel et al., 2016). The results of a research conducted in Antalya, which aimed to investigate the critical success factors (responsiveness, shared roles, strategy formation, and collaboration) for the development of crisis management, showed that the governance activities are ineffective because of the lack of implementing critical success factors (Çakar, 2018). Another research conducted in Bodrum revealed that there is a lack of governance in the sector (Muslu, 2018).

### *1.2 Muğla as a Tourist Destination*

Muğla province located in the south of Aegean region is an important tourism destination (Çuhadar, 2014). Muğla has the longest coastline in the country (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010b). While some sources state that the length of the coastline is more than 1100 km (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010b; Çuhadar, 2014; Çoban, 2017), others suggest that the length is approximately 1480 km (Yücel and Ertin, 2019; Muğla Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate, 2020a). The province with natural attractions, historical and cultural resources, unique architecture, narrow streets, and districts is one of the most popular and important tourism destinations. (Çuhadar, 2014; Yücel and Ertin, 2019). Bahar (2008) states that the province is considered by domestic and international tourists as “Heaven on Earth” and “Where Beauty Meets” (as cited in Çuhadar, 2014: 3). Although Muğla is not one of the most preferred destinations in global tourism market, its attractions and the important tourism regions such as Bodrum, Marmaris, Fethiye create significant potential for the destination (Baldemir & Kurnaz, 2013). Muğla is 3rd, among the first 10 destinations in Turkey, after İstanbul and Antalya in terms of the number of visitors (Çuhadar, 2014; Yücel and Ertin, 2019; T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010b) and 2nd in terms of facilities and accommodations (Yücel and Ertin, 2019).



**Figure 1.** The map of Muğla province  
Source: T.C. Muğla Governorship (2010b)

Muğla province is one of the advantageous provinces because the different districts of Muğla offer both alternative and traditional tourism products. For instance, while Marmaris provides services for health tourism and marine tourism Bodrum and Fethiye provide sport tourism in addition to health tourism and marine tourism (Eraslan and Dönmez, 2017). Other alternative tourism types offered in Muğla province include yacht tourism, cultural tourism, congress tourism, , and agro tourism (Baldemir and Kurnaz, 2013).

Muğla has a qualified environment and spatial structures to support marine tourism activities (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010b). It's coves, blue flag beaches and marinas are the locomotive of marine tourism in the country (Yücel and Ertin, 2019). Turkey's best equipped marinas are in the South Aegean and Mediterranean coast. When considering the yacht mooring capacity, eight of the top 10 marinas in Turkey are located in Muğla (Çuhadar, 2014). There are 22 marinas with total capacity of 5721 in the province. Seven of the marinas are located in Bodrum, six in Fethiye, six in Marmaris, and the remaining three in Datça, Köyceğiz, and Milas (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010b). Marinas operating in Muğla demonstrate the destination's potential for marine tourism. The quality of the services offered by the ports strengthens the position of the marinas in the Muğla Marine Tourism cluster (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010a: 73). Moreover, there are 131 coves, 57 of which have blue flags, and 61 islands on the coast of Muğla (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010b).

**Table 1.** The Number of International Tourists Arriving through Marinas

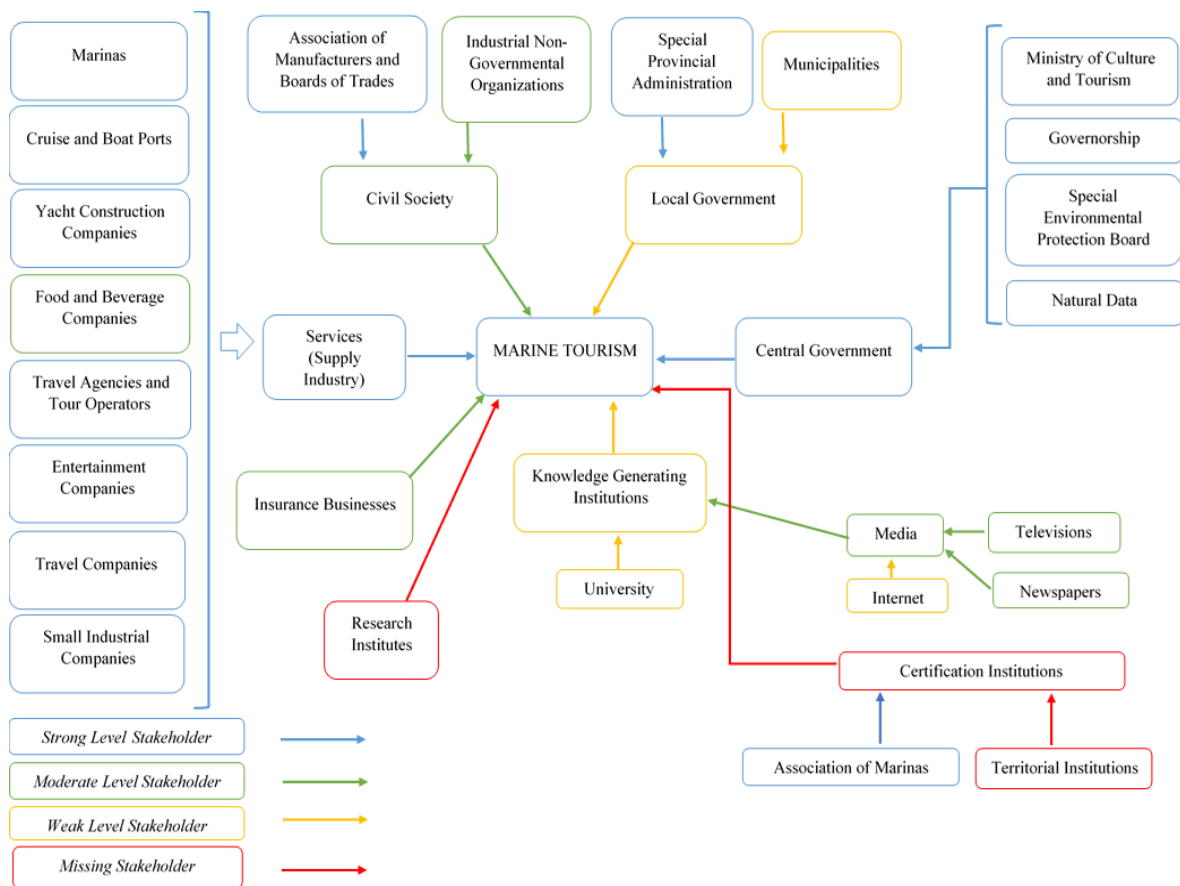
<i>Marinas</i>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Marmaris	246.601	197.610	213.592	247.269	242.711	112.877	119.320	121.473
Bozburun	7.206	8.038	10.850	0	10.183	10.693	13.692	10.436
Bodrum	186.579	203.453	194.594	213.628	141.986	100.391	119.008	141.510
Mantarburnu	124.715	149.202	120.878	125.280	185.831	132.951	128.246	142.635
Fethiye	23.656	23.279	22.922	23.573	20.743	18.573	17.034	23.185
Datça	8.095	5.817	7.510	15.471	8.472	7.613	8.349	6.803
Turgut	31.983	35.475	40.508	43.828	40.692	30.179	39.566	43.345
Güllük	2.885	2.514	2.132	2.349	2.230	2.634	3.008	2.765
Yalikavak	423	2.035	4.505	7.855	9.270	7.730	7.448	8.576
<b>Total</b>	<b>632.143</b>	<b>627.423</b>	<b>617.491</b>	<b>679.253</b>	<b>662.118</b>	<b>423.641</b>	<b>455.671</b>	<b>500.728</b>

Source: Muğla Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate (2020b)

Marine tourism is important for the destination (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010a). As indicated in Table 1, the destination hosts average 550.000 international tourists arriving through marinas every year. However, the destination is not in a position that will reveal its true potential. As a strategic tourism area, it is vital for Muğla to adopt approaches that will significantly improve the marina management, the tour operators' activities, and the B2C relations in order to create more added value for its existing potentials (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010a). According to a research conducted by the Governorship in the province, it is stated that sub-tourism sectors need to be primarily developed. In this context, the clustering potential of sub-tourism sectors was investigated, and it is revealed that regional clustering should be taken into account in marine tourism in order to increase the global competitiveness of the sectors (Eraslan and Dönmez, 2017).

According to Andersson, Schwaag-Serger, Sorvik, and Hansson (2004), there are some stages of clustering, namely, agglomeration, emerging cluster, developing cluster, mature cluster, and transformation. The first stage of clustering is agglomeration. In this stage, a region has a number of companies (Andersson et al., 2004). The number of new entrepreneurs increase in this stage. However, there are undeveloped relationship networks among the actors (Müderrisoğlu, 2016). In the Muğla Marine Tourism cluster, the relationship level between local government, NGOs, food and beverages businesses are moderate and weak. However, the level of network relationships among marinas, which have a strategic position in the cluster, with knowledge generation institutions, media, certification and other actors is weak (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010a). Thus, it can be stated that the Muğla Marine Tourism cluster is in the agglomeration stage. Figure 2 shows the map of Muğla Marine Tourism cluster.





**Figure 2.** The stakeholders of Muğla marine tourism cluster  
 Source: T.C. Muğla Governorship (2010a)

According to the map of Muğla Marine Tourism Cluster, the supply industry, financial institutions, central government, and natural data are strong stakeholders. Local governments and non-governmental institutions are moderate level stakeholders; institutions of knowledge generation, and local government are weak level stakeholders; research institutes and certification institutions are missing stakeholders (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010a).

## 2. Methodology

The qualitative research method was preferred for investigating the current situation of strategic governance in the marina sector in Muğla Marine Tourism Cluster. Unlike the quantitative research, the qualitative research helps obtain the primary or secondary data needed to constitute a meaningful whole (Kozak, 2014). It is thought that the qualitative research method is more convenient for the current study as the number of studies conducted in the research is limited.

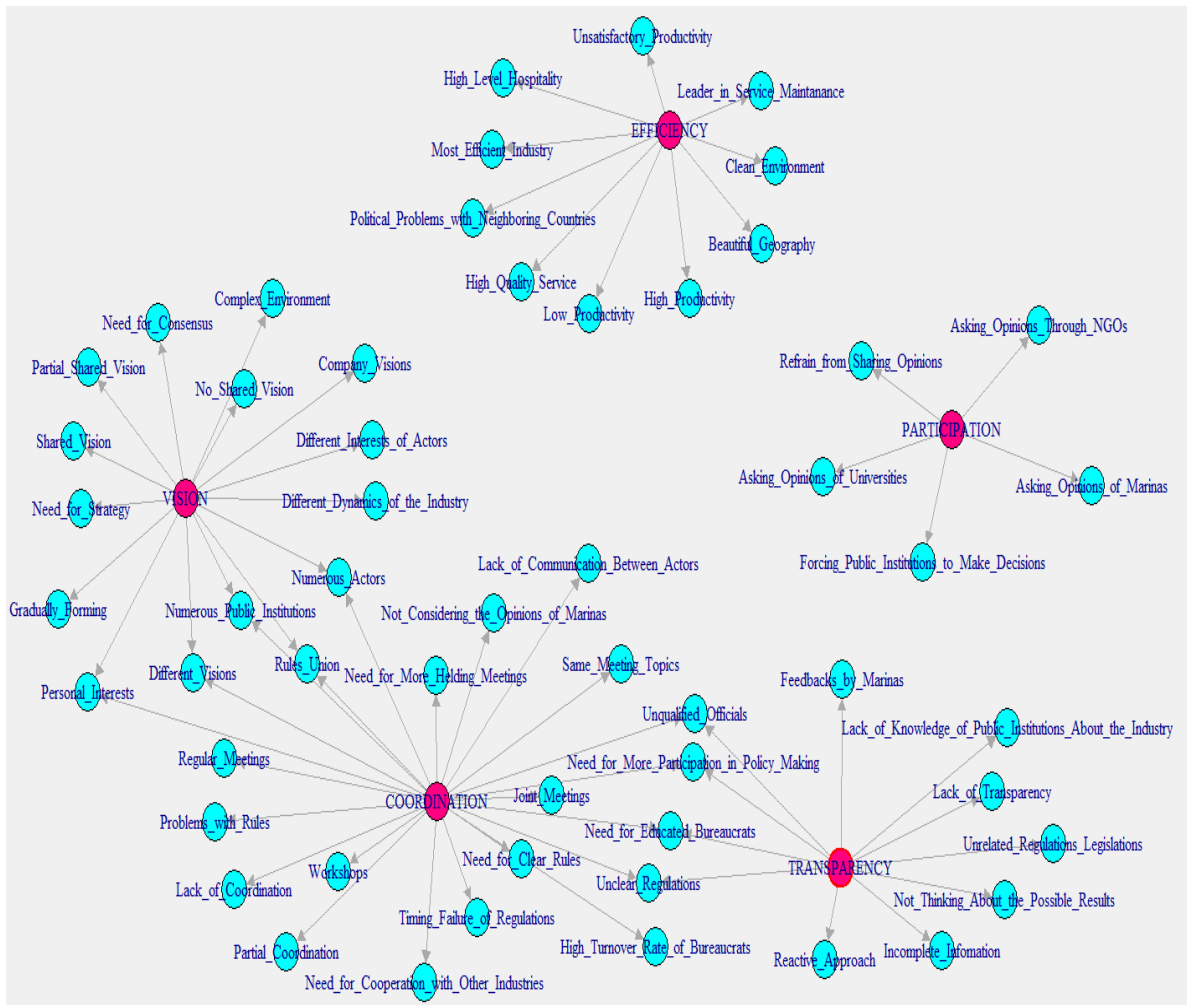
The semi-structured interview was used for ensuring the maximum coherence between the data obtained from the various interviews and to prevent skipping the questions to be answered. For the main purpose of the study, the governance and strategic

governance literature was reviewed, and the questions were designed in accordance with the current literature. The designed questions were sent to two academicians who have experience in qualitative research. After this stage, on 13-14 of April 2017, a pilot research was conducted on two marina managers to determine whether or not the questions were easily understood and were convenient for the aim of the research.

A holistic multiple-case study design was preferred in this study. There is no agreement on the number of marinas in the destination. Some studies claim that the number of marinas operating in the destination is 22 (T.C. Muğla Governorship, 2010b), while others claim that the number is either 27 (Çoban, 2017) or 14 (Çuhadar, 2014). The true number of marinas operating in the destination could not be obtained. There were 20 marinas registered by the Turkish Chamber of Shipping. Therefore, the population of the study is 20 marinas, registered by the Turkish Chamber of Shipping, operating in Muğla (Bodrum, Marmaris, Fethiye, Göcek).

Tuckett (2004) stated that there are no defined rules to determine the sample size in qualitative studies, but he suggested that the sample size relies on small numbers. First, all marinas operating in the region were contacted via e-mail on different dates and were informed about the study. However, some marinas did not respond to our e-mails. Those with no response, were contacted again via e-mail. Eventually, six marinas accepted to take part in the study. At the beginning we interviewed six marinas. After the interviews, we noticed that the answers given by the participants were very similar to each other. Therefore, it was decided that the data obtained from those six interviews were sufficiently saturated. Türnüklü (2000) reported that when the information obtained by the researcher begins to be saturated, it means that the adequate sample size for the study has been received. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (as cited in Abubakar, Anasori, and Lasisi, 2019) stated that the saturation of the data in a qualitative research can generally be achieved within the first 12 interviews. They further indicated that the first six interviews are helpful in enabling to support for conformation of the themes. For this reason, data gathering process was stopped.

Content analysis and descriptive analysis that are mostly preferred in qualitative data analysis were both applied to the data. During the analysis process, first, all interviews were transcribed. Subsequently, the interview transcripts were coded. Finally, the themes were developed using RQDA software (see Figure 3). RQDA is a R package and a qualitative data analysis software (Abubakar et. al., 2019).



**Figure 3.** The codes and themes

In the developing of the themes process, the most mentioned dimensions of governance in the literature were taken into consideration. Accordingly, the most mentioned dimensions of governance are shared vision, interaction (coordination), involvement (participation), transparency, efficiency (effectiveness), and efficacy (Cizel et al., 2016; Farmaki, 2015; Ruhanent et al., 2010; Valente, Dredge, and Lohmann, 2015).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Vision

First of all, it was aimed to determine whether a shared vision, which is the most important dimension of strategic governance, exists among the marinas. Although one out of six participants stated that there is a shared vision among the actors, the majority of the participants stated that the marinas share a partially common vision. It was determined that the most significant problem in ensuring the vision unity is the number of actors in the industry and their tendency to operate individually to reach their own interests.

**P6:** “... it is possible to say that both the number of the actors and individual interests prevent the formation of a shared vision in the sector.”

This situation showed that the vision unity which is the first step in performing successful strategic activities has not yet been fully achieved. Nevertheless, the participants indicated that actors share a partial vision in the sector and the shared vision is slowly forming.

**P1:** “... I cannot speak of a clear shared vision. However, we can say that a shared vision has been developed slowly.”

**P4:** “There is a partially shared vision among the actors. What is this vision? Carry more passengers, carry better quality passengers, use better quality and more luxurious boats.”

**P5:** “Although there is no clear-vision unity among actors, it can be stated that there is a partially vision unity.”

Interdependence and resource exchange are characteristics of strategic governance (Cizel et al., 2016). Although there is no completely shared vision among the actors, it can be indicated that there is a partial interdependence and resource exchange between the actors. This current situation appears to be important to establish a shared vision.

### 3.2. Participation

A broad-based participation in policy making or decision-making process is necessary for effective strategic governance activities. All participants stated that their opinions were asked by the related ministries through governmental institutions or non-governmental organizations such as Marine Tourism Associations and Turkish Chamber of Shipping.

**P1:** “They contact with us through Turkish Chamber of Shipping, district governorship, municipalities, etc...Our opinions are taken into account some way...”

**P4:** “Before finalized and declared, the drafts of decisions, legislations are sent to us through trade associations and non-profit organizations...”

The marinas share their opinions or give feedbacks about the legislations and regulations through governmental or non-governmental institutions. But this does not mean there is implicit participation in the decision-making process. Even they share their opinions, the participants have doubts whether their opinions are taken into consideration or not.

**P2:** “...If a decision related to our sector will be made or regulation will be implemented, they definitely ask our opinions through the Marine Tourism Association. However, are our opinions taken into consideration or not? That is a big question mark.”

**P5:** “They ask our opinions, but they stand by their guns though. We could not get away with this situation. They think that they know everything. We cannot change this.”

The mutual trust between the actors and the ministries is important for effective participation. However, one of the participants stated that some actors do not share their opinions, and one of the participants underlined that they do not share their opinions because of the fear of being misunderstood.

**P6:** “...Nevertheless, it is not true to say that all actors make a contribution by sharing their opinions about the regulations and legislation...”

**P3:** “The public (government) asks our opinion about the new legislation through Turkish Chambers of Shipping. The Turkish Chamber of Shipping sends the draft legislation to us and we give feedback if the draft covers the regulations in our field. Yet, our people refrain from reading drafts and making feedback. They have thoughts of being misunderstood...”

The success in the sector can be obtained through the participation of the marinas in the development of regulations or legislations process. In order to ensure the participation of all marinas, mutual trust should be established in the sector. Consequently, marinas will not refrain from sharing their opinions and effective regulations and legislations can be developed.

### 3.3. Coordination

An effective strategic governance requires coordination among the actors which have different interests and expectations. All participants articulated that there is a lack of coordination in the sector. Although majority of the participants stated that there is a partial coordination in the sector, two of them expressed that there is no coordination because of a large number of actors and shared vision.

**P1:** “...there is no coordination among all actors in the sector. Because there are many actors in the sector.”

**P6:** “As I mentioned it before, there are many actors in the sector. Therefore, there is not a shared vision unity in the sector, nor is there complete coordination...”

Many ministries are involved in the sector. Each ministry has their own legislation or regulation related to the sector. These legislations or regulations may conflict each other. These conflicts and the bureaucracy can sometimes affect establishing coordination between governments and actors in a negative manner. One of the participants stated that the excessive bureaucratic process is one of the main reasons for the limited coordination in the sector.

**P2:** “There is limited coordination between the actors. We are always pushing the government to make some decisions. However, we cannot follow most of the things because of the excessive and changeable bureaucratic process.”

Some participants emphasized that in order to ensure the coordination, a consensus should be established among the actors.

**P1:** *“...In order to establish coordination among these actors, a consensus must first be established...”*

**P3:** *“...All institutions (port authority, customs, etc.) related to the sector should come together before the beginning of the season and should determine the rules to be applied in that season...”*

All participants stated that regular meetings are held to discuss about the sector. These meetings are held by non-governmental organizations such as the Turkish Chamber of Shipping and Marine Tourism Associations. The public institutions hold meetings about the sector as well. These meetings are considered to achieve a successful coordination. However, it is not possible to say that these regular meetings are sufficient for establishing the coordination. So that, some participants asserted that the public needs to have more frequent meetings in order to better understand the problems experienced by the sector. They also added that more importance should be given to the actors' opinions in those meetings. In addition to the meetings, one of the participants emphasized that in order to achieve a coordination between the actors, the leadership of governorships is required.

**P5:** *“There is partial coordination in the sector. In order to improve the coordination, governorships need to activate... It is required to operate activities in coordination under the leadership of governorships... If the coordination under the leadership of governorship is established, it will be very beneficial for the sector.”*

### 3.4. Transparency

Transparency means accessing the information or the flow of information among the actors. Transparency principle is important for establishing trust between the actors and establishing trust can increase the level of participation. As it was mentioned before, some actors refrain from sharing their opinions because of the lack of trust between the actors. Thus, we can claim that the flow of information between the actors is low. One of the participants explained:

**P6:** *“...We cannot get information about why or how decisions are made...”*

It may be argued that there is no transparency in the sector. This situation may be a possible consequence of partial participation in the decision-making process. Even so, sharing information on why decisions are made can help actors to be prepared for the possible outcomes of the decisions. Some participants stated;

**P4:** *“...For example, after the crisis on Greece island, they said that we do not give permission to travel abroad in order to prevent the confiscation of our ships. How can I explain this situation to the guest that I received 10.000 € deposit?”*

**P5:** *“...Recently, after the crisis occurred on Greece island, the government found a way out. Traveling to Greece islands or organizing a tour to the islands were*

*forbidden. They did not think about the consequences of this decision, they did not share with us. This decision adversely affected the sector.”*

In addition, although there is a flow of information from public institutions to the actors, the sector representatives have also informed the public institutions about the possible consequences of the decisions made. One of the participants further stated;

**P1:** *“The possible consequences of decisions are generally predicted by the sector and shared with the government. For example, you made this decision, but this decision can cause that consequences... We are sharing feedbacks.”*

### 3.5. Efficiency

One of the main objectives of strategic governance is the effective use of resources and to increase the efficiency level of a sector. Therefore, all other dimensions of strategic governance may be considered as tools for achieving high efficiency. Almost all participants stated that they use the resources of the region effectively and the efficiency level of the sector is satisfactory. However, they stated that there are some factors affecting the efficiency in negative way and emphasized that the efficiency of the sector decreased because of these negative factors.

**P1:** *“However, recent incidents occurred have adversely affected the sector. There are three major incidents which negatively have affected the sector. The first one is the terrorist attack occurred at Atatürk airport. The second one is the Reina terrorist attack. And the third one is the treacherous coup attempt...”*

**P2:** *“In recent negative developments occurred in the political conjuncture, there was a lack of confidence about Turkey abroad. It is wrong to say that this is only related to the political conjuncture. It can be stated that terrorist incidents across the country have effects on the perception of insecurity. Thus, people are afraid...”*

Although the politic instability, terrorist attacks, and incidents occurred in the region are mainly considered negative factors for the efficiency, as one of the participants emphasized that high costs and high competition level are also negative factors for the efficiency of the sector.

**P4:** *“...Costs are increasing day by day. We are operating in the boat sector. New boats launch annually because we cannot limit the number of boats. It is the same cake, but the slices are getting smaller. Competition stands out. And so, we cannot raise the prices. While maintenance costs are continuously increasing, we cannot raise the prices as the costs. The efficiency of the sector is therefore low.”*

In addition to these negative factors, participants strongly emphasized that a large number of legislations and regulations made by different ministries related to the sector affect the efficiency. It appears that there is a consensus among the actors that main

negative factors for the efficiency are external factors. Unlike this consensus, one participant emphasized the internal factors affecting the efficiency.

**P6:** *“Considering resources of the region, the level of efficiency is not satisfactory. The region has lots of tourist attractions such as natural resources, climate, etc. But we cannot promote them sufficiently.”*

Regardless of the opinions of other participants, one participant pointed out that there is a lack of available statistical data about the sector and therefore, it is difficult to predict the efficiency of the sector.

**P3:** *“We do not have a clear information about the efficiency of the sector since we cannot measure how many ships we host; how many guests participate in the tours. So, no exact numbers.”*

## Discussion and Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the strategic governance activities in the marina sector operating in Muğla Marine Tourism Cluster. This study provides different insights into tourism governance by examining the marina sector. The current state of the strategic governance practices in the sector was investigated using quantitative data obtained from a sample of marina managers operating in Muğla destination.

This study showed that there is not a shared vision among the actors. This study indicates that the actors neglect the common goals and they operate in order to achieve their own goals instead of the common goals. These findings in line with Cizel et al. (2016) who stated that the tourism stakeholders in Antalya tend to operate independently from each other. One of the possible main reasons for this outcome is that the collaboration culture is not fully established in the country, which causes a lack of shared vision in the sector.

It was also found that there is insufficient coordination between the actors. The finding that emerges from this study is consistent with that in Cizel et al. (2016) and Çakar (2018). As in Muslu’s (2018) study, the present study showed that many ministries are related to the sector and each ministry has its own legislation and standing rules which sometimes conflict with each other. Richins (2011) points out that lack of coordination can be a major problem for management and development in tourism destinations.

This study revealed that the participation process generally takes place in such that marinas’ opinions are consulted after preparing the regulations and legislation. Through non-governmental institutions and local governments, public institutions consult opinions of the marinas about the regulations and legislation related to the sector to be made or to be changed. In other words, the participation process cannot be fully performed in the sector because of some obstacles. This finding corresponds with those of earlier studies conducted by Hatipoglu et al. (2016) and Semone, Laws, Ruhanen, Wang and Scott (2011). On the other hand, this study also provides an important finding for the existing literature that some actors hesitant to give an opinion due to some



reservations. There is a strong possibility that the marina enterprises cannot fully involve in the decision-making process related to the sector.

Different from the previous studies related to the tourism governance in Turkey (e.g. Yüksel et. al., 2005; Cizel et al., 2016; Hatipoglu et al., 2016; Çakar, 2018; Muslu, 2018), the present study discovered that the transparency process is not completely performed in the sector. However, the conclusion that emerges from this study is similar to that in Semone et al. (2011). It is highly likely that the lack of trust causes a lack of transparency principle between the actors. There is also a good possibility that the actors who are consulted about the draft regulations and legislation regarding the sector refrain from giving their opinions since the transparency principle is not fully implemented. Establishing transparency process may provide a multidimensional motivation for achieving the main goal pursued (British and Irish Ombudsman Association, 2009), creating relationship networks based on trusts among the actors (Rhodes, 1996), and creating broad participation.

This study partially corresponds with that of an earlier study (Muslu, 2018). Some actors advocated that the efficiency level of the sector is low because of the competition level which is caused by increasing the number of boats. Moreover, the study showed that the actors claim that the sector uses its own resources very effectively and so the sector is efficient. This conclusion is in contrast with the idea of Laws, Agrusa, Scott, and Richins (2011) who state that cooperation or coordination is supposed to facilitate effectiveness. However, there is a lack of coordination between the actors in the sector. Nonetheless, it is difficult to say that the sector is efficient due to the lack of number of guests served and net income data obtained from them.

Consequently, it can be articulated that the top-down-centralized approach is preferred, and the strategic governance is not strictly implemented in the sector. These conclusions consistent with the results of previously published studies (Yüksel et al., 2005; Cizel et al., 2016; Hatipoglu et al., 2016; Çakar, 2018; Muslu 2018).

The study contributes important evidences to the current literature by examining marine tourism governance. The previously published studies mainly focused on mass tourism governance. Thus, the study provides different insights into the governance activities in the tourism industry. Besides, this study also provides crucial information for tourism professionals and policy-makers in Muğla destination. Turkish tourism industry highly depends on mass tourism and tourism professionals note for need for alternative strategies in order to increase the profitability level (Duman and Tosun, 2010). Hence, alternative tourism strategies may be developed and Muğla may gain a strong competitive advantage by understanding and eliminating the obstacles for establishing strategic governance in the sector.

In the context of limitations of the study, first, it is restricted to Muğla destination. Future studies may examine other destinations which have similar characteristics using similar methods. Second, at the data collection stage appointments from the public institutions could not be taken because of intense bureaucracy, as a result the public institutions had to be left out of this research. For future research, it is proposed that public agencies should be undertaken in a separate study. Third, only face-to-face interviews were utilized in this study. Focus groups interviews could not be conducted because of intense works of marina managers at the time of the interviews. In this context, lack of brainstorming of the face-to-face interview technique, a low level of creativity in

responses, responses in accordance with the interviewer's direction due to influence of the interviewer over the interviewee may be listed as the disadvantages of face to face interview (Opdenakker, 2006). Thus, it is suggested that focus group interviews may be carried out in future studies.

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Almatourism N. 23, 2021: Yüzbaşıoğlu N., Doğan O., Strategic Governance in the Marina Sector in The Context of Marine Tourism Cluster

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